

# Submission on the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy Consultation Paper

February 2018



## Status of this Submission

This Submission has been prepared through the Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) for the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA). MWAC is a standing committee of WALGA, 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) as well as a number of Local Government representatives. 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 Australian Local Governments. However, individual Local Governments and Regional Councils may have views that differ from the positions taken here.

This Submission was considered and endorsed by the Municipal Waste Advisory Council on Wednesday 28 February 2018.

## Executive Summary

The Association appreciates the opportunity to comment on the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy Consultation Paper* (the Consultation Paper). The introduction of initiatives such as a Container Deposit Scheme and a ban on lightweight single-use plastic shopping bags have brought a renewed focus to waste management in Western Australia. The review of the Strategy presents an opportunity to provide clear direction for Local Government, State Government and Industry over the next five years.

### Whole of Government Commitment

The Association considers that for the Strategy to be effective, a whole of Government commitment is needed to its implementation. This includes the State Government taking a leadership role in areas such as procurement and ensuring that all Government Departments commit to implement the Strategy. To achieve reduced waste generation and increased recovery, the State Waste Strategy needs to be embedded in a number of Government policies, strategies and plans.

*Recommendation: That the State Government commits to the implementation of the State Waste Strategy and takes a leadership role in its implementation.*

*Recommendation: That the State Government agency tasked with driving implementation of the Strategy fulfills their role in a coordinated, efficient and effective manner.*

*Recommendation: Action Plans outlining activity on priority issues/materials must be included in the Strategy, with clear responsibility for the implementation of individual actions assigned to relevant Government Departments.*

*Recommendation: To ensure a whole of Government approach is taken on priority issues, the Strategy must be linked to other relevant Government policy, strategy and plans.*

### Framework

The Circular Economy approach has potential to change the way waste is viewed and lead to a shift in how products are developed and services provided. However such a move would require a considerable change to WA's current economic system, which will require a whole of Government approach. The Government needs to clearly identify its position and commitment regarding the

Circular Economy and quantify the costs and benefits that would come with transitioning to a different economic system.

*Recommendation: That the Government commissions work to quantify the costs and benefits of transitioning to a Circular Economy in Western Australia.*

*Recommendation: The Government clarifies its position on the Circular Economy.*

### **Shared Responsibility**

The Association considers that a negotiated agreement regarding shared responsibility to implement the Strategy, between State, Local Government and the waste management industry will deliver improved waste avoidance, resource recovery and consequent diversion of material from landfill.

*Recommendation: In defining 'shared responsibility' for the implementation of the Waste Strategy, roles and responsibilities must be clearly negotiated, understood and agreed to by all stakeholders.*

*Recommendation: All parties to the Strategy should be empowered to commit to implementing their responsibilities on an equal basis.*

### **Targets**

Further information is required on the methodology and data used to arrive at the targets provided in the Consultation Paper. Targets should be based on modelling of realistic configurations of infrastructure, engagement and service delivery, with due regard to the differences between metropolitan and regional areas. To focus activity, the Waste Authority should also consider how targets and incentives could be designed that drive improvements in the recovery of specific materials.

The new Strategy must focus on the implementation of practical initiatives that deliver meaningful change across the entire waste management industry. The Association welcomes further discussion on what parameters should be used to measure progress towards the objectives and targets of the Waste Strategy.

*Recommendation: Provide further information on the methodology and data used to arrive at the targets provided in the Consultation Paper.*

*Recommendation: Set targets based on modelling of feasible configurations of infrastructure, engagement, and service delivery.*

*Recommendation: Engage the waste management industry to understand what parameters should be used to measure the Department's performance in delivering its roles and responsibilities.*

*Recommendation: Engage the waste management industry to understand what parameters should be used to assess progress towards targets.*

*Recommendation: Provide adequate support and incentives to assist with the achievement of targets.*

*Recommendation: The Department undertakes an assessment of different approaches to setting targets in other jurisdictions, such as:*

- *Differentiated targets for different geographical zones*
- *Defined intentions for non-metropolitan areas as opposed to numerical targets.*

*Recommendation: In setting targets for specific materials, consider those assigned to existing national initiatives.*

## **Interconnectivity**

For the Strategy to succeed policy, programs, economic interventions and regulation are all necessary elements. The connection between these different elements should be clearly identified in the Strategy.

*Recommendation: Establish clear connections between all components / elements of the Waste Strategy.*

## **Principles**

Local Government considers that the principles should be simple and straightforward, providing clarity on what the Strategy is attempting to achieve. The WARR Act includes objects which identify the purpose of the Act and provide a clear principles for the Strategy. This approach is consistent with other jurisdictions.

*Recommendation: That the Principles used in the Strategy reflect the objects of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act.*

## **Objectives**

The Association supports objectives which align with the WARR Act and those identified in the Consultation Paper. The Association has expressed concern previously that the current regulatory regime has the potential to undermine the achievement of targets in the State Waste Strategy as there is no ability to restrict the number of landfills developed – site are instead assessed on a case by case basis.

The targets of the current Waste Strategy only incentivise diversion of waste from landfill, with no guidance on how, or where, material should be diverted to. Consequently, diversion practices have largely been dominated by low cost operations. The Association considers that more graduated targets would allow for a clear preference to be provided on *how* waste should be diverted from landfill.

*Recommendation: That the Objective be reframed to ‘Maximise Environmental Benefit.’*

*Recommendation: That the Environmental Protection Act be amended to ensure the CEO can refuse a license application if a proposed facility will undermine Waste Strategy outcomes and targets.*

*Recommendation: That targets for recovery are included – for example % Recycled, % Composted, % waste to energy and % to landfill.*

*Recommendation: That the State Government sets specific recycling, composting and diversion targets for its own operations.*

*Recommendation: That the role of Waste to Energy is identified as part of the Strategy.*

## **1.0 Background**

The Government has signalled its intention to drive much needed change in waste management policy by moving to align its approach with community expectations. It is clear that the Government understands the importance of engagement, and has been receptive to feedback provided on a number of proposed waste reforms. To inform how the Government engages the waste management industry in the review of the Waste Strategy, it is worth considering how implementation of the current State Waste Strategy has been approached.

The *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007* (WARR Act) establishes the WARR Account and a five member Waste Authority that is serviced by the Department of Water and Environmental

Regulation (the Department). The functions of the Waste Authority are outlined in Schedule 2 of the WARR Act. Of particular relevance to the Waste Strategy, are those functions associated with:

- advising the Minister for Environment
- administering the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account (WARR Account)
- preparing and submitting Annual Reports and Business Plans to the Minister (in line with the timelines and contents specified in the Act)
- developing, promoting and reviewing the Waste Strategy (and coordinating its implementation).

The current Strategy was announced in March 2012 – five years after the introduction of the WARR Act. The Strategy includes performance targets for Local Government, but not State Government. Since the release of the Strategy, Local Government has received limited support or funding to meet these targets, or implement programs and frameworks developed by the Department. Prior to the March 2017 State Election, both the Auditor General and the Waste Authority requested feedback on the Waste Strategy. From these reviews, it became clear that limited implementation had occurred in a number of the strategic priority areas in the Strategy. Many of the 2015 targets in the Strategy had not been achieved. A range of factors have impacted on the implementation and effectiveness of the Strategy, including:

- Timeliness of decision making and program implementation: As per the Association's Submission to the Auditor General "timeliness of decision making on funding has undermined the delivery and effectiveness of many programs"<sup>1</sup>
- Approach to engagement with stakeholders: Programs and policies which are for, or effect, Local Government are frequently developed in isolation by the Department. Local Government has considerable operational understanding of implementing service changes, the time it takes and the issues associated. The Association has repeatedly encouraged the Waste Authority and Department to engage the sector in the development of programs or policy to ensure they are fit for purpose and include realistic operational considerations
- Political process: If the Strategy is indeed a State Waste Strategy, it should be clear that Government is committed to its implementation and is leading by example in this area.

The Association considers that to ensure the new Strategy is progressing the Auditor General be requested to review the progress of implementation after 3 years after the Strategy is endorsed.

Another key issue with the implementation of the Waste Strategy, relates to funding. The passage of the WARR Act and the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy Act 2007* (WARRL Act) were accompanied by an understanding that the primary rationale for the Levy was to provide funds for relevant strategic activities. Specifically, implementation of the "*Strategic Direction, and the administration costs directly associated with its implementation*"<sup>2</sup>. WARR Account funds should be used to address critical issues, such as market development and infrastructure needs.

The establishment of the WARR Account in 2008 saw a balance of \$11 million transferred from a similar Levy that was previously raised under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. Initially, a Levy of \$7/tonne for putrescible waste and \$3/m<sup>3</sup> for inert waste was applied to waste collected or landfilled in the metropolitan area. In 2009, the WARR and WARRL Acts were amended to substantially increase the Levy and divert funds away from strategic waste management activities. At least 25% of funds raised through the Levy must now be paid into the WARR Account, with the remaining 75% of funds going to consolidated revenue. The regulatory amendment to increase the Levy occurred before the Waste Strategy was developed, or any additional resources were allocated to the enforcement of either the Levy or illegal dumping provisions. Local Government continues to view the Levy increase as a serious breach of trust. For the 2017/18 Financial Year, the Levy is \$65/tonne for putrescible waste and \$60/m<sup>3</sup> for inert waste<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> WALGA (2016). Submission to the Office of the Auditor General's Performance Audit of the State Waste Strategy. Available online. [http://www.wastenet.net.au/profiles/wastenet/assets/clientdata/document-centre/final\\_walga\\_submission\\_audit\\_of\\_waste\\_strategy\\_march\\_2016.pdf](http://www.wastenet.net.au/profiles/wastenet/assets/clientdata/document-centre/final_walga_submission_audit_of_waste_strategy_march_2016.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Parliament of Western Australia (2007). Explanatory Notes for the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Bill 2007. Available online. [http://parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/Bills.nsf/5ADE18E604C7F24FC8257377000F1C2D/\\$File/EM%2B-%2BBill%2B152-1.pdf](http://parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/Bills.nsf/5ADE18E604C7F24FC8257377000F1C2D/$File/EM%2B-%2BBill%2B152-1.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (2015). Landfill levy rates to rise from January 2015. Available online. <https://www.der.wa.gov.au/about-us/media-statements/112-landfill-levy-rates-to-rise-from-january-2015>.

Local Government collects the Levy on behalf of the State as a pass-through cost in rates or via the operation of landfills accepting metropolitan waste. This is in addition to those costs and risks associated with implementing programs and frameworks developed by the Department. For example, the flagship Better Bins Program provides up to \$30 per household to encourage Local Governments to move to a three bin collection system. In 2015, the City of Stirling implemented a three bin system, investing \$10 million in new bin infrastructure. To date, approximately \$1.5 million has been received from the Government through the Better Bins Program. The disproportionate burden of rolling out and continuing to service such an initiative is likely to discourage many other Local Governments from participating.

Section 36(1)(da) of the WARR Act allows WARR Account funds to be used to cover the services and facilities of the Department. Since the introduction of the WARR Act, there has been a marked increase in the percentage of funds allocated to the Department. In the 2017/18 Financial Year, \$19 million will be allocated to the WARR Account, with at least \$11 million funding the Department's operational activities (Appendix 1 includes a break down of these costs). The increase in funds allocated to the Department has not resulted in the implementation of the Strategy, or the development of publically available frameworks, programs and resources that deliver measurable benefits to the sector and reduce waste to landfill.

## 2.0 Purpose of a Waste Strategy

The head of power for the Strategy, and its required content, is outlined in the WARR Act. The Minister's *Statement of Expectation for the Waste Authority* also provides context for the development of the Strategy.

s24 of the WARR Act outlines the purpose of the waste strategy:

*The purpose of the waste strategy is to set out, for the whole of the State —*

- (a) a long term strategy for continuous improvement of waste services, waste avoidance and resource recovery, benchmarked against best practice; and*
- (b) targets for waste reduction, resource recovery and the diversion of waste from landfill disposal.*

In June 2017, the Minister released a *Statement of Expectation for the Waste Authority*, with an emphasis on the following priority areas<sup>4</sup>:

*"I expect the Waste Authority to work with Departmental staff to address the following priority issues:*

- food waste – an important and emerging focus of waste management actions both at a state and national level in Australia;*
- construction and demolition waste – undertaking further work to ensure appropriate standards are available for the use of this material and opportunities for its use by government agencies, such as Main Roads, are explored and implemented;*
- statutory review of the Western Australian Waste Strategy – undertaking the review process in a way that ensures it supports the Government's priorities and policies; and*
- cross-government collaboration – working with government agencies that are significant generators of waste or potential purchasers of recycled products, including those responsible for transport, local government and procurement to encourage improved waste minimisation practices.*

*I have separately requested that the Department works on a number of waste related matters including the development of a container deposit scheme, the options to ban or restrict the use of single use plastic bags, and economic analysis of the waste levy."*

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<sup>4</sup> Minister for Environment; Disability Services (1 June 2017). Ministerial Statement of Expectation for the Waste Authority. Available online. <http://www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/publications/statement-of-expectation>.



To date, the process used to revise the Waste Strategy aligns with the relevant section of the WARR Act. \$100,000 has been allocated in the Waste Authority Business Plan 2017/18, for a consultant to undertake a review. This is an additional expense to the \$8,559,500 charged to the WARR Account for services provided by the Department under s16 of the WARR Act.

### 3.0 Designing an Effective Waste Strategy

#### 3.1 Whole of Government Commitment

**Recommendation: That the State Government commits to the implementation of the State Waste Strategy and takes a leadership role in its implementation.**

**Recommendation: That the State Government agency tasked with driving implementation of the Strategy fulfills their role in a coordinated, efficient and effective manner.**

**Recommendation: Action Plans outlining activity on priority issues/materials must be included in the Strategy, with clear responsibility for the implementation of individual actions assigned to relevant Government Departments.**

**Recommendation: To ensure a whole of Government approach is taken on priority issues, the Strategy must be linked to other relevant Government policy, strategy and plans.**

Many of the issues with implementing the current Strategy appear to come from different understandings of who has ownership of the Strategy's implementation and which party is responsible for implementing individual actions. As the current Strategy was endorsed by Government, there was an expectation by stakeholders that Government would support its delivery. There are a range of actions in the Strategy that have not been delivered, such as the development of a State Waste and Recycling Infrastructure Plan. If the Strategy is indeed a State Waste Strategy, it should be clear that Government, in its entirety, is committed to the Strategy's implementation and is leading by example.

The Association considers that a coordinated and effective Government agency must drive the implementation of the Strategy. This is particularly relevant for the delivery of waste related policy, guidance, programs, regulation and enforcement. The current Department structure does not appear to facilitate collaboration and as a result there appears to be limited coordination in the Department's current approach to these functions, making it difficult to effectively influence the decisions of the waste management industry and other Government agencies.

The Waste Authority, as the entity tasked with developing the Strategy, must clearly articulate how the Strategy will be implemented. The legislative requirement for consistency between Business Plans and the Waste Strategy has not guaranteed its implementation. The Association considers that an Implementation Plan / Action Plan must be included in the Strategy, assigning responsibility for the implementation of individual actions to the Department and other agencies or stakeholders. For example, the Strategy could contain a high level policy commitment to invest a defined amount back into Local Government / Waste Management industry for each year of the Strategy. This approach would provide investment certainty for industry. Currently, the Department's activities that are listed in the objectives section of the Consultation Paper are general activities as opposed to clear deliverables. For example, the Department's activity on developing markets for C&D material is currently limited to "*encouraging the use of recycled products*" and "*developing opportunities for state government agencies to increase their use of recycled products*".

The Waste Strategies adopted by other jurisdictions document how implementation will occur. This approach brings together all the different economic, regulatory and policy approaches that are needed to address a specific issues. Both the Queensland *Waste Avoidance and Resource*

The Victorian Government has taken a slightly different approach to implementation, with its *Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan 2015-44*<sup>10</sup> underpinned by *Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plans*. The Implementation Plans are developed by the Waste and Resource Recovery Groups in consultation with Local Government and the community. Table 1.2 of the Strategy outlines priority actions for Government over a period of 5 years, with tasks linked to clear timeframes. The Association considers that this implementation approach should be adopted in Western Australia, with realistic tasks and deadlines assigned to Government agencies. For example, an Action Plan could task Main Roads with amending specifications to permit the use of recycled C&D materials in Main Roads applications. Examples of Strategy frameworks used in other jurisdictions are provided in Appendix 2 of this Submission.

A practical way to foster cross-government collaboration on waste management issues, is to ensure the Waste Strategy links to other Government strategies and policies. This approach is used in other Australian jurisdictions. For example, Figure 1 of the South Australian *Waste Strategy 2015-2020*<sup>12</sup> outlines how the Strategy fits into a broader framework of policies, strategies and plans. Similarly, Figure 5 of the Queensland *Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy (2014–2024)* details how the principles and objectives of the Strategy align with the overarching *Queensland Plan*. Infographics of these examples are provided in Appendix 3 of this Submission.

<sup>12</sup> Green Industries SA (2015). South Australian Waste Strategy 2015-2020. Available online. <http://www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au/publications-waste-strategy-2015-2020>.

While Western Australia does not have a Strategic Plan or Economic Plan, linkages could still be made to the strategic documents that guide the activities of other agencies. For example linkages could be made with:

- WA Government's Plan for Jobs<sup>13</sup>
- Regional Blueprints<sup>14</sup>
- 20-year State Infrastructure Strategy<sup>15</sup>
- State Planning Strategy, State Planning Policies and other strategic documents<sup>16</sup>
- Interim State Public Health Plan<sup>17</sup>
- Resilient Families, Strong Communities: A roadmap for regional and remote Aboriginal communities<sup>18</sup>
- Government Procurement Policies<sup>19</sup>
- High Performance - High Care: Strategic Plan for WA Public Schools 2016–2019<sup>20</sup>
- Western Australian Innovation Strategy<sup>21</sup>
- 'Transport @ 3.5 Million' plan<sup>22</sup> and other Main Roads Strategies
- Regional Development Strategy 2016-25<sup>23</sup>.

The Association understands that the Department intends to progress the development of Local Government waste plans, as per the WARR Act. In doing so, consideration must be given to the establishment of linkages with Local Government Strategic Community Plans<sup>24</sup>.

## 3.2 Frameworks

**Recommendation: That the Government commissions work to quantify the costs and benefits of transitioning to a Circular Economy in Western Australia.**

**Recommendation: The Government clarifies its position on the Circular Economy.**

The Consultation Paper refers to the Waste Hierarchy and Circular Economy as the framework for the Strategy. While the objects of the WARR Act do refer to the Waste Hierarchy, they do not establish a connection to the concept of a Circular Economy. The importance of a whole of Government commitment to implementing the Waste Strategy (Section 3.1 of this Submission) becomes apparent when considering the framework that the Waste Strategy operates within – particularly regarding the Circular Economy.

In Western Australia, there appears to have been limited discussion outside of the waste management industry on what a Circular Economy is and if a move to a Circular Economy is an approach that would benefit the State. In Europe, movement towards a Circular Economy has been

<sup>13</sup> Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (accessed February 2018). WA Government's Plan for Jobs Available online. <http://www.jtsi.wa.gov.au/what-we-do/industry-development/industry-participation/wa-government%27s-plan-for-jobs>.

<sup>14</sup> Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (accessed February 2018). Regional Blueprints. Available online. <http://www.drd.wa.gov.au/projects/Economic-Development/Pages/Regional-Blueprints.aspx>.

<sup>15</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet (2018). Infrastructure Western Australia. Available online. <https://www.dpc.wa.gov.au/ProjectsandSpecialEvents/infrastructurewa/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>16</sup> Western Australian Planning Commission (accessed February 2018). Western Australian Planning Framework. Available online. [https://www.planning.wa.gov.au/dop\\_pub\\_images/Planning\\_Framework.jpg](https://www.planning.wa.gov.au/dop_pub_images/Planning_Framework.jpg).

<sup>17</sup> Department of Health (accessed February 2018). First interim state public health plan. Available online. <http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Improving-WA-Health/Public-health/Public-Health-Act/First-interim-state-public-health-plan>.

<sup>18</sup> Regional Services Reform Unit (accessed February 2018). Roadmap. Available online. <http://regionalservicesreform.wa.gov.au/p/roadmap>.

<sup>19</sup> Department of Finance (accessed February 2018). Government Policies. Available online. [https://www.finance.wa.gov.au/cms/Government\\_Procurement/Policies/Government\\_Policies.aspx](https://www.finance.wa.gov.au/cms/Government_Procurement/Policies/Government_Policies.aspx).

<sup>20</sup> Department of Education (accessed February 2018). Our strategic directions. Available online. <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/web/our-organisation/our-strategic-directions>.

<sup>21</sup> New Industries WA (November 2016). Western Australian Innovation Strategy. Available online. <http://www.newindustries.wa.gov.au/innovation-strategy>.

<sup>22</sup> Department of Transport (February 2017). Perth and Peel Transport Plan. Available online. <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/projects/perth-transport-plan-for-3-5-million.asp>.

<sup>23</sup> Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (June 2016). Regional Development Strategy 2016-25. Available online. <http://www.drd.wa.gov.au/about/What-We-Do/Pages/Regional-Development-Strategy.aspx>.

<sup>24</sup> Government of Western Australia (2015). Strategic Community Plan. Available online. <https://www.dlqc.wa.gov.au/CommunityInitiatives/Pages/Strategic-community-plan.aspx>.



driven by commitments at a European Union level<sup>25</sup>. In Australia, the South Australian Government is currently the only jurisdiction to have undertaken specific research on what the benefits of Circular Economy would be for their State, driven largely by a need to stimulate the economy and generate employment opportunities<sup>26</sup>.

When drafting the Waste Strategy, the Waste Authority should consider how the economy is currently structured and what policy tools could be used to address priority issues such as market development for problematic materials, over and above those opportunities identified in Government procurement.

The Association considers that the Circular Economy could bring significant benefits to the waste management industry in WA. However, detailed analysis of the Circular Economy in a WA context is required to understand and quantify the costs and benefits of moving to this approach.

Moving to a Circular Economy would mean fundamental changes to our economic system and would likely result in significant short term adjustment costs. Such fundamental changes to the structure of the economy would initially require incentives to encourage businesses to change their operating model and to create markets for waste materials that would eventually need to become self-sustaining.

When considering what a Circular Economy would mean for WA, it is important to clearly define:

- The scale of the Circular Economy to be adopted - local, state, country or global
- The type of benefits that could be realized in WA and the associated adjustment costs (e.g. implications for jobs and economic growth)
- How other jurisdictions with similar structures and challenges to WA have approached the Circular Economy.

It is particularly important that WA's industry structure is considered in this analysis. Table 1 compares WA with other jurisdictions. While the Australian economy has undergone a period of structural change, with a shift away from agriculture and manufacturing towards services, mining continues to be the key industry sector in Western Australia. In 2016-17, mining represented 25.1% of Gross State Product in WA, up from 18.4% a decade earlier. Other key industries in 2016-17 (as measured by Gross Value Added) include:

- Business and property services (10%)
- Construction (8%).
- Manufacturing (5%).
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing (3%).

Table 1: Summary of industry structures in Australian jurisdictions (Industry Gross Value Added, % of GSP).

	WA	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	TAS	AUS
Agriculture	2.9	1.8	2.6	3.4	5.9	9.6	2.8
Mining	25.1	1.8	0.8	6.4	3.5	3.5	5.8
Manufacturing	5.1	5.4	6.9	6.2	6.5	6.0	5.8
Utilities	1.9	1.9	2.7	3.1	3.5	3.0	2.4
Construction	8.3	6.7	7.4	8.3	5.9	5.3	7.4
Wholesale	3.6	4.3	4.9	4.0	4.8	3.4	4.2
Retail	3.5	4.3	5.1	4.7	5.1	4.8	4.5
Accommodation and food	1.8	2.6	2.1	2.8	2.5	2.6	2.4
Transport	4.4	5.2	5.1	5.0	4.1	3.8	4.8
Communications	1.1	3.6	3.2	1.6	2.1	3.6	2.7
Finance and insurance	4.6	12.0	9.9	6.4	7.5	6.3	8.8

<sup>25</sup> European Commission (accessed February 2018). Towards a Circular Economy. Available online. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/towards-circular-economy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/towards-circular-economy_en).

<sup>26</sup> Green Industries SA (accessed February 2018). What is a Circular Economy? Available online. <http://www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au/circular-economy>.

Rental and real estate	2.4	3.7	2.9	3.1	2.3	1.6	3.1
Professional services	5.1	7.9	7.7	6.0	4.2	2.7	6.8
Administration and support	2.5	3.6	3.5	2.9	2.7	1.6	3.2
Public administration	4.3	4.6	4.8	5.7	5.6	6.3	5.5
Education and training	3.8	4.6	5.1	5.1	5.7	6.2	4.8
Healthcare and social	5.7	6.0	7.4	7.7	9.2	12.5	7.0
Arts and recreation	0.6	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.8
Other	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.7

The heavy reliance on resources means that the WA economy is more capital intensive and export-focused than other states. These characteristics – particularly those with an external focus – are important considerations for how a Circular Economy would operate in WA. As an initial step, opportunities for value adding to existing material streams could be identified and investigated. In WA, exports accounted for 50% of Gross State Product in 2016-17, compared to 19% nationally. Similarly, business investment accounts for 16% of GSP, compared to 11% across the country.

### 3.3 Shared Responsibility

**Recommendation: In defining ‘shared responsibility’ for the implementation of the Waste Strategy, roles and responsibilities must be clearly negotiated, understood and agreed to by all stakeholders.**

**Recommendation: All parties to the Strategy should be empowered to commit to implementing their responsibilities on an equal basis.**

The Consultation Paper states that “...one of the most fundamental principles to becoming a low waste society is shared responsibility.” The Association agrees that there is a need to share responsibility to achieve this outcome, but considers it is essential to clearly define what is meant when using the phrase ‘shared responsibility’. To ensure the new Strategy is implemented, there needs to be a clear Government commitment to it – and all parties to the Strategy should be empowered to commit to implementation on an equal basis.

Local Government’s experience with how the term ‘shared responsibility’ is applied has not always been positive. The National TV and Computer Recycling Scheme is an example of an industry funded initiative where shared responsibility is often referred to. Of the 62 sites for the Scheme in Western Australia, 18 are operated by Local Government. 95% of the material recovered through the Scheme in the 2015/16 Financial Year was collected at these Local Government sites (950,882kg). In some situations, Local Governments are also contributing to the cost of recycling material collected under the Scheme. The Arrangements that are tasked with organising collection and recycling of e-waste on behalf of their members are not physically responsible for collected material, or explaining to the community why it has been so difficult to access reliable services.

To create an environment where responsibility for the delivery of the Strategy is truly shared, all parties must commit on an equal basis. Table 2 outlines Local Governments view of what ‘shared responsibility’ should be when designing and implementing the Waste Strategy. This matrix is only intended to start a discussion on the definition of shared responsibility. Ultimately, roles and responsibilities must be clearly negotiated, understood and agreed to by all stakeholders. Local Government supports the establishment of a Government/Industry working group tasked with developing an equitable definition of shared responsibility and associated roles and responsibilities. This work would inform the detailed implementation/action plans needed to drive the strategy.

Table 2: Defining Shared Responsibility.

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Entity type(→)	State Government (Environment Minister, Waste Authority and Department of Water and Environmental Regulation)	Other Government entities/ Departments	Local Government, Regional Councils and WALGA	Waste management industry (private sector)	Product Manufacturers	Not for profits (e.g. charities, social enterprises, environment groups)	Community
Aspect(↓)							
<b>Legislation/ Regulation</b>	Write, consult on, enact, ensure compliance and review relevant legislation and regulation. This includes requirements for sustainable procurement and product stewardship.	Write, consult on, enact, ensure compliance and review relevant legislation and regulation.	Comply with legislation. Regulate as appropriate.	Comply with relevant legislation and regulation.			
<b>Strategic direction</b>	Through consultation, set the Strategic Direction.  Implement the actions in this matrix to achieve, monitor and review progress towards Strategic Direction.	Contribute to the development and achievement of the strategic direction.					
<b>Targets</b>	Through consultation, research and modelling, set targets.  Implement the actions in the matrix to achieve, monitor and review targets.	Contribute to the development and achievement of the targets.					
<b>Policy, Programs &amp; Guidance</b>	Through consultation and research, develop Policy, Programs and Guidance.  Provide adequate funding, or incentives, to ensure uptake of Programs and Guidance.  Support Local Governments with development of local	Contribute to the development and successful implementation of Policy, Programs and Guidance.	Contribute to the development and successful implementation of Policy, Programs and Guidance.  Develop relevant local policies, programs and guidance.	Contribute to the development and successful implementation of Policy, Programs and Guidance.			

	policies. Making sure programs work across regional areas as well as metropolitan.						
<b>Market Development</b>	Facilitate a market for recycled materials, by undertaking research and pilot projects, promoting procurement of recycled materials to other Government Departments, providing funding incentives, developing product specifications and pursuing Product Stewardship where appropriate.	Required to use, and support the use of products made from recycled materials.	Provide collection and processing services for recycled materials.  Use, and support the use of products made from recycled material.	Provide collection and processing services for recycled materials.  Manufacture, use, and support the use of, products made from recycled materials.	Use recycled materials as feedstock in manufacturing processes.  Initiate Product Stewardship Schemes to facilitate market development, when required.	Use, and support the use of products made from recycled materials.  Promote the benefits of using recycled materials.	Support the use of recycled materials, purchase products made from recycled materials.
<b>Infrastructure (such as MRF's, drop off centres, composting facilities, landfills)</b>	Work with relevant agencies and stakeholders to coordinate large scale planning for required infrastructure including developing an infrastructure plan to identifying key locations for infrastructure, current infrastructure capacity and potential infrastructure needs.  Develop best practise guidelines for the development of infrastructure.	Work with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation to ensure that infrastructure locations with protected buffers are made available in a timely manner.	Commission relevant waste management infrastructure.	Build, operate, supply waste management infrastructure.	Consider the capacity and capability of existing infrastructure in product design.	Create, maintain and service specific infrastructure as appropriate	Use infrastructure correctly.
<b>Services (such as collection, transport, material sorting)</b>	Use services that contribute to reuse, resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill.	Through purchasing processes engage services that contribute to reuse, resource recovery and	Deliver municipal waste services which contribute to reuse, resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill.	Deliver collection, sorting and processing services.	Use services that contribute to reuse, resource recovery and diversion of	Collection, sorting, processing of specific streams.  Use services that contribute to	Use services correctly.  Use services that contribute to reuse, resource

		diversion of waste from landfill.  Use services that contribute to reuse, resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill.	Use services that contribute to reuse, resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill.	Use services that contribute to reuse, resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill.	waste from landfill.	reuse, resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill.	recovery and diversion of waste from landfill.
<b>Behaviour Change</b>	<p>Develop and run initiatives on matters where there is commonality across the state. For example, waste avoidance messages.</p> <p>Influence decision making on Government services to encourage reuse, resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill.</p> <p>Support Local Government to uptake programs to change behaviour around waste which suits a whole state approach with regional programs differing from metro</p>	Engage staff and contractors to undertake activities in a way that contributes to reuse, resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill.	<p>Develop and run initiatives on matters specific to a region or local area for example how to use the kerbside recycling bin.</p> <p>Communicate with and update the local community on changes at a state level (targets, initiatives etc).</p>	<p>Develop and run initiatives on behalf of Local Government.</p> <p>Supply State and Local Governments with specific information on infrastructure, such as capacity and access to markets.</p>	Contribute on a product specific basis.	Contribute to behaviour change initiatives in line with the organisations sphere of influence and objectives.	Act according to education material received.
<b>Measurement and monitoring</b>	<p>Set standards and definitions for data collected, enforce data collection as required.</p> <p>Analyse the data that is reported from other entities and use the data to inform decision making.</p> <p>Monitor and report on progress towards the strategic direction / targets.</p>	Collect and report data to the relevant state agency.	Collect and report data to the relevant state agency.	Collect and report data to the relevant state agency.	Collect and report data to the relevant State / Federal agency (e.g. TV and Computer Scheme).	Collect and report data to the relevant state agency.	Receive information on progress towards the strategic direction and targets.



Currently, tasks that are delivered by the Waste Authority and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation are funded through the WARR Account. In the 2017/18 Financial Year, this was approximately \$11 million out of a possible \$19 million. Very little financial support is provided to the remainder of the system to implement their responsibilities and/or move to new frameworks and systems proposed by the Department. Aside from the funds provided from the WARR Account, it does not appear that the State Government is investing in waste management initiatives. Local Government's contribution to residential waste and recycling services, reported in the *2015–16 Local Government Census*, was \$288 million.

106 Local Governments (23 metropolitan and 83 non-metropolitan) also provide waste and/or recycling services to commercial premises. It is difficult to ascertain the cost of providing these services, with only 63 of these Local Governments able to report a total cost of around \$17 million<sup>27</sup>. Local Government also underwrites substantial investment in waste treatment infrastructure such as alternative waste treatment facilities, transfer stations, landfills, and material recovery facilities.

### 3.4 Targets

**Recommendation: Provide further information on the methodology and data used to arrive at the targets provided in the Consultation Paper.**

**Recommendation: Set targets based on modelling of feasible configurations of infrastructure, engagement, and service delivery.**

**Recommendation: Engage the waste management industry to understand what parameters should be used to measure the Department's performance in delivering its roles and responsibilities.**

**Recommendation: Engage the waste management industry to understand what parameters should be used to assess progress towards targets.**

**Recommendation: Adequate support and incentives are provided to assist with the achievement of targets.**

**Recommendation: The Department undertakes an assessment of different approaches to setting targets in other jurisdictions, such as:**

- Differentiated targets for different geographical zones
- Defined intentions for non-metropolitan areas as opposed to numerical targets.

**Recommendation: In setting targets for specific materials, consider those assigned to existing national initiatives.**

The Consultation Paper queries if targets should be introduced for each of the objectives. While the proposed objectives fulfill the WARR Act requirement for targets on waste reduction, resource recovery, further information needs to be provided on the methodology that was used to arrive at the targets suggested in the Consultation Paper. It is vital that targets are based on achievable configurations of infrastructure, engagement, and service delivery. The methodology used to develop the current Strategy targets has not been provided. The outcomes of the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Planning Project were intended to have been used to determine how we could meet the Strategy targets that had been set.

The Waste Strategies adopted by other jurisdictions clearly explain what rationale and data have been used to set targets. For example, targets for MSW, C&I and C&D waste streams in the South Australian *Waste Strategy 2015-2020* are based on a detailed analysis that was undertaken as part of

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<sup>27</sup> Waste Authority (accessed February 2018). The 2015–16 census of Western Australian local government waste and recycling services. Available online. <http://www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/programs/data/lg-census/>.

the *Review of South Australia's Waste Strategy 2011–2015*<sup>28</sup>, annual recycling activity surveys and Zero Waste SA's own internal analysis. Similarly, targets for the MSW, C&I and C&D waste streams of the NSW *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014-21* are based on:

*“...an independent modelling study conducted on behalf of the EPA<sup>29</sup>. This study assumed continued population growth, scheduled increases in the Waste Levy to 2016 and funding from the Waste Less, Recycle More initiative. It also took into account various waste actions, including reducing waste generation, improved kerbside recycling, better source-separation of commercial and industrial waste, recovery of food and garden waste, development of additional alternative waste treatment (AWT) facilities and diversion of recycling residuals to energy from waste.*

*The new targets are based on the modelled cumulative recycling rates that could be achieved from combining the various waste actions. They have been rounded to account for variability in current waste data and forward projections as well as likely improvements in systems and technologies over time<sup>30</sup>.*

As discussed in section 3.1 of this Submission, the Department must accept responsibility for the implementation of individual actions that are linked to clear deliverables and timeframes. Given the limited implementation of the current Strategy, there is a need for discussion and agreement as to what performance metrics should be used to measure the Department's performance and level of commitment to the achievement of Strategy targets. Local Government is concerned that the bulk of the funds from the WARR Account are currently expended on the Department, with limited outcomes. An example of a Program that, to date, has resulted in minimal impact is the Recycled Construction Products Program. The establishment of markets for recycled construction and demolition material has been of concern for a number of years, compounded by increases to the Levy. This Program was announced in 2015, and launched in 2016. Since this time, limited funding has been provided for the use of recycled material. The combination of a much higher Levy, limited regulation and market demand for products has led to stockpiling of material and active avoidance of the Levy. Local Government supports the efforts of the Department to bring unscrupulous operators to account.

There is a need for discussion and agreement as to what performance metrics will be used to measure progress towards the targets listed in the Waste Strategy. Section 7 of the NSW *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014-21* states what parameters will be used to measure progress against the targets of each key result area, with progress reports assessing performance against targets released every two years. The Association suggests that a similar approach should be pursued by the Waste Authority in drafting the Waste Strategy.

There are limited incentives to encouraging Local Governments to work towards the targets of the State Waste Strategy. As the achievement of targets is optional, Local Government investment decisions have predominately been driven by cost. Incentives could include pre-agreed financial rewards and/or recognition of those Local Governments that do meet the targets. Alternatively, penalties could be imposed on those Local Governments that do not meet targets. While baseline performance targets should be set by the State, adequate support must be provided to improve performance – particularly in regional and remote areas.

The main tool to drive achievement of the Targets has been an economic one – the increasing Levy. However the Levy should not be used in isolation and a combination of economic, regulatory and policy approaches are required.

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<sup>28</sup> ZeroWasteSA (2014). *Review of South Australia's Waste Strategy 2011–2015*. Available online.

<http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/resource-centre/publications/waste-strategy>.

<sup>29</sup> NSW EPA (accessed February 2018). *WARR Strategy Review 2013*. Available online. <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/recycling-and-reuse/warr-strategy/policy-makers>.

<sup>30</sup> NSW *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014-21* pg15.

It is important that targets take into account the differences between metropolitan, regional and remote areas. Data that is currently used to assess the performance of regional centres is based on an estimate using metropolitan data, making it less reliable than the metropolitan area<sup>31</sup>. The Association suggests that an assessment of how other jurisdictions have approached this issue should occur. The Queensland *Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy (2014–2024)* allows for differentiated MSW targets across geographical zones that reflect the differences in waste management across the state, such as available infrastructure, population base, location and costs to undertake waste treatment and management. The South Australian *Waste Strategy 2015-2020* adopted a similar approach, setting defined intentions for non-metropolitan areas as opposed to numerical targets. In considering how to improve performance across individual material streams, there should be an alignment of any targets with those provided under national initiatives such as the National Foodwaste Strategy, the Tyre Stewardship Scheme, the National TV and Computer Recycling Scheme and the Australian Packaging Covenant. It is not recommended that materials-specific targets are assigned to products in the MSW stream at this stage, given the difficulties associated with collecting this information.

### 3.5 Interconnectivity

**Recommendation: Establish clear connections between all components / elements of the Waste Strategy.**

There are no clear linkages in the Consultation Paper between the framework, principles, foundations, opportunities for improvement, priority materials and the objectives. Many of the actions listed under the objectives do not appear to align with the principles of either the Waste Hierarchy or Circular Economy. Further clarity is also required on how the actions under each objective leverage the various policy tools that have been referred to as foundations in the Consultation Paper.

The Association suggests that the Waste Authority considers replicating the interconnected approach to Strategy development used by the Victorian Government. An infographic summarizing how the vision, purpose, goals, strategic directions and outcomes of the Victorian *Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan 2015-44* work together is provided in Appendix 4 of this Submission.

## 4.0 Responses to Questions

The Association has formulated the following responses to the questions posed in the Consultation Paper. Where possible, linkages to other relevant sections of this Submission are provided.

### 4.1 Principles

*Have the correct principles been identified? Are there other principles that you consider should be included?*

**Recommendation: That the Principles in the Strategy are the same as the objects of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act.**

Local Government considers that the principles should be simple and straightforward, providing clarity on what the Strategy is attempting to achieve. The WARR Act includes objects which identify the purpose of the Act. The Strategy is a requirement of the Act.

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<sup>31</sup> Office of the Auditor General (October 2016). Western Australian Waste Strategy: Rethinking Waste. Available online. <https://audit.wa.gov.au/reports-and-publications/reports/western-australian-waste-strategy-rethinking-waste/>.

*“The primary objects of this Act are to contribute to sustainability, and the protection of human health and the environment, in Western Australia and the move towards a waste-free society by —*

- a. promoting the most efficient use of resources, including resource recovery and waste avoidance; and*
- b. reducing environmental harm, including pollution through waste; and*
- c. the consideration of resource management options against the following hierarchy –*
  - i. avoidance of unnecessary resource consumption;*
  - ii. resource recovery (including reuse, reprocessing, recycling and energy recovery);*
  - iii. disposal.”*

The South Australian Government uses a simple approach to communicating Waste Strategy frameworks and principles - that aligns with their legislation. The South Australian *Waste Strategy 2015-2020*, states that:

*“The Zero Waste SA Act sets out the framework and principles that guide us in developing the Strategy. The framework is the waste management hierarchy.*

*The principles are:*

- ecologically sustainable development*
- best practice methods and standards*
- open dialogue with local government, industry and the community.”*

## **4.2 Foundations**

*Are these the right foundations for our Waste Strategy? Are there others that you consider should be included?*

The foundations referred to in the Consultation Paper were originally framed as strategic objectives in the Waste Strategy. The foundations are essentially policy approaches that can be used to achieve desired outcomes. The way that the foundations have been framed, has created confusion and questions about how they work together and if they carry equal weight when applied to the waste management industry. The current foundations are planning, engagement and education, regulation, compliance and enforcement, better practice guidance, knowledge and data and economic incentives.

As discussed in Section 3.1, there is a need for implementation/action plans to be included in the Waste Strategy on priority issues and materials. Such plans would need to clearly identify how the different activity areas work together to achieve an outcome, across Government, as opposed to the current approach where it is not clear how different policy approaches are being applied.

For example, the use of economic incentives has traditionally focused on the Levy. While the Levy can contribute to waste diversion from landfill, it can only function as intended when:

- Viable market outlets exist for the material diverted from landfill - otherwise stockpiling or potentially illegal disposal of material occurs
- Fit for purpose standards for products made from diverted material exist - without such standards, there is no a clear delineation of when a waste becomes a product, and limited market acceptance of recycled products
- Assistance is provided for operators transitioning to a new way of operating - if significant financial outlay is involved in diverting material from landfill, financial assistance could support a business case for investment. For example, funding could be provided to cover the cost of implementing new testing regimes stipulated by the Department, to prove that waste materials have become products
- There is effective regulation of the waste industry - to ensure the Levy is paid on all eligible material.

The Levy alone cannot achieve the necessary outcomes. In industries where there is a history of continuing market failure, there is no certainty that new markets will automatically develop in response to a price signal. Rather, higher costs may be passed to those generating the material.

Local Governments have also expressed concern that the Department's approach to regulation, compliance and enforcement activities has not created a level playing field across the waste management industry.

### 4.3 Western Australia's Opportunities for Improvement

*Are there other opportunities for Western Australia to improve its waste performance?*

The opportunities for improvement listed in the Consultation Paper should inform the development of objectives and actions. The Association agrees that collaboration and shared responsibility are opportunities, but shared responsibility must be negotiated (refer to section 3.3 of this Submission). Local Government considers that other opportunities for improvement include:

- State Government leadership in the implementation of the Strategy
- Standardised data collection
- Provision of strategically located infrastructure and adequate staffing
- Development of Strategic Partnerships with key stakeholder organisations to facilitate system changes
- Interconnected regulatory approaches, for example the introduction of regulatory limits on the use of products such as synthetic fertilizers in agriculture.

### 4.4 Scope of the Strategy

*Should the scope of the Waste Strategy be broadened to include other types and sources of waste?*

At this time, the Association does not support the expansion of the Strategy to include additional types and sources of waste, due to limited progress on current waste streams. However, the Strategy could be used to bring together relevant Government agencies to develop a holistic approach to priority issues. As identified in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of this Submission, there is a need for collective action on the development of markets for problematic materials. Coordinated effectively, significant opportunities could be realized in terms of job creation and improved resource recovery. For example, a localized hub could be used to aggregate and process local organics from agricultural, wastewater, MSW and C&I waste streams. In this instance, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (formally the Department of Agriculture and Food) would need to drive initiatives that address the acceptance of recycled organic products in the agricultural industry.

### 4.5 Priority Materials

*Have the highest priority wastes for Western Australia been identified? How will market and processing based factors affect the inclusion of these priority materials in the Waste Strategy?*

From the information provided in the Consultation Paper, it is difficult to identify the methodology that will be used to determine priorities. The priority materials currently listed in the Consultation Paper are market driven, with the quality of material, transport and end markets all important factors influencing recovery rates. The Association suggests that the focus of the Strategy, as communicated through targets, should determine priority materials. For example, if the aim of the Strategy is to divert tonnes from landfill, materials such as organics and C&D waste will become high priority materials. However, if the Strategy is designed to pursue the adoption of a Circular Economy, an assessment of available materials, and where they can be used will determine priority materials.



Local Government considers that priority should be given to those materials where there is no clear resource recovery pathway or end market. Alternatively, priorities could be driven by a life cycle assessment of materials, or the degree of hazard a material poses when released into the environment.

Additional materials considered to be priorities by Local Government include tyres and glass. In discussion with the sector, the issue of differences between regional and metropolitan priorities was raised. While a material may not be a priority in the metropolitan area it may be a significant issue in the regions. Any campaigns and programs designed by the Department must facilitate adoption by regional and remote areas, with a view to strengthening local markets.

## 4.6 Waste Strategy Objectives

*Are these the right objectives for the Waste Strategy?*

General commentary on setting targets has been included in Section 3.4, with specific comments on the targets proposed in the Consultation Paper for each Objective included in the following sections. The Association considers that the Objectives for the Strategy need to link to the WARR Act as the enabling legislation. For the actions listed under each of the Objectives, it is important that these are framed in action orientated and measurable terms.

### **Objective 1: Minimise environmental impact**

*Do you have any other ideas about how we can minimise environmental risks and impacts from waste? Are there other actions that should be undertaken to minimise environmental impact? What should state and local governments do? Business and industry? Community groups? What will you do? What targets do you consider should be used for this objective?*

**Recommendation: That the Objective be reframed to ‘Maximise Environmental Benefit.’**

**Recommendation: That the Environmental Protection Act be amended to ensure the CEO can refuse a license application if a proposed facility will undermine Waste Strategy outcomes and targets.**

Although the WARR Act objects refer to reducing environmental harm, feedback from Local Government indicates that there is a preference for the objective in the Waste Strategy to be framed as a positive statement - ‘maximizing environmental benefit.’ This reflects the need to be more ambitious and innovative in how waste management is approached. Framing the objective in this way could also assist with linking the Strategy to the concept of a Circular Economy.

The Association has previously expressed concern that the current regulatory approach to licencing facilities in the Environmental Protection Act allows decisions to be made that only take into account environmental impacts on a site specific basis. This approach potentially undermines Waste Strategy objectives and targets. The Department of Environment Regulation Background Paper on the 2014 Review of the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act (2007)* identified that existing landfills had capacity to manage the waste generated until around 2025, or until 2030 if the targets in the Waste Strategy were met. The Paper also identified that there was “*increasing pressure for metropolitan waste to be disposed to landfill outside the metropolitan area*”. The Paper stated “*there is a strong case to reform the landfill policy and regulatory framework to include planning, siting and compliance considerations so that landfills can be managed consistent with Government policy. Policy considerations should balance the need to ensure availability of sufficient landfill space to manage residual waste and unplanned events...with the need to limit supply to encourage maximum diversion from landfill*”<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Department of Environment Regulation (2015). *Review of Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 Discussion paper*. Available online <https://www.der.wa.gov.au/component/k2/item/6474-review-of-the-waste-avoidance-and-resource-recovery-act-2007>.

The Association agrees with the Department's assessment of this gap in policy, which has not been addressed in the years since the Background Paper was released. Non-metropolitan Local Governments continue to raise this important issue with the Association. The lack of a strategic approach to this issue is likely to result in the development of more landfills in the areas surrounding Perth, greater competition between sites, lower landfill prices and ultimately, a situation where the landfill diversion targets in the Waste Strategy are undermined. The Association acknowledges there is a need for appropriately planned landfills in the future, but would highlight that there is sufficient landfill space to accommodate the general waste disposal needs of the Perth metropolitan area for the foreseeable future. Policy relating to landfills must change to ensure the need for a site is demonstrated before it is approved. There is support for an improvement in the linkages between the WARR Act and the Environmental Protection Act.

There are a number of additional activities relating to environmental benefit that the Strategy could support, such as the adoption of:

- A coordinated approach to reducing illegal dumping
- A coordinated approach to litter reduction
- A coordinated approach to market development and investment by Government in this area
- A coordinated approach to investigating and addressing Levy avoidance
- Product Stewardship Schemes for problematic materials and the application of penalties to industries that produce material that cannot be recycled, and/or has no local end use
- Innovative approaches to the reduction of material used in manufacturing and development of sustainable end markets for recoverable material
- Programs focus on current polluting activities and how operational efficiencies can reduce these impacts, for example DWER CleanRun Program
- Contemporary Guidance developed in conjunction with industry
- Programs to address the regulation of small and medium businesses, for example the DWER Light Industries project.

The Association is supportive of current activities such as the introduction of a Container Deposit Scheme, Plastic Bag Ban and the Household Hazardous Waste Program.

While environmental benefit is not necessarily something that can be measured directly, it is proposed that targets are developed in support of this objective. For example:

- Reduction in illegal dumping
- Reduction in littering
- Reduce material use in product design
- The percentage of material used in products that can be recovered
- Efficiencies in processing and waste management approaches
- Number of landfill facilities required in the future
- 'Beyond compliance' approaches to operations by industry.

Local Government has also suggested that a future approach could be investigate the implementation of landfill bans. For example, no unprocessed organics to landfill by 2025. If feasible, this would require careful consideration and a phased approach to implementation.

## **Objective 2: Reduce generation**

*Do you have any other ideas about how we can reduce our waste generation? Are there other actions that should be undertaken to reduce waste generation?*

*What should state and local governments do? Business and industry? Community groups? What will you do? Are these the right targets for Objective 2 of the Waste Strategy?*

The current Waste Strategy does not contain waste reduction targets, as required by the WARR Act. The Association considers that it is important to emphasise the need for waste reduction on a per capita basis. However, further consideration must be given as to how other factors influence this measure. For example, economic activity, population growth, seasonal factors, location and consumer behaviour. Until such time as economic growth can be decoupled from waste generation, the per capita figure does not provide a useful measure on the effectiveness of waste reduction initiatives.

The South Australian *Waste Strategy 2015-2020* contains an aspirational target where waste generation reduces by one per cent per year over the five year life of the strategy. The Queensland *Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy 2014-2024* sets a target to reduce the amount of waste generated per capita by 5 percent over 10 years. Interestingly, the *NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014-21* does not contain a specific target for reducing waste generation. Instead, there is an aspiration to reduce the rate of waste generated per capita by 2021-22. As a number of factors can influence waste generation, the NSW Government has decided to measure ongoing trends against a number of parameters to better understand how to monitor progress. For example, the Strategy suggests that a comparison could be made between the rates of waste generation per capita, and rate of change in the NSW GSP.

Non-metropolitan Local Governments have raised concerns with the practicalities associated with implementing waste reduction initiatives in regional areas. For example, in some regional areas there is only one shop in town. Residents are not able to make low waste choices (for example bulk purchasing with no packaging), as no alternatives options are available. In developing waste reduction initiatives, an assessment of the choices presented to consumers in the current system is required. Successful waste reduction initiatives provide the community with information on how to change their behaviour as well as access to resources and infrastructure that allow them to do so. Wide reaching behaviour change campaigns are needed, that link to easily accessible waste.

In measuring waste generation, it is essential that accurate data is collected. The aim of any target should be to measure progress and the effectiveness of interventions.

Other approaches that could be taken to reduce waste generation include:

- Adopting Product Stewardship approaches, which focus on product redesign and waste reduction, for example WRAP UK Sustainable Clothing Action Plan
- Introducing evidenced based programs that make it easy for the community and retailers to reduce foodwaste, for example WRAP UK Love Food, Hate Waste
- Developing industry specific programs that reduce waste generation, for example the NSW Bin Trim Program.

### **Objective 3: Increase recovery**

*Do you have any other ideas about how we can increase resource recovery? Are there other actions that should be undertaken to increase resource recovery? What should state and local governments do? Business and industry? Community groups? What will you do? Are these the right targets for Objective 3 of the Waste Strategy?*

**Recommendation: That targets for recovery are included – for example % Recycled, % Composted, % waste to energy and % to landfill.**

**Recommendation: That the State Government sets specific recycling, composting and diversion targets for its own operations.**

**Recommendation: That the role of Waste to Energy is identified as part of the Strategy.**

The targets of the current Waste Strategy only incentivise diversion of waste from landfill, with no guidance on how, or where material should be diverted to. Consequently, diversion practices have largely been dominated by low cost operations. Further to those comments provided in section 3.4 of this Submission, WALGA considers that more graduated targets would allow for a clear preference to be provided on *how* waste should be diverted from landfill. Landfill diversion targets are a requirement of the WARR Act, so should be included, as well as providing specific targets on the amount of waste diverted to recycling, composting and waste to energy. Targets could be set on the recyclability of packaging, with penalties applied to the packaging industry for a failure to use material that cannot be recycled, and/or has no local end use. Alternatively, the implementation of a landfill ban on certain unprocessed materials could be investigated (refer to the response to Objective 1 of this Submission). The use of these type of mechanisms would require a renewed focus on improved

data collection, with a requirement for industry to report information on the destination of material. The Association understands that the Department is currently developing amendments to the WARR Regulations 2008 to this end.

Local Government is also keen to see accountability from the State Government on the rate of recovery in its own operations. Local Government specifically reports waste landfilled or recovered from its own activities as well as household statistics. If State Government is committed to leading by example, then Government agencies should also report on their performance.

Some key activities that could facilitate increased recovery, include:

- The development of convenient, well located community drop off sites, allowing for material to be recovered, and linking to the implementation of Container Deposit Scheme depots
- Supporting regional and remote areas to establish alternative, localised outlets for recyclable materials. Reliance on international market outlets for materials such as scrap metal has proved to be problematic
- Optimising existing infrastructure. With the introduction of a CDS presents an opportunity to optimise the additional capacity available in the kerbside recycling system. As Material Recovery Facilities are designed to process specific materials, the focus must be on moving recyclable material that is currently placed in the general waste bin, across to the recycling bin.

Local Governments have raised the role of Waste to Energy and the importance in ensuring a consistent approach in the Strategy, aligned with the legislation and previous advice from the Waste Authority. The Waste Authority provided the following advice to Government:

*The Waste Authority has previously identified that not only is the current rate of disposal to landfill a poor use of resource, the current waste and recycling and infrastructure is not sufficient to meet the population needs in the medium to long term. The growth in waste generation and the preference to divert waste from landfill has significant implications for waste management infrastructure planning and investment into the future. In order to meet policy objectives and strategy targets, a range of waste management options will need to be pursued along different points of the waste hierarchy.*

*Conclusion 1:- Waste to energy plants have the potential to offer an alternative to landfill for the disposal of non-recyclable wastes, with the additional benefit of the immediate capture of stored energy.<sup>33</sup>*

Even with a concerted effort to avoid waste and/or reuse it in other processes, the reality remains that residual waste streams will be produced. This material can be treated in Waste to Energy facilities to generate energy and reduce the volume of residual material that is disposed of to landfill.

## 5.0 Conclusion

The Association considers that an opportunity exists for an effective strategy to be developed, with clear objectives, targets and initiatives. For this Strategy to succeed it is imperative that a whole of Government approach is taken and all stakeholders are engaged in the implementation of the Strategy.

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<sup>33</sup> EPA (2013). Report and recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority and the Waste Authority and Advice of the Environmental Protection Authority to the Minister for Environment. Available online.  
<http://www.epa.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Publications/Rep%201468%20Waste%20to%20energy%20s16e%20040413.pdf>

## Appendix 1 - Waste Authority Business Plan 2017-18

Released November 2017

	Funding (\$)	DWER	Local Government	Consultant/Service Provider	Waste Industry / Community / Charity
<b>New initiatives</b>					
Food waste initiatives	150,000	Waste Wise Schools	Via CIE and Community Grants [Metro & Non-Metro]	Consultant to do research under Better Bins. No funds for implementation	Via CIE and Community Grants
Illegal dumping community education campaign	120,000			Consultant to research, consult and develop. No funds for implementation	
Statutory review of the waste strategy	100,000			Consultant to undertake consultation.	
Review of the Waste Wise Schools program	100,000	Not clear if this is an internal review and who will conduct it.		Not clear if a consultant is doing this review.	
Methodology for approved manner for the provision of data	50,000	DWER staff use contractor's work to finalised approved manner		Consultant to develop and consult on methodology.	
Drop off and vergeside service trials	50,000		Competitive Local Government bids [Mainly Metro]		
Recycled products policy	50,000			Consultant works with other government departments. Only tasked with documenting findings and providing advice. No practical changes result from this funding.	
Governance framework	30,000			External provider to review the governance framework.	
Events	20,000	Waste Authority promotion at W&R Conference, Local Government Convention and two breakfast sessions.			
<b>Ongoing initiatives</b>					
Better bins kerbside collection	2,090,000		Funding available for Local Government. However, funds not entirely allocated in the past. [Metro & Non-Metro]		
Household hazardous waste program	1,600,000		Metro & Non-Metro		
Community and industry engagement program	1,000,000		Funding available for Local Government. However, funds not entirely allocated in the past. [Metro & Non-Metro]		Other organisations able to access CIE Program.
Keep Australia Beautiful Council WA	832,000				



Waste Wise Schools	711,000				
Recycled construction products program	700,000		Only stream A goes to Local Government, which is 80% of funding. This Program has not been implemented to date. [Metro only]		
Support for testing recycled construction and demolition products	400,000				Potentially for C&D Material producers, however these funds have not been expended to date
Right bin communications toolkit and evaluation	300,000			Develop resources. Survey residents.	
Community grants scheme	250,000		Some funding for Local Government possible [Metro & Non-Metro]		Funding for Community Groups
Charitable recycling organisation rebate	250,000				Charity Groups
Engagement in action	197,500			Service provider delivers state wide evidence based initiative.	
Local government waste plans	50,000	Subject to availability of staff	LGs can use resources that the Dept develops on a voluntary basis. No funding allocated.	Contractor may be engaged to do part of the work	
Charitable recycler dumping reduction program	50,000				Charity Groups
Clean communities	5,000				Community Groups
Household hazardous waste review	0				
Data strategy	0				
Funding principles	0				
Advice to support the planning authority's consideration of waste management and infrastructure planning	0				
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>9,105,500</b>				
<b>Services provided under section 16</b>					
Strategic, policy and program development, implementation, management and data monitoring	3,236,000				
Administration and overheads	1,551,500				
Levy inspection, compliance and enforcement	1,126,000				
Waste Authority support	833,000				
Illegal dumping	749,000				
Ministerial and Director General support	712,000				

Communications	352,000				
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	<i>8,559,500</i>				
<b>Functions funded under section 80</b>					
Container deposit scheme	660,000				
Single use lightweight plastic bag ban	500,000				
Economic analysis of waste levy	150,000	Unclear if this analysis is by a consultant or the Department		Unclear if this analysis is by a consultant or the Department	
National initiatives	25,000	APC funding and other initiatives			
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	<i>1,335,000</i>				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,000,000</b>				
	<b>\$19,000,000</b>	<b>\$11,645,000</b>	<b>\$5,652,500</b>	<b>\$835,000</b>	<b>\$867,500</b>

Appendix 2 - Examples of Waste Strategy Frameworks



Figure 2: Elements that together will achieve WARR Strategy 2014–21 objectives

Figure 1: NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014-21 (Figure 2, pg 10).



Figure 1: Strategy framework  
Figure 2: Queensland Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy 2014-2024 (Figure 1, pg 3).



Figure 3: Victorian *Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan 2015-44* (Figure 1.2, pg 24).

TABLE 1.2  
SWRRIP IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

	Action	Who	Timeframe
<b>Goal 1</b>	Landfills will only be used for receiving and treating waste streams from which all materials that can be viably recovered have been extracted.		
1.1	Develop a consistent statewide process to assess the need for additional landfill airspace and the scheduling of new landfill sites to inform the development of the SWRRIPs.	Lead: DELWP, SV, WRRGs	Short term (1 year)
<b>Goal 2</b>	Materials are made available to the resource recovery market through aggregation and consolidation of tonnes to create viability in recovering valuable resources from waste.		
2.1	Provide guidance and establish programs to develop markets for goods and services made from recovered resources.	Lead: SV Support: WRRGs	Short term (1-3 years)
2.2	Provide guidance and develop programs to increase recovery of priority materials such as e-waste and organics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>optimisation of collection systems</li> <li>improving the capacity of the recovery industry to separate material streams to improve quality of feedstocks for reprocessing.</li> </ul>	Lead: SV Support: DELWP, EPA, WRRGs	Short term (1-3 years)
2.3	Support local governments to procure waste and resource recovery services and infrastructure that will achieve the goals and objectives of the SWRRIP.	Lead: WRRGs and SV	Ongoing
2.4	Provide ongoing support to local government and industry to identify and develop opportunities for recovery of material streams with potential economic value or high environmental and public health risk at the state, regional and local level to inform infrastructure investment decisions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>potential opportunities and gaps identified in the SWRRIP</li> <li>opportunities to use cross regional flows to consolidate material streams</li> <li>opportunities in rural areas where economies of scale may be hard to achieve.</li> </ul>	Lead: WRRGs and SV	Medium term (3-5 years)
2.5	Support local government to develop mechanisms at the local level to ensure adequate long term provision of suitably located and appropriately zoned land for waste and resource recovery activities.	Lead: WRRGs Support: SV	Medium term (3-5 years)

	Action	Who	Timeframe
<b>Goal 3</b>	Waste and resource recovery facilities including landfills are established and managed over their lifetime to provide best economic, community, environment and public health outcomes for local communities and the state and ensure their impacts are not disproportionately felt across communities.		
3.1	Build the capacity of local government to evaluate and identify options for managing material streams including residual waste that provide best economic, community, environment and public health outcomes for the state.	Lead: SV Support: WRRGs	Short term (1–3 years)
3.2	Provide support to industry to improve engagement mechanisms and provide opportunities for community involvement in the planning of waste and resource recovery infrastructure to build the social licence to operate facilities.	Lead: SV Support: EPA and WRRGs	Short term (1–3 years)
3.3	Provide support to industry to ensure facilities are operated and managed to minimise impact on community, environment and public health.	Lead: SV	Short term (1–3 years)
<b>Goal 4</b>	Targeted information provides the evidence base to inform waste and resource recovery infrastructure planning and investment at the state, regional and local levels by local governments, the waste and resource recovery industry and other government agencies.		
4.1	Develop WRRIPs that strategically plan for the waste and resource recovery needs of each WRR region for the next 10 years that consider the needs and priorities of local communities and align with the SWRRIP.	Lead: WRRG Support: SV	Short term (1–3 years)
4.2	Provide and share current and relevant data and information with local governments, the waste and resource recovery industry and other government agencies to inform business planning related to waste and resource recovery infrastructure including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establish a data governance framework to facilitate improved waste and resource recovery data collection, storage and analysis</li> <li>regular and timely publication of relevant data and case studies</li> <li>identifying data and information gaps and processes to improve data set</li> <li>completing the SWRRIP economic and transport analyses following alignment of the WRRIPs.</li> </ul>	Lead: SV Support: Environment portfolio	Short term (1–3 years) + ongoing over the life of the SWRRIP
4.3	Integrate planning requirements and decision making processes for waste and resource recovery infrastructure into the state's land use planning frameworks.	Lead: DELWP Support: SV and WRRGs	TBD
4.4	Develop the process to ensure, where appropriate, that the objectives of programs (e.g. grants programs) delivered across government agencies consider waste and resource recovery planning and SWRRIP goals.	Lead: SV Support: DELWP, EPA, DEDJTR, DHHS	Medium term (3–5 years)
4.5	Engage proactively with industry to facilitate investment in waste and resource recovery infrastructure that supports the SWRRIP goals.	Lead: SV Support: WRRGs	Medium term (3–5 years)
4.6	Develop and implement a strategy to educate community and business on waste and resource recovery to support achieving the goals of the SWRRIP.	Lead: SV	Development: Short term (1–3 years) Implementation: Long term (10 years)
4.7	Investigate opportunities to reduce the generation of greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impact of climate change through the way we manage our waste and material streams.	Lead: SV Support: DELWP and EPA	Short term (1–3 years)

Figure 4: Victorian *Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan 2015-44* (Table 1.2, pg 25).

# Appendix 3 - Examples of Alignment between Strategic Documents

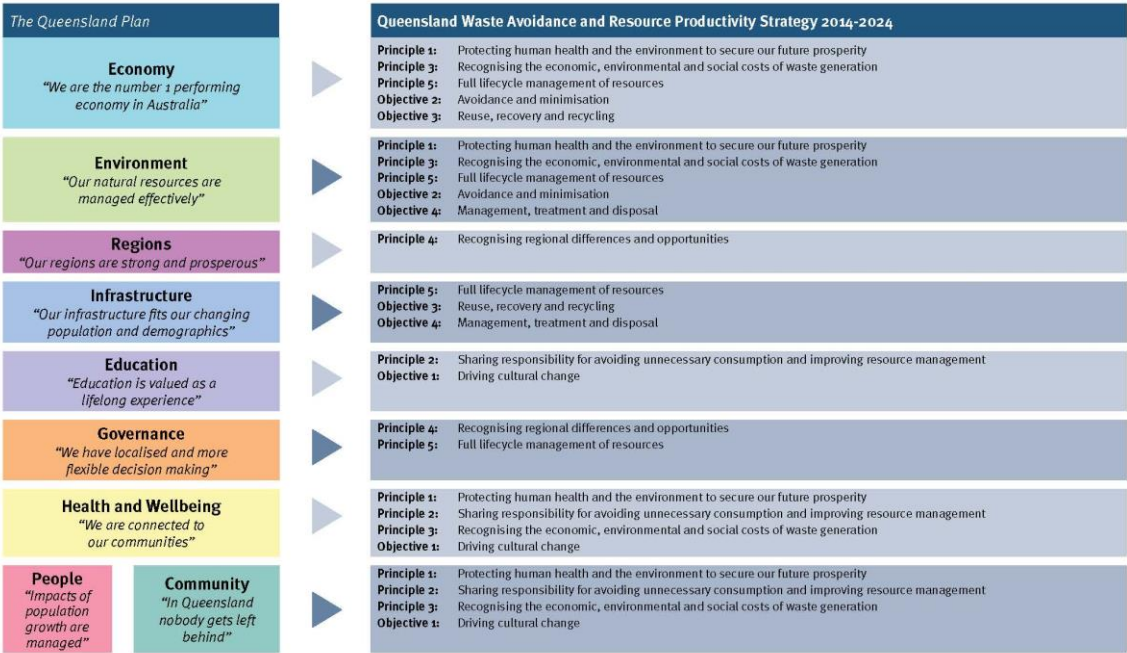


Figure 5: How the waste strategy aligns with *The Queensland Plan*

Figure 5: Queensland *Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy 2014-2024* (Figure 5, pg 9).



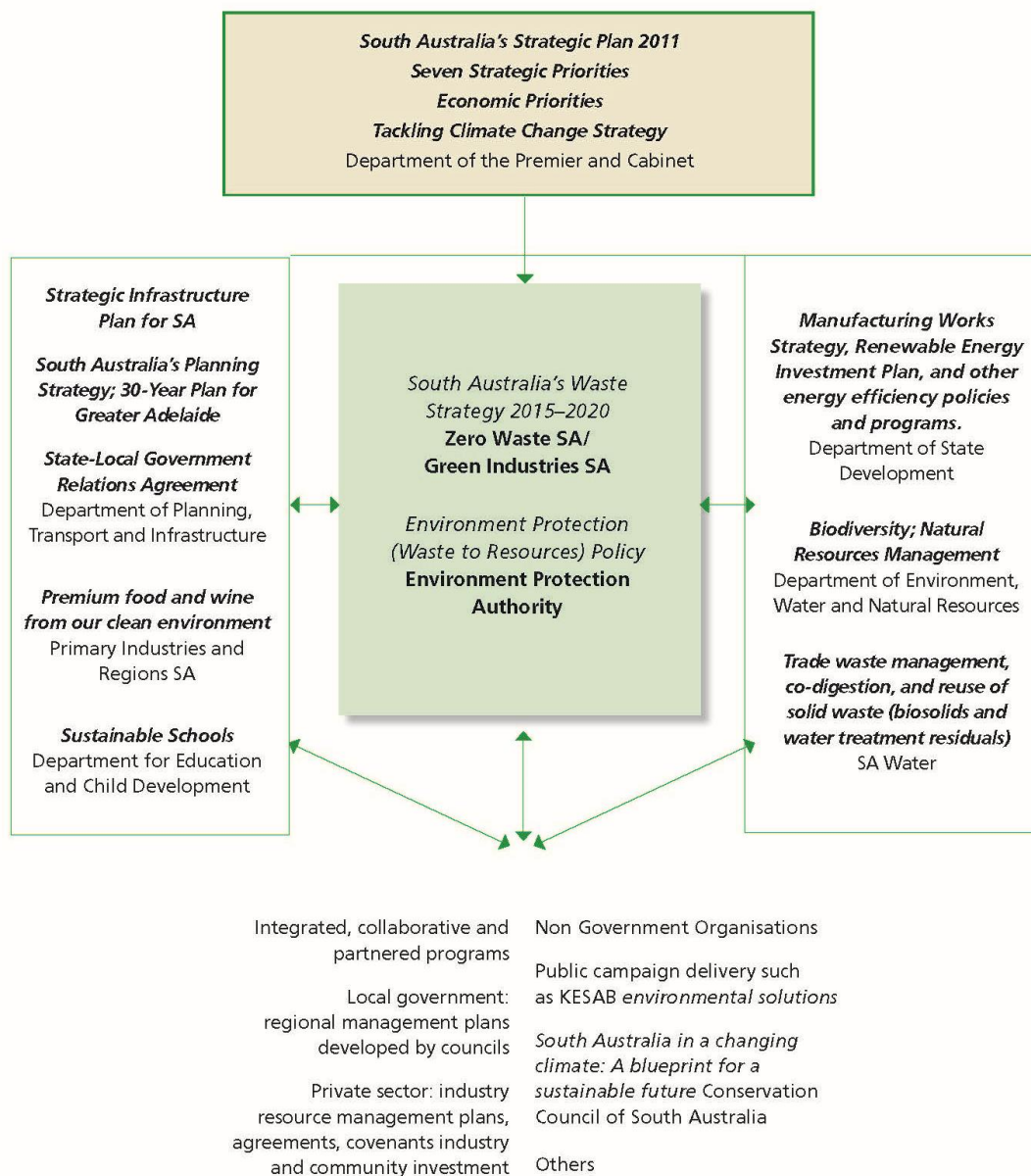


Figure 6: South Australian *Waste Strategy 2015-2020* (Figure 1, Page 12).

## Appendix 4 - Example of an Interconnected Waste Strategy

FIGURE 1.1  
SWRRIP VISION, PURPOSE, GOALS, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND OUTCOMES

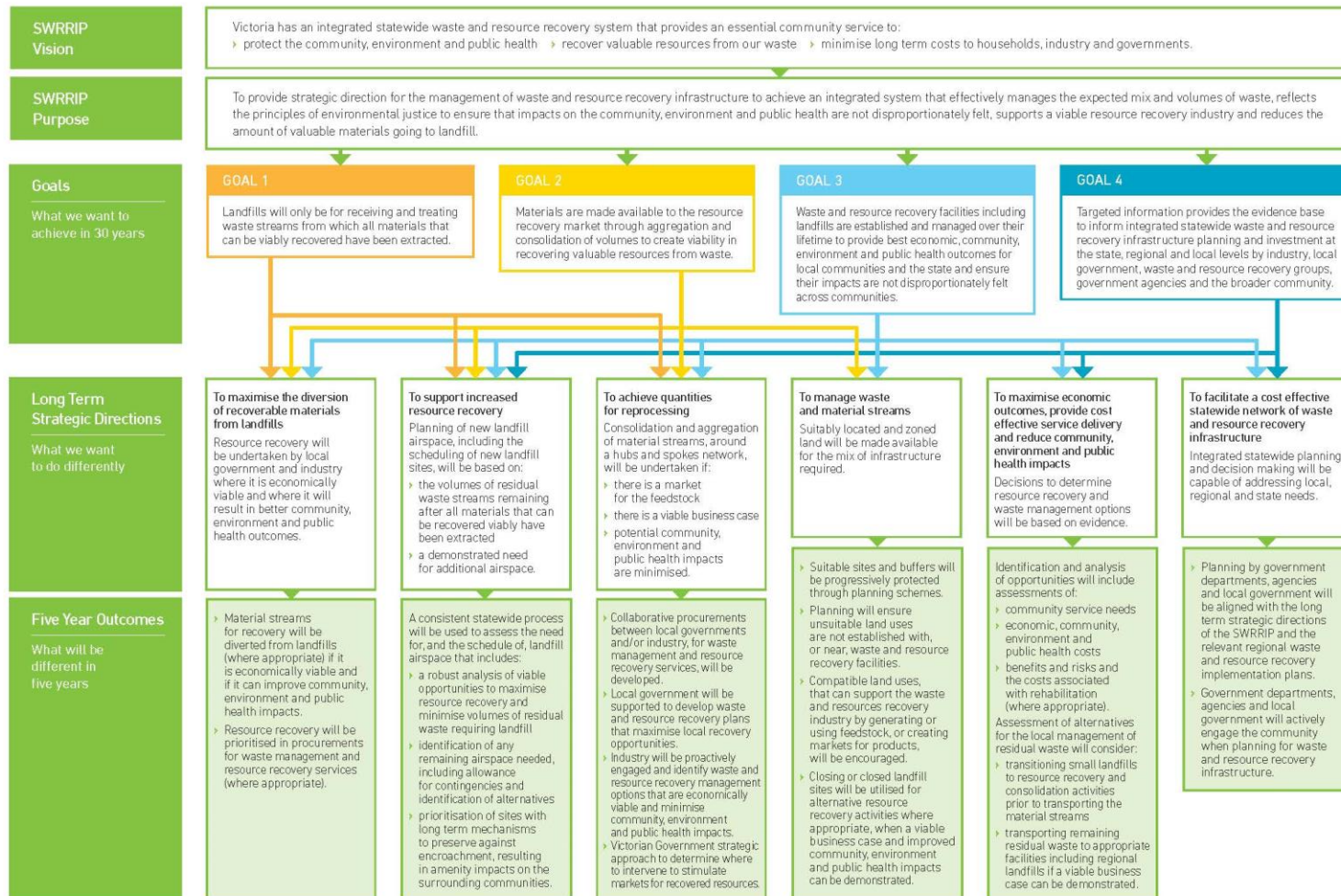


Figure 7: Victorian *Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan 2015-44* (Figure 1.1, pg 17).