



MEDIA RELEASE

NSW BAN WILL BACKFIRE INTO POSSIBLE INCINERATION

The NSW EPA's proposed ban on resource recovery from municipal solid waste will have significant consequences for NSW's environment and economy, according to the Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR).

"If the NSW Government implements the EPA's decision, waste to landfill or incineration will increase by some 25%, some 200 jobs may be lost, and Council rates may go up," said Pete Shmigel, ACOR CEO.

"It is hard to understand how an internationally proven product successfully used by local farmers and others for nearly 20 years - and which the NSW Government has previously said has 'no human health impact' - can now be banned.

"Compost products from all sources, including home-made compost in people's backyards and bagged compost on the shelves at Bunnings, generally contain materials with impacts, as well as all their very beneficial aspects. The incidental impacts are managed through carefully developed rules and guidelines like Australian Standard 4454 which permits for trace levels of plastics and glass and other materials.

"While industry has been given no opportunity to see the report cited in today's media, we were yesterday 'confidentially' briefed by the EPA that laboratory tests on our industry's material were done at 10 times the actual permissible usage.

"That's like setting an emission level for cars using a test with a coal-powered train or some fictional car that's ten times larger than normal. It's wholly arbitrary and illogical.

"The evidence appears incomplete at best; the process has lacked transparency and may well be compromised; the assumptions are highly flawed; the impacts of NSW Government policy goals are profound, and; the consequences to not only our industry but the agricultural, mining and timber sectors have been largely ignored.

"What is most regretful is that industry has on several occasions and in writing - both to the EPA and the Minister - offered to develop and invest in a new performance level to address their concerns. That offer has been de facto rejected, or is now being dismissed as 'unachievable' without robust industry consultation. Therefore, the prospect of an

environmentally beneficial and economically sustainable way forward has been seemingly ruled out by the EPA which is fully unproductive.

“Together with our partners in Councils who contract us, our industry has been positively contributing to the NSW environment and economy for decades, and we will act with purpose during the upcoming consultation period on the draft decision including scientific proof of our benefits, quantification of the decision’s consequences, and communicating with the community that it’s Government seems to put untreated landfill disposal and even incineration before recycling, jobs and environmental protection.

“The Minister has said he wants waste and resource recovery to be ‘self-sustaining, affordable and reliable’. The EPA position on MWOO will put all of recycling into disarray, increase taxpayer costs, and send material to landfill or incineration. That is a bad result for NSW,” Shmigel said.

**For more information: Pete Shmigel 0419 541 531
16/10/19**