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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached the Tasmanian Government submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Waste and Recycling Industry in Australia.

Yours sincerely

Elise Archer MP
Minister for Environment and Parks

Tasmanian Government Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Waste and Recycling Industry in Australia

Terms of Reference and Tasmanian Government responses

a. The quantity of solid waste generated and the rate of diversion of solid waste for recycling

Waste generation (tonnes) and recovery rates in Tasmania over the past five years

Waste (Tonnes)	Landfilled	Recycled	Composted	Generated	Recovered
2011-12	460,467	159,633	41,298	661,398	30.38%
2012-13	471,921	182,193	42,748	696,861	32.28%
2013-14	398,603	200,380	37,642	636,625	37.39%
2014-15	415,443	194,170	39,350	648,964	35.98%
2015-16	412,864	189,635	33,848	636,342	35.12%

Waste disposed to landfill and disposal rates in Tasmania by sector over the past five years

Waste Breakdown Sector %	by Total Tonnage	Municipal	Commercial & Industrial	Construction & Demolition
2011-12	460,467	36.99%	56.25%	10.11%
2012-13	440,748	38.75%	42.05%	19.19%
2013-14	398,603	42.43%	50.69%	6.88%
2014-15	415,443	43.24%	48.90%	7.86%
2015-16	422,530	41.24%	50.97%	7.79%

Tasmania generated approximately 636,342 tonnes of waste in 2015-16. The amount of waste generated in Tasmania over the last five years has been reasonably steady. Waste to landfill during the year was made up of municipal (41.24%), commercial and industrial (50.97%), and construction and demolition waste (7.79%). Improvements in data collection and waste classification have resulted in a more accurate profile of waste generation and recycling in Tasmania by each sector.

The reporting of Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste generation, which is considered low compared with national benchmarks, is unlikely to accurately reflect the actual level of activity and therefore waste generation within this sector. This is because much of the State's C&D waste ends up in clean fill sites and this does not need to be reported under either the Tasmanian Waste Classification System or National Waste Reporting.

b. The accreditation and management of landfills

Landfills receiving greater than 100 tonnes of waste (excluding clean fill) per annum are classified as level 2 activities under the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*. Environmental assessment and regulation of level 2 activities is the responsibility of the Tasmanian Environment Protection Authority. Landfills receiving clean fill only are not regulated by the EPA.

The Environment Protection Authority sets conditions of operation for landfills Permits issued under land use planning and approval legislation. Permit conditions may be varied from time to time using an Environment Protection Notice. EPA Tasmania administers a regulatory program involving periodic compliance audits and reviews of legal instruments. Tasmanian landfills are typically operated by local government. Some industrial landfills remain present at industrial sites, but are generally no longer receiving waste for disposal.

The *Landfill Sustainability Guide 2004* is Tasmania's current environmental guideline for landfills. Conditions of operation generally reflect the content of the Guide. Tasmania has a variety of landfills including older unlined landfills approaching end of life. Several landfills are connected to sewer for disposal of excess leachate.

Due to Tasmania's highly dispersed population, a number of small scale landfills remain in operation in remote areas, such as on King Island and Flinders Island. Tasmania's first Category C (or secure) landfill cell is due to open for receipt of waste in the very near future, this is expected to reduce reliance on interstate disposal facilities for wastes that exceed the disposal criteria that apply to putrescible landfills.

c. The extent of illegal landfilling

There is little quantitative data on the extent of illegal landfilling in Tasmania, and only a handful of isolated cases of illegal activity are reported to EPA Tasmania each year. In each instance the location, scale and content of waste material may vary greatly. However, of particular concern to regulators are reports of the alleged illegal burial of controlled waste material, including industrial and farm chemicals, as well as asbestos.

EPA Tasmania works closely with local government and other State agencies to act on illegal landfilling on public land and that which presents risks to the public (such as disposal of asbestos or tyres, which are controlled wastes in Tasmania). Aside from the above situations, illegal landfilling is largely seen as an issue for local government. Illegal landfilling using clean fill and inert wastes is often not seen as a high priority in terms of environmental risk. Operators of recycling ventures have indicated that their businesses are affected by the availability of cheap disposal routes, such as clean fill disposal sites.

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

Tasmania does not currently have a legislated waste levy.

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

No comment.

f. The destination of material collected for recycling, including the extent of material reprocessing and the stockpiling of collected material

No comment.

g. The current economic conditions in the industry, including the market for material collected for recycling

No comment.

h. The transportation of solid waste across state boundaries

Movement of controlled waste into and out of Tasmania is administered in accordance the *National Environment Protection (Movement of Controlled Waste between States and Territories) Measure*, which is a State Policy under Tasmanian law. Tasmania does not currently have a waste tracking system for internal movements. Interstate movements are tracked via hard copy consignment authorisations. Some Tasmanian waste generators have been reliant in recent years upon interstate transfers to deal with wastes for which no facility is available in Tasmania. Such transfers have generally been well accommodated by interstate counterparts.

Movement of materials between Australian metal smelting facilities has facilitated the reprocessing of materials that would otherwise be considered waste. Tasmania's cement kiln has also been utilised as an incinerator for destruction of certain wastes that have energy recovery or raw material benefits to the cement making process. All such wastes have been subject to trials and tests to confirm acceptable environmental outcomes. Due to the presence of Bass Strait, Tasmania is generally unlikely to receive or export general waste for disposal. Tasmania is a gateway for waste being returned from Antarctica and Macquarie Island.

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 policy settings and legislation adopted by the Australian Government are extremely important for addressing some of the priority waste management issues in Tasmania. For example, although the Tasmanian Government is investigating the introduction of a Container Deposit System (CDS), the adoption of a national CDS - or other used packaging measures - would likely be far more effective and provide greater economy of scale.

The Tasmanian Government suggests that policy tools available under national legislation like the *Product Stewardship Act 2011* (the PSA) could be better utilised. These don't have to be regulatory options, but could be co-regulation or voluntary schemes, such as the one that is in place for end-of-life tyres. Given that the PSA is currently under review, it is an opportune time for the Australian Government to examine the effectiveness of current approaches and whether existing regulatory and policy settings are achieving increased recycling and reuse.

j. Any other related matters.

No comment.