



WASTE
MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA

Summary Statement for Senate enquiry appearance.

Established in 1991, the Waste Management Association of Australia (WMAA) is Australia's peak association for waste management professionals.

With over 1,000 members and representing more than 3,000 individuals in the waste and resource recovery industry, it has a network of State Branches, National Divisions and Special Interest Groups that provide the opportunity for networking, communication and involvement in projects aimed to encourage sustainable waste management.

The WMAA "tag line" "Fostering best practice and innovation in resource management" indicates the extent of its interest in resource recovery. In preparing submissions WMAA has been mindful of particular terms of reference of this inquiry viz:

- c. potential new strategies to reduce, recover or reuse waste from different waste streams;
- d. the economic, environmental and social benefits and costs of such strategies; and
- e. policy priorities to maximise the efficiency and efficacy of efforts to reduce, recover or reuse waste from different waste streams.

Given the functions and diverse interests within the waste management industry sector there is obviously a range of views some of which may appear to conflict with others. The West Australian and Tasmanian Branches have given their support to the submission to be presented by the NSW Branch. The Victorian Branch and the Landfill and Recycled Organics Divisions hold some differing views.

This serves to highlight the complexity of the industry sector and that there is no one simple answer to collection, treatment, recycling and disposal of the increasing amount of material discarded by us all. However a guiding principle should be resource recovery and the highest value re-use of that resource.

Attached are two papers one the National view of the Compost Division (a Recycled Organics special interest group) of WMAA which has the support of the members across the country.

Commercial composting represents a huge opportunity to convert a perceived waste problem into an organic resource for Australian Agriculture. Essentially we see strategies to drive demand for Recycled Organics products (ie. Quality RO products to agriculture) being the most effective means of recovering large amounts organic materials from the Municipal and C&I waste streams. The paper highlights benefits from National action and proposes some initiatives that could be undertaken at a Commonwealth level that would enhance those benefits. Whilst not all new ideas it would be a *new* strategy for the federal government to support it.

The other has been prepared by the Landfill Division (another special interest group), and discusses the landfill sector of the industry in the context of carbon trading.

Opportunities to reduce landfill GHG emissions fall into two categories – short term landfill operational improvements and longer term waste composition changes and methane oxidation advances.

Short term improvements include:

- Increased landfill gas capture;
- Improved landfill capping;
- Modified operational planning to bring forward capping and gas collection; and
- Modified operations - such as leachate recirculation - to accelerate methane generation and reduce long-term gas generation.

Longer term improvements are expected from:

- Changes to waste composition; and
- Alternative bio-filter capping that enhances the natural oxidation of methane.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you in my capacity as National President of the Waste Management Association of Australia.