

Submission



To Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
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From Colin Sweet, CEO - ALOA

Date September 19 2017

Subject **Waste and Recycling Industry in Australia**
– ALOA's Response to the Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communication

Background

The Australian Landfill Owners Association (ALOA) was formed in late 2008. It is an incorporated entity with members from across Australia.

Modern landfills are an essential element in today's integrated waste management infrastructure as landfills:

- Offer cost effective and reliable disposal of recycling and processing residues and unsorted wastes;
- Manage greenhouse gas emission by methane collection and combustion;
- Provide a source of renewable energy;
- Have the flexibility to accept variable waste volumes; and
- Are reliable last resorts for the acceptance of large volumes of 'disaster' waste.
- Member landfills provide services to the public, local government, industry, property developers, mining and agriculture.

ALOA members receive and safely manage the disposal of almost three quarters of the waste landfilled in Australia.

Since its inception ALOA has defended the interests of its members in national and state issues. In particular, ALOA campaigned for fairer treatment under the 'carbon' tax and worked closely with the Australian Local Government Associate (ALGA) to develop the Voluntary Waste Industry Protocol to utilise collected carbon tax monies.

ALOA is governed by a 'national' board and has state 'chapters' in each of the mainland states.

Response

ALOA provides the following response to each item in the Terms of Reference

a) *The quantity of solid waste generated and the rate of diversion of solid waste for recycling;*

ALOA supports the diversion of solid waste for recycling when an improved environmental outcome is derived.

b) *The accreditation and management of landfills;*

ALOA believes that all waste that is landfilled should be directed to well managed and environmentally compliant facilities. The current legislative frameworks are sufficient to ensure a high level of environmental performance of the landfill sector provided they are applied uniformly to all facilities. State based Environmental Protection Authorities are the proper government body to enforce the legislative frameworks.

c) *The extent of illegal landfilling;*

ALOA is unaware of the extent of illegal landfilling, but entirely supports the efforts of regulatory authorities to reduce it to zero.

d) *The role of landfill levies in determining the end destination of material, including the hypothecation of collected levies for enforcement and waste diversion purposes;*

The current system of landfill levies, whereby adjoining states have significantly different levies, encourages the interstate movement of large volumes of waste for the economic benefit of the transport and waste facility operators. Harmonisation of environmental legislation across the states would provide a great environmental benefit for the community.

e) *The role of different incentives and collection methods in determining the quality and quantity of material collected for recycling;*

Other participants in the waste management sector are in a better position to comment on this matter.

f) *The destination of material collected for recycling, including the extent of material reprocessing and the stockpiling of collected material;*

Other participants in the waste management sector are in a better position to comment on this matter

g) *The current economic conditions in the industry, including the market for material collected for recycling;*

Other participants in the waste management sector are in a better position to comment on this matter

h) *The transportation of solid waste across state boundaries;*

Subject to there being no financial or environmental disadvantage, solid waste should be deposited into the nearest solid waste landfill.

i) *The role of the Australian Government in providing a coherent, efficient and environmentally responsible approach to solid waste management, including by facilitating a federal approach;*

The role of the Australian Government should be to harmonise environmental legislation to avoid the unnecessary transport of waste across state borders, caused by differential levies or differential waste classifications. The Australian Government should be the lead Authority to ensure the highest and most consistent environmental outcomes across all states.

j) *Other related matters*

ALOA wishes to re-iterate the role that appropriately managed, environmentally compliant and properly licenced landfills perform within a broad waste management system serving a modern society.

Landfills of this type are key pieces of essential infrastructure serving a vital role in the safe and efficient disposal of a wide range of wastes. They receive materials from domestic and commercial residual waste bins as well as the residual waste produced by waste recycling and recovery operations.

ALOA supports the activities of all Regulators in the waste management industry and will continue to engage with the Regulators' endeavours to improve all environmental outcomes in an even-handed manner.