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14 September 2020

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Emailed: ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Palethorpe

Inquiry into the Recycling and Waste Reduction Bills 2020

On behalf of the Local Government Association of South Australia (“LGA of SA”) and our 68 member councils, I welcome the opportunity to provide feedback to the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee (“the Committee”) on its inquiry into the Recycling and Waste Reduction Bills 2020.

Local government in South Australia plays a significant role in waste, recycling and resource recovery, beyond that of kerbside collection. Various, South Australian councils own and manage landfills, transfer stations and Material Recovery Facilities as well as undertake education and other programs to increase recycling and resource recovery rates, to reduce the amount of waste disposed to landfill. Finally councils are leveraging procurement capacity to stimulate “end market” development for recyclables.

Given the significant investment local government has in waste and recycling, the LGA of SA has actively participated and advocated for local government throughout the development of and consultation on the Waste Export Ban by providing written submissions, contributing to industry roundtables led by the Commonwealth and by providing comment through our membership to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).

I have *attached* a copy of the more recent LGA of SA submission made in relation to Consultation Regulation Impact Statement for the Waste Export Ban.

In addition to previous submissions, I wish to highlight the following matters for the Committee to consider as part of its inquiry into the Recycling and Waste Reduction Bills 2020:

1. Recycling Modernisation Fund – state and territory government funding commitments
2. Circular procurement in COVID-19 economic recovery projects

1. Recycling Modernisation Fund (RMF) – State and Territory Government funding commitments

The Australian Government has provided clear funding commitment and direction through the RMF. Given that Australian Government funding is contingent on co-funding from industry and states and territories, state and territory governments should provide transparent information on the investment amount and type they are willing to make in relation to the RMF, like the Government of Western Australia.

Transparency from state and territory governments provides clarity and direction to industry. This assists industry in the strategic planning and development of infrastructure to sort, process and remanufacture recyclable materials in alignment with the impacts of the Recycling and Waste Reduction Bills.

2. Circular procurement in COVID-19 economic recovery projects

There is opportunity for all levels of government to implement circular procurement practices as part of the COVID-19 economic recovery efforts to assist in developing onshore markets for Australian recyclables.

Target 4 of the National Waste Policy Action Plan is to “*Significantly increase the use of recycled content by governments and industry*”. The success of the Waste Export Ban implemented in the Recycling and Waste Reduction Bill is inextricably linked to the development of onshore markets for recyclable materials – end markets need to meet the increased demand resulting from the Waste Export Ban.

In response to COVID-19 many governments have announced funding packages and programs designed to stimulate economies, fast track infrastructure projects and create local jobs.

Where suitable, these projects (and projects/infrastructure being developed through the RMF) should seek to take advantage of recycled-content materials and product options. Utilising recycled content in these projects will assist in the development of onshore markets for Australia’s recyclables.

Leveraging the stimulus spending, and the infrastructure projects through the RMF, provide an opportunity to continue the momentum gained in tackling Australia’s waste and recycling challenges and to fast-track an effective response to these challenges.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

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Attach: ECM 698080 – COAG Waste Export Ban – Consultation Regulation Impact Statement
Copy to: South Australian Minister for Environment and Water, Hon David Speirs MP