

Environment and Communications References
Answers to questions on notice
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Portfolio

Inquiry: Inquiry into waste reduction and recycling policies
Question No: IQ24-000119
Division/Agency: Circular Economy Division
Topic: National Waste Policy Action Plan - progress update
Question Date: 15 July 2024
Question Type: Written

Senator Whish-Wilson asked:

The National Waste Policy Action Plan Annexure 2022 provides an update on progress made and action items that have been delivered up to September 2022.

1. Please provide detail of all action items that have not been delivered as part of the National Waste Policy Action Plan and detail on current progress of these undelivered items.

Answer:

1. Action items within the National Waste Policy Action Plan which are yet to be completed, or which are ongoing, are set out in the tables below.
 - a. In October 2022, environment ministers requested the NWPAP be strengthened towards achieving the targets. All remaining action items are being reviewed for their relevance. A revised Action Plan will be provided to environment ministers for consideration at the end of 2024.

Outstanding action items to be completed prior to or by 2030

Action Item		Lead	Progress
1.07	Adopt sustainable procurement policies, targets and guidelines for the use of recycled content and support government agencies to improve their recycled content procurement policies	All govts	The Australian, NSW, Victoria and WA governments have delivered this action item with sustainable procurement policies in place. Other governments are in developmental stages and/or trialling procurement guidelines, studies and tools to be rolled out more broadly.
1.09	Explore a legislative framework to prevent the landfilling of recyclable material	All govts	The Australian Government, ACT, NSW, Victoria and ALGA have delivered this action item. Other government agencies have implemented legislation, are investigating the feasibility of introducing disposal bans for end-of-life products and materials or are reviewing their existing policies.
2.03	Support the Fight Food Waste Campaign to avoid foodstuffs going to landfill	All govts	All governments have delivered, or are supporting, this action in an ongoing capacity.
2.04	Report on lessons learned and options to support waste reduction in the commercial and industrial, and construction and demolition waste streams	All govts	The Australian Government, Victoria and ALGA have delivered this action item. NSW, Queensland and SA expect to release reports, discussion papers or research during 2024 and 2025. The remaining states have provided funding to support infrastructure or are engaging with industry on improvements.
2.09	Deliver the industry-led target of 100% of all Australia's packaging being reusable, recyclable or compostable	APCO	A review of progress towards the National Packaging Targets has estimated that by 2025 94% of packaging would be reusable, recyclable or compostable.

Action Item		Lead	Progress
2.11	Develop Australian standards or adopt appropriate international standards that maximise the value of materials throughout the life of a product, to increase life cycle potential and avoid waste	Business Sector	ACOR co-authored a report in 2023 on Standards to facilitate the use of recycled material in road construction; AORA partnered in the current review of AS4454; and APCO developed the Sustainable Packaging Guidelines.
2.13	Align community education efforts to reduce food waste, to maximise impact and reduce confusion	S&T and Local govts	Action continues to be supported in an ongoing capacity.
2.16	Develop and launch a Circular Economy Hub online platform and marketplace to highlight sustainability education and resources, and match buyers and sellers of recovered resources	APCO & Planet Ark	Planet Ark has delivered the online platform. Delivery of the marketplace component is expected in 2024.
3.05	Preferred stewardship scheme for photovoltaic systems (a) identified and (b) in place	Aus Govt	Following consultation processes in 2022 and 2023, the Australian Government is developing a mandatory product stewardship scheme for solar PV panels.
3.07	Consider national standards for kerbside recycling collection and materials recovery facilities to improve consistency and performance	All govts	On 9 June 2023, environment ministers agreed to develop a national roadmap to improve harmonisation of kerbside collection, for ministers to consider in 2024.
3.08	Explore how to better align reporting systems to agreed national classifications and definitions for data and reporting, including surveys of recycling, to improve sharing of information	All govts	Implementation continues through the endorsed Waste and Resource Recovery Data Roadmap (Data Roadmap) by the RRRG Data Working Group. Governments are undertaking a range of activities that are aligned with the Australian Standard on Waste and Resource Recovery Data and Reporting.
3.09	Develop a common approach to restrict the disposal of priority products and materials in landfill, starting with lithium-ion batteries, materials collected for the purpose of recycling, and e-waste	All govts	Jurisdictions are working together through various working groups to share information about the disposal options for priority products and materials.
3.13	Investigate how to develop and best implement an agreed national approach to the movement of waste, to improve environmental outcomes of waste management	All govts	ACT and NSW have delivered this action item. All governments are continuing to progress the work of the RRRG Data Working Group.
3.14	Report on opportunities to promote regional collection and recycling of soft plastics through expansion of the Regional Model for Soft Plastics	APCO	APCO is actively engaging with stakeholders to enable a confident re-establishment of soft plastics collection and to grow processing capability.
3.16	Explore opportunities to leverage existing regional development programs to support better waste	All govts	ACT, NSW and Tasmania have delivered this action item. Other states are exploring opportunities, providing funding through grant programs in regional areas or are implementing joint waste strategies.

Action Item		Lead	Progress
	management and resource recovery		
3.17	Increase access to resource recovery and waste management infrastructure for regional, remote and Indigenous communities in every state and territory	All govts	NSW, Queensland and Victoria have delivered this action item.
3.19	Develop performance standards for material recovery facilities, and assess opportunities for other standards	W&RR industry	ACOR and NWRIC have delivered this action item.
3.20	Taking into account relevant international standards, establish a nationally-consistent framework to enable ships to discharge clean segregated recyclable materials at Australian ports to divert this waste to landfill	Aus Gov	Action is expected to be delivered in mid-2024. Delays were experienced as the Australian Maritime Safety Authority were unable to engage a suitable contractor and due to challenges with getting endorsement for the full scope of the pilot project from biosecurity/DAFF. Management activities are being undertaken to ensure appropriate management of biosecurity concerns while managing project slippage.
3.21	Deliver industry-led target of 70% of Australia's plastic packaging being recycled or composted	APCO	APCO reported this action item is not on track to be met by the due date of 2025.
3.22	Implement the Waste and Resource Recovery Data Roadmap to harmonise waste data nationally	All govts	Governments continue to contribute through the RRRG Data Working Group as well as progressing state based activities.
4.01	Determine use of recycled content in road construction to establish a baseline and allow reporting on actions to significantly increase recycled content use	Aus Govt	Progress is linked to action 3.06, which has been delivered with Austroads completing guidelines for the use of recycled plastics in road construction: https://austroads.com.au/infrastructure/pavements/incorporating-recycled-plastics-into-asphalt The Australian Government continues to work across portfolios to identify data sources for use of recycled content in roads.
4.02	Partner with Infrastructure Australia, the Green Building Council of Australia and the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors to improve demand for recycled materials	Aus Govt	The Australian Government has completed work with Infrastructure Australia and continues to engage with the Green Building Council of Australia. The Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors has agreed to support communication activities to members when needed.
4.04	Devise specific procurement targets across all government procurement, with details about how the target will be calculated, achieved and audited	All govts	To assist in the development of targets, governments are updating procurement policies, undertaking consultation and research to inform baselines and/or policy development.
4.05	Report on government procurement activities that have significantly increased the use of recycled material in infrastructure projects, including where possible the percentage	All govts	Governments are continuing to implement policies to increase the use of recycled content in government procurements.

Action Item		Lead	Progress
	of capital works projects that include recycled content		
4.07	Investigate ways to support and promote businesses using circular economy practices, such as awards or recognition schemes	All govts	ALGA has delivered this action item. Remaining governments continue to progress this action item through activities such as the provision of grants.
4.08	Incorporate information about the percentage of recycled content in packaging into the Australasian Recycling Label, to allow informed consumer choice	APCO	Due to the upcoming packaging policy reform, APCO has not undertaken this action and will await announcement on mandated design standards.
4.09	Encourage Australian businesses to adopt and publish sustainable procurement policies, including use of recycled content	Business sector	APCO's sustainable packaging guidelines outline how businesses can establish sustainable procurement guidelines. Additionally, APCO has published Supporting Government Procurement of Recycled Materials.
4.10	Support the Australian Packaging Covenant organisation to develop and deliver an industry-led target for average recycled content to be included across all packaging	All govts	Nationally led reforms to packaging regulation will incorporate mandatory design requirements including on recycled content.
5.02	Implement the Pacific Ocean Litter Project, to reduce plastics and other waste in oceans	Aus Govt	In 2021, the Project was redesigned into two phases, with phase one being extended to 2024. A second phase, agreed by DCCEEW and DFAT, is to be completed in 2027.
5.03	Implement measures to reduce ship-sourced waste in accordance with the International Maritime Organisation's Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships	Aus Govt	Dependent upon completion of action item 3.20.
5.07	Phase out problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic packaging through design, innovation or introduction of alternatives	APCO	APCO has created resources to support its our members such as the Sustainable Packaging Guidelines, an Action Plan for Problematic and Unnecessary Single-Use Plastic Packaging, and the National Roadmap to Phase out B2C EPS. Within the Action Plan, APCO has identified problematic and/or unnecessary single-use plastic packaging for immediate action.
5.09	Better manage the import, export, use, manufacture and end-of-life disposal of products and articles containing hazardous substances	All govts	National standards for the management of the environmental impacts of industrial chemicals are being scheduled by the Australian Government through the Industrial Chemicals Environmental Management Scheme (IChEMS). This action item is also being considered through work on the new national packaging regulations.
6.03	Provide support to develop distributed infrastructure solutions to process organic waste, including composting infrastructure	S&T and Local govts	ACT, Tasmania, Victoria and WA have delivered this action item.

Action Item		Lead	Progress
6.04	Deliver Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) collection to metropolitan households and businesses	S&T and Local govts	All governments are progressing activities to meet this action item through activities such as FOGO pilots, grants, and rollout of FOGO bins.
6.05	Support the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre to undertake a range of research and activities to reduce food waste in the supply chain, transform unavoidable waste into co-products and influence behavioural change in businesses and households	Aus Govt	The Australian Government, through DISR, has provided \$30 million in funding from 2018 to 2028. DCCEEW has also entered into a new \$10 million (ex GST) grant agreement with End Food Waste Australia Limited for the delivery of a nationwide consumer behaviour change campaign to reduce food waste in Australian households.

Ongoing action items with no specified due date

Action Item		Lead	
1.03	Develop new markets for recycled products and materials	All govts	Government are supporting legislative changes, and implementing circular economy strategies and related policy and programs.
1.04	Build industry capacity and infrastructure to collect, separate, recycle and remanufacture recycled materials	All govts	Governments are supporting this action through activities such as the implementation of waste strategies and plans that target the building of industry capacity and infrastructure.
2.05	Deliver targeted programs to build businesses' capability to identify and act on opportunities to avoid waste and increase materials efficiency and recovery	All govts	Work is continuing through investment in a range of strategies, programs and grant funding, including through the Recycling Modernisation Fund.
2.07	Support community-based reuse and repair centres, enabling communities to avoid creating waste	All govts	Activities being supported include co-design process with stakeholders in the reuse and repair sector, Garage Sale Trails.
2.08	Give greater public recognition to businesses that are promoting sustainable packaging design through design awards	APCO	Annual delivery of APCO's Industry Sector Awards that recognises high performing APCO members based on their annual reporting, that are promoting sustainable packaging design and innovation.
2.12	Support and promote circular economy principles in urban planning, infrastructure and development projects	All govts	Governments have reported continued activities and priorities in their state-based strategies.
2.14	Improve consumer information to increase recycling rates and improve the quality of materials in kerbside recycling collection through the Australasian Recycling Label	APCO	ARL is accessible on over 300,000 stock keeping units (SKU) and 900 organisations using the Packaging Recycling Evaluation Portal to support best practice design for recyclability.
3.15	Develop shared infrastructure and collection processes for packaging waste in remote and regional areas through the Remote and Regional Waste Collection Partnership	APCO	ANZPAC is working with the support of the NT Government to develop a Business Case for Circularity of Plastic Packaging across the NT including remote communities, with the final report expected April 2024.

Action Item		Lead	
4.03	Work with industry to identify specific opportunities to increase uptake of recycled content in buildings and infrastructure	All govts & business sector	Governments are progressing this ongoing action item through collaboration with industry and sustainability organisations in the buildings and infrastructure sectors. States and territories are continuing to run funding programs and implement policies that preference the use of recycle content.
4.06	Report on progress in achieving procurement targets	All govts	Activities are dependent on 4.04 and 4.05 being delivered.
7.03	Publish the National Waste Report every two years	Aus Govt	The most recent National Waste Report was published to the DCCEEW website on 15 December 2022. The next Report is due at the end of 2024.
7.04	Publish monthly international trade data on Australian recycled material exports	Aus Govt	Published quarterly on the Waste Export viewer.
7.05	Publish the national Hazardous Waste in Australia report	Aus Govt	Published in 2021. The next report is due in 2024.