



NRI Stakeholders SUMMIT – *It Time to Tell Government What We Expect*

Introductory Statement

The peak bodies (The Australian Council of Recycling, Boomerang Alliance and Waste Management Association of Australia) that oversee the National Recycling Initiative (NRI) have met with a broad cross section of their respective membership at a national summit meeting held from June 3rd & 4th 2010.

The Summit identified the priority actions which governments need to address to advance resource recovery and recycling in Australia. Summit delegates represented almost every aspect of resource recovery and recycling and combined represented public and private sector organisations employee over 20,000 staff, around 80% of the total market.

Some 35 recommendations were submitted for consideration, of which Eight have been adopted as priorities by the National Recycling Initiative. A further twelve recommendations were thought to be meritorious and we recommend government consider each of these within the work of their ongoing priority.

These recommendations are not a criticism of government, rather they recognise that recent developments such as the adoption of National Waste Policy by the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC), and the agreement for the Commonwealth to introduce overarching legislation to introduce product stewardship schemes are significant steps forward that these recommendations build upon. Equally, it is important to recognise that while there has been good progress in some areas, Governments needs to do much more to support improved performance in the resource recovery and recycling arena. Institutional arrangements have become outdated, investigative and implementation timelines are infrequently met and many states are using national inaction as an excuse to ignore their jurisdictional responsibilities in waste and recycling.

We urge all environment ministers and their respective agencies to urgently consider our recommendations and call on ministers to consider adopting the Summit's priority recommendations at the upcoming EPHC meeting in Darwin on July 5th 2010. The NRI partner organisations wish to receive some feedback about this discussion at the upcoming Enviro 2010 conference, which the Commonwealth Environment Minister, The Hon. Peter Garrett, is addressing.

The recommendations are:

Priority Recommendations for the EPHC to Consider

1. The EPHC should establish a mechanism under the NWP that will develop uniform minimum standards and definitions (or best practice guidelines) for legislation that will promote a nationally consistent approach to laws to support resource recovery.
2. The Commonwealth and States should develop a comprehensive and systematic approach to the collection, collation, storage and dissemination of waste management and resource recovery data.
3. Waste levies, charges, fees etc. collected by national and state governments should be reinvested to support resource recovery activities.
4. The EPHC should introduce Product Stewardship for the most problematic wastes namely: gas bottles, all types of tyres, lead acid batteries, mercury bearing lamps and sharps. States and territories should also take regulatory action to prohibit the disposal of these items in the waste stream (ban disposal to bin) nationally.
5. Urgently take action to extend the national carbon offset standard to include diversion of waste from landfill beyond June 30, 2010 and develop a plan to
 - o Recognize recycling as an energy efficiency activity (and attract RECs).
 - o Foster the recovery of energy from waste but only when it has been pre-sorted and is undertaken in full accordance with the WMAA "energy from waste sustainability guide".
6. The EPHC should take action to support the development of markets for recycled organic products, recognising the carbon value for agricultural soils.
7. Develop a stimulus package to attract infrastructure investment in the resource recovery sector; including accelerated depreciation (@ 50%), development of a Green bonds facility and an AusIndustry innovation program.
8. Based on its economic contribution, develop industry policy to support recycling.

Other Meritorious Recommendations

The following recommendations attracted a wide consensus of support and are also meritorious of government consideration:

1. Introduce a national zero waste or sustainability agency to drive product stewardship and recycling programs at a national level.
2. Governments that utilize waste levies should develop a rebate system on levies for disposal of residuals from recycling.
3. Relevant research be undertaken on recycling and its role within the sustainable economy with the support of Government and industry.
4. Establish and implement a voluntary industry accreditation scheme based on an industry agreed standard for the resource recovery industry (or sectors of that industry).
5. Seek increased enforcement of regulations across Australia to prevent illegal dumping.
6. Seek a national ban on e-waste in household bins from January 1, 2012.
7. Regulate the uncontrolled export of whole used tyres; & Implement consistent national regulations for waste tyre classification, transport and processing (sites storing over 2500 all used tyres must be licenced); ensure tyres are processed to at least a flat piece so it can hold no dirt or water prior to export. Further, the summit considered that the disposal of all tyres to landfill and on mine sites should be banned;
8. That government facilitate a dialogue between manufacturers of consumer good (and importers) and the resource recovery operators with a view to optimise resource recovery outcomes.
9. Require the manufactures of 'non-standard' products be required to produce Resource Recovery Data Sheets (RRDS's) to demonstrate the potential for recycling prior to such materials being released into the urban waste stream.
10. The special circumstances of managing waste and recycling in regional communities need support for innovation addressing specific local circumstances. A Resource recovery innovation grant program developed for rural and regional communities is needed.
11. All inert construction and demolition waste must be considered initially for resource recovery and maximum value added recycling, and mandatory levels for recycling set at 85% where 'application to land' regulations permit.
12. The summit expressed its concern at the lack of programs, innovations and opportunities around C&I resource recovery. Government need urgently to introduce programs and encourage innovation in C&I resource recovery.