



**WASTE MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**

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Strategic Planning and Implementation Working Group

SUBMISSION TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION

Waste Generation & Resource Efficiency Inquiry

Feb 2006

Introduction

This submission seeks only to make the Productivity Commission aware of:

- i) The S.P.I.G. initiative
- ii) The circumstances that gave rise to the project
- iii) Who is involved in the project
- iv) The objectives of the project
- v) The proposed methodology
- vi) To reference the project to any of the specific issues in the Inquiry Discussion Paper

i) The Strategic Planning and Implementation Working Group (SPIG) Initiative

The NSW Branch of the WMAA has established a Working Group – the Strategic Planning and Implementation Working Group to

- a) Oversee and coordinate the development of a detailed Implementation Plan to facilitate the delivery of the necessary systems and infrastructure and the engagement of (private) capital, and
- b) Recommend the commercial, regulatory and legislative regime necessary to facilitate such implementation

ii) The circumstances that gave rise to the project

At the plenary session of the NSW WMAA Conference 2005 discussion turned to the frustrations that the “waste sector” had with implementing the NSW Government Waste Strategy. The concept emerged that in the absence of leadership on the subject of implementation, the “waste sector” could and should self organise to produce the necessary Implementation Plan themselves as a basis for subsequently

- a) Presenting the collaboratively produced outcomes to Government, and
- b) Providing a framework and structure for the “waste sector” going forward

iii) Who is involved

The NSW Branch asked Dr Ron Wainberg and Mark Glover to co-chair the Working Group which would include:

- Spokespersons of the various technical specialist Working Groups within the WMAA
- The Boomerang Alliance of environmental NGOs and the LGSA (<http://www.boomerangalliance.org/>) membership includes (<http://www.boomerangalliance.org/300.php>)
- The LGSA
- Australian Council of Recyclers (ACOR) (<http://www.acor.org.au/>)

The current make up of the SPIG Working Group is:

Name	Representation
Tony Wilkins	NSW Branch / PNEB
Tony Kanak	Compost NSW
Ron Wainberg (co-chair)	AWT/DORF Committee
Mark Glover (co-chair)	EfW Division
Nav Brah	Landfill
Mike Ritchie	WMAA majors
Marc Stambach	AWT
John Cook	Biosolids
Jeff Angel	TEC (NPC)
Dave West	Boomerang Alliance
Bob Verhey	LGA
John Lawson	ACOR

iv) The project objectives

- a) Oversee and coordinate the development of a detailed Implementation Plan to facilitate the delivery of the necessary systems and infrastructure and the engagement of (private) capital, and
- b) Recommend the commercial, regulatory and legislative regime necessary to facilitate such implementation

In approaching the task the Working Group have initially adopted, as starting conditions

- a) The NSW Government Waste Strategy – as a starting point
- b) A definition of sustainability

For the purposes of subsection (1) (a), ecologically sustainable development requires the effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes. Ecologically sustainable development can be achieved through the implementation of the following principles and programs:

- 1) *The precautionary principle – namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.*
 - 2) *Inter-generational equity – namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.*
 - 3) *Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity.*
 - 4) *Improved valuation and pricing of environmental resources.*
- c) To include the concept of Highest Net Resource Value in making decision as “The provision and operation of the services, capabilities and infrastructure to systematically recover the Highest Net Resource Value from the materials (and energy) presented in urban waste streams”.
 - d) An initial target of reducing waste to landfill by 66% by 2014 (NSW Government strategy)
 - e) Establishing annual milestones and benchmarking from 2006 to 2014
 - f) A list of boundary conditions is currently being developed by the stakeholders

v) The proposed operational methodology

Following a similar pattern to the production of the highly regarded EFW Sustainability Guide and Code of Practice (<http://www.wmaa.asn.au/efw/download.html>) the intent is to engage the expert and representative members of the Working Group to retain full management and editorial control of the process, but passing interim drafts or discussion papers and, eventually final reports and recommendations via a much broader and numerate Reference Group for peer review.

vi) Reference SPIG project to Inquiry Questions

The relevance of the SPIG project to the specific questions posed by the Inquiry Discussion Paper goes particularly to the issue of the inter jurisdictional issues, the prevailing lack of Government or jurisdictional leadership.

We ask that this submission be assessed specifically when the issues raised in questions:

Question 3

What strategies should be adopted by government and industry to improve economic, environmental and social outcomes in regard to waste and its management?

Question 29

Are institutional or regulatory barriers preventing the uptake of better waste management practices and how?

Question 70

Are there any significant regulatory differences between the states and territories in waste management? What are the costs of these differences?

Question 71

How could national coordination be further improved?

Question 72

When is it appropriate to implement uniform national approaches and when is it appropriate for the jurisdictions to pursue their own agendas?

Question 73

What role should the Australian government play in pursuing uniform national approaches when this is the appropriate course of action to take?

Question 74

How well is the Environment Protection and Heritage Council functioning in developing waste management policies that are in the national interest? What other models for developing policy should be considered?

are being considered.

We thank the Inquiry for the opportunity to present this information and we remain willing to provide additional and supporting information if required.

Dr Ron Wainberg and Mark Glover

(Co-chairs)