



MEDIA RELEASE

RECYCLERS CONFIDENT ABOUT INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE IN FACE OF CRISIS

Although it is early days for COVID-19, some organisations have already identified the potential for new business and innovation over the next six months, but it comes against a broader backdrop of concern about public policy settings for recycling, a breaking report commissioned by Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR) has shown.

ACOR, which represents the \$15 billion strong resource recovery industry, commissioned Prime Creative Media through its title *Waste Management Review* to undertake a measure of industry confidence of Australia's recycling sector.

From January to March 2020, Prime Creative Media surveyed more than 500 respondents working in municipal waste (MSW), commercial and industrial (C&I) and construction and demolition (C&D) waste. This included an updated survey conducted in the past two weeks.

The research reports found that, while almost half of all organisations across MSW, C&I and C&D streams are positive about their organisation's own performance and prospects, more than a third of industry respondents across all streams are not positive about public policy and government settings for resource recovery.

Respondents ranked issues most important to them and the top three issues across organisations working in MSW, C&D and C&I. Key issues highlighted by respondents were a need for greater reinvestment of State-based waste disposal levy funding into activities in resource recovery; grants/loans for resource recovery especially infrastructure and technology; and pro-active purchasing of recycled content products by the public sector.

In ACOR's second follow-up – COVID-19 Industry Pulse Check – 41 per cent of just under 100 participants indicated they were somewhat impacted by COVID-19, 35 per cent very impacted and 16 per cent unsure of the impact.

Several respondents indicated they would like clarifications on what the meaning of waste as an essential service is. Respondents called for waste levy relief by pausing waste levy increases over the next six months to 12 months.

Businesses are also somewhat confident about identifying new business opportunities over the next three to six months, with 35 per cent indicating some level of positivity.

ACOR CEO Pete Shmigel said that with the Council of Australian Government's ban on the export of unprocessed materials, re-investment into the sector is critical now more than ever.

"It's hoped that governments take the findings of these reports under consideration as part of the ongoing response to COVID-19 and more broadly. The overall picture is one of an industry that believes in its own capability, and was planning significant capital investments, but that is not as confident about the policies, regulations and government frameworks under which it operates. The latter are key to industry development," Shmigel said.

"If we want to optimise recycling's environmental and economic benefits, including during COVID19 when we really need those hi-viz jobs, we need to better line up industry interests and their social outcomes and public policy. Implementation of the National Waste Policy with all stakeholders around one table is an opportunity in that way. It's time for an era of better partnership, including around infrastructure, procurement, planning, and economic signals like waste disposal levies."

Waste Management Review Managing Editor Toli Papadopoulos said the publication was proud to continue to support the growth of the recycling sector during what was a challenging time for many. He noted that the sector was enterprising and results driven, and continuing this momentum was paramount.

"We look forward to seeing the impact of ACOR's whitepaper by the industry and key decision makers," Mr Papadopoulos said.

To read the full whitepaper, head to ACOR's website:

http://www.acor.org.au/uploads/2/1/5/4/21549240/acor_whitepaper-3.pdf

**For more information: Pete Shmigel, ACOR CEO, 0419 541 531
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