

## National Waste Policy Strategy Cluster 7

### Data Working Group

#### Terms of Reference

#### Background

On 5 November 2009, the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) endorsed the *National Waste Policy: Less waste, more resources* (the NWP).

At the 5 July 2010 meeting of the EPHC, the NWP Implementation Plan was endorsed. The Implementation Plan contains a number of high level priorities and timeframes that have been agreed by EPHC. It also sets out priority initiatives and milestones for each of the sixteen strategies for the first five years. These strategies are grouped into seven clusters and a working group is to be established to implement the work program for each strategy cluster.

The Data Working Group, co-chaired by the Australian Government and New South Wales, is responsible for progressing strategy 16 of the NWP. The objective of strategy 16 is to provide decision makers with access to meaningful, accurate and current national waste and resource recovery data and information.

Publication of a three yearly national waste report and establishment of a national data system are the main activities for this strategy.

The Data Working Group will report to the Environment Protection and Heritage Standing Committee (EPHSC) and the EPHC<sup>1</sup> through the NWP Implementation Working Group (IWG).

The Implementation Plan acknowledges that in addition to these priority initiatives, individual jurisdictions will continue to manage waste in line with their strategic objectives and constitutional responsibilities. This may include developing and funding their own initiatives in addition to initiatives within the Work Plan of the Data Working Group.

#### Role of the Data Working Group

The role of the Data Working Group is to provide a collaborative forum which:

- Supports and enables the Australian Government to develop and publish a three-yearly current and future trends waste and resource recovery report
- Establishes a system that underpins that report and provides access to integrated national core data on waste and resource recovery that is accurate, meaningful and up-to-date and available online
- Fosters the acceptance of the common objective between States, Territories and the Commonwealth to develop and maintain consistent data collection, analysis and reporting methodologies and outputs; and enable modification and improvement to State, Territory and Commonwealth systems to achieve this objective
- Regularly reports progress and emerging issues to the EPHSC and Ministers (see reporting section below)

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<sup>1</sup> All references in this document to EPHC and EPHSC can be read to mean any other forum that may be created following the 2009 COAG Review of Ministerial Councils.

- Submits requests to fund cross-jurisdictional projects under the agreed work program for the Data Working Group to the EPHSC for approval prior to proceeding; and
- Shares knowledge, progresses opportunities for improved waste data between jurisdictions and discusses options for improving waste data in the shorter term.

### **Work Plan**

The IWG will provide an annual Work Plan template to the Data Working Group. The substance of the Work Plan will be developed and endorsed by the Data Working Group at their inaugural meeting. This Work Plan will include a template for seeking EPHSC approval for cross-jurisdictional funding requests.

Two key initiatives under the NWP data strategy have been agreed by all jurisdictions in the NWP Implementation Plan. These initiatives will form the basis of the Work Plan for the Data Working Group, which will include a breakdown of key milestones, associated timeframes, stakeholder engagement and costs.

The first initiative relates to the design and development of a national data system, and the following major milestones are included in the NWP Implementation Plan:

- Needs and purpose of data agreed by jurisdictions by 2011.
- Diagnostic of existing data collection and reporting arrangements against agreed national data needs completed and gaps identified by 2012.
- Short term improvements to data and collection arrangements identified and implementation commenced by 2013.
- Options for collecting and reporting national waste data, including costs and benefits assessed by 2014.
- Approach agreed by 2015.

The second initiative under this strategy is to provide a forum for effective contribution to the second National Waste Report. This will be published in 2013.

Where funding is required for cross-jurisdictional projects to implement elements of this work program and cost sharing is agreed by the Working Group members, a draft proposal using the funding template provided by the IWG is to be submitted for approval to the EPHSC through the IWG.

Once finalised, this Work Plan must be provided to EPHSC for endorsement, and will form an attachment to these Terms of Reference.

### **Membership**

The Data Working Group will comprise representatives from the Australian Government, state, territory and local governments.

If the Data Working Group requires expert advice, participation of an expert will be at the discretion of the co-Chairs. The co-Chairs may invite representatives to attend meetings from relevant government departments, organisations or businesses as required.

Where a member cannot attend a meeting, a nominated proxy will be accepted. Observers may attend at the co-chair's discretion. Members will fund their own participation.

## **Administrative support**

The National Environment Protection Council Service Corporation (NEPSC) may provide administrative support to the group<sup>2</sup>.

Administrative support may involve arranging meetings and distributing papers, as well as managing Data Working Group cross-jurisdictional contracts and coordinating reports for EPHSC and EPHC. The Data Working Group members will be provided with an agenda prior to each meeting, and minutes will be taken. A summary record of the meeting and actions arising will be distributed to all working group members as soon as practicable after each meeting.

Other options for administrative support may include one of the chairs, co-chairs or meeting hosts providing some of these services.

## **Frequency and conduct of meetings**

The Data Working Group will meet regularly to progress its work. Where appropriate, teleconferences will be used to minimise time and expense to members and other participants.

Any significant issues that are unable to be resolved by the Data Working Group will be discussed by the IWG. If resolution is not achieved through this forum, the issue will be escalated to EPHSC.

## **Reporting**

The co-Chairs of the Data Working Group are responsible for providing timely and accurate advice to the IWG twice a year, using the reporting templates that will be provided by the IWG. The IWG is responsible for co-ordinating reports and funding requests from the seven Working Groups for EPHSC and EPHC on the activities and progress of the NWP.

## **Confidentiality**

Discussions of the Data Working Group are 'government-in-confidence'. The Working Group will agree on what, if any, information should be released publicly.

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<sup>2</sup> NEPSC's role in providing administrative support to working groups will be subject any changes to EPHC arrangements arising from the 2009 COAG Review of Ministerial Councils.