



Australian Government

Department of the Environment

Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM
Secretary

Ms Lyn Beverley
Secretary
The Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Beverley

Please find attached the Department of the Environment's submission to The Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee inquiry into the Commonwealth procurement procedures – paper procurement.

The Department of the Environment engages on waste management by supporting the implementation of the strategies under the *National Waste Policy: Less waste, more resources* in collaboration with the states and territories.

Yours sincerely

Dr Gordon de Brouwer
11 April 2016

SENATE FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the Commonwealth procurement procedures – paper procurement

The Department of the Environment advises on, and implements, environment policy to support the Government in achieving a healthy environment, strong economy and thriving community now and for the future. The programmes and initiatives of the Department work to protect and improve the environment through the four pillars of Clean Air, Clean Land, Clean Water and Heritage Protection.

In regard to waste management, the Department supports the Australian Government's obligations to a number of international agreements that apply to hazardous substances, wastes, persistent organic pollutants, ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gases and climate change.

The Department of the Environment's responses to the Inquiry Terms of Reference are as follows:

b) the impact of procurement connected policies with particular reference to the ICT Sustainability Plan and the National Waste Policy, on securing manufacturing investment and jobs in the paper sector

ICT Sustainability Plan

The *ICT Sustainability Plan 2010-2015* was developed by the Department of the Environment in consultation with the Department of Finance. The plan covered a period of five years to June 2015.

The primary aim of the plan was to improve environmental performance and reduce carbon emissions across government and the ICT industry. The plan served as a guidance document and did not require the use of Australian recycled paper or mandate the use of Australian-made paper.

The purchase of recycled copy paper by Australian Government departments and agencies is determined by the Department of Finance's Commonwealth Procurement Rules and Whole of Government Stationary and Office Supplies Panel arrangement. The Procurement rules ensure environmental sustainability is part of the considerations in achieving the cost-effective use of resources in procurement decisions.

National Waste Policy

Under Australia's Constitution, waste management is primarily the responsibility of state and territory governments. The Australian Government is responsible for ensuring that Australia's international obligations are met, whether through measures implemented by the Commonwealth or through measures implemented by the states. Local governments, which directly manage waste through activities such as waste collection and recycling services, management and operation of landfill sites, and maintaining waste management infrastructure, do so within the regulatory framework of their state or territory.

The *National Waste Policy: Less Waste More Resources* draws together waste management in Australia by setting Australia's waste management and resource recovery direction to 2020. The policy was agreed by all Australian environment ministers in November 2009 and was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments in 2010. Through this framework the

Australian Government works with the states and territories to support key national waste priorities.

The policy sets six key directions and identifies 16 priority strategies that would benefit from a national or coordinated approach. Two strategies within the policy directly relate to procurement:

Strategy 2: As significant procurers of goods, services and infrastructure, all governments will embody and promote sustainable procurement principles and practices within their own operations and delivery of programs and services to facilitate certainty in the market.

Strategy 6: The Australian Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments, local governments, industry, business and the community, will provide access to knowledge and expertise in sustainable procurement and business practices.

The strategies under the policy are implemented by individual and collective action by the Commonwealth and state and territory and local governments.

The Department of Finance's Commonwealth Procurement Rules and Whole of Government Stationary and Office Supply Panel arrangement are the key instruments that the Commonwealth uses to address these two strategies.

More information on the policy can be found at: www.environment.gov.au/protection/national-waste-policy.