

ACOR

Australian Council of Recyclers Inc

**Productivity Commission Waste Generation and Resource
Efficiency Inquiry
ACOR presentation 28 February 2006**

Presentation delivered by ACOR President John Lawson

I'd like to start this presentation with a "back to the future" question: If you found yourself having to justify to your great-great-great grandchildren how our generation had stewarded their resources, could you justify our current actions in resource depletion and wastage?

ACOR believes that it is vital that governments provide the leadership required to replace the current 'take-make-waste' pattern with a more sustainable mode of consumption, reuse and recycling.

We would like to see an end to waste strategy, and replacement with a resource efficiency approach.

We would recommend the approach taken in an article in *The Economist*, which advocated three things needed for a new market based green revolution:

- 'Get the price right' for the services of nature;
- Develop the information that is required to set prices correctly; and
- Embrace the concept of cost-benefit analysis (recognising that some things in nature are irreplaceable).

ACOR would also add:

- develop the planning and infrastructure required to deliver sustainable outcomes; as well as a number of associated recommendations in the attached paper.

ACOR wants to see a national strategy of 'maximum resource recovery and continuous improvement in resource efficiency' which would seek to value resource recovery eco-services, create mechanisms to overcome existing market failures, financially reward eco-service provision, improve data collection, improve planning and provision for recovery infrastructure, further develop national standards for recycling products and establish a fund for resource recovery industry development.

ACOR estimates that implementing this strategy has the potential to deliver \$912 million of commodity inputs, between 5,000 and 9,000 jobs, and in excess of \$3.5 billion of associated eco-services.

The alternative to this sort of a strategy outcome is not just "more of the same" in terms of wasted resources, but "much more of the same" as wealth grows in the short term and waste with it. Our great-great-great grandchildren's judgement of us will not be how much short term wealth we created and consumed for ourselves, but what sort of a legacy we left for them.