



LGAT Submission Inquiry into the Product Stewardship Bill 2011

April 2011

Introduction

LGAT is the representative body of Local Government in Tasmania. Established in 1911, LGAT is incorporated under the *Local Government Act 1993* with membership comprising the 28 of the 29 Tasmanian councils.

The objectives of the Association are:-

- To promote the efficient administration and operation of Local Government in the State of Tasmania;
- To watch over and protect the interests, rights and privileges of municipal Councils in the State of Tasmania;
- To foster and promote relationships between Local Government in the State of Tasmania with both the Government of Tasmania and the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia;
- To represent the interests of the members of the Association generally, and in such particular matters as may be referred to the Association by its members; and
- To provide such support services to the members of the Association as the Association may by resolution in meeting determine.

LGAT works closely with the three regional waste management authorities being:

- Southern Waste Strategy Authority,
- Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Group and
- Cradle Coast Authority Waste Management Group.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Product Stewardship Bill. LGAT welcomes the development of this legislation. As identified in the LGAT Submission on the National Waste Policy, there is strong Local Government support for the development of an effective Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Product Stewardship Framework at a national level. The assumption that Local Government will continue to provide services for all products is not sustainable. Waste is no longer simple, cheap or easy to deal with, as waste increases in volume and complexity so does our understanding of the impacts of waste on the environment, society and the economy. The proposed Product Stewardship Bill 2011 provides a positive step toward making this shift.

Drivers for Product Stewardship

Local Government has identified that there is a need to ensure that responsibility for waste management and its costs are distributed more equally throughout the supply chain. There is strong support in the sector for ensuring the producer should assume greater responsibility for the reuse, recycling and disposal of their products at end-of-life.

While Producers taking responsibility for products is not directly identified as a driver for Product Stewardship, the preferred approach for achieving the objects of Act is though encouraging or requiring manufacturers, importers, distributors and other person to take responsibility for products.

The cost of waste management, to Government, is identified as one of the product stewardship criteria.

Priority Products – Criteria and Process

In the Product Stewardship Bill, and the Consultation Paper which proceeded it, a specific process for the selection of products for Product Stewardship schemes was not included. The inclusion in the Bill of this requirement may not be suitable, however LGAT notes that such a list of priority products needs to be developed. Such a process would allow direct input by stakeholders into what products would be considered. If a list of priority products is developed, this shows clear leadership from Government and allows industry time to develop Product Stewardship programs.

Recommendation: A list of priority products for product stewardship is developed by the Commonwealth Government in consultation with State/Territory Governments, Local Government and the community.

Options for Product Stewardship

Voluntary approach

A voluntary approach is supported, however voluntary schemes will need to be in line with Government priorities and be clearly accountable. To facilitate this, the proposed system of accreditation and review is supported.

Co-regulatory Approach

The expectation for a co-regulatory approach is again that there would be clear aims, auditing and review mechanisms. The Product Stewardship Bill appears to satisfy this expectation.

Mandatory Approach

Local Government considers that a mandatory approach is relevant wherever a voluntary or co-regulatory scheme is not an option to achieve the objectives of the legislation. LGAT supports the approach taken in the Bill which does not overly limit the circumstance under which a mandatory approach can be implemented.

LGAT supports the Extended Producer Responsibility as an approach to ensure manufacturers take responsibility for their products at end of life.