



Submission to the Waste Authority
on
Draft II Waste Strategy for Western Australia

PREPARED BY THE



MUNICIPAL WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL
"Getting the Environment Right"

April 2010

Status of this Submission

This Submission has been prepared through the Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) for the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA). The Municipal Waste Advisory Council is a standing committee of the WA Local Government Association, with delegated authority to represent the Association in all matters relating to solid waste management. MWAC's membership includes the major Regional Councils (waste management). The Regional Councils members of MWAC include the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council, Mandarie Regional Council, Southern Metropolitan Regional Council, Rivers Metropolitan Regional Council, Western Metropolitan Regional Council and the City of Geraldton-Greenough. This makes MWAC a unique forum through which all the major Local Government waste management organisations cooperate. This Submission therefore represents the consolidated view of Western Australia Local Government. However, individual Local Governments and Regional Councils may have views that differ from the positions taken here.

This position has been endorsed by MWAC on Friday 16 April 2010.

The Municipal Waste Advisory Council's member organisations are:

Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council
City of Geraldton-Greenough
Mandarie Regional Council
Rivers Regional Council
Southern Metropolitan Regional Council
Western Australian Local Government Association
Western Metropolitan Regional Council

Executive Summary

Local Government supports the implementation of a state-wide Waste Strategy for Western Australia (WA), and appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Strategy. This Submission focuses on the key priorities of Local Government as identified in the Association's previous Submission of the first draft of the Waste Strategy, by Local Government representatives and through a workshop with members of the Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC). This Submission should be read in conjunction with our previous Submission to the Waste Authority on the first draft of the Waste Strategy for Western Australia.

Local Government waste has been identified as the only waste stream to show a decrease in tonnes to landfill over the past few years. Despite increasing population, Local Government waste to landfill has decreased by approximately 1% per year since 1999/2000. This decrease is the result of recycling and resource recovery initiatives and operations by Local Governments.

This Submission highlights that there are a number of constraints on Local Government and Regional Councils in undertaking waste management which are of particular concern given that the success of a large area of the Waste Strategy is reliant on Local Government waste management activities. Identified constraints include the limited capacity for Local Government to raise funds; contractual agreements; the approvals process; the Basel Convention; and, Local Government structural reform in WA.

The Association welcomes the addition of the 10 Priority Actions by the Waste Authority. The following table provides a summary of the Association's response to each proposed action.

Key Priority	Summary of WALGA Response
1.	The Association commends the Waste Authority for this commitment and looks forward to state-wide application. The Association is interested in the timeline for the implementation of this strategy.
2.	The Association commends the introduction of this action. The Association recommends that the wording is changed to 'at least 50%'.
3.	The Association supports this action in principle, but is concerned that this strategy may result in increased cost for Local Government. Recommendation: That the Waste Authority's Priority Action 3 be amended to include waste disposal plans for 'development' not just 'demolition' as outlined in the <i>Planning and Development Act 2005</i>.
4.	The Association supports the consideration of waste management activities as an 'essential service'. The Association recommends that the Authority undertake a comprehensive investigation of the possible implications of these potential regulations. Recommendation: That the Waste Authority undertake a comprehensive investigation into the potential implications of essential service regulations on Local Government and the waste management industry.
5.	The Association supports State Government taking a leadership role in this area.
6.	The Association supports the commitment to work in partnership with Local Government and others. The Association commends the commitment to the ongoing success of the Household Hazardous Waste Program.
7.	The Association supports this initiative and the commitment to the development of Extended Producer Responsibility Schemes (including a Container Deposit Scheme). The Association suggests that the Authority introduce regulations locally, if Federal action is not forthcoming.
8.	The Association is concerned that this action will impose an unwanted financial burden on non-metropolitan Local Governments. The Association would like clarification of the term 'existing standards'. Recommendation: That the Waste Authority clarify the term 'existing standards'.
9.	The Association supports the Waste Authority's commitment to data collection and management for waste management activities.
10.	The Association supports the consideration of social cost to landfill in the increase of the Landfill Levy. However, there are a range of reasons that could also be considered for setting the Levy. The Association supports the commitment of a pre-determined schedule for the Levy over the next ten years. Recommendation: That the Waste Authority identifies and considers the range of reasons why a Landfill Levy is used.

This Submission outlines the concerns that the Association has with the Targets in the draft Waste Strategy; with specific emphasis on the Targets for municipal solid waste (MSW) for metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. The Association queries the accuracy of the supplied figures for the current recovery rate and the appropriateness of using these figures to base future projections. The Association recommends that the Targets be reduced due to:

- The time required to develop resource recovery infrastructure;
- The reliance on the metropolitan Regional Councils to affect the metropolitan recovery rate;
- The high costs involved and the absence of any commitment from the Waste Authority to fund these strategies; and,
- The questions around the accuracy of the current recovery rate.

The Target for contamination rate is not supported by the Association. Substantive concerns have been raised with contamination rate as a target, which include:

- The need for waste audits and the costs associated with the audits;
- Increased contamination rate through transport from non-metropolitan areas to the metropolitan area;
- A large investment in processing infrastructure is needed; and,
- Market fluctuation issues.

The Association is concerned by the questions surrounding the Targets and Strategies for the upgrading of landfill standards. The Association has reservations about supporting these strategies when the proposed standards have not been defined. There is also no discussion around the potential financial impact of these strategies, which is of particular concern in the non-metropolitan area.

The Targets in the draft Waste Strategy focus predominately on Local Government activities, although MSW only makes up around 20-25% of the waste disposed to landfill. The Association recommends that the Strategy give equal weight to all waste streams, which includes the implementation of a percentage based recovery target for Commercial and Industrial (C&I) waste recovery.

The draft Waste Strategy proposes to make rural and remote Local Governments responsible for the development and implementation of waste management plans for remote Indigenous communities. This Submission highlights that services to Indigenous communities are the subject of ongoing negotiations, and it would be pre-emptive to place additional responsibility on Local Government at this early stage. Local Government does not currently have responsibility for provision of services to Indigenous communities on Crown Land.

Local Government plays a vital role in waste management in WA, and the success of a large area of the Waste Strategy is reliant on Local Government waste management activities. To ensure this success, Local Government will be looking to the State Government to commit to ongoing funding to support these innovative strategies into the future. The Association looks forward to the release of the Waste Authority Business Plan, as concern has been expressed by Local Government about funding for initiatives outlined in the Waste Strategy.

This Submission contains a number of issues which are important to WA Local Governments. The Association would like a commitment from the Waste Authority that a review of the Waste Strategy will be conducted within 2 years, in partnership with Local Government and relevant stakeholders.

Summary of Key Recommendations

This Submission contains a number of recommendations to the Waste Authority, identified as priorities for Local Government. Of key importance are:

Key Recommendation 1 – Setting reasonable resource recovery targets for municipal solid waste

The Association does not support the proposed target for metropolitan Perth resource recovery of 70%. The Association is concerned that the proposed target is too high and will not be achievable in the timeframe set. The reasons for this include:

- Doubts to the accuracy of the stated current recovery rate of 45%, consequently the appropriateness of using this figure to base future recovery projections;
- The cost and time to build the infrastructure necessary to divert waste means that it is highly unlikely that the necessary new facilities will be built in the proposed timeframe; and,
- Comparisons with other State Waste Strategies indicates that no other state in Australia has set their municipal solid waste recovery rate this high except for South Australia and this is currently under review.

The Association proposes that the recovery rate target for municipal solid waste in the metropolitan area be amended to 50% based on realistic estimate of the current recovery rate.

The Association does not support the current target for non-metropolitan municipal solid waste recovery of 45%. Of primary concern is the absence of the current base line figures for non-metropolitan regional centre, on which to base future projections of resource recovery. As a result, it appears unreasonable to expect such a high recovery rate within such a short period of time.

Key Recommendation 2 – Consideration of the constraints on Local Government

The draft Strategy is very Local Government focused, with limited consideration given to the constraints on Local Government. A major issue is the ability of Local Government to resource Strategy implementation. Other constraints include:

- The limited capacity of Local Governments to raise funds;
- Contractual agreements;
- The approvals process;
- The Basel Convention; and,
- Local Government structural reform.

For non-metropolitan Local Governments, the proposal to bring landfills up to the standard of bigger landfills is a major concern. The financial impact of this strategy has not been investigated and it is not clear what these standards are. Without this clarification, the Association is reluctant to support the Target.

Key Recommendation 3 – Review of the Waste Strategy for Western Australia

The Association recommends that the Waste Authority makes a commitment to review the progress of the Waste Strategy within 2 years of commencement. This review will provide an opportunity to track the progress of the Strategy, and the appropriateness of the Targets specifically. The Association recommends that this review is conducted in partnership with Local Government and relevant stakeholders.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That the Waste Authority's Priority Action 3 be amended to include waste disposal plans for 'development' not just 'demolition' as outlined in the *Planning and Development Act 2005*.

Recommendation 2: That the Waste Authority undertake a comprehensive investigation into the potential implications of essential service regulations on Local Government and the waste management industry.

Recommendation 3: That the Waste Authority clarify the term 'existing standards'.

Recommendation 4: That the Waste Authority identifies and considers the range of reasons why a Landfill Levy is used.

Recommendation 5: That a percentage recovery rate of 50% for MSW is implemented due to current recovery rates and concerns with the data used for projections.

Recommendation 6: That contamination rate as a target is removed.

Recommendation 7: That a quantitative percentage based recovery target be set for C&I waste. This Target is to be based on a 25% increase in recycling based on the current recovery rate.

Recommendation 8: That the Waste Authority invests in the collection of accurate recovery rates before setting a resource recovery rate for non-metropolitan areas.

Recommendation 9: That the strategy for waste planning in Indigenous communities be removed from the Waste Strategy until such time as Commonwealth and State Government negotiations on service provision to these areas are finalised.

Recommendation 10: That the Waste Authority make the Business Plan for the Waste Strategy available as soon as possible.

Recommendation 11: That the Waste Authority undertake a review of the Waste Strategy within 2 years of implementation, in partnership with Local Government and other relevant stakeholders.

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1 Introduction - Key Challenges for Local Government

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the development of a waste strategy for Western Australia (WA). This Submission relates directly to the second draft of the Waste Strategy, as released by the Waste Authority on 19 March 2010. This Submission focuses on the key priorities for Local Government as identified in our previous Submission, by Local Government representatives and through a workshop with members of the Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC). This Submission should be read in conjunction with the MWAC Submission to the first version of the draft Waste Strategy.

Local Government supports the implementation of a state-wide Waste Strategy for WA. Waste Management is a significant activity for Local Government. The operating cost of Local Government waste management and related activities exceeds \$130 million per annum. Additionally, tens of millions of dollars of new capital are invested each year to meet increased demand and adopt new technologies. As a result, Local Government waste has been identified as the only waste stream to show a decrease in tonnes to landfill over the past few years. Despite increasing population, Local Government waste to landfill has decreased by approximately 1% per year since 1999/2000.¹ This decrease is the result of recycling and resource recovery initiatives and operations by Local Governments.

In undertaking waste management activities, Local Governments face a range of constraints. In the Association's previous Submission to the Waste Authority it was recommended that the Authority consider the constraints on Local Government operations when finalising the Strategy. There has been no commitment on this matter, and a number of related concerns have not been addressed. A major concern is the limited capacity for Local Government to raise funds which is of particular relevance when considering the importance of Local Government waste management activities on the success of the Waste Strategy. For example, the proposed Resource Recovery Target for municipal waste of 70% relies heavily on metropolitan Regional Councils providing continued investment in alternative waste technologies and increased collections. There is no commitment that funding will be available to achieve this Target, or a guarantee that an increased financial contribution will not be expected from the community.

There are a number of initiatives in the draft Waste Strategy that could further affect Local Government's capacity to deliver waste management activities, especially as a result of an increased financial burden. The Association awaits the release of the Waste Authority Business Plan, which will clarify the financial arrangements for Strategy implementation.

The draft Waste Strategy does not consider a number of constraints on non-metropolitan Local Governments. For example, there are a number of non-metropolitan Local Governments in WA who are collecting types of waste not covered by the Strategy. There is no direction in regards to how this is to be addressed. There is also a concern regarding the proposal to ensure that landfills in regional centres will be operating to 'existing standards' without a clear definition of what the term means or a discussion about how this is to be funded.

WALGA has been advocating that waste management should be included in the Federal

¹ Cardno (2008). Review of Total Recycling Activity in Western Australia 2006/07. Available online http://www.zerowastewa.com.au/documents/review_total_recycling_wa_0607.pdf

1. Introduction Summary

This section introduces the importance of Local Government waste management activities to the success of the Waste Strategy.

- Local Government waste has been identified as the only waste stream to show a decrease in tonnages to landfill over the past few years, despite increasing population.
- Local Governments face constraints in undertaking waste management activities.
- There is an expectation that all targets and strategies be developed in partnership with stakeholders.
- Local Government will be looking to the State Government to commit to ongoing funding to support these innovative strategies into the future to ensure the success of the Waste Strategy for WA.

Assistance Grants for Local Government as there is a clear expectation of service provision and an imbalance in the financial ability to provide these services. In some non-metropolitan areas, for example, to provide an equivalent service to that of the metropolitan areas, the charge would be too high on a per capita basis due to large distances, low population density and distance to market or reprocessors.

Other constraints on Local Government that need to be considered include:

Contractual Agreements: Local Governments often use contractors (rather than in-house delivery of services). These contracts are often for substantial periods (from 5-10 years). They set an operating environment, and although they are unlikely to include some variability, they constrain how a service will be delivered and the outcomes achieved.

Approvals: For some Local Governments, approvals for new sites (for example, transfer stations) have taken up to five years. This delay will constrain how quickly sites can be prepared and may mean significant delay in implementing any landfill site consolidation. This is particularly significant when considering that the success of the MSW Targets rely on the implementation of Alternative Waste Treatment (AWT) facilities, the construction of which can take between 5 and 7 years with a total investment of \$100 million each. The delay in the development of infrastructure is a significant constraint that will have a major impact on the success of the Waste Strategy.

Basel Convention: This is the international treaty which governs the export of materials. It has a potential to constrain recycling activities, depending upon how the products are defined. Given the largely export-based nature of recycling in WA, the Basel Convention may have a greater impact on recycling in WA than in other states where reprocessing capacity for material is present.

Another concern is the potential impact of *Local Government structural reform* on waste management operations. This direction from the State Government has the potential to limit new activities which may mean that waste management may have a lower priority for some Local Governments than it would otherwise. If the number of Local Governments is reduced, the activities required to move to a new structure will also take time. In the Association's previous Submission a recommendation was made to ensure that the Waste Authority engage with the Minister for Local Government to guarantee that timelines for waste management activities and structural reform will work together.

As discussed in our previous Submission, the Association recommends that the Waste Authority include the rationale for undertaking waste management activities in order to ensure that all stakeholders are aligned with the State Government and to inform the community of the benefits of waste management. For example, the Victorian Waste Strategy (2005) provides the following rationale for the diversion of waste from landfill:

- Manufacturing products from recycled materials uses less energy than manufacturing from virgin materials. This means more efficient industries and less greenhouse gas;
- Manufacturing products from recycled materials also means less air and water pollution from mining, processing and manufacture from virgin materials (...);
- Diversion of organic wastes from landfill will reduce methane emission and has the potential to generate soil conditioning, water conservation and renewable energy products;

- Communities value and feel empowered by recycling and being able to purchase recycled products... [etc]²

In a comprehensive Waste Strategy for WA, Local Government would expect a direction from the State Government on the future of waste management in the state, with the inclusion of:

- Strategies and targets that are inclusive of all waste streams across the supply chain (from manufacture to disposal);
- Reasonable targets that are adequate and achievable;
- Strategies to improve the profile of waste management in WA, through community education and empowerment;
- Strategies to adequately address issues faced by industry in regards to planning, construction and running of infrastructure through the inclusion of waste activities in state planning policies and contingency planning;
- Waste management policy that ensures that the materials currently consumed and discarded will be valued by current and future generations as a resource to be conserved, reused and recycled;
- Strategies that adequately address community concern for the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste including consideration for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Schemes (including Container Deposit Systems (CDS)); and,
- Strategies developed through adequate consultation with community and industry representatives to ensure that all constraints on those involved are addressed through a commitment to funding and other resources.

There is an expectation that all Targets and Strategies be developed in partnership with relevant stakeholders. It is expected that responsibility for achieving targets and strategies will be negotiated and agreed. Review for the Strategy should be considered and planned for before the Strategy is finalised.

Local Government plays a vital role in waste management in WA, and the success of a large area of the Waste Strategy is reliant on Local Government waste management activities. To ensure this success, Local Government will be looking to the State Government to commit to ongoing funding to support innovative strategies into the future.

2 Response to Waste Strategy for WA Draft II

2.1 10 Priority Actions

The 10 Priority Actions for the Waste Authority is a welcome addition to the Waste Strategy. The Association acknowledges the importance of the Waste Authority committing to a number of achievable strategies. There are a few points that the Association would like clarified in the identified actions.

1. The Waste Authority will fund at least two community engagement and behaviour change programs that focus on waste avoidance. These programs will be funded appropriately and a senior level staff member will contribute to this activity.

² State Government of Victoria 2005, *Sustainability in Action: Towards Zero Waste Strategy*. [http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/Towards_Zero_Waste_Strategy_\(Sep_05\)2.pdf](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/Towards_Zero_Waste_Strategy_(Sep_05)2.pdf)

2. Response to Waste Strategy for WA Draft II

10 Priority Actions Summary

The Association welcomes the inclusion of the Priority Actions. The following section outlines the Association's response to each of the 10 Priority Actions.

The Association commends the Waste Authority for committing to the establishment of these programs, and the allocation of funds for a senior level staff member. The Association is supportive of this initiative. The Association would like some clarification on:

- The definition of 'waste avoidance' for the purpose of this action and what this entails;
- Whether this program will be state-wide; and,
- The timeline for likely implementation of these programs.

2. The Waste Authority will recommend to the government that it require its agencies and government owned instrumentalities to take 50% of the current construction and demolition waste stream for use as raw material.

The Association commends the introduction of this action. As highlighted in our previous Submission, Local Government strongly supports State Government leading by example.

The Association suggests that the wording be changed to 'at least 50%' to ensure that this Priority Action is successful.

3. The Waste Authority will prepare and propose regulations to empower local government to require and implement waste disposal plans before authorising demolition.

The Association supports this action in principle, but is concerned that this strategy may result in an increased burden on Local Government. Local Government has already been given the authority to impose waste disposal plans as a condition of development under the *Planning and Development Act 2005*, although the Association recommends that the Waste Authority investigates what impact this may have, and whether or not Local Government has the capacity to do this.

The Association recommends that this target be amended to reflect that waste disposal plans should be necessary for all development, not just for demolition. Local Government considers that all businesses should have waste management plans to ensure the adequate reduction as well as disposal of their waste. It is important that businesses are responsible for the costs involved in implementing this action and not ratepayers. The Association would also like to see this action expanded to include both private and government developments.

The Association also suggests that the term 'empower' is removed as Local Government already has the power to require waste disposal plans under the *Planning and Development Act 2005*.

Recommendation 1: That the Waste Authority's Priority Action 3 be amended to include waste disposal plans for 'development' not just 'disposal' as dictated in the *Planning and Development Act 2005*.

4. The Waste Authority will consider the development of regulations to declare the collection and management of solid waste as an essential service. As part of this, and in partnership with others, the Waste Authority will develop a waste infrastructure plan for the south-west of Western Australia, in the first instance, from around Geraldton to Albany.

The Association supports the consideration of waste management activities as an 'essential service'. It is recommended, however, that the Waste Authority undertake a comprehensive investigation of the possible implications of these potential regulations.

The Association is currently developing a discussion paper on this subject that will be made available later in the year.

The Association supports the development of a waste management plan for the region in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation 2: That the Waste Authority undertake a comprehensive investigation into the potential implications of essential service regulations on Local Government and the waste management industry.

5. The Waste Authority will develop schemes to recognise appropriate minimum post consumer management of identified products and will recommend to government that government purchases of those products be limited to suppliers using those suitable end-of-life management schemes.

As discussed under Action 2, Local Government supports State Government taking leadership in this area.

6. The Waste Authority will set itself a priority to work in partnership with local government, industry and others to achieve sound, pragmatic waste management outcomes, including the ongoing management of household hazardous waste. It will allocate a senior level staff member to this partnership and fund it appropriately.

The Association supports the commitment to work in partnership with Local Government and others. The Association commends the commitment to the ongoing success of the Household Hazardous Waste Program and the adequate funding of this initiative into the future.

7. The Waste Authority will recommend that government legislate to enable up-front charges including a container deposit scheme; on new purchases, to create an industry fund to manage products in their post-consumer life.

The Association supports this initiative and the commitment to the development of Extended Producer Responsibility Schemes (including a Container Deposit Scheme). This action is recommended in the absence of any Federal Government action.

8. The Waste Authority will prepare and propose regulations to bring waste management in larger regional areas in line with existing standards consistent with those used by larger landfills in WA and community expectations.

The Association is concerned that this action will impose an additional financial burden on non-metropolitan Local Governments. The Association also seeks clarification of what the term 'existing standards' refers to.

The imposing of these standards is likely to be an expensive exercise. The Association suggests that a time-frame be given for implementation to ensure that these changes be adequately budgeted for. Clarification is also required on what the standards are to apply to: existing landfill cells or any future cells developed.

Recommendation 3: That the Waste Authority clarify the term 'existing standards'.

9. The Waste Authority will work with others to develop and implement an efficient and effective scheme of monitoring and reporting that is both useful for managers and suffices for reporting requirements and benchmarking.

The Association supports the Waste Authority's commitment to data collection and management for waste activities. The Association suggests that the action be updated to include a commitment to 'develop, fund and implement' this scheme.

10. The Waste Authority will provide advice to government regarding the long-term, progressive increase in the Landfill Levy to a level commensurate with the real social cost of landfill, based on a pre-determined schedule over the next ten years. This will allow business and government to plan waste management and infrastructure development with certainty.

The Association supports the consideration of social cost of landfill in the increase of the Landfill Levy, however, there are a range of reasons that could also be considered for setting the Levy. For example, the Productivity Commission's 2006 report *Waste Management* highlights that externalities vary according to location, the type of waste and how the landfill is constructed and managed. The Report comments that basing levies on the environmental and social externalities of the landfill would also be difficult to achieve in practice, and varying the levy to account for these differences with any precision is virtually impossible.³

The Association supports the commitment to develop a pre-determined schedule for the next ten years, and recommends that the Waste Authority consult with Local Government before giving advice to the State Government on any potential increase to the Landfill Levy in order to adequately ascertain the potential impacts.

Recommendation 4: That the Waste Authority identifies and considers the range of reasons why a Landfill Levy is used.

2.2 Targets

The Targets in the draft Waste Strategy focus predominantly on Local Government waste management activities. Local Government waste makes up around 20-25% of the waste disposed to landfill, and is the only waste stream where waste to landfill has actually decreased. The structure of Local Government may make it easier for the State Government to engage and regulate this waste stream however this should not mean that other waste streams are ignored. It is therefore suggested that in the State Waste Strategy equal weight be given to all waste streams.

There is also very little correlation between the Targets and the Strategies. For example, there is no commitment to the funding of Local Government activities (such as Strategic Waste Management Plans or Alternative Waste Technologies) in order to successfully achieve the Targets.

The following comments highlight particular concerns regarding the intended targets.

³ Productivity Commission 2006, *Waste Management*. Report no. 38, Canberra.

Targets Summary

- The Targets in the draft Waste Strategy focus predominantly on Local Government waste management activities.
- The Association recommends that the Waste Strategy give equal weight to all waste streams.
- There is little correlation between the Targets and the Strategies.

Resource Recovery Target 1 Target not supported.

Resource Recovery Target 1

In metropolitan Perth at least a 70% recovery rate for municipal waste by 2016 (up from approximately 45%).

The Association does not support this Target. As expressed in our previous Submission, the Association supports a percentage recovery rate for municipal solid waste (MSW) but does not support the proposed rate of 70%. A number of concerns regarding this Target were raised our previous Submission.

The Association would like clarification on the origin of the current 45% recovery rate. Elsewhere in the second draft of the Strategy the recovery rate is given as 25%. The Association is concerned that this base rate is not accurate and, consequently, should not be used as a basis for future projections.

Another issue is the justification for the 70% recovery rate. No other state waste strategy has a recovery rate for MSW this high except for South Australia, and they are currently undertaking a review to potentially reduce this figure. As discussed previously, to achieve a 70% recovery rate a heavy expectation is placed on metropolitan Regional Councils to continue investment in AWT and increased collections. However, only three Regional Councils have AWT facilities, which will not be sufficient to reduce the rate to 70% by 2016. Although another two AWT's have been planned, the expense and the timeframes involved from planning to construction (from 5 to 7 years) will mean that these facilities can not be relied upon to contribute to the Target rate.

As discussed in our previous Submission, the Association recommends that the Target be reduced to approximately 50% based on:

- The inadequate existing infrastructure to affect the recovery rate on a large scale;
- The reliance on the metropolitan Regional Councils to affect the recovery rate;
- The high costs involved and the absence of any commitment from the Waste Authority to fund these strategies; and,
- The questions around the accuracy of the 45% figure used to set the resource recovery target.

Recommendation 5: That a percentage recovery rate of 50% for MSW is implemented due to current recovery rates and concerns with the data used for projections.

Resource Recovery Target 2

The contamination rate of kerbside recyclables collections will be reduced from approximately 25% to 10% by 2016.

The Association does not support this Target. It is not clear where the contamination rate is to be measured. Contamination rate varies depending on whether it is measured at kerbside or post-processing.

Substantive concerns have been raised with contamination rate as a target. These include:

Resource Recovery Target 2
Target not supported.

Resource Recovery Target 4
Target not supported.

Waste Disposal Targets 7-9
Targets not supported.

- In order to measure contamination rate at kerbside a regime of waste audits would have to be instituted, this is a potentially costly exercise with only limited value to increasing resource recovery;
- Material being collected in the non-metropolitan area then transported to the metropolitan area is likely to have a higher contamination rate as the result of additional glass breakage en route;
- In order to reduce contamination rate (post-processing) large investment in processing infrastructure is needed – this may be done but will only have a small impact for the funds spent; and,
- Market fluctuation issues – it is sometimes not cost effective to recover material, and in that case it is considered a 'contaminant'.

There is also the consideration that using both an AWT and kerbside recycling system may mean a higher 'contamination' rate in the recycling bin.

Recommendation 6: That contamination rate as a target is removed.

Resource Recovery Target 4

The recovery rate for commercial and industrial waste will continuously increase over the lifespan of the strategy. At least one facility for processing commercial and industrial waste will be established by 2016 and a second by 2020.

The Association does not support this Target. The Association is concerned by the absence of a percentage based recovery rate target for Commercial and Industrial (C&I) waste recovery. The Strategies contained in the document do not adequately address this increasing waste stream. Feedback from the first round of public consultation indicated an expectation that more would be done in the Waste Strategy on increasing recovery rate for C&I waste.

The Association recommends that in the Strategy, the Waste Authority include the development of education strategies that target business and industry specifically, and the implementation of waste management plans for government and industry. The commitment to establish two C&I processing facilities is welcomed, but is a strategy to achieve an increased C&I recovery rate, not a target. The Association strongly suggests that a percentage based recovery rate target is used. If the Local Government sector is aiming to increase its recovery rate by 25% it is a reasonable expectation that the C&I sector could also increase their recovery rate by 25%. This would indicate a C&I recycling target of 62%. Or given uncertainty around the current baseline figure the Target could be worded to achieve a 25% increase in recovery.

Recommendation 7: That a quantitative percentage based recovery target be set for C&I waste. This Target is to be based on a 25% increase in recycling based on the current recovery rate.

Resource Recovery Target 5

In larger regional areas with a population greater than 25,000 at least a 45% recovery rate for waste by 2016.

The Association does not support this Target. The Association queries the proposed Target rate as it is not clear what current recovery rates are, therefore it is difficult to assess whether this target could be met. A differential target for the non-metropolitan area is supported, however data on current recovery rates is needed to ensure the Target is realistic.

Instead of a target, the Association suggests the implementation of a strategy to gather data about the waste generation and recovery rate in non-metropolitan areas prior to setting targets for recovery (perhaps at the first review of the Strategy). This will allow time to put in place data collection systems and gain some idea of the variability and reliability of the data. It also needs to be acknowledged that the regional centres will have varying demographics and potentially waste characteristics.

Recommendation 8: That the Waste Authority invests in the collection of accurate recovery rates before setting a resource recovery rate for non-metropolitan areas.

Waste Disposal Target 7

All landfills servicing metropolitan Perth will be operating to appropriate standards by 2011.

Waste Disposal Target 8

All landfills servicing larger regional areas with a population greater than 25,000 will be operating to existing standards consistent with those used by larger landfills in WA by 2015.

Waste Disposal Target 9

Landfills that are not consistent with the existing standards of larger landfills in WA will be closed by 2015 if they lie within a 100km radius of a landfill that does meet the standards. These sites will be replaced with transfer stations.

The Association is concerned about the setting of targets to meet standards that have not been defined or developed. Without an understanding of what these standards are, the Association does not support these targets.

Concerns about how the standards would interact with existing license conditions have been raised. There is support for reform of license conditions and a move toward a more risk based approach to licensing, however that is a strategy for improving landfill management rather than a target. The environmental impacts of a landfill will vary dependent on the size of the landfill, its location, type of waste accepted and general management. These variables need to be considered in developing standards.

Financial implications, while not the primary consideration, need to be considered. As mentioned, there are constraints on Local Government revenue raising opportunities in the non-metropolitan area and consistent standards which do not take into account the variability of landfills would be a costly and potentially unnecessary exercise.

2.3 Further Points

There are a number of other issues in our previous Submission that the Association would like to bring to the attention of the Waste Authority. The following issues are of particular concern.

Disposal Strategy 36

Rural and remote area local governments and other relevant agencies will develop and implement waste management plans for the disposal of waste from remote indigenous communities to ensure good social, environmental and economic outcomes.

The Association is concerned with the proposed allocation of responsibility to Local Governments for the development and implementation of waste management plans for remote Indigenous communities. Services to Indigenous communities are the subject of ongoing negotiations between the Commonwealth and State Governments. At this stage in these negotiations it would be pre-emptive to place additional responsibility on Local Government. Local Government does not currently have responsibility for provision of services to Indigenous communities on Crown Land.

As outlined in the Council of Australian Government's 2009 'National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing', the responsibility of services, and the degree to which these services are needed, will be subject to comprehensive audits. The audits will assess the level and need for municipal and essential services as well as an assessment of required housing related infrastructure.⁴ As the audits and their implications have not been finalised, it is recommended that the associated strategy is removed from the draft Waste Strategy.

As discussed in our previous submission, general consensus is that, if Local Governments were to deliver waste management services to Indigenous communities it would be subject to:

- Additional funding to enable Local Government to deliver services to a satisfactory standard; and
- Existing community infrastructure must be upgraded to acceptable and agreeable standards before Local Government will accept responsibility for them.

Recommendation 9: That the strategy for waste planning in Indigenous communities be removed from the Waste Strategy until such time as Commonwealth and State Government negotiations on service provision to these areas are finalised.

The need for a draft Waste Authority Business Plan is an issue which has been raised by many Local Governments. Although it is the intention of the Waste Authority, as outlined in the 'Workshop & Submission Analysis' document, that the Business Plan will address concerns around how the strategies are to be funded and identification of parties responsible each target, the Association is concerned that Local Government has not been given the opportunity to comment on this document. The allocation of responsibility and funding should be negotiated with all relevant stakeholders before a decision is made.

⁴ Council of Australian Governments 2008, 'National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing'

Further Points Summary

This section covers a number of further issues which are of concern.

Disposal Strategy 36

This Strategy is not supported.

Business Plan

The Association is concerned by the absence of the Business Plan. The Association would like the opportunity to comment on this document as soon as it is available.

In regards to funding, Local Government would also expect a commitment from the Waste Authority to fund a number of the strategies in order to guarantee the success of the Waste Strategy.

Recommendation 10: That the Waste Authority make the Business Plan for the Waste Strategy available as soon as possible.

3 Conclusion

Local Government plays a vital role in waste management in WA. Local Government waste has also been identified as the only waste stream to show a decrease in tonnes to landfill over the past few years. Due to this commitment to waste management in WA, Local Government is well placed to give reliable feedback in regards to the direction of the draft Waste Strategy for WA. The Association is concerned that a number of comments made in the previous Submission have not been acknowledged. The Association has written to the Waste Authority highlighting some of these issues.

Of key importance to Local Government is the setting of reasonable targets for municipal solid waste (MSW). If the current resource recovery targets for MSW for both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas remain unchanged, there is a strong possibility that the targets will not be met in the proposed timeframe. The Association is concerned that our previous comments on this issue have not been addressed.

The possible financial burden for non-metropolitan Local Governments as a result of a number of strategies is also of concern. The draft Waste Strategy includes proposals to bring non-metropolitan landfills up to standards comparable with bigger landfills in metropolitan Perth. As discussed, landfills vary dependent upon a range of factors which need to be considered in setting standards.

The Association acknowledges that this is the first Strategy under a new Act, therefore expectations from stakeholders are high regarding what the Strategy will cover. This Submission contains a number of issues identified as important to WA Local Governments. It is understood that the Waste Authority has to consider a range of issues presented by stakeholders. To ensure the Strategy is useful and has ongoing relevance to all stakeholders, the Association suggests that the Waste Authority commit to, in conjunction with stakeholders, review of the Waste Strategy within 2 years. This review will provide an opportunity to track the progress of the Strategy, and the appropriateness of the Targets. The Association would welcome the opportunity to participate in the future review with the Waste Authority and other relevant stakeholders in order to ensure that the Waste Strategy for WA includes targets and actions that will direct the success of waste management activities into the future.

Recommendation 11: That the Waste Authority undertake a review of the Waste Strategy within 2 years of implementation, in partnership with Local Government and other relevant stakeholders.

3. Conclusion

Summary

The Association's key concerns are:

- Targets for MWS need to be reasonable and achievable.
- The financial burden on non-metropolitan Local Governments.
- The constraints on Local Government in undertaking waste management activities.
- The identified need to review the Strategy after 2 years.