

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF RECYCLING'S

10 POINT PLAN FOR RESULTS- BASED RECYCLING

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INTRODUCTION

In addition to its environmental role, the Australian recycling industry significantly contributes to the Australian economy. It operates across our homes, businesses, factories and construction sites. It collects, sorts, and reprocesses material, and makes new recycled content products.

We make new products not push waste.



We are now at a crossroads. Australia is currently ranked about 17th in the world for recycling, and recycling rates are stagnant. That also means stagnation in jobs that this industry contributes. And, China has now stopped taking substantial amounts of material. That's why we are taking charge of making change.

We have a big goal - **100% recovery of recyclable, compostable, reusable or recoverable materials.** And, there are new national recycling targets in public policy. To reach these aims, a practical and positive plan is needed.

We need to reboot recycling as a self-sufficient sector that enables employment and prevents pollution. Independent reports show that domestically remanufacturing 50% of the material formerly sent to China leads to some 500 jobs here and reduces greenhouse gases equivalent of 50,000 less cars.

This is our 10 Point Plan for investment in the improvement, innovation and infrastructure of the recycling industry. **Surveys show that some 90% of Australians support such a plan.**

Though investing in these solutions, we can fulfil the promise of recycling: that what Australians put in the bin at home, at work or on site becomes new products not lumps in landfill.



WHAT RESULTS SHOULD RECYCLING IN AUSTRALIA BE ACHIEVING?

- 100% recovery of recyclable, compostable, reuseable or recoverable materials and their diversion from landfill - as Australia is currently ranked about 17th in the world, recycling rates in key categories have been stagnating, and energy capture is lagging
- Greenhouse gas emission reductions through resource recovery and through using recycle rather than virgin materials in manufacturing, and through energy recovery from residual waste
- Affordable and environmentally appropriate energy recovery from residual waste
- Economic and jobs growth of 50% - as the sector is currently valued at around \$15 billion per year, and .5% of GDP, and generates around 50,000 jobs, including in regional areas
- Social capital growth – as recycling is a service that 88% of Australians believe should be further invested in and it is an industry that provides accessible and meaningful employment to many disadvantaged people
- Full accountability by brand owners and retailers for the collection, sorting and recycling of materials placed into the marketplace
- Domestic self-reliance in terms of markets for collected recycle and application of the proximity principle – as a response to increased protectionism by major trading nations, including bans and restrictions on the export of Australian recycle
- Regional leadership and innovation – as the Oceania Pacific region continues to modernise and confronts the challenge of increased waste generation per capita

What public policy principles support achieving those results?

- Use of a “resource recovery efficiency” hierarchy to optimise material usage and/or value recovery at every stage from avoidance, reuse, recycling, residuals and energy recovery, and disposal
- Leadership
- Industry recognition
- Competition
- True cost approach
- Rational regulation
- Community empowerment

WHAT 10 PUBLIC POLICY MEASURES DOES THE RECYCLING INDUSTRY ADVOCATE?

1. Reform waste levies to raise recycling not revenue

- Rationalisation and policy consistency of economic signals between levies, CDS and rates
- Appropriate level of levy in each State
- Appropriate and transparent trajectory of increases toward true cost of landfill disposal
- Exemption of recycling residuals in every State – with appropriate safeguards to promote legitimate recycling, such as efficiency thresholds, auditing and accreditation

2. Invest \$1.5b of waste disposal levy funds into recycling

- Full transparency and allocation to resource recovery objectives to stimulate a circular economy
- Investment in the unfunded costs of kerbside recycling
- Investment in infrastructure and technology including first-grade sorting and enhanced reprocessing
- Investment in recycle market development R&D and commercialisation projects and Government “buy recycled” purchasing initiatives
- Provision of appropriate resources to more effectively deliver resource recovery strategy and initiatives (eg, delineating responsibilities between the regulatory wing and program wing of government, such as in Victoria and South Australia)
- Greater investment in data collection and utilisation for decision-making

3. Make end-of-life producer responsibility the key way to prevent pollution and pay for recycling in a circular economy

- Immediate introduction of landfill bans for batteries, e-waste and other potentially hazardous materials
- Full funding of the unmet costs of kerbside recycling on a 50/50 basis between State Governments' landfill levies and the packaging supply chain including through an improved National Environment Protection Measure (NEPM) for packaging to support UK-style Packaging Recovery Notes
- Development of a transparent and accountable method for fast-tracking product stewardship materials and products
- Ensure that voluntary approaches feature real trajectories against targets and real consequences for non-achievement
- Reestablishment of an external advisory group for product stewardship policy to determine where there is market failure and drive efforts

4. Build a sustainable domestic recycling sector through national industry development focus

- Conduct of a national recycling infrastructure audit and identification of gaps
- Development of new metrics for waste, recycling and resource recovery activity – beyond tonnes diverted – to include greenhouse gas abatement, energy efficiency, toxicity avoidance, regional development contribution, economic/social capital generation
- Examination of trends – such as automation, digitisation, personal empowerment, and urbanisation - impacting on industry and the best measures to harness positives for greater environmental, social and economic outcomes
- Examination of how to optimise running parallel Container Deposit Schemes and conventional kerbside recycling schemes to ensure optimum efficiency

5. Introduce a Resource Recovery Incentive for Industry (R2I2) with different tax levels for virgin and recycled content material usage in major product manufacturing and importation categories such as packaging, road construction, and building construction

6. Have more contestability in recycling markets

- Opening further activities and markets to full contestability, including domestic recycling and waste services in Multi-Unit Dwellings
- Provision of greater options to ratepayers above conventional resource recovery services on a user-pays basis, such as greater source segregation, guaranteed provenance outcomes, and direct data provision
- Recognition in recycling contracts of the full and true value of services

7. Use common sense to standardise of recycling methods

- Clear definition of scope of materials in kerbside recycling and preferred practice collection methodologies and their unit costs – and restrictions on non-conventional plastics and complex packs
- Support for accreditation of recycling collection, sorting and remanufacturing to benchmark and drive continual professionalisation and improvement in resource recovery
- Introduction of national level education to promote positive consumer choices and behaviours within a standardised system
- Conduct of an annual national recycling and garbage bin audit to determine performance benchmarks and progress in kerbside recycling
- Development of a recycling commodity market index to enable better risk awareness and sharing between parties

8. Capture the greenhouse gas reduction benefits of recycling activities

- Create a dedicated Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) funding initiative to better credit and provide support for recycle materials collection and sorting, and for recycle materials use in manufacturing, given the embodied energy benefits
- On-going CEFC support for the production of lower-impact replacement fuels derived from resource recovery processes

9. Use more energy recovered from residual waste for affordable and sustainable energy

- Improved development of energy-from-waste infrastructure for residual waste, including micro-generation, co-generation and fuel replacement opportunities

10. Improve government approaches to planning, regulation and enforcement

- Appropriate regulation of unprocessed recycle export materials and the application of the proximity principle
- Strategic planning for waste and resource recovery facility siting in every State, including the retention of dedicated areas and buffer zones
- Placement of all waste and resource recovery facilities in the domain of State Government planning instruments as a recognition of their essential status
- Efficient and collaborative consent models for waste and resource recovery facilities
- Improved regulatory classification of recovered materials to alleviate unnecessary blockages to their recycling and facilitating their treatment as manufacturing inputs
- Better education and skills among regulators, including industry-based inductions and training
- Granting Council rangers the ability to fine households and businesses for contamination of recycling streams – as they can for littering and illegal dumping
- Use of broader environmental footprint method in the application of regulations to resource recovery sites



ACOR

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OF RECYCLING

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ACOR is the national peak body for the recycling sector with member companies operating across the spectrum of recycling activities of recyclate collection, sorting, reprocessing and recycled content product manufacturing; recycling supply chains in the municipal, commercial & industrial, and construction & demolition spheres, and; recyclate streams from domestic kerbside materials to e-waste materials.