



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **REASONABLE BUT PATCHY PROGRESS ON RECYCLING AT MEETING OF ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS (MEM)**

“Given that the last MEM could not even crawl together, the fact that this one at least walked toward a more domestically sustainable system is reasonable if not patchy progress, and a credit to new leadership,” Pete Shmigel, ACOR CEO, said.

“ACOR is optimistic that both State and Federal Ministers will now stay focussed on an undeniable fact: their collective action, including expenditure allocation, is needed to enable an effective export ban and its environmental and economic benefits, as opposed to unintended suburban stockpiles and local landfilling. We look forward to working with Government on implementation aspects such as export definitions.

“However, it’s regretful that clear opportunities – like an immediate ban on baled tyre exports that sometimes go to overseas incinerators and specific procurement actions – have been missed. These aspects need to be revisited as the process moves forward from here, including at COAG, as there is strong evidence of their benefits,” Shmigel said.

ACOR notes that among the positives is:

- A clear timetable for the waste export ban;
- Adoption of broader waste minimisation targets through the NWP Action Plan such as 80% resource recovery and halving organic waste;
- Greater commitment to recycled roads as an important solution, including the Commonwealth to play a leading role;
- Establishment of an ongoing stakeholder process for progress and accountability;
- Recognition of the need for brands and packaging supply chain members to make clear their ‘buy recycled’ commitments;
- Commitment to harmonising container deposit schemes; and
- Recognition of the need for infrastructure investment for domestic sustainability.

ACOR notes with concern:

- The failure to enact an immediate ban on baled tyre exports as there are readily available markets for the material and serious environmental impacts from its continued export for two more years;
- Further indecision on funding for infrastructure especially for mixed paper decontamination and plastics reprocessing capacity, and;
- A lack of substantive progress on the product stewardship agenda, including batteries growing by 300% in consumption and creating OH&S risks in recycling facilities.

“It’s hard to understand why banning baled tyres has not been prioritised as ample evidence was produced on the environmental impact of exports, the existing domestic capacity for reprocessing, and the legal avenues available. If one or two jurisdictions blocked this, they need to state their reasons so they can be addressed, and the ban date revisited and expedited at COAG itself. Otherwise, other jurisdictions should just start now via regulations as there is minimal risk in doing so,” Shmigel said.

“On the other hand, it’s good to see more commitment to recycled roads as a practical, no/low cost solution for domestic sustainability. There is evidence that specifying recycled content in even 12 major projects around the country can double our plastics recycling rate, and we should move forward faster on that front, including at COAG where we look forward to the Prime Minister’s continued leadership on recycling,” Shmigel said.

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