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Question 1 - What are the key issues facing the NSW waste system?
PROCESSING OPPORTUNITIES: There are limited waste processing opportunities available in NSW. There are two major recycling processors (Visy and Polytrade), which creates risk should either of these companies fail.
LIMITED MARKET OPPORTUNITES: There are limited market opportunities for products that are created from the waste industry. Without local markets, waste generated locally must be transported interstate or internationally to be used.
LACK OF TRANSPARENTY: There is no requirement for recyclers to report on where their products are recycled. Products are often sold to the international market at the highest bid, and then no guarantee or reporting requirement on how the product is recycled safely.
RED TAPE: Approval processes for new technologies is restrictive. Too much red tape.
PRODUCT PACKAGING: Extended producer responsibility (State & Federal) needs to be progressed to tighten the controls on packaging, which will make recycling of packaging more cost effective.
CROSS BORDER DIFFERENCES: Cross border influences and differences (i.e. levies, charges - State and Regional) create unbalanced playing fields for industry and service providers.
EDUCATION: Consumers understanding is limited. Confidence is lacking especially with scare campaigns from shows such as 4 corners, war on waste, and media in general.
FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES: Not enough income from waste levies is being returned to the resource recovery sector to solve the recycling crisis.
CHANGING ENVIRONMENT: MRFs are not keeping up with changes in packaging and recycling industry. EPR would assist this.
ECONOMIES OF SCALE: Australia is expected to compete in the world market with recycled commodities. With each MRF operator or recycling contractor competing, they are small operators in a large competitive market, yet, LGAs expect top dollar for their ratepayer. Australia would benefit from consolidated selling power similar to the wool market or other trading cooperatives that work together to achieve greater purchasing/selling power.
EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY: The current EPR scheme could be expanded to include all waste. The current lack of responsibility on manufacturers and producers means that products that are entering the market in Australia are often difficult to manage when they reach their end of life.
THROW AWAY SOCIETY: There seems to be no requirement for products to last beyond 2 years with limited repair options for consumers. Smart TVs for example, with a 2 year warranty fail and the consumer has little option to repair the TV. The producer which results in items being thrown out and new products purchased. Producers have no responsibility to manufacture products to that meet a certain standard and have a minimum working life. For example, TVs and Fridges that have no warranty after 12 months is not sustainable.

Question 2 - What are the main barriers to improving the NSW waste system?
RED TAPE: Red tape, surrounding approvals, licencing and development times.
ECONOMIES OF SCALE: Most local government areas who manage waste do not have the scale to effectively manage waste. Collection is at a reasonable scale, given size of LGAs and populations, yet getting tonnages to compete and/or transport waste in a cost effective manner can be a challenge.
DISTANCE: Transport costs in regional areas can be high, making the cost of recycling higher than landfilling. With a lack of infrastructure in regional areas, material must be transported by truck, train or boats to facilities that can then process the material.
COST: The cost to collect, separate, process, transport recycled material is increasing.
CROSS BORDER DIFFERENCES: Border - NSW vs Qld

LACK OF EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY: There is little control on manufacturing for packaging to have products that are easily repaired to extend their life, or easily recycled when reaching their end-of-life.

Question 3 - How can we best reduce waste?
EDUCATION: State level campaigns supported by local level behaviour change initiatives that build the community's, business and government understanding of the system, the impacts of their behaviour on the system, and that promotes waste avoidance and over consumerism as well as recycling the right way.
EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY: Shift the cost of managing consumer packaging waste at end of life from local government to those who design and generate the packaging through product stewardship schemes for manufacturers, importers and distributors, including targets, bans, design and labelling requirements. Capacity build and invest in the expansion of the reuse and repair sector and address barriers to buying second-hand and repaired products, including right to repair legislation for products that have significant environmental cost to build and discard.
WASTE LEVIES: NSW Government commitment to return all or most (80%) of the waste levy back to the resource recovery industry. Have a waste related levy on products that are imported to Australia to fund the management of these products when they reach their end of life.
ON SHORE PROCESSING: Available processing of recycling materials within Australia.

Question 4 - How can we recycle better?
EDUCATION: State wide education campaigns that focus on the importance of recycling to encourage the right way to recycle, reduce contamination and the purchase of products with recycled content
COLLECTION & PROCESSING: Improve material separation for kerbside recycling and clean up at household and processor. This could be achieved by reducing consumer confusion, removing non-compostable and non-recyclable products from the market (before 2023). Review international best practice household stream separation and explore recycling stream separation through pilots at kerbside and take back schemes for improved outcomes compared to the current comingled bin model Develop an industry roadmap to give clear direction and regulatory consistency and certainty for investment, skills and capacity building.
RECYCLED PRODUCTS IN PROCUREMENT: Support the development of strong markets for recycled products and recovered materials to help stabilise the market value of recycled materials. Mandate recycled content in procurement guidelines and building certification systems. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PRESSURE: Work with the Australian Government to:

- regulate/ban/DE incentivise production and importation of hard-to-recycle materials
- introduce producer responsibility schemes with binding targets to drive action by producers to take responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products.
- standardise packaging labelling and certify use of recycled content Improve recycling rates of C&I and C&D waste through mandated targets of recycled content in new developments.

ON SHORE PROCESSING: On shore processing will result in greater control and ensure safe and healthy outcomes are achieved in an environmental impacts are minimised.

Question 5 - What are the main opportunities for improving the NSW waste system?
PLANNING & REGULATION: Improve waste and resource recovery outcomes for state significant developments, such as wind and solar farms through consent conditions or other regulatory means. Prioritise waste and resource recovery within district plans, SEPPs and LEPs and evaluate the benefit of a SEPP for waste and resource recovery. Strategically plan and protect waste and resource recovery infrastructure.
CIRCULAR ECONOMY: NSW Government has a lead role in developing holistic policy approaches that supports transition to a circular economy. Substantial commitment and investment from all levels of

government is needed to transition towards a circular economy and a resilient and responsible waste and resource recovery sector. Regional areas have the potential opportunity to develop localised circular economies through regional processing and remanufacturing of recyclables, bringing jobs and investment and overcoming the costly logistics facing communities trucking their recycling to Sydney for processing. Support would be required to secure stable markets for regional products made of recycled content.
REVIEW OF THE WASTE LEVY: Local councils pay waste levies on behalf of ratepayers that are recovered through household rates. Waste levies currently have limited impact on reducing the waste generated by ratepayers, as they have no direct financial incentive to reduce waste going to landfill, paying generally a flat fee for their waste. However there is potential to structure a tiered waste ley to support initiatives that align with strategy objectives. Only a small proportion of the levy paid by ratepayers is returned to councils for waste management and recycling programs. The NSW waste levy is used to fund other NSW Government priorities rather than reserving the revenue for waste management and recycling programs as its purpose. A review of the waste levy including its effectiveness in reducing waste to landfill and promoting recycling and resource recovery. The implementation of waste levies across Australia in an equitable and consistent manner so that interstate transfer of waste is minimized should be advocated.
INCREASED HYPOTHECATION OF THE WASTE LEVY: The NSW Government collects more than $770 million each year from its waste levy but it only returns a small portion of that money, less than 20 percent - to waste and recycling services in NSW. The NSW Government should fully reinvest its increasing waste levy revenue in better planning and management of our waste and recovered resources to drive a circular economy.
REGIONAL COLLABORATION (RENEW): The model of the Metro Regional Waste Groups and the RENEW Regional Waste Groups supported by regional waste strategies that align with the NSW WARR strategy has been effective in: improving the delivery of WLRM programs increasing regional collaboration for planning and joint procurement of waste and resource recovery infrastructure and services, knowledge sharing and capacity building of councils, as well as regional scale campaigns to underpin council level behaviour change across the target areas of the WARR strategy. A commitment for continued funding and resource regional coordination for strong waste and resource recovery outcomes should be an integral part of the 20 year Waste Strategy.
DATA COLLECTION: Having framework for collecting, analysing and sharing state-wide waste and resource recovery data at LGA level in a timely way for informed decision making including improved timing of release and quality of the WARR data. A framework and funding source for consistent, quality compositional audits that bring cost efficiencies of scale. Technologies for collecting data at remote facilities e.g. unmanned landfills. Introduce systems for tracking and reporting on materials that are recycled and provide incentives for highest possible resource recovery.
PROCESSING TRANSPARENCY: Having minimum reporting requirements or transparency that materials are being processed in a safe, healthy manner that meet Australian environmental standards would deliver confidence at a consumer level that recycling is worthwhile. It is often difficult for Councils seek the best value for their communities and the knowledge that their recycling is being responsibly recycled but without industry transparency and data this is difficult to know if achieved. Lack of transparency also discourages other price models such as cost/risk sharing to be responsibly considered.
REGULATION: There is need for the waste and resource recovery sector to be provided with clear policy directions underpinned by consistent regulatory certainty if the waste and resource recovery system is to improve.

Question 6 - Any other information that you would like to contribute to the waste strategy initiative?
REVIEW LAST NSW WASTE STRATEGY (EVIDENCE BASED): A comprehensive review of the current WARR 2014-2021 strategy would be beneficial to evaluate how successful it has been in achieving its

objectives as well as an evaluation of the WLRM funding package that supports the strategy to inform the new funding mechanism for the 20 year strategy.