



MEDIA RELEASE

POTENTIAL TO TURN WASTE INTO ENERGY, WITH LESS LANDFILL AND LOWER EMISSIONS

The Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR) has today released a [discussion paper](#), investigating the potential to turn Australian waste into clean energy.

ACOR, which represents the \$15 billion strong resource recovery industry, commissioned a discussion paper on the evolving relationship between clean energy and waste reduction policies increasingly being implemented by Australian governments.

The paper finds that clean energy can be derived from organic wastes, such as food waste, biosolids, green waste, and paper and cardboard in three ways:

- by the pre-waste collection and industrial composting of organic wastes to produce biomethane and soil improvers;
- by the management of landfills to harvest a proportion of the methane from the decomposition of organic wastes disposed there; and
- by the combustion of remnant organic and other materials left in the post-recovery waste stream to create dispatchable, low emissions electricity which can provide valuable supporting services for high intermittent renewables electricity systems.

As governments across Australia are looking for more ways to implement a circular economy, turning our harder-to-recycle waste into clean energy could have a big environmental impact. Pursuing a waste to clean energy policy could have the dual benefit of helping with the de-carbonisation of the electricity system while reducing the amount of waste going to landfills, which are a source of methane, one of the most destructive of all greenhouse gases.

“The energy that could be used from these waste streams may be useful as a source of zero-emissions fuels, low emissions electricity and as an important complement to running high renewable generation in the electricity grid.” said Cameron O’Reilly, Interim CEO of Australian Council of Recycling.

“Increased waste to clean energy capabilities could also have the added benefit of off-setting the waste levies imposed by some states. As the economics of recycling and resource recovery facilities are underpinned by avoided landfill levies rather than wholesale energy prices, they can be viable through periods of low or negative wholesale prices unlike some other forms of clean energy generation.

“The report reinforces that energy from waste, selectively applied in a way that does not draw material from the waste stream that has other uses, has a role to play in a decarbonised and circular Australian economy,” said O’Reilly.

Media contact: Catherine Beachley, 0468 928 797
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