



Australian Government

Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts



EPHC
Environment Protection and Heritage Council

National Waste Policy: Less Waste, More Resources

November 2009





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National Waste Policy Statement

BACKGROUND

This statement is in two parts. Part one provides the context for the development of the National Waste Policy and summarises the roles and responsibilities of governments. It highlights progress in relation to waste management and resource recovery and presents the drivers for change.

Part two presents the National Waste Policy. The policy sets out the purpose, scope, aims, principles, key outcomes, directions, implementation and strategies for action. It has a built-in capacity, through ongoing data gathering and regular reporting to the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC), an intergovernmental committee of environment ministers, to keep up with domestic and international economic, social and environmental change.

Part one – context

INTRODUCTION

Australian governments have a long history of collaboration on waste policy and actions. The first comprehensive domestic approach to waste was agreed under the 1992 National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (the National Strategy for ESD) by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), which committed Australia to improving the efficiency with which resources are used; reducing the impact on the environment of waste disposal; and improving the management of hazardous wastes, avoiding their generation and addressing clean-up issues. This commitment still stands. It has underpinned the policies and programs implemented by governments to date and formed the basis for collaboration on national waste issues under the EPHC since its inception in 2002.

In November 2008, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, announced that the Australian Government, with the support of the EPHC, would lead the development of a new National Waste Policy for Australia.

Australia has obligations under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (the Basel Convention) to take appropriate measures to

ensure that the generation of hazardous and other wastes (including household wastes) is reduced to a minimum, taking into account social, technological and economic aspects; that adequate disposal facilities exist for the environmentally sound management of wastes; and that waste managers take steps to prevent pollution due to waste and, if this occurs, minimise the consequences for human health and the environment. Under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (the Stockholm Convention) there is the further requirement to restrict, and ultimately eliminate, the production, use, trade, release and storage of dangerous long-lasting chemicals.

Waste generation has increased by 31 per cent between 2002 and 2006 to 43.8 million tonnes and this trend is expected to continue.¹ Hazardous waste generation (as defined under the Basel Convention) has doubled from 0.64 to 1.19 million tonnes per annum between 2002 and 2006 and now appears to have stabilised. Resource recovery from waste has also increased over this period to 22.7 million tonnes. However, given the changing nature of the waste stream, the capacity for continued growth in the recovery of materials is constrained under current policy settings.

¹ Hyder Consulting, *Waste and recycling in Australia*, Amended report, 2009.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The overarching policy and regulatory framework for waste derives from the Australian Constitution, international agreements, Commonwealth legislation, agreements of COAG, decisions of the EPHC and other ministerial councils, and from multiple legislative instruments in each state and territory. Fundamental to these are the requirements to avoid waste, reduce the hazardous nature and content of waste, and reduce the amount for disposal.

Under the Constitution the management of waste is primarily the responsibility of the state and territory governments. The Australian Government is responsible for ensuring that Australia's international obligations are met, whether through measures implemented by the Commonwealth or through measures implemented by the states.

The Australian Government's role and overarching responsibilities flow from the suite of international agreements and apply to hazardous substances, wastes, persistent organic pollutants, ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gases and climate change. Relevant instruments to which Australia is a party are: the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal; the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer; the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; and the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. There is also international agreement to commence international negotiations to develop a legally binding instrument on mercury.

The Australian Government has passed legislation to reflect many of these international obligations. The export and import of hazardous waste from and to Australia is subject to the *Hazardous Waste (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1989*; industrial, agricultural and veterinary chemicals are subject to the *Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989* and the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Act 1994*; dumping and

incineration at sea of waste is covered through the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981*, *Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983*, and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*; and ozone depleting substances through the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989*. The Australian Government is also committed to reducing greenhouse emissions and the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) will impact on waste management. The *Product Stewardship (Oil) Act 2000* established a product stewardship framework for used oil.

All state and territory governments have enacted comprehensive legislative and policy instruments to protect the environment and conserve natural resources. Their waste management and resource recovery legislation is as follows:

- NSW** *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (amended in 2008) and *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001*
- Vic** *Environment Protection Act 1970* and *Environment Protection (Amendment) Act 2006*
- Qld** *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- WA** *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007* and *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Levy Act 2007*.
- SA** *Environment Protection Act 1993*, *Zero Waste SA Act 2004* and *Plastic Shopping Bags (Waste Avoidance) Act 2008*
- Tas** *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*
- ACT** *Environment Protection Act 1997* and *Waste Minimisation Act 2001*
- NT** *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 2007*

The roles and responsibilities of local government depend on the regulatory framework of a particular state or territory and can vary significantly. Local government plays an important role in providing household waste collection and recycling services, managing and operating landfill sites, delivering

education and awareness programs, and providing and maintaining litter infrastructure. They may also form cooperative groups to work together on waste management issues of regional significance and can have compliance and enforcement roles for littering and the illegal disposal of waste.

BUILDING ON CURRENT EFFORTS

The 1992 National Strategy for ESD provided an impetus for all levels of government to introduce a broad range of waste minimisation and management policies, programs and legislation, including visions, strategies, targets and priorities. This considerable investment has made a significant difference to waste management in Australia and resulted in:

- increased infrastructure for waste collection, processing and handling systems, including advanced treatment facilities in some locations
- increased access to kerbside recycling to over 90 per cent of households
- increased solid waste recycling
- improved management of landfill sites
- new domestic and international markets for materials and products recovered from waste
- regional waste management plans in some jurisdictions
- improved risk management for hazardous materials
- extended community-based litter initiatives
- a range of voluntary and co-regulatory product stewardship schemes
- standards and programs that have delivered broader environmental benefits, such as greenhouse gas reduction and improved water and energy efficiency
- increased community awareness of waste management and resource recovery options and benefits; and
- improved waste management data in some jurisdictions.

Notwithstanding these considerable and ongoing efforts by governments and actions by industry and the community, there is a range of major interrelated drivers for renewing a national

approach to progress the commitment given in the 1992 National Strategy for ESD, including:

- the need to ensure that waste management remains aligned with Australia's international obligations which continue to evolve over time
- large scale growth in the generation of waste and the increasingly complex and potentially hazardous nature of the growing waste stream
- a prospective need for additional infrastructure which faces increasing environmental and community constraints and can take time to develop
- significant change in markets for waste and recovered resources and the way services are delivered
- existing regulatory and quasi-regulatory settings, which in combination, act as impediments to achieving current waste and resource recovery policy outcomes and to establishing effective secondary markets for waste
- potential for waste management to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy and water efficiency, soil health and use of resources
- changing community expectations and aspirations
- the opportunity for managing waste as a resource to improve economic and job outcomes and encourage innovation and the development of technology and infrastructure; and
- the absence of fundamental data and analytical tools, as identified in 1992, on many aspects of waste management, to enable governments, business and communities to make sound decisions.

Most states and many local governments have recently renewed, or are in the process of renewing, their own waste management and resource recovery policy and regulatory frameworks, and it is timely to do so at a national level to ensure that the waste and resource recovery system remains efficient and effective.

Waste and resource recovery is extensively regulated. This is because of the significant consequence of not managing waste safely or effectively and inherent market failures (particularly information failures, a lack of clear price signals, and the potential for 'free-riding'). Since 1992 a wide

4 National Waste Policy: Less waste, more resources

variety of waste policies and legal instruments have been adopted at national, state and local levels. Their evolution has resulted in a complex patchwork of approaches that does not clearly articulate the respective roles of governments, objectives, or the basis for collaboration and national leadership on waste.

As markets and regulatory frameworks have evolved, a range of barriers have emerged that industry considers increase costs and complexity, and could be addressed through better coordination. In some cases, these fragmented approaches have led to perverse or unintended consequences, such as the movement of waste to lower level treatment facilities because of reduced costs. It is timely to review these arrangements from a national perspective to determine how to save costs for governments, industry and the community, as well as deliver better environmental outcomes.

Intervention will be necessary in situations where the market will not proactively manage hazardous materials before they become waste. Further effort will be required if we are to meet our current international obligations to minimise waste (and in particular, hazardous waste) and to manage the risks associated with a range of hazardous materials to ensure we protect human health and the environment.

There is a need to plan how to meet prospective requirements, such as the need to reduce the presence of an additional nine persistent organic pollutants and mercury, and provide accurate national reporting. At present, to enable us to understand the extent of the risk, monitoring for the presence of persistent organic pollutants in people and in the environment is based on one-off activities, generally at a single location and point in time. This monitoring, although limited, has shown that pollutants like brominated flame retardants (chemicals applied to prevent electronics, clothes and furniture from catching fire) are found at low levels across Australia in people, and the natural environment, from carnivores such as Tasmanian devils, to herbivores like grey kangaroos.

The way waste is managed and the use of waste as a resource can also make a difference to jobs and the economy. A recent survey on the employment

impacts of recycling estimated that full time equivalent (FTE) employment per 10 000 tonnes of waste is 9.2 for recycling and 2.8 for landfill. On a national level, this corresponds to an estimated direct labour force of 22 243 FTEs in recycling activities and 6695 FTEs in landfill operations—that is, 28 938 across Australia. Combined with indirect employment, this amounts to 53 246 jobs.

While recycling rates significantly increased between 2002 and 2006, there is no guarantee that recycling can continue to mitigate the growth in waste generation without updating the policy settings and addressing market barriers.

The nature of our waste is also changing. Higher proportions of goods are being disposed to landfill which contain complex materials that do not readily degrade and increasing quantities of potentially hazardous substances. The management of hazardous wastes will also be influenced by listings of persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention and the introduction of a binding instrument for managing mercury.

These trends will leave a legacy of waste for future generations and require that Australia has adequate landfill practices and controls to contain hazard, and monitor sites to reduce the future risk to people and the environment. Strengthened planning for future waste management and resource recovery infrastructure will also be needed with these trends.

An analysis of Australian landfills comparing the controls in place against those recommended through state and territory guidelines found that the presence of controls was broadly compliant for most design, construction and operational criteria. The compliance level for large landfills however, substantially exceeds that of small landfills. Whilst there are clear state and territory guidelines and strong jurisdictional regulation, the reported landfill compliance is not yet fully meeting these requirements² (particularly for small and medium scale landfills, where some 27 per cent of solid waste is disposed).

² Wright Corporate Strategy Pty Ltd, *Landfill performance study*, 2009.

The growth in waste is placing demands on management and disposal facilities. While nationally Australia has sufficient landfill sites, some cities and towns are projected to deplete existing capacity within five years and are applying for approval to extend existing facilities. The increasing costs of transporting waste to distant locations and dealing with the associated greenhouse gas emissions, combined with greater environmental conditions and community opposition to new sites, are factors that will continue to make the siting of new landfills problematic and drive recycling and efforts to prolong the life of existing facilities.

Almost two thirds of all waste sent to landfill is organic (food waste, paper, cardboard, biosolids, green waste, textiles and wood), with approximately 37 per cent of landfilled waste regarded as readily degradable (biodegradable). Organic waste in landfill generates the powerful greenhouse gas methane, which is also odorous and highly flammable. Estimates of annual greenhouse gas emissions include a large component of emissions resulting from waste disposal over the preceding 50 years. Today's waste management decisions leave a legacy for future generations.

The waste sector is projected to continue its contribution to greenhouse emissions of around 15 million tonnes of CO₂-e per year.³ Of this, approximately 11 million tonnes of CO₂-e is derived from landfills. Enhanced recovery of organic material presents considerable potential to positively contribute to climate change and sustainability issues, and contribute to jobs and the economy.

Communities are calling for recycling to be more readily available in work places and public spaces, and for convenient infrastructure to be established to help them deal appropriately with waste arising from their consumption choices. Recent 'choice modelling' which seeks to provide a dollar value for non-market goods and services, and attitudinal surveys, suggest that communities are willing to pay for increased access to resource recovery facilities that deliver significant recycling outcomes.

By deploying existing and innovative technologies for better waste avoidance, reprocessing and recycling across different locations, scales, waste streams and materials, business, industry and consumers can save money, water and energy and avoid greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. Re-use of resources can also conserve virgin and finite resources and generate new opportunities and jobs and more effectively meet the needs and aspirations of Australian communities.

³ Department of Climate Change, *Tracking to Kyoto and 2020: Australia's Greenhouse Emissions Trends 1990 to 2008–2012 and 2020*, August 2009, p60.

Part two—the policy

NATIONAL WASTE POLICY: LESS WASTE, MORE RESOURCES

PURPOSE

The National Waste Policy builds on the 1992 National Strategy for ESD commitments to improve the efficiency with which resources are used, reduce the impact on the environment of waste disposal, and improve the management of hazardous wastes, avoiding their generation and addressing clean-up issues. It also seeks to enhance, build on, or complement, existing policy and actions at all levels of government.

The policy sets a clear direction for Australia over the next 10 years, toward producing less waste for disposal, and managing waste as a resource to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits. It will complement action to deliver greenhouse gas emission reductions, reduce energy and water use, support jobs, and invest in future long term economic growth. It will promote more consistent regulation and address market impediments. The policy will provide the basis for collaboration among the jurisdictions to deliver effective and efficient approaches to national waste issues, and ensure that waste management remains aligned with Australia's international obligations.

The practical outcome of implementing the National Waste Policy will be that all wastes, including hazardous wastes, will be managed consistent with Australia's international obligations, and for the protection of human health and the environment. The policy also seeks to ensure that the risks associated with waste are understood and managed in the future to minimise intergenerational legacy issues. There will also be a significant contribution to greenhouse gas reduction, water and energy efficiency and improved resource use. Greenhouse gas emissions from landfill will be addressed under the final design of the CPRS, and the beneficial and/or innovative use of organic material diverted from landfill will be encouraged to increase the

productivity of the land, provide a source of energy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Improved economic and job opportunities will arise from using waste as a resource. There will be a consistent and coherent regulatory environment that facilitates business activity, sends clear signals on government policy directions, and removes distortions and impediments to the effective operation of relevant markets. The differences between jurisdictions in the way waste is defined, classified and regulated will be addressed, and information failures will be dealt with. Innovation and the development of technology and infrastructure will be encouraged for managing waste as a resource and waste avoidance.

The policy will align the approach by government, business and the community with global directions to reduce the environmental, health and safety footprint of manufactured goods through design, manufacture, supply chain, consumption, and at end of life through a national approach to product stewardship rather than state-by-state regulation (which would distort national markets).

This policy statement articulates the aims, outcome and principles to guide action, sets key directions and priority strategies for national waste management and resource recovery policy to 2020, and provides a mechanism for measuring progress and responding to change.

SCOPE

This policy encompasses wastes, including hazardous wastes and substances, in the municipal, commercial and industrial, construction and demolition waste streams, and covers gaseous, liquid and solid wastes. Radioactive waste is excluded.

AIMS

The aims of the National Waste Policy will be 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, and

- contribute to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, energy conservation and production, water efficiency, and the productivity of the land.

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE OUR ACTIONS

The key principles that underpin *Less waste, more resources* are:

- management of all wastes, including hazardous wastes, in line with Australia's international obligations
- environmentally responsible management of waste to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to broader sustainability outcomes
- holistic approaches which address market, regulatory and governance failures, duplications and inconsistencies
- participants in the product supply and consumption chain, rather than the general community, bear responsibility for the costs of resource recovery and waste management
- evidence-based decisions informed by the waste management hierarchy of actions and the principles of ecologically sustainable development, including the precautionary approach and the principle of intergenerational equity
- the environmentally sound management of materials, products and services embracing whole-of-life cycle strategies and quality assurance practices
- avoidance or minimisation of hazardous and other waste generation, taking account of social, technological and economic factors
- minimisation of intergenerational legacy issues through understanding and management of the risks
- regular provision of nationally consistent and comprehensive data on waste and re-use of materials to assess performance and inform policy
- consideration of overall community benefits taking account of social, environmental and economic outcomes for any measures, whether voluntary or regulatory; and

- implementation of policy by the appropriate level of government, industry or the community.

OUTCOME: LESS WASTE, MORE RESOURCES BY 2020

Where we want to be in 2020:

1. Australia manages waste, including hazardous waste, in an environmentally safe, scientific and sound manner, and has reduced the amount per capita of waste disposed.
2. Waste streams are routinely managed as a resource to achieve better environmental, social and economic outcomes, including saving water, energy, greenhouse gas emissions and finite resources, and to increase productivity of the land.
3. Australia has increased the amount of products, goods and materials that can be readily and safely used for other purposes at end of life.
4. Opportunities to safely manage, reduce and recycle waste are available to all Australians, including approaches that have been tailored to meet the needs of remote and rural communities.
5. The risks associated with waste and hazardous substances are understood and managed to minimise current and intergenerational legacy issues.
 - Australia manages its products, materials and chemicals that contain potentially hazardous substances, in particular those that are persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic, consistent with its international obligations and using best available evidence, techniques and technologies.
 - Local stockpiling of hazardous waste has been significantly reduced, particularly for rural and remote areas.
 - There are consistent and clear requirements for disposal of hazardous material, and for content labelling of manufactured goods, that also provide a level playing field for Australian manufacturers and importers and informs consumers.

6. The interaction of regulatory frameworks and operational processes across government agencies aligns with world's best practice and facilitates waste avoidance, resource recovery and appropriate end of life management arrangements within their own operations as well as by business and the community.
7. There are efficient and effective Australian markets for waste and recovered resources, and local technology and innovation are sought after internationally.
 - Businesses, including those in manufacturing and the supply chain, embrace innovations that support the creation of value from potential waste streams and minimise their environmental footprint.
 - As part of a seamless national economy, there is a consistent and coherent regulatory environment that facilitates business activity in resource recovery and waste management.
8. Governments, industry and the community have embraced product stewardship and extended producer responsibility approaches.
 - Product stewardship and extended producer responsibility is adopted in business operations, leading to improvements in the design, longevity and disassembly of products, a reduction in hazardous content, less waste, and more thoughtful consumer choices.

DIRECTIONS

To achieve these outcomes, the policy sets six key directions and identifies 16 priority strategies that would benefit from a national or coordinated approach. These strategies will give focus to the work across individual jurisdictions, build on current directions and complement existing activity. This will also lead to clarity and certainty for business and the community. The strategies will be delivered by action at a national level through collaboration, or be led by one or more jurisdictions. These are described below, with further detail in Table 1.

The six key areas are:

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, in order to measure progress and educate and inform the behaviour and the choices of the community.

IMPLEMENTATION

The National Waste Policy will be implemented by individual and collective action by the Commonwealth and state, territory and local governments, and forms the long term agenda for EPHC for resource recovery and waste issues.

The roles and responsibilities for each level of government have been articulated and are set out in Table 1.

Progressive action on collaborative strategies will be undertaken as part of the EPHC work program. An implementation plan will be released by EPHC following its first meeting in 2010.

Table 1. National Waste Policy Strategies

Shared responsibility for reducing the environmental, health and safety footprint of manufactured goods and materials across the manufacture-supply-consumption chain and at end of life.		
Taking responsibility		
Objective: Support business and consumers to appropriately manage end of life products, materials and packaging.		
Strategy	Results	Responsibility
<p>1. The Australian Government, with the support of state and territory governments, will establish a national framework underpinned by legislation to support voluntary, co-regulatory and regulatory product stewardship and extended producer responsibility schemes to provide for the impacts of a product being responsibly managed during and at end of life.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 3, 4, 7, 8</p>	<p>The first product stewardship scheme(s) are in place under the national framework within three years, and Commonwealth legislation for the national product stewardship framework is enacted.</p> <p>A number of voluntary product stewardship schemes are accredited and reporting under the national product stewardship framework within four years.</p> <p>Business is increasingly aware of, and implementing, waste avoidance opportunities.</p>	<p>Australian Government to resource and be responsible for the establishment and administration of the Commonwealth legislative framework.</p> <p>Australian Government will consult state and territory governments through EPHC, on the design of the National Product Stewardship Framework.</p> <p>Consultation on additional products that might be regulated in future will be through EPHC.</p> <p>Operation of the co-regulatory and any regulatory schemes to be funded by the sector subject to regulation and the approach agreed as part of the development of the scheme by the sector.</p> <p>Accreditation of voluntary schemes to occur on cost recovered basis through a fee for service.</p> <p>State and territory governments to provide for assessments, inspections, intelligence gathering as part of existing policy, program and regulatory operations.</p> <p>State and territory governments can continue to support local product stewardship action.</p>
<p>2. All governments as significant procurers of goods, services and infrastructure, will embody and promote sustainable procurement principles and practices within their own operations and delivery of programs and services to facilitate certainty in the market.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</p>	<p>Sustainable procurement principles are taken into account as part of value for money in procurement decisions.</p> <p>Waste management, use of reprocessed materials, resource recovery and responsibility for goods and materials at end of life, are taken into account as far as practicable in decision making.</p> <p>Guidance on sustainable procurement such as standard specifications and model contract clauses are available to procurement officials within four years.</p> <p>Governments will report periodically on the uptake of sustainable procurement.</p>	<p>All governments to undertake as part of existing arrangements.</p> <p>EPHC, through the secretariat, facilitates sharing of guidance materials between jurisdictions and in consultation with relevant bodies such as the Australian Procurement and Construction Council.</p>

Taking responsibility		Shared responsibility for reducing the environmental, health and safety footprint of manufactured goods and materials across the manufacture-supply-consumption chain and at end of life.
Objective: Support business and consumers to appropriately manage end of life products, materials and packaging.		
Strategy	Results	Responsibility
<p>3. The Australian Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments, industry and the community will better manage packaging to improve the use of resources, reduce the environmental impact of packaging design, enhance away from home recycling and reduce litter.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 2, 4, 7</p>	<p>Approaches to improving the use of resources, reducing the environmental impact of packaging design, enhancing away from home recycling and reducing litter will be agreed.</p> <p>Improved away from home recycling.</p> <p>Packaging design will increasingly provide for easy re-processing and will be labelled accordingly.</p>	<p>All governments will progress through EPHC activities, including the National Packaging Covenant.</p> <p>This strategy will also be progressed through existing and prospective government initiatives and programs.</p>
Improving the market		Efficient and effective Australian markets for waste and recovered resources, and local technology and innovation are sought after internationally.
Objective: Support waste avoidance, reduction, recovery and re-use by addressing market impediments and removing red tape.		
Strategy	Results	Responsibility
<p>4. The Australian Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments, will introduce a national definition and classification system for wastes (including hazardous and clinical wastes) that aligns with definitions in international conventions, provides for when a product or material ceases to become a waste, and reflects these classifications in relevant policies and instruments.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 2, 5, 6</p>	<p>Existing arrangements are mapped in a simple national classification data base for wastes which shows equivalent classes and to the extent possible, how these relate to international approaches.</p> <p>Principles are agreed that can be applied to classes or types of waste that enable definitions to be applied as to when a material ceases to be a waste.</p> <p>Existing classification arrangements are assessed and options developed for a national system, together with their costs and benefits, with a decision on an approach within four years.</p> <p>National classifications and definitions of when a material ceases to be a waste are referenced as key instruments are progressively reviewed or new instruments established.</p> <p>Key government policies and legislation use consistent classifications and are supported by nationally consistent data collection and tracking systems.</p>	<p>This strategy will be progressed in two phases.</p> <p>The first phase will address impediments to defining when a product or material ceases to become a waste, map existing classifications of waste, and scope development of a nationally consistent classification system that aligns with current and future needs. Existing arrangements such as the Controlled Waste NEPM and NPI will be considered. This phase will be progressed through EPHC.</p> <p>For the national classification system, the first phase will build on EPHC work to scope requirements, and assess the benefits of change, implementation options and costs.</p> <p>For the second phase of the national classification system, EPHC will agree an approach. This will be completed within four years.</p>

Improving the market		
Efficient and effective Australian markets for waste and recovered resources, and local technology and innovation are sought after internationally.		
Objective: Support waste avoidance, reduction, recovery and re-use by addressing market impediments and removing red tape.		
Strategy	Results	Responsibility
<p>5. The Australian Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments through the EPHC, will facilitate the development of a suite of agreed national principles, specifications, best practice guidelines and standards, to remove impediments to the development and operation of effective markets for potential wastes.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7</p>	<p>National principles to encourage safe re-use of waste are agreed; and national specifications for use of recycled construction and demolition waste in pavements, fit-for-purpose use of recycled organics and biosolids derived from organic waste are commenced within a three year period.</p> <p>Further priorities agreed and work program to develop national guidance and standards for these priorities endorsed.</p> <p>National guidance is publicly available, referenced in government guidelines and state and territory licensing arrangements as appropriate.</p>	<p>To be undertaken through EPHC, with the first step being to scope the project, identify priorities and timeframes. This would include looking at existing materials that could be shared or used nationally.</p>
<p>6. The Australian Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments, local governments, industry, business and the community, will provide access to knowledge and expertise in sustainable procurement and business practices.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</p>	<p>Capability is provided under the auspices of the EPHC that provides access to current information and analyses on waste management and reprocessing technologies; regulatory and institutional settings; research; business case information; and consumer values.</p>	<p>To be undertaken through EPHC, with the first phase being to scope the project, identify priorities and timeframes.</p>
Pursuing sustainability		
Less waste and improved use of waste to achieve broader environmental, social and economic benefits.		
Objective: To enhance biodegradable (organic) resource recovery and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills.		
Strategy	Results	Responsibility
<p>7. State and territory governments building on existing commitments, continue their focus to phase down the amount of biodegradable material sent to landfill.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7</p>	<p>Biodegradable waste disposed to landfill is significantly reduced. This will be achieved through beneficial re-use such as compost, soil conditioners, biochar, and through the use of alternative waste treatment technologies, waste-to-energy plants and bio-digesters.</p> <p>Increased markets are available for beneficial use.</p>	<p>State and territory governments to undertake as part of their existing waste management and program responsibilities.</p>
<p>8. State and territory governments ensure the safety and health risks arising from landfill gas emissions are managed across all landfills through appropriate regulation and licence requirements.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7</p>	<p>State and territory governments effectively manage health and safety risks arising from landfill gas emissions through key policies, planning, legislation and licence conditions.</p>	<p>State and territory governments to undertake as part of their existing waste management responsibilities.</p>

Pursuing sustainability		Less waste and improved use of waste to achieve broader environmental, social and economic benefits.
Objective: To enhance biodegradable (organic) resource recovery and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills.		
Strategy	Results	Responsibility
<p>9. The Australian Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments, will develop a strategy for measures to address emissions from disposal of waste to landfills and other waste activities, and these support the operation of a future CPRS.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7</p>	<p>Strategies for addressing and/or offsetting emissions from landfill that complement the approach to resource recovery from organic waste is released by EPHC by 2011.</p> <p>State and territory governments have initiatives for diverting organic waste from landfill and energy production.</p>	<p>Strategies developed through EPHC.</p> <p>Australian Government is responsible for the implementation of the proposed CPRS which covers landfill emissions, and continues to support appropriate research, innovation and related activities through relevant programs.</p>
<p>10. State and territory and local governments, in collaboration with the Australian Government, industry and business, to achieve major improvements in waste avoidance and re-use of materials in key areas of the commercial and industrial waste stream.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</p>	<p>Significant waste avoidance and resource recovery actions are identified for the commercial and industrial waste stream and initiatives commenced progressively over the period. This will include supply chain, food waste, packaging recycling and central business district initiatives.</p>	<p>All jurisdictions to identify opportunities within the other national waste policy strategies to promote waste avoidance and enhanced resource recovery from the commercial and industrial waste stream.</p> <p>State and territory governments to determine areas that could deliver the most significant waste reductions and/or recovery outcomes, and develop partnerships to implement/resource complementary cross-cutting activities as part of existing and prospective initiatives and program responsibilities.</p> <p>All jurisdictions to identify areas and processes for national action in the commercial and industrial waste stream and progress these through EPHC.</p>
<p>11. All governments continue to encourage best practice waste management and resource recovery for construction and demolition projects.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</p>	<p>Construction and demolition projects apply best practice waste avoidance, waste management and resource recovery procedures.</p>	<p>All governments to progress as part of their existing procurement, infrastructure and waste management responsibilities.</p>

Reducing hazard and risk		Potentially hazardous content of wastes is reduced and waste recovery, handling and disposal is consistent, safe and accountable.
Objective: A comprehensive nationally integrated system for the identification, classification, collection, treatment, disposal and monitoring of hazardous substances and waste that aligns with international obligations.		
Strategy	Results	Responsibility
<p>12. The Australian Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments, will ensure that: our international obligations are met; hazardous materials entering the waste stream are reduced; transboundary movement of hazardous waste is effectively, efficiently and legally undertaken within Australia and complies with international requirements; product stewardship is adopted to provide for the impacts of a product with potentially hazardous materials being responsibly managed during and at end of life; and facilities are available to handle and dispose of hazardous substances that become waste in an environmentally sound manner.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</p>	<p>The existing hazardous waste arrangements are mapped to a national classification system for wastes, and these classifications referenced in key instruments as they are reviewed or new instruments established.</p> <p>Product stewardship schemes address specific products that contain potentially hazardous materials.</p> <p>An assessment of options to introduce a labelling system for products and articles containing potentially hazardous content to allow safe disassembly and/or treatment and disposal is completed and a decision made.</p> <p>Government systems, policies and regulatory frameworks are aligned to ensure that appropriate transboundary movement of hazardous waste for treatment and disposal can occur in an expeditious, streamlined and legal manner, and the monitoring and reporting system is integrated with a contemporary National Pollutant Inventory.</p> <p>Key government policies and legislation use consistent classifications for hazardous wastes, including clinical wastes, and are supported by nationally consistent data collection and tracking systems.</p> <p>A monitoring program for chemicals listed under the Stockholm Convention has commenced and priorities for the management of hazardous substances in products and materials completed.</p> <p>An analysis of Australia's current and future hazardous waste treatment and disposal capabilities has been completed.</p> <p>Local stockpiling of hazardous substances and waste is reduced.</p> <p>Improved collection of chemical waste and containers.</p>	<p>Australian Government is responsible for the first phase of establishing the basic monitoring program for chemicals listed under Stockholm Convention. Scaling up of monitoring and sampling to occur in the second phase.</p> <p>See comments for Strategy 1 regarding product stewardship scheme.</p> <p>See comments for Strategy 4 regarding hazardous component of national classification to underpin monitoring and reporting.</p> <p>Labelling system to continue to be progressed by EPHC.</p> <p>Streamlining transboundary movement to be undertaken by jurisdictions as part of their waste management responsibilities.</p> <p>Analysis of Australia's current and future hazardous waste treatment and disposal capabilities will be undertaken under the auspices of EPHC.</p> <p>Jurisdictions to reduce local stockpiling of waste as part of existing waste management responsibilities.</p> <p>Assessment of improved collection of chemical waste and containers to be progressed by EPHC.</p>

14 National Waste Policy: Less waste, more resources

Reducing hazard and risk		Potentially hazardous content of wastes is reduced and waste recovery, handling and disposal is consistent, safe and accountable.
Objective: A comprehensive nationally integrated system for the identification, classification, collection, treatment, disposal and monitoring of hazardous substances and waste that aligns with international obligations.		
Strategy	Results	Responsibility
<p>13. The Australian Government, with the support of state and territory governments, will adopt a system that aligns with international approaches, to reduce hazardous substances in products and articles sold in Australia that present a potential risk during and at end of life to human health, safety or the environment.</p> <p>Key outcomes: 1, 3, 4, 6, 8</p>	<p>An assessment of the approach best suited to Australia is complete and a decision made within three years.</p>	<p>The first phase will be for the Australian Government to undertake, in consultation with the states and territories, an assessment of approaches to reduce hazardous substances in products and articles sold in Australia.</p> <p>The second phase will be to determine the most suitable approach informed by the analysis of costs and benefits and alignment with approaches overseas. Consultation with state and territory governments on the approach to be adopted will occur through EPHC.</p>

Tailoring solutions			Increased capacity in regional and remote communities to manage waste and recover and re-use resources.		
Objective: Support improved waste management and re-use of waste in regional, remote and Indigenous communities.					
Strategy		Results		Responsibility	
14. State and territory and local governments to work together to identify regional and remote waste and resource recovery actions to build capacity and ensure an appropriate suite of services is available to communities. Key outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7		Actions are assessed including a regional and remote stakeholder waste network to build capacity.		State and territory and local governments continue to resource and take relevant action as part of existing policies and programs, including waste management.	
15. The Australian Government will undertake an audit of existing waste infrastructure and local capability in selected remote Indigenous communities as part of a larger essential services audit under the COAG National Indigenous Housing Partnership Agreement. Key outcomes: 2, 4, 5, 8		The audit is completed within two years and recommendations provided.		Australian Government is responsible for the audit.	
Providing the evidence			Decision makers have access to meaningful, accurate and current national waste and resource recovery data and information.		
Objective: Develop capacity to effectively collect consistent, accurate and meaningful national waste and resource recovery data to inform policy and decisions.					
Strategy		Results		Responsibility	
16. The Australian Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments, will develop and publish a three-yearly current and future trends waste and resource recovery report. This will be underpinned by a system that provides access to integrated national core data on waste and resource recovery that is accurate, meaningful and up-to-date and available online. Key outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8		The first periodic national current and future trends in waste and resource recovery report (National Waste Report) will be published in three years. The basic national dataset, and how best to improve data collection and streamline business reporting requirements and administration, to align with national directions, will be scoped and developed over a five year period.		Future National Waste Reports will be developed by the Australian Government in consultation with the states and territories and made available through EPHC. The first phase will be to assess information needs for policy, regulatory and operational purposes and business needs. Any improvements and streamlining that can be easily made in the short term will be identified and improvements undertaken where feasible. Options for accessing comprehensive, robust, accurate and timely core national waste data and information will be assessed—these could include a virtual, dispersed or an aggregated system. The second phase on the integrated national waste data system is for EPHC to agree an approach.	

