



20-Year Waste Strategy for NSW

Submission by Cleanaway Waste Management Limited

25 September 2019

Cleanaway Waste Management Ltd, Australia's largest total waste management services company is pleased to express its views on the 20-year waste strategy for NSW.

Cleanaway's operations in NSW represent a large part of our overall business. We employ over 1,000 people and operate over 35 depots and resource recovery facilities in New South Wales.

Cleanaway firmly believes that government working closely with industry can resolve the recycling and waste management issues currently facing the people of New South Wales. Companies such as ours will invest in the necessary infrastructure required to make a sustainable future possible provided the appropriate policy settings and the framework for the industry are in place.

Should any further information be required in relation to the 20-year waste strategy, please contact:

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1. What are the key issues facing the NSW waste system?

- A key role of the NSW government is to establish and maintain the policy settings and the framework required to support a viable waste and recycling sector for all industry participants.
- Without the appropriate policy settings and framework, the vision of a clean, healthy and environmentally friendly society is merely a pipedream and the concept of sustainability will be unachievable.
- A key role of the NSW government is to establish and maintain the policy settings and the framework required to support a viable waste and recycling sector for all industry participants.
- While there are programs in place such as Waste Less Recycle More, the development of waste infrastructure in the state is lengthy, complex and very costly. A streamlining of the approval process will provide certainty to industry to invest in these crucial infrastructure assets.
- While the Container Deposit Scheme has been highly successful in providing a clean stream of recyclable material in the state, there is little remanufacturing of those materials into recycled products. The mandatory procurement of recycled products (as opposed to virgin products) into the government's own procurement policies will generate demand for recycled products and lessen dependence on export markets.
- To meet the NSW resource recovery targets will require the development of energy from waste as an alternative to landfill disposal for residual waste that cannot be recycled. Energy from Waste (EfW) technologies have now developed, and there are numerous overseas examples, that prove this waste can be converted into safe, reliable baseload energy.
- The current NSW Energy from Waste Policy Statement requires councils to introduce a three-bin collection system (including 'FOGO') for 100% of residuals to be allowed to go to an EfW facility. In the absence of councils moving down this path, the current policy significantly limits the opportunity for residual waste to be diverted from landfill.
- Government must strongly and equitably enforce waste regulations through its agencies such as the EPA.
- It is imperative that government recognise the extremely important role that responsible management of waste has in society. The government has a key role in ensuring all participants in the industry are held accountable to the policies that are in place.

2. What are the main barriers to improving the NSW waste system?

- A recognition at all levels of government that waste is a valuable resource and the safe management of waste is an essential service to the community.
- Uncertainty around regulatory and policy frameworks plus the time and costs associated with receiving approvals for waste infrastructure assets.

3. How can we best reduce waste?

- Education of the community is a key component towards the reduction of waste. This is particularly the case in improving recycling habits whereby the community is integral to the correct sorting of recyclable waste in their kerbside recycling.
- The phasing out of single-use materials.
- Increasing resource recovery by the development of local markets for recoverable material.

4. How can we recycle better?

- We consider that, currently, there is a gross misunderstanding in the community as to the real cost of recycling. The government is best positioned to implement change to ensure solid waste is managed in a coherent, efficient and environmentally friendly way.

- It should also be highlighted that, overall, we sort our recyclable material into different streams but do not actually recycle much within Australia. Actual recycling does not take place until the material is reused, such as by inclusion into a new product or material. Consequently, Australia is almost entirely reliant on foreign countries to purchase recyclable material in order for it to be recycled.
- Both the state government and the local councils need to facilitate the mandatory procurement of recycled products (as opposed to virgin products) into their own procurement policies. This will provide the much needed locally generated “end demand” for products and support the establishment of a true circular economy within the state.

5. What are the main opportunities for improving the NSW waste system?

- A consistent approach by both the State and Local governments in the planning for future waste and recycling assets.
- The use of alternative waste disposal facilities such as energy from waste and organics treatment facilities
- The State government working with the Federal government to develop nationally consistent specifications and standards for the use of recyclable and remanufactured goods.

6. Are there any additional views or information you would like to provide about waste in NSW?

- Cleanaway firmly believes that government working closely with industry can resolve the recycling and waste management issues currently facing the people of NSW. Companies such as ours will invest in the necessary infrastructure required to make a sustainable future possible provided the appropriate policy settings and the framework for the industry are in place.