



By Anne Prince  
ACOR's CEO

The Australian Council of Recyclers (ACOR) was established in 1983 to encourage and promote recycling achievements to the wider community. Today, ACOR is a primary resource to government and industry in developing and communicating more effective approaches to consumer and industrial recycling.

Today our member's recycle in excess of 11 million tonnes of material annually and directly employ over 5,000 staff.

ACOR's vision is to optimise resource recovery and achieve the highest resource value of Australia's secondary materials. To achieve this vision, the organisation operates under the following principles:-

- Seeks to encourage government, industry and community to take actions to advance effective and feasible resource recovery.
- Seeks to ensure government policy is practical, flexible, equitable and promotes optimal resource recovery outcomes.
- Seeks to maximize the uptake of recovered resources by the processing of secondary resources to internationally recognised standards.

### The Council's member's span a vast array of sectors including:-

- Batteries - car and mobile phones
- Mobile garbage bins
- Cardboard
- Mobile telephones
- Computers
- Plastics
- Construction and demolition materials
- Tyres
- Electronics
- Whitegoods
- Ferrous and non-ferrous metals
- Alternate Waste and Energy Technologies
- Glass packaging
- Paper and newsprint

### Current members of ACOR include:-

- ACI Packaging
- GEO Fabrics Australasia
- Alcoa Australia Rolled Products
- MRI
- AMCOR
- Norske Skog
- Alex Fraser
- ResourceCO
- Australian Vinyls
- Sell and Parker
- Bluescope steel
- Sims Group
- Boral Recycling
- Smorgon Steel Recycling
- EDL
- Sulo
- Fisher and Paykel
- Global Renewables Ltd
- Visy

To become a member of ACOR you must meet the four criteria's which are:-  
1. Have a significant investment in

proven operational resource recovery infrastructure

2. Be a significant operator by material, stream or market share
3. Be focused on adding value to recovered resources
4. Add value to ACOR through participation, ideas and promotion of the association

Governments have and should continue to recognise the critical importance our members contributions have into the development of waste and resource recovery policy. Our members have significant expertise in resource recovery with considerable commitment to research and development, infrastructure, technology and strategic planning to identify obstacles to further improving recovery rates

Our members have three Key Priority Areas, which we believe will significantly influence resource recovery. These are:-

- Legislation - Restructuring landfill levies to reduce the cost of 'closing the loop' and maximize recycling
- Quality - Improving the quality of feedstock through producing to well recognised standards thereby improving acceptance and higher uptake of recycled materials in new products.
- Siting of Infrastructure - Ensuring due and practical consideration is given for the need for recycling infrastructure and to ensure such businesses can operate effectively without unnecessary limitation.

### Landfill Levies

ACOR is appalled that the NSW Government has not honored its commitment to hypothecate 55% of the approximately \$100 million currently collected in waste levies annually from New South Wales landfills, and allocated these monies to waste minimisation activities. Instead all these funds simply went into consolidated revenue to help balance the ailing state budget.

Waste levies were originally created as a tool to encourage greater resource recovery and increase diversion from landfill.

The levy has reached \$21.20/ tonne for metropolitan Sydney and \$13.20 in the Extended Regulated Area of Newcastle, Central Coast and Wollongong.

The NSW government has raised \$478 million since 1993 from the waste levy.

The hypothecation of a percentage of the monies collected to spend on projects designed to lift resource recovery, only became a reality in 2000 after much agitation by the NSW Local Government and Shires Association. Since 2000, \$125 million has been diverted to run the NSW Waste Boards and administer Resource NSW now part of Dept Environment and Conservation and its programs.

In 2004 no funds were diverted from the levy fund and government pocketed \$89 million dollars. The levy effectively acts as a TAX on recycling with nothing returned to do the research and development needed to make the next big improvements in resource recovery rates!

The government budget papers this year have identified \$29 million of the anticipated income stream of approximately \$102 million levy pool will be diverted to waste management activities. This equates to a hypothecation ratio of just 20.4%.

The disposal of the waste generated from attempting to maximize the amount of materials recycled is a significant cost to our business. In NSW alone our members pay in excess of \$4,000,000 in levies and over \$20,000,000 in landfill fees disposing of contaminants accompanying the primary materials we are trying to recover. These contaminants attract both a disposal charge as well as the waste levy.

Whilst the levy maybe an effective tool to support landfill diversion behaviour amongst waste generators unfortunately, when applied to recyclers, the levy only serves to add costs which erode the margin on recovered materials which draws the recovery net closer to the major metropolitan centres, where lower collection costs can offset the levy's impact. The levy therefore tends to most affect the outlying regional areas due to higher transport costs. ACOR would like to see some of the levy funds used to support transport of resources from rural and regional centres back to the metropolitan areas where recovery facilities re located.

ACOR would also like to see the levy

ACOR members include:



Alcoa Kaal  
Australia



# resource recovery sector

rebated to recyclers who are attempting to recover more 'contaminated' materials, which would normally go to landfill. These recyclers are naturally hit with higher waste bills, but made all the worse by the additional cost of paying the levy on top.

ACOR intends to engage with other stakeholders and lead representations to the government on this matter.

## Quality, Quality, Quality

The level of contamination in material is a key issue as the quantity of material increases and the tolerances to accept contamination reduce. To remove contamination is a costly and time consuming exercise but a necessary one.

Contamination can cause impurities in the finished product and create substandard products. For example a client of ACI Glass recently set their performance indicator as one failure in 1,000,000 glass bottles. To meet this standard ACI Glass require a feedstock that is free of ceramic and Pyrex as these materials melt at a lower temperature than glass and therefore create a "stone" in the product which creates a point of failure in the bottle which could lead to ultimate failure on a filling line.

To assist council's, contractor and MRF Operator's ACOR has developed an industry recycling Materials Specification document for recovery of all post-consumer materials from kerbside and industrial collection points.

The need for this document is exemplified by the increasing complexity of packaging and the demands of recycled material processors to meet the higher quality standards spoken of earlier as the recyclet is in the direct competition with virgin raw materials.

The Manual contains specifications for the following materials; Aluminium; Glass; HDPE; LDPE; PET; PVC; Paper; Steel

The Manual was mailed to every council in Australia on CD and is posted on the ACOR website [www.acor.org.au](http://www.acor.org.au)



## Siting of infrastructure

It is imperative that facilities are located close to collection sources to reduce transport costs in the industry. State Governments across the nation are setting ambitious targets of working towards zero waste e.g. NSW have identified a target of 68% diversion from landfill by the year 2014 while Victoria has set it's sights on 75% by the year 2013.

To achieve these targets substantial additional diversion from landfill of resources will be required In NSW an additional 700,000 tonnes of municipal waste, 1,000,000 tonnes from the commercial and industrial sector and a further 300,000 tonnes from construction and demolition.

To process this material will require new and improved technologies and facilities.

At odds with this direction is planning constraints that the resource recovery sector generally face when trying to identify sites which comply with planning requirements.

Recently Botany Bay City Council released a Development Control Plan No. 42 for Waste and Recycling Industrial Development. The DCP treats waste and recycling as the same activities and is discriminatory in a number of ways including specifying only daylight hours for operation. Many MRF's and reprocessing facilities operate 2 - 3 shifts on a 24 hour cycle to maximise equipment efficiency and to cope with the processing of feedstock during peak periods.

The Rethmann saga is well known to the industry whilst not a member of ACOR, we support them in this matter on principle. Rethmann submitted a Development Application to construct a MRF to target the CBD waste stream in an area zoned for industrial activity. Council refused to deal with the application and did want trucks entering the area at night. Waste can only be collected from the CBD during night time hours due to access. Rethmann took Botany Council to the Land and Environment Court after council failed to deal with the application within a reasonable time and the application was approved by the Court. However, Council has lodged an appeal to the Supreme Court.

## ACOR appointed to the NSW EPR Expert Reference Group

We welcomed the release of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Priority Statement 2004. Through ongoing dialogue ACOR has endeavoured to make policy makers aware of the issues and implications for the resource recovery sector by sharing our combined knowledge and experience in recycling and reprocessing.

In recognition of the expertise within ACOR Mr Vince Chaplin, Group Manager Environment with Smorgon Steel Recycling has been appointed to join the New South Wales EPR Expert Reference Group.

Currently ACOR membership spans 11 of the 16 Wastes of Concern noted in the EPR Priority Statement and it is our members who will play a significant role in delivery to the state of NSW and nationally the outcomes sought from this policy approach.

Mr Chaplin will join Mr Michael Bennett from Refrigerant Reclaim Australia and Dr Tony Wilkins of News Limited as industry representatives on this committee.



Mr Vince Chaplin  
Group Manager  
Environment  
Smorgon Steel Recycling

Another company has been forced to relocate a major piece of recycling infrastructure out of an area it has operated in for over a quarter of a century due to Local Government allowance of residential incursion across traditional buffer zones, to within metres of the plant. .

We object to resource recovery facilities being grouped in with the waste disposal industry and as such subject to the same planning framework as that afforded to old tips and landfill sites.. This classification approach implies we are receivers of putrescible matter with the associated offensive odours and potential to attract vermin. Visy have located a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Melbourne in a residential area, bordering a school, and within 100 metres of a Hospital and to date the plant has received no complaints in respect to noise, odour or traffic.

We acknowledge the need for sensitive design to protect the amenity of the neighbourhood. We fundamentally believe there is a lack of understanding of what we do and how we do it by State and Council Planners nationally. It is our job to educate them.

*Feedback on issues - ACOR are interested in your views and feedback on the issues raised in this issue. To submit anonymous responses please go to [www.acor.org.au/feedback](http://www.acor.org.au/feedback)*

*Australian Council of Recyclers  
PO Box 277  
Balgowlah NSW 2093  
Tele: 02 9907 0883  
Fax: 02 9907 0330  
Mobile: 0425 251 277*

