



Australian Government

Department of Sustainability, Environment,  
Water, Population and Communities



EPHC  
Environment Protection and Heritage Council

# National Waste Policy: Less Waste, More Resources

STATUS REPORT  
November 2010



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## Background

On 5 November 2009 Australia's environment ministers through the Environment Protection and Heritage Council endorsed the *National Waste Policy: less waste, more resources* (the National Waste Policy). The National Waste Policy aims to avoid the generation of waste, reduce the amount of waste (including hazardous waste) for disposal, manage waste as a resource and ensure that waste treatment, disposal, recovery and re-use is undertaken in a safe, scientific and environmentally-sound manner. In acknowledgement of the potential to achieve wider community objectives, the National Waste Policy also aims to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy conservation, raise water efficiency and enhance productivity of the land.

The National Waste Policy establishes Australia's waste management and resource recovery agenda across six key directions for the period to 2020:

1. **Taking responsibility**—shared responsibility for reducing the environmental, health and safety footprint of products and materials across the manufacture-supply-consumption chain and at end-of-life.
2. **Improving the market**—efficient and effective Australian markets operate for waste and recovered resources, with local technology and innovation being sought after internationally.
3. **Pursuing sustainability**—less waste and improved use of waste to achieve broader environmental, social and economic benefits.
4. **Reducing hazard and risk**—reduction of potentially hazardous content of wastes with consistent, safe and accountable waste recovery, handling and disposal.
5. **Tailoring solutions**—increased capacity in regional, remote and Indigenous communities to manage waste and recover and re-use resources.
6. **Providing the evidence**—access by decision makers to meaningful, accurate and current national waste and resource recovery data and information to measure progress, educate and inform the behavior and the choices of the community.

Sixteen priority strategies that build on these key directions and give focus to the work of individual jurisdictions are also identified in [The National Waste Policy Implementation Plan](#) (The Implementation Plan).

The Implementation Plan provides milestones for reporting on action against each of the 16 strategies identified in the National Waste Policy, over the period of 2010-2015.

Progress against the 2010 milestones as at 14 October 2010 is presented in [Table 1](#) while progress against the remaining strategies (which have longer term milestones) is presented in [Table 2](#).

**Table 1: National Waste Policy Implementation: Status report against strategies with 2010 milestones as at 14 October 2010**

<b>Strategy 1 - product stewardship</b>	
<b>Implementation Plan 2010 Milestones</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p><b>Commonwealth Legislation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder reference group established May 2010</li> <li>- Discussion paper released July 2010</li> <li>- Bill introduced into Parliament in spring 2010 sitting period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stakeholder Reference Group established in May 2010 and first met in June 2010</li> <li>▪ Consultation Paper planned for release &amp; stakeholder consultations to commence November 2010.</li> <li>▪ Initial drafting instructions complete &amp; drafting of Bill commenced</li> <li>▪ A study on common data requirements for product stewardship schemes scheduled for release November 2010</li> </ul>
<p><b>National television &amp; computer scheme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion paper released July 2010</li> <li>- Stakeholder consultation from April 2010</li> <li>- Draft scheme developed by industry by July 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implementation Working Group established March 2010</li> <li>▪ Stakeholder Reference Group established May 2010</li> <li>▪ Risk management plan and common risk register developed</li> <li>▪ Modelling of timing, geographic rollout &amp; infrastructure/collection arrangements underway</li> <li>▪ Key performance indicators and data collection and reporting methodologies progressing</li> <li>▪ Australian standard for the collection, storage, transport and treatment of e-waste commenced. Draft interim industry guidelines under development.</li> <li>▪ Further advice sought on exemption thresholds</li> <li>▪ Prospective liable parties notified of the Bill and possible obligations</li> <li>▪ Transitional arrangements for selected regions subject to digital switchover under development</li> <li>▪ ACT banned televisions from going to landfill in April 2010</li> </ul>
<p><b>National tyre product stewardship strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation Working Group established April 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tyres Steering Group established April 2010</li> <li>▪ Implementation Working Group established May 2010</li> <li>▪ Study on the domestic and international flow of end-of-life tyres commenced</li> <li>▪ Draft long term whole of life tyre management strategy being considered by steering group</li> </ul>
<p><b>FluoroCycle</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Program commences by September 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program announced May 2009. Australian Government committed \$600,000 over 3 years in support</li> <li>▪ Program launched in July 2010 and Guidelines released</li> <li>▪ Lighting Council Australia appointed as the FluoroCycle Administrator in July 2010</li> <li>▪ As of 14 October 2010, seventeen foundation signatories and 34 businesses and organisations have indicated strong interest. High level of interest from metropolitan and rural councils</li> </ul>

**Table 1: National Waste Policy Implementation: Status report against strategies with 2010 milestones as at 14 October 2010**

<b>Strategy 3 - packaging &amp; litter</b>	
<b>Implementation Plan 2010 Milestones</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p><b>Australian Packaging Covenant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement by May 2010</li> <li>- Decision Regulatory Impact Statement released by June 2010</li> <li>- NEPM (Used Packaging Materials) amended by end June 2010</li> <li>- Australian Packaging Covenant commences July 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consultation &amp; decision Regulation Impact Statement completed by June 2010</li> <li>▪ National Environment Protection (Used Packaging Materials) Measure amendment agreed and tabled in Parliament on 28 September 2010. Disallowance period expires after first sitting day in 2011</li> <li>▪ Australian Packaging Covenant commenced 1 July 2010</li> <li>▪ Sustainable Packaging Guidelines released July 2010</li> <li>▪ As at 14 October, 253 signatories recommitted to the Australian Packaging Covenant</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scope and develop national standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft Australian Standard for biodegradable plastics in home composting released for comment in February 2010</li> <li>- Research on the rate and extent of biodegradable plastics in relevant Australian soil and marine environments completed by September 2010</li> <li>- Australian Standard for degradable plastics in home composting finalised September 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Australian Standard for biodegradable plastics in home composting finalised and released in July 2010</li> <li>▪ Research on the rate and extent of disintegration of biodegradable plastics in Australian soil and marine environments completed. Report is being finalised</li> </ul>
<p><b>Measures to improve recycling of packaging and reduce litter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Willingness to pay (choice modelling) survey completed by July 2010</li> <li>- EPHC consider choice modelling report by July 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Survey on consumer's willingness to pay to improve recycling of packaging and reduce litter released in July 2010</li> <li>▪ Preparation of consultation Regulation Impact Statement on packaging waste commenced and initial consultation with stakeholders underway</li> <li>▪ ACT introduced legislation on 28 October 2010 to ban single-use plastic shopping bags</li> </ul>

**Table 1: National Waste Policy Implementation: Status report against strategies with 2010 milestones as at 14 October 2010**

<b>Strategy 4 - National classification system for waste</b>	
<b>Implementation Plan 2010 Milestones</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p><b>Establish a baseline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing waste definitions and classifications in Australia are documented by 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initial study describing waste classifications used in Australia being finalised</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy 5 - National standards &amp; specifications</b>	
<b>Implementation Plan 2010 Milestones</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p><b>National standards &amp; specifications for recycled construction &amp; demolition material &amp; organics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing jurisdictional standards, specifications and industry initiatives as well as relevant international standards and specifications are documented by 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Industry led revision of Australian Standard for use of recycled organics in composts, soil conditioners and mulches released for public comment in July 2010</li> <li>▪ NSW issued an updated specification for supply of recycled material for pavements, earthworks and drainage (April 2010). To be considered in the national context</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy 12 - Comprehensive hazardous waste system</b>	
<b>Implementation Plan 2010 Milestones</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p><b>Monitoring hazardous substances in the environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Pollutant Inventory statutory guidance materials updated (ongoing)</li> <li>- Program to monitor levels of chemicals of concern in air over time as required by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants started by December 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning phase for the review of the existing National Pollutant Inventory guidance documentation and establishment of a list of the priority materials to be reviewed and updated has commenced</li> <li>▪ Phase 1 of National Monitoring of Hazardous Substances in Air has commenced</li> <li>▪ Workshop held with NChEM Working Group (Australian Government, states and territories) October 2010 to discuss options for establishing and operating an environmental standards setting body and performance indicators for a performance measurement framework for monitoring the impact of chemicals in the environment</li> <li>▪ Desktop review of existing labelling requirements in Australia and overseas and development of options for environmental labelling in Australia completed</li> <li>▪ Planning phase for the review of the Hazardous Waste Act well progressed</li> </ul>

**Table 1: National Waste Policy Implementation: Status report against strategies with 2010 milestones as at 14 October 2010**

<b>Strategy 15 - Waste audit of remote Indigenous communities</b>	
<b>Implementation Plan 2010 Milestones</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>Audit of selected communities</b>  - Base level waste standards that draw on existing national guidelines and frameworks and a review of jurisdictional standards, guidelines and/or regulations agreed by 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Base level waste standards agreed</li><li>▪ Physical audits of essential and municipal services in selected remote Indigenous communities completed March 2010</li><li>▪ Negotiation on audit data with State and Northern Territory Governments continuing in 2010</li></ul>



**Table 2: Progress of longer term National Waste Policy strategies at 14 October 2010**

Strategy	Progress
<p><b>Strategy 2:</b> Sustainable procurement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Cwth</u>: Guidance on incorporating sustainability into value for money decisions being developed</li> <li>▪ ACT: Implemented a Stationery Procurement Contract which allows for reporting against an 'earth saver' sustainable product line and developed Sustainable Procurement Circulars to assist employees consider choices for more sustainable and "green" procurement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 6:</b> Knowledge exchange – sustainable procurement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not commenced (first milestone due 2012)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 7:</b> Phase down of biodegradable material in landfill</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>VIC</u>: Revised guidance on best practice environmental management for siting, design, operation and rehabilitation of landfills released Sept 2010. Encourages removal of putrescible fractions from the waste stream</li> <li>▪ <u>QLD</u>: Introducing waste levy for Commercial &amp; Industrial and Construction &amp; Demolition sectors. All waste destined for recycling or beneficial re-use exempt. Funds used in part to encourage investment in recycling, composting and re-use facilities</li> <li>▪ <u>SA</u>: Committed \$6.1 million over 4 years (2010-11 to 2013-14) to assist councils to implement kerbside collection of food waste as part of existing green organics collections.</li> <li>▪ <u>NSW</u>: Love Food Hate Waste program launched in May 2010. Program aims to raise awareness about the environmental and economic impacts of food waste in NSW and to reduce the amount of food being sent to landfill. The program is being delivered through major partnerships with community, retail, manufacturing and supply chain organisations. To date, the program has 46 program partners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 8:</b> Landfill safety and risk management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>SA</u>: Introduced its Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy on 1 September 2010. The Policy aims to achieve sustainable waste management by applying the waste management hierarchy consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development as set out in the SA Environment Protection Act 1993.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 9:</b> Emissions/ offsets for landfill and other waste activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Cwth</u>: Scoping knowledge and opportunities to decrease food waste in commercial &amp; industrial sector underway</li> </ul>

Table 2: Progress of longer term National Waste Policy strategies at 14 October 2010

Strategy	Progress
<p><b>Strategy 10:</b> Commercial and industrial waste avoidance &amp; re-use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Cwth</u>: Collation of data, knowledge and knowledge holders on food waste commenced. This will help build a national picture. Undertaken in collaboration with the Australian Food &amp; Grocery Council.</li> <li>▪ <u>SA</u>: Recycle at Work program has facilitated (as at May 2010) the installation of 1,656 new recycling services in commercial and industrial sector since the start of the program in October 2008.</li> <li>▪ <u>SA</u>: The Resource Efficiency Assistance Program (REAP) is helping businesses and Government understand, develop and implement cost saving resource efficiency measures. \$1.16m has been allocated to REAP in 2010-11.</li> <li>▪ <u>NSW</u>: In June 2010, Planet Ark, in partnership with NSW and business, launched a national Business Recycling Directory &lt;BusinessRecycling.com.au&gt;. The directory is aimed at connecting small to medium sized businesses with recycling service providers.</li> <li>▪ <u>ACT</u>: Launched in August 2009 ACTSmart Office and Business programs to improve waste management and recycling and reduce waste to landfill. Over 160 sites signed up.</li> <li>▪ <u>ACT</u>: Will release a comprehensive ACT waste strategy in 2010, consistent with the National Waste Policy and focus on improving recycling in the commercial sector, promoting innovation in resource recovery and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 11:</b> Construction &amp; demolition waste management and resource recovery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not commenced (first milestone due 2014)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 13:</b> Reducing hazards in products and articles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project scoping and procurement plan to develop methodology for identifying articles and products containing Stockholm Convention listed persistent organic pollutants underway (first milestone due 2011)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 14:</b> Regional &amp; remote capacity building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>WA</u>: Examining opportunities to re-use construction and demolition waste in remote Indigenous communities</li> <li>▪ <u>SA</u>: Developed a draft regional waste management priorities and implementation plan for the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY Lands).</li> <li>▪ <u>NSW</u>: Aboriginal Land Clean Up program. Commenced in 2006. The aim of the program is to facilitate a partnership project which allows Local Aboriginal Land Councils and local government councils to develop and progress co-operative ongoing relationships through a collaborative project to address the social and environmental issues of illegal dumping occurring on Aboriginal owned lands.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Strategy 16:</b> National waste report &amp; national data system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <u>Cwth</u>: Stakeholder evaluation of the 2010 National Waste Report commenced. Workshops held in Tasmania, WA, QLD, SA. This will inform priorities &amp; improvements for 2013 National Waste Report.</li><li>▪ Negotiations initiated and project planning underway to produce a comprehensive map of landfills in Australia in 2011. This is a collaborative project between the Commonwealth (including Geoscience Australia) and the Waste Management Association of Australia.</li><li>▪ <u>SA</u>: Zero Waste SA environmental user system (ZEUS) allows the electronic capture, storage and reporting of waste and recycling data for metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas and at a state level for South Australia.</li></ul>
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