

2007

RE-THINKING WASTE

**Disposal Behaviour & Resource Efficiency
Interim Action Plan**

Environment, Heritage and the Arts



Northern Territory Government

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RE-THINKING WASTE

Disposal Behaviour & Resource Efficiency Interim Action Plan

Introduction

The demographic position of the Northern Territory poses unique challenges when considering waste management, disposal behaviour and resource recovery issues. Approaches adopted in more populous regions of Australia where waste management is big business may not provide solutions for the Territory. The viability of recycling in most areas of the Territory is severely constrained by the distance to markets and small population. Collection and processing infrastructure is undeveloped and there is no data on the volume of recyclable/reusable materials available to assist analysis of industry development opportunities.

A rethink of our perception of 'waste' in industry, in the home and in our shopping centres is long overdue. In recent decades emerging sustainable technologies have transformed materials previously wasted to landfill into valuable resources for an increasing range of new products, processes and industries. These technologies should be explored seeking industry development opportunities for our remote and regional communities and seek smart solutions to convert waste problems into energy or valuable commodities such as plastic woods, glass tiles or road surfaces and cement additives.

Background

The Environment, Heritage and the Arts Division seeks to continue building on the outcomes of the Northern Territory Litter Abatement and Resource Recovery Strategy (LARRS). LARRS and its Implementation Plan were adopted in 2003 with a timeframe of three years (now expired). The Strategy was delivered in partnership with the Beverage Industry Environment Council (BIEC) who provided annual funding of \$250 000 to the Northern Territory Government as an industry commitment under the National Packaging Covenant. In addition, they committed to expend a further \$250 000 per year for other projects they would facilitate in the Territory to promote LARRS objectives.

In 2005, BIEC amalgamated with the Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) and became known as the Packaging Stewardship Forum (PSF). They continue to undertake a range of packaging stewardship activities in the NT and have offered to provide further funding of \$200 000 in 2006-07 for activities related to the Strategy. A review of the outcomes and future options will be undertaken later in 2006 and will form the basis of a future strategy.

Interim Action Plan

This interim action plan proposes to use the funding support offered by PSF for priority actions to address outstanding issues and to follow up on outcomes of the LARRS Program. It endeavours to find opportunities to integrate resource recovery and litter management with regional development and capacity building and represents an initial step in developing a longer-term waste management framework for the Territory.

Goals:

- To identify effective incentives for appropriate disposal behaviour in the NT.
- To identify opportunities to maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts in the NT;
- To establish a sustainable resource-not-waste management framework and effective implementation mechanisms; and
- To promote greater awareness of resource efficiency issues in the NT.

Drivers

- Environmental responsibility – good governance;
- Sustainable development/remote community development;
- Stewardship/ recognising limited resource base and future needs; and
- Meeting NEPM responsibilities.

Principals

- Waste minimisation hierarchy – avoid, reduce, re-use and recycle;
- Shared responsibility - product stewardship and co regulation;
- Re-think Waste - promoting public involvement, understanding and confidence;
- Develop incentives to Re-think Resources – opportunities for regional development;
- Working together - integrated - whole of government – regional/community partnerships;
- Polluter pays; and
- Intergenerational equity.

PRIORITY PROJECT OVERVIEWS

A Education Programs

A.1 Building better community education resources

Objectives:

- To inform the public about environmental issues associated with resource recovery and efficiency issues;
- to inform the public about appropriate disposal behaviour in the home and costs of contamination in kerbside collection systems;
- to provide information on recycling services available in the Territory;
- to provide information about the processes involved in resource recovery; and
- to promote the positive outcomes achieved in communities within the Territory.

Key Stakeholders: Environment Protection Agency, LGANT, DEET, LGH&S, local councils, Packaging Stewardship Forum, recycling industry representatives, KABC NT and COOLmob

Resources:

- \$460 000 EnvironmeNT Grants Program;
- \$20 000 PSF funding (Litter Abatement and Resource Recovery Strategy Fund);
- EPA Program and DEET agency resources; and
- NT Cool Communities Program.

Actions:

- Update the NT Recycling Directory and develop website as a portal to educational resources nationally and within the Territory;
- Link to LARRS projects and other initiatives to promote awareness and provide models for the community;
- Link to EnvironmeNT Grant program with appropriate guidance materials on appropriate projects;
- Expand the NT Cool Communities program to promote awareness and deliver appropriate guidance material to Territory households;
- Investigate a partnership with COOLmob to commission an extension of the Enviro Girl public service announcements to cover the recycling message; and
- Explore partnership opportunities with winner of DCC Kerbside Recycling contract (post June 2007).

A.2 Re-thinking Waste-in-Schools education programs

Objectives:

- to promote awareness of resource efficiency issues within school communities; and
- to establish incentives and encourage appropriate disposal behaviour in our schools

Key Stakeholders: DEET Sustainable Schools Program, EPA Program, Local Councils, KABC NT, Wastemaster, Visy

Resources:

- \$460 000 EnvironmeNT Grants Program;
- \$40 000 PSF funding (Litter Abatement and Resource Recovery Strategy Fund); and
- DEET Sustainable Schools program and EPA Program resources.

Actions:

- Consult with DEET in relation to policy changes and support for recycling services in schools to send the correct message to students and the community about the Governments commitment to appropriate disposal behaviour;
- Consult with the Program Manger of the DEET Sustainable Schools Program, local government and industry partners to develop a Re-thinking Waste in Schools Program and appropriate resources. Deliver this in time for participating schools to apply for funding for project delivery through the 2007-08 EnvironmeNT Grants program; and
- Establish a sub-category within the EnvironmeNT School Project Grants program and develop appropriate guidance materials.

B Regional/Industry Development Projects

B.1 Explore opportunities to fund regional infrastructure for integrated waste management in the NT

Objectives:

- to develop partnerships to promote resource/energy recovery industries and regional development (Building Stronger Regions – Stronger Future Strategy and Objective 5 of the 2015: Moving the Territory Ahead: NT Economic Development Framework);
- to investigate the economic feasibility and environmental appropriateness of available alternative technologies using waste as a resource for energy production in small remote/regional communities (NT Strategy for Greenhouse Action 2006);
- to establish a sustainable mechanism to fund regional infrastructure and improve the capacity to reuse/recycle resources in regional and remote communities; and
- to identify market opportunities and processes that will facilitate resource recovery in the Territory.

Key Stakeholders: EPA Program, DBERD, Regional Development Board, LGANT, LGH&S, individual councils; DPIFM & NT Chambers of Commerce and Correctional Services.

Resources:

- \$460 000 EnvironmeNT Grants Program;
- \$60 000 PSF funding (Litter Abatement and Resource Recovery Strategy Fund);
- Regional Development Fund; and
- Agency resources

Actions:

- Explore partnerships between Local Government/Industry/NT Government;
- Liaise with program manager of Regional Development Fund;
- Liaise with LGH&S in relation to Grants Commission funding levels for waste management infrastructure and services and reporting requirements;
- Identify Markets/Economic incentives/Changes required to achieve increased resource recovery, including transport logistics (eg. transport industry policy 'ship it in ship it out' and opportunities for support from brandowners through National Packaging Covenant Action Plans, subsidised rail freight);
- Liaise with local government and recycling industry representatives to improve data and reporting on resources recovered from the Territory;
- Investigate and promote new technologies in resource management and recovery as a regional development process providing resource solutions for remote communities;
- Identify opportunities for energy recovery/fuel from waste (NT Strategy for Greenhouse Action 2006);
- Monitor opportunities for capture and flaring of landfill gas, and other downstream measures that directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfill waste;
- Identify national programs that apply to the Territory;
- Promote hydraulic crushers and similar infrastructure through EnvironmeNT Grant program to improve logistics of transport of recovered materials to markets; and
- Identify opportunities to establish pilots (e.g. voluntary container deposit scheme and infrastructure at Lajamanu and a multiple polymer plastic remanufacturing plant in the Territory).

B.2 Engaging with industry to develop product stewardship approaches and Environmental Codes of Practice (including Waste Management Plans)

Objectives:

- to work with industry to establish Codes of Practice in key waste generation industries; and
- to provide an appropriate incentive to minimise waste and increase the volume of resources recovered.

Key Stakeholders: DBERD Industrial Waste Working Group, EPA Program, Chambers of Commerce, PSF, AHA and TCA.

Resources:

- \$460 000 EnvironmeNT Grants Program;
- \$80 000 PSF funding (Litter Abatement and Resource Recovery Strategy Fund);
- Other industry contributions; and
- Agency resources.

Actions:

- Work with DBERD to explore a partnership between the NT Chambers of Commerce, industry associations (AHA and PSF, TCA, etc) and the EPA Program to develop agreed voluntary codes of practice focussing on waste reduction and resource recovery;
- Develop guidance documents establishing EPA Program expectations of environmentally responsible behaviour in the building and construction industry and in the hospitality industry, provide current technical advice and awareness of existing and potential opportunities available to minimise waste and increase resource recovery; and
- Gazette the codes of practice under s. 12 of the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act* when they are finalised and agreed. The Gazettal process will legally define the general environmental duties of the industry activity and provide an incentive for compliance with the measures identified in the code. A Pollution Abatement Notice may be issued to require compliance with a gazetted code where significant breaches are identified.

C Re-think Governance

C.1 Ensure the responsibilities of the National Environment Protection (Used Packaging Materials) Measure are appropriately met in the NT.

Objective:

- to work with industry to raise awareness of environmental responsibilities and obligations under the UPM NEPM; and
- to work with local governments to develop a better understanding of resource recovery activities in the Territory and allow more accurate reporting under the UPM NEPM.

Key Stakeholders: local councils, brandowners, DBERD, EPA Program, Chambers.

Resources:

- Agency resources.

Actions:

- Work with DBERD to identify Territory business that may potentially trigger the UPM NEPM (i.e. annual turnover of >\$5m/yr);
- Contact the major brandowners identified to inform them of their obligations under the NEPM and seek information from them on their current operations to establish if they are significant contributors to the NT waste stream and/or take appropriate actions to minimise the impact of their products;
- Liaise with local governments to inform them of the reporting requirements of the NEPM and seek their cooperation in establishing a more effective annual reporting process;
- Liaise with commercial resource recovery operations in the Territory seeking their cooperation in tracking volumes of resources recovered/land filled in the Territory; and
- Compile a database to track resource recovery activities in the Territory.

C.2 Government Agency Waste Management Plans

Objectives:

- to establish a NRETA-wide waste management policy and planning process as a template for other NTG agencies; and
- to introduce greening of government initiatives in the NTG.

Key Stakeholders: EPA Program, NRETA, DCIS, NT Industry Capability Network, Eco-buy Victoria.

Resources:

- Agency resources.

Actions:

- Review Environment and Heritage Green Office Program and update as waste management and resource efficiency program template;
- Draft a waste management/resource efficiency policy paper and liaise with NRETA senior management to establish support and seek their assistance to identify relevant officers within each section to develop 'Re-think Program' network;
- Liaise with Re-think network and develop an agency-wide planning and annual reporting process;
- Facilitate high level briefings on green procurement and green specifications workshops through Eco-Buy Victoria;
- Develop support resources for procurement officers; and

- Work with Eco-buy Victoria and NT Industry Capability Network to develop NT content on the National Eco-buy database.

ACRONYMS

AHA	Australian Hotels Association
COOLmob	A community organisation funded by the Northern Territory Government through the Cool Communities Program to deliver community environmental education programs
DBERD	Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development
DCIS	Department of Corporate Information Services
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DPIFM	Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mines
EPA Program	Environment, Heritage and the Arts Division, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA)
KABC NT	Keep Australia Beautiful Council (NT)
LARRAC	Litter Abatement and Resource Recovery Advisory Committee
LARRS	Litter Abatement and Resource Recovery Strategy
LGANT	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
LGH&S	Department Local Government, Housing and Sport
TCA	Territory Construction Association
UPM NEPM	National Environment Protection (Used Packaging Materials) Measure