



Inquiry: The waste and recycling industry in Australia

Hearing: Melbourne, 20 November 2017

Tabled by: The National Waste and Recycling Industry Council

## **INTRODUCTION TO SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING - 8.50 am NOV 20, 2017**

**The National Waste and Recycling Industry Council welcomes this opportunity to testify before the Commonwealth Review of the Waste and Recycling Industry in Australia.**

**The NWRIC (the Council) is the industry's national policy setting body. Its core activity is proactive engagement with all key industry stakeholders to promote solutions to the challenges facing the sector.**

**The national members of the Council - Alex Fraser Group, Cleanaway, J. J. Richards, Remondis, ResourceCo, Solo Resource Recovery, Sims Metal Management, Suez, Toxfree and Veolia - hold the majority of the private capital invested into waste management and recycling assets in Australia.**

**The Council also comprises 'state affiliates' who represent the interests of smaller industry companies at a State level. The Council has affiliates in every state or territory except Tasmania.**

**The Council understands the purpose of this committee hearing is to develop a coherent national approach to the management of solid waste including issues related to landfills and markets for recycled materials.**

**The NWRIC believes the key barrier to improving waste management in Australia is:**

- 1. The lack of reliable medium and long term infrastructure planning.**
- 2. The need for better harmonisation of waste legislation to remove regulatory disparities.**
- 3. The introduction of improved enforcement of existing standards and regulations.**
- 4. The urgent need for local uses for recycled products.**

**If waste continues to grow by 4.5% per year - rising from approximately 55 million tonnes today - then by 2040 Australians will generate 138 million tonnes of solid waste. Assuming a future national diversion rate of 75% - our recycling capacity will need to increase by more than 400%.**

**As a result the Council calls for all governments to meet this challenge by aligning all waste planning, regulations and procurement practices to quickly transition the sector to a circular economy.**

**Today, the largest barrier to moving to a circular economy is a lack of planning for expanded waste and recycling infrastructure. The Council believes these plans should include suitable buffers and protection of infrastructure from future encroachment.**

**Without comprehensive planning the private sector will find it difficult to invest in new infrastructure. This planning should cover both the near term (10 years) and the long term (30 years). Planning for energy recovery and fuel manufacture facilities will also be needed as to ensure the circular economy is sustainable.**

**As evidenced by the recent Four Corners Report; [Trashed](#) - improved regulatory harmonisation, better enforcement of existing environmental standards and the creation of new markets for recyclable products is needed in every Australian jurisdiction.**

**The Council have engaged in extensive correspondence with EPAs and State and Territory Governments on this issue. We are encouraged by the recent changes in Victoria, which are aimed at creating a more responsive EPA.**

**For a circular economy to be successful, we need robust markets for recycled materials. Currently markets for recycled materials are under threat including the Chinese 'National Sword' (previously 'Green Fence') policy which will exclude the export of some recycled materials to China.**



To solve this challenge, the Council proposes that landfill levy funds be used to stimulate the creation of domestic markets for recycled materials.

To further stimulate recycling, The Council supports the expansion of the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) to support greenhouse gas reduction initiatives - including compost, landfill gas, recycling and material efficiency.

The Council was created last year to improve Australia's waste management and recycling capacity, to promote a safer industry and raise standards. The Council believes that an early transition to a sustainable circular economy is required to meet the challenge of increased waste volumes and has put forward a 'checklist' for implementing effective change in its [Policy Roadmap for a Circular Economy](#).

We welcome further questions from the Senate Committee..