



Review of the Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010

Summary of submissions and EPA response



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EPA FOR RECONCILIATION

The EPA acknowledges and respects the Aboriginal peoples of South Australia as the first peoples and nations of this State. We recognise them as the traditional custodians of land and waters in South Australia and that their spiritual, social, cultural and economic beliefs are of ongoing importance today. We recognise that they have made, and continue to make, a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the State.

Artwork: 'Caring for Country', courtesy of Arrernte man Scott Rathman, for the EPA.

Contents

Executive summary	1
1 Introduction	4
2 Background	5
3 Consultation process and engagement approach	6
3.1 Consultation overview	6
3.2 Consultation materials	7
3.3 Media and social media	7
3.4 EPA website	7
3.5 YourSAy website	7
4 Summary of responses	8
Key area 1: Supporting the transition to a more circular economy	9
4.1 Broadening the policy objective	9
4.2 Expanding the waste management hierarchy	14
4.3 Managing resources to preserve value	16
4.4 Defining waste	20
Key area 2: Avoiding waste generation	24
4.5 Product stewardship requirements	24
4.6 Edible food donations	34
Key area 3: Maximising resource recovery	39
4.7 Municipal solid waste	39
4.8 Commercial and industrial waste	50
4.9 Circular procurement	70
4.10 Prohibited landfill waste	72
Key area 5: Protecting the environment and human health from waste pollution	84
4.11 Unlawful disposal of waste	84
4.12 Contaminants and chemicals of concern	86
4.13 Greenhouse gas emissions from landfill	87
4.14 Medical waste	89
Key area 6: Circular economy metrics, reporting and transparency	90
4.15 Circular economy metrics	90
4.16 Waste depot reporting	92
4.17 Reporting by local government	95
4.18 Transparency in waste levy component of service fees and charges	101
4.19 Additional questions	103

Abbreviations	106
Appendix List of organisations that participated	108

List of figures

Figure 1	Number of submissions received by stakeholder group	6
Figure 2	Question 1: Do you agree that 'circular economy' should be an objective of the W2R EPP?	9
Figure 3	Question 2: Do you agree that 'climate change mitigation' (i.e., limiting, reducing, or preventing greenhouse gas emissions) should be an objective of the W2R EPP?	11
Figure 4	Question 1b: What mechanisms should be considered when thinking of maximising higher-value reuse of materials?	18
Figure 5	Question 1: Should waste only cease to be waste if it complies with an approved EPA standard or specification? If so, what would be the benefits and costs of this approach?	20
Figure 6	Question 6: Should the EPA adopt a cost-recovery model for assessment of new resource recovery proposals?	22
Figure 7	Question 2: What would be an appropriate time frame for bans on these products to commence and why?	29
Figure 8	Question 1: Do you agree that food-waste-generating businesses should be required to donate unsold edible food to food rescue charities or recipient agencies?	35
Figure 9	Question 2a: Business type: what type of food-waste-generating businesses should be captured?	36
Figure 10	Stakeholder support for additional criteria for including businesses within the mandate	36
Figure 11	What is the optimal time frame for this proposed requirement to commence and why?	37
Figure 12	Question 1: If a requirement to provide a standardised three-bin system (recyclables, organics, and general waste) to all residential premises, in particular metropolitan Adelaide areas, was mandated, which councils or which areas should this apply to and why?	39
Figure 13	Question 2: Should a requirement to provide a standardised three-bin system to all residential premises in metropolitan Adelaide apply to multi-unit dwellings serviced by private waste contractors?	40
Figure 14	Question 3: If separate collections for recyclables or organics, whether by council or private waste contractors, are unable to be provided due to lack of access or infrastructure, should this trigger a requirement for the waste collected to be treated for resource recovery prior to disposal to landfill?	41
Figure 15	Question 1: How might waste and resource recovery collection services in outer regional and rural areas be modified to achieve cost-effective improvements in rates of resource recovery and diversion of organics?	43
Figure 16	Question 2: What are the barriers to improving resource recovery outcomes in outer regional and rural areas?	44
Figure 17	Question 3: What are the opportunities for these areas that may arise from improved resource recovery outcomes (e.g., new local enterprises, skills development, job creation)?	44

Figure 18	Question 3: Are there opportunities that could be explored that facilitate cost-effective resource recovery (e.g., using reverse logistics/backloading to utilise the space in the food trucks returning to Adelaide empty)?	46
Figure 19	Question 5: What support would assist communities in the management of waste and the recovery of valuable materials for recycling?	47
Figure 20	Support needed for successful implementation	49
Figure 21	Support for mandatory source separation of co-mingled materials	51
Figure 22	Question 1: For South Australian businesses and organisations that do not have access to council collected kerbside bins, what recyclable materials should be required to be separated for resource recovery collection?	51
Figure 23	Question 1: Should the separation and collection of food waste for businesses that generate food waste be mandatory?	55
Figure 24	Geographical scope of the requirements	56
Figure 25	Question 1: Should South Australian businesses and organisations be required to prepare waste reduction plans?	58
Figure 26	Question 2: Should this apply to all South Australian businesses and organisations?	59
Figure 27	Question 1: Do you agree that the recombining of waste and resource recovered materials that have been collected separately should be prohibited?	61
Figure 28	Question 2: Should materials in public place recycling or organic waste bins be prohibited from disposal to landfill?	62
Figure 29	Question 1: Should public place general waste bins require treatment for resource recovery prior to disposal to landfill where recycling and organic waste bins have not been provided?	65
Figure 30	Question 1: Should the requirement for waste or other matter to be treated prior to disposal to landfill be expanded beyond metropolitan Adelaide?	67
Figure 31	Question 1: Should unwearable clothing textiles be prohibited (banned) from disposal to landfill in SA?	74

List of tables

Table 1	Overview of consultation process and engagement approach	6
Table 2	Suggested additional objectives for consideration for the W2R EPP	12
Table 3	Question 1b: Should a reuse proposal be rejected if there is a higher-value reuse option available for that material?	17
Table 4	Question 4: Are there opportunities to develop local skills and create jobs?	46
Table 5	Question 2: How should 'food waste' be defined?	55
Table 6	Question 3: Which businesses/organisations should be given the priority	56

Executive summary

In 2023, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) commenced a review of the *Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010* (W2R EPP). As part of this process, the EPA undertook public consultation on the discussion paper *Beyond recycling: Moving SA towards a circular economy* between 23 September and 20 December 2024, which explored various policy and legislative options to support a circular economy in South Australia.

This stakeholder engagement process has involved drawing input from community members, local government, waste and resource recovery industry, government agencies, industry bodies, prescribed bodies, academia, environment and circular economy non-government organisations, waste and resource recovery consultants, product stewardship organisations, businesses, and statutory bodies. Stakeholders provided detailed and considered feedback on a wide range of policy proposals aimed at strengthening the regulatory framework, promoting circular economy outcomes, improving resource recovery, and minimising environmental harm. Overarching themes from the consultation and key policy reforms the EPA will seek to progress are outlined as follows.

Policy reforms will be developed progressively, with implementation subject to prioritisation, further stakeholder engagement, feasibility assessments, and inter-agency coordination. It is noted that while many of the proposed reforms will form part of an amended draft W2R EPP, other reforms will be progressed as part of separate projects to amend other legislation or underlying policies and standards. Any proposed legislative amendments will be subject to further public consultation.

The EPA acknowledges the diverse and constructive contributions received throughout the consultation process and remains committed to working collaboratively to support South Australia's transition to a more circular, resilient, and resource-efficient economy.

Key stakeholder views and EPA focus areas

1. Circular economy and climate change mitigation objectives

A clear majority of stakeholders expressed support for embedding circular economy and climate change mitigation as core objectives of the revised W2R EPP. These principles were broadly acknowledged as critical to reducing waste generation, extending the life cycle of materials, enhancing resource efficiency, and contributing to South Australia's broader sustainability and emissions reduction commitments. Stakeholders advocated for a holistic, system-wide approach extending beyond traditional waste management. In response, the EPA will seek to revise the W2R EPP to formally incorporate objectives relating to the circular economy and climate change mitigation. It is noted, however, that a separate Environment Protection Policy on climate change is currently being developed by the EPA. The incorporation of a climate change objective in the W2R EPP will be considered alongside this work to ensure alignment and coherence across policy instruments.

2. Expansion and application of the current waste management hierarchy

Stakeholders were broadly supportive of expanding South Australia's waste management hierarchy to embed circular economy principles and introducing new circular economy principles into the W2R EPP to guide EPA regulatory decision-making. However, submissions emphasised the need for balance between clarity and flexibility to support practical application and avoid unintended consequences. They also recommended supporting highest-value use, while taking into account practical feasibility and economic limitations. In response, the EPA will further explore incorporating a principles-based approach into the W2R EPP to support practical application of the waste management hierarchy in regulatory decision-making.

3. Source separation and collection requirements

There was strong stakeholder support for the introduction of mandatory source separation and collection requirements, particularly targeting the commercial and industrial sector and businesses that generate significant quantities of food waste. Submissions generally endorsed a staged and risk-based approach, underpinned by investment in appropriate infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives. In response, the EPA will undertake further analysis to support policy design with phased implementation and an initial focus on high-waste-generating sectors in areas where adequate processing capacity is already in place. Emphasis will be placed on the source separation and collection of paper and cardboard and organic materials (including food waste), alongside measures to enhance the consistency and effectiveness of kerbside collection systems.

4. Dilution, recombination and waste-derived materials

Proposals to prohibit the dilution of waste materials, prevent the recombination of separately collected materials, and prohibit the disposal of source separated organic waste to landfill were broadly supported by stakeholders. Some submissions emphasised the importance of allowing for limited exemptions in specific circumstances (e.g., heavy contamination of recyclables). There was also strong support for requiring approved standards or specifications for certain waste-derived materials based on risk, to manage potential harm and provide greater clarity on the point at which such materials cease to be classified as waste. In response, the EPA will continue work on the development of these requirements via proposed amendments to the W2R EPP, with particular focus on materials considered to present higher risks and addressing the challenges associated with emerging contaminants.

5. Product stewardship and problematic materials

The establishment of a state-based product stewardship framework received broad support from stakeholders, particularly in the absence of national action to address problematic materials and products. Suggested approaches include the development of design standards, mandatory take-back schemes, and material-specific targets for reuse or recycling. A number of stakeholders also encouraged the EPA to consider stronger regulatory measures for the implementation of product stewardship arrangements for problematic materials, particularly for single-use plastics and batteries. In response, the EPA will explore the potential for new legislation aligned with actions underway in other jurisdictions, such as New South Wales, for further government consideration.

Landfill bans on problematic products and materials were supported to reduce environmental harm and increase resource recovery, noting that accessible collection and resource recovery infrastructure and appropriate end-markets must exist. This further highlighted the need for appropriate product stewardship arrangements to support landfill bans and achieve circular economy outcomes. In response, the EPA will undertake further feasibility assessments to determine whether, and how, potential landfill bans may be appropriately progressed via proposed amendments to the W2R EPP.

6. Circular procurement

There was strong stakeholder support for the introduction of circular procurement requirements, particularly for government entities and larger businesses. Submissions commonly advocated for the implementation of mandatory reporting obligations, measurable targets, and standards aligned with circular economy principles, but many questioned whether the EPA was best placed to oversee this. While the EPA does not intend to progress mandatory regulatory requirements further at this time, it is noted that actions relating to government and business procurement policies and practices have been included in South Australia's Waste Strategy 2025–2030 which was released in December 2025.

7. Food donation requirements

Proposals to mandate the donation of unsold edible food by food-waste-generating businesses were generally well-received, with stakeholders acknowledging the potential to reduce food waste and enhance support for food relief initiatives. Key considerations identified include the need to define appropriate applicability thresholds, ensure adequate support and capacity within the charitable food sector, and establish clear and practicable implementation time frames. In response, the EPA will continue to engage with relevant stakeholders to further explore the development of this proposal via potential amendments to the W2R EPP.

8. Infrastructure, access and kerbside services

With respect to resource recovery infrastructure and services, stakeholders generally expressed support for standardised household three-bin systems, including for multi-unit dwellings and areas with limited or no existing services provided that issues relating to logistics, access and processing capacity are adequately addressed. Support was noted for the standardisation of bin lid colours on an attrition basis, and the expansion of public place collection infrastructure, but noting contamination challenges. In response, the EPA will continue to work collaboratively with local government to assess the feasibility of these initiatives and, where appropriate, facilitate implementation via potential amendments to the W2R EPP.

9. Data transparency and reporting

The importance of data reporting and transparency was consistently highlighted by stakeholders. There was broad support for measures such as expanding mass balance reporting, requiring public reporting from waste depots, mandatory council kerbside waste data reporting, standardising kerbside audit methodologies, and increasing public access to waste management data and strategies, and local government waste contract tendering information. These reforms were viewed as important for monitoring progress, enhancing accountability, and supporting evidence-based decision-making. In response, the EPA will explore appropriate mechanisms to improve data collection and availability while also considering identified barriers, including concerns related to commercial sensitivities. While some of these may be progressed through amendments to the W2R EPP, others may be progressed through future amendments to the Environment Protection Regulations, through other policy measures and collaborative partnerships under the current legislative framework.

10. Cost recovery and waste levy disclosure

There was strong support for the introduction of a cost-recovery model for the assessment of new resource recovery proposals, provided that such a model is transparent, equitable, and does not create unintended disincentives for innovation. Stakeholders also expressed in-principle support for extending waste levy disclosure obligations to certain waste and resource recovery operators, but noted associated complexities. In response, the EPA will further explore appropriate models and mechanisms to ensure fair and effective implementation, noting that this may be progressed through future amendments to the Environment Protection Regulations.

1 Introduction

This report summarises submissions received in response to consultation on the discussion paper *Beyond recycling: Moving SA towards a circular economy*. The purpose of the consultation process was to identify stakeholder views on various policy and legislative options to support a circular economy in South Australia and use the feedback provided to guide review of the *Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010* (W2R EPP) and other related policy measures. This report describes the consultation process undertaken by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), provides an analysis of main themes from the feedback received, and outlines the EPA's response to key issues.

The process fulfilled the engagement objectives set out in the [Engagement Charter](#), which outlines the EPA's commitment to engagement through listening to communities and involving them in decisions that affect them. Engagement regarding the review of the W2R EPP was extended via broad media and by directly inviting submissions from relevant stakeholders. All consultation materials were made publicly available online.

The EPA acknowledges the time and effort individuals and organisations have put into preparing submissions, which provided important and detailed feedback, with 120 submissions received in total. While the feedback from the consultation was broad and, at times, extended to matters beyond the scope of responsibility of the EPA, all submissions were carefully considered.

A new South Australian waste strategy titled: *Accelerating SA's transition to a circular economy: South Australia's waste strategy 2025-2030* developed by Green Industries SA (GISA), was publicly released in December 2025. Feedback received through the consultation process was shared with GISA and has directly informed development of the new strategy.

While many of the proposed reforms will form part of an amended draft W2R EPP, other reforms will be progressed as part of separate projects to amend other legislation or will be progressed through other measures not requiring legislative reform. The respective approach is outlined in the EPA response to feedback about each policy option. Key priority actions have also been incorporated into South Australia's Waste Strategy 2025-2030.

Further cost-benefit analysis and targeted stakeholder engagement will be undertaken where necessary to inform policy development. The development of any legislation is subject to government approval and further public consultation.

2 Background

The *Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010*, through the *Environment Protection Act 1993* (EP Act), provides a regulatory underpinning for South Australia's waste management objective and actions identified under South Australia's Waste Strategy and the National Waste Policy Action Plan. The establishment of this ambitious regulatory framework in 2010 enabled improved waste management and resource recovery practices, including diverting resources from landfill, placing South Australia at the forefront of resource recovery in Australia.

Since the commencement of the W2R EPP, significant changes have occurred in the waste and resource recovery sector that warrant a review of the policy. This review provides an opportunity to consider policy initiatives that contribute to the South Australian Government's commitments to a circular economy and achieving zero net emissions by 2050. Transitioning to a circular economy is vital for addressing climate change, as 45% of global emissions come from the way we produce and consume materials.

A circular economy is an economic model designed to prioritise reduction of waste and pollution, the circulation of products and materials at their highest value, and the generation of nature. As we transition to a more circular economy, we will improve and sustain our environment, increase our wellbeing, and grow our economic prosperity in a sustainable way. A contemporary and effective regulatory framework can strengthen implementation and enforcement, give regulatory certainty for investment, and drive the development of a circular economy.

The discussion paper [Beyond recycling: Moving SA towards a circular economy](#) identified the following key review areas for feedback:

Key area 1: Supporting the transition to a more circular economy

- Broadening the policy objective
- Expanding the waste management hierarchy
- Managing resources to preserve value
- Defining waste

Key area 2: Avoiding waste generation

- Product stewardship requirements
- Edible food donations

Key area 3: Maximising resource recovery

- Municipal solid waste collection requirements
- Commercial and industrial waste collection requirements

Key area 4: Supporting a strong market for recovered resources

- Circular procurement
- Prohibited landfill waste

Key area 5: Protecting the environment and human health from waste pollution

- Unlawful disposal of waste
- Contaminants and chemicals of concern
- Greenhouse gas emissions from landfill
- Medical waste

Key area 6: Circular economy metrics, reporting and transparency

- Circular economy metrics
- Waste depot reporting
- Reporting by local government
- Transparency in waste levy component of service fees and charges.

3 Consultation process and engagement approach

Consultation during the twelve-week public comment period was designed to encourage and support written submissions from the community and stakeholder groups.

3.1 Consultation overview

Table 1 Overview of consultation process and engagement approach

Aspect	Details
Method	Discussion paper, information sessions, online survey via YourSAy webpage, written submissions
Duration	12 weeks (23 September 2024 to 20 December 2024)
Submissions received	120 total (86 written and 34 online surveys)
Stakeholder representation	Prescribed bodies, local government waste subsidiaries, local government associations, waste and resource recovery consultants, academia, local councils, industry bodies, supermarkets, food rescue organisations, government agencies, licensees (waste and resource recovery industry), statutory authorities, and individual participants
Public information sessions	Conducted both face-to-face and online around South Australia – Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, Port Lincoln, Berri, Victor Harbor, and Adelaide

3.1.1 Stakeholder groups and their contribution

The EPA received 120 submissions in total, including 86 unique written submissions and 34 online surveys. Figure 1 shows the number of submissions received from each stakeholder group.

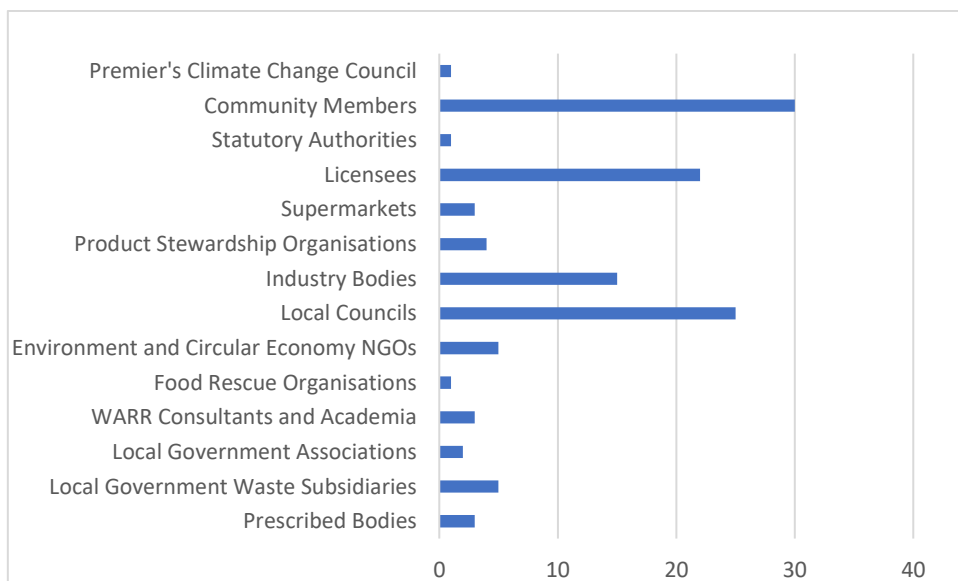


Figure 1 Number of submissions received by stakeholder group

3.2 Consultation materials

The EPA prepared the discussion paper [Beyond recycling: Moving SA towards a circular economy](#). This incorporated international, national and state contexts on a circular economy, described a range of options to drive South Australia towards a circular economy, and sought feedback on the policy options proposed.

Other supporting documents available during the consultation period included:

- [Proposed expanded SA Waste Management Hierarchy images](#)
- [Environment Protection \(Waste to Resources\) Policy 2010](#)
- [South Australia's Waste Strategy 2020-2025](#)
- [SA Food Waste Strategy 2020-2025](#)
- [National Waste Policy Action Plan 2019](#).

3.3 Media and social media

The state government issued a media release on 24 September 2024 to announce the release of the discussion paper [Beyond recycling: Moving SA towards a circular economy](#).

Media coverage included print, online and radio coverage across metropolitan and regional South Australia.

To raise further awareness, the consultation was promoted via social media to encourage feedback by directing people to the [YourSAy](#) online engagement website.

3.4 EPA website

The EPA website featured a dedicated [Waste to Resources Policy Review](#) page with links to the discussion paper, YourSAy webpage, and information session dates and places. The Waste to Resources Policy Review page received a total of 1,006 visits.

3.5 YourSAy website

The [YourSAy website](#) featured a dedicated page during the consultation period, which provided links to the discussion paper, information session dates, feedback form, FAQs, survey and other relevant documents.

The consultation received a total of 34 survey responses via the YourSAy survey tool. The site recorded more than 5,000 total visits, with a maximum of 147 visits a day, and over 2,600 downloads of the discussion paper.

4 Summary of responses

This section provides a summary of responses for each of the policy options outlined in the discussion paper, EPA response to the key issues raised, and the next steps that the EPA will take for each of the policy options. Submissions came from stakeholders who collectively brought a range of views about the proposed policy options. An analysis has been undertaken of all the submissions received to measure the level of support for each policy option.

Submissions from community members constituted the largest portion (25%) of total responses to the review. In general, these submissions demonstrated broad support for the proposed policy options, but with less explanation or qualification of their support.

In contrast, submissions from local councils, industry bodies, prescribed bodies, and licensees also indicated general support for the majority of policy options, but their responses provided more context and qualification. These groups were more likely to express conditional support or opposition, often accompanied by detailed commentary reflecting their operational experience, business focus areas, and specific regulatory considerations.

As community members represented the largest group of respondents, the overall results of the review were somewhat skewed toward unqualified support. To account for this, the report includes a comparative analysis that examines the level of support for each policy proposal across different stakeholder categories. This approach allows for a more balanced interpretation of the feedback by highlighting the variations in perspectives and the underlying rationale provided by each group.

Key area 1: Supporting the transition to a more circular economy

This key policy review area consists of four policy proposals: broadening the policy objective, expanding the waste management hierarchy, managing resources to preserve value, and defining waste.

4.1 Broadening the policy objective

The first proposal presented in the discussion paper involves a review of the fundamental principles and objectives of the W2R EPP. The paper notes that the EP Act has been updated to include principles related to the circular economy and climate change mitigation. Considering these legislative changes, the discussion paper proposed expanding the policy’s objectives to align with these broader goals. (For further details, refer to Section 7.1 of the discussion paper.)

4.1.1 Circular economy objective

Stakeholders’ views were sought on whether the waste management objective should be broadened to include circular economy (see Section 7.1 of the discussion paper for details). A total of ninety-four (94) responses were received from a diverse range of stakeholders, with strong and widespread support in favour of making the circular economy a core objective of the W2R EPP (see **Figure 2**).

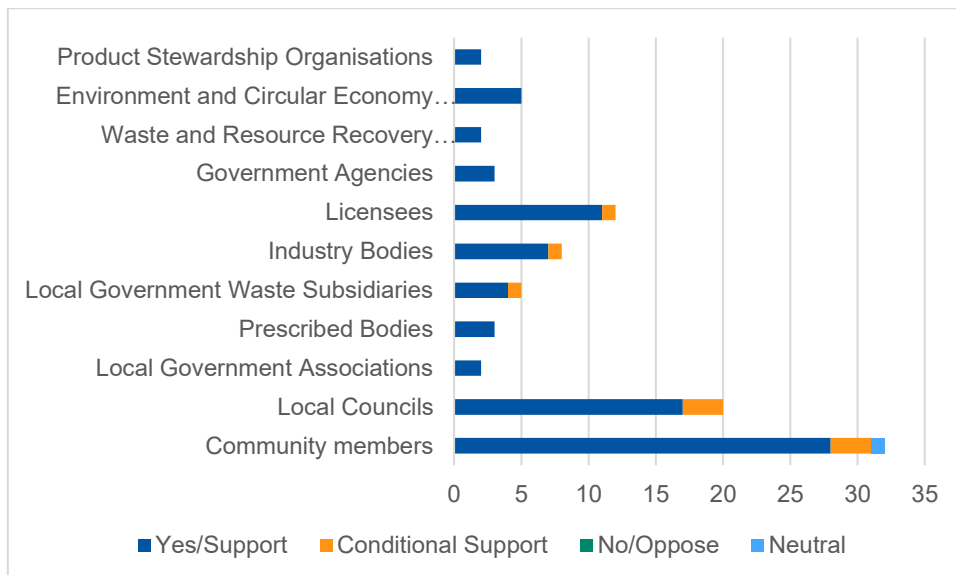


Figure 2 Question 1: Do you agree that ‘circular economy’ should be an objective of the W2R EPP?

Many stakeholders emphasised that circular economy principles are essential for extending material life cycles, reducing waste generation, improving resource efficiency, and minimising environmental impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions. Circular economy was widely viewed as integral to achieving South Australia’s climate change commitments, sustainable development goals, and environmental protection objectives. Stakeholders also highlighted that a circular economy extends beyond traditional waste management, encompassing sustainable product design, resource recovery, reuse, and broader systemic shifts toward regenerative and low-impact economic models.

Several stakeholders expressed qualified support, acknowledging the value of a circular economy framework, but urging caution around implementation. Key concerns raised include:

1. Need for whole-of-government commitment and coordination
 - Many submissions cautioned that circular economy objectives must be supported by coordinated government policy, clear regulation, and cross-portfolio collaboration.
 - Consistency with federal, state, and other jurisdictions' policies was seen as important to avoid regulatory duplication or conflicts.
 - Government leadership was seen as important to drive consistency, set clear targets, and enable cross-portfolio collaboration (e.g., procurement policies, waste levies, and environmental standards).
2. Regulatory and economic instruments
 - Stakeholders identified economic incentives and disincentives, such as tailored waste levies, subsidies, and procurement policies, as key tools to encourage circular economy outcomes.
 - A level regulatory playing field for industry participants was seen as necessary to ensure fairness and support investment and innovation.
 - Some stakeholders suggested incorporating the 'Best Available Techniques' into licensing to ensure recovery options are maximised and environmental performance is upheld.
3. Infrastructure and practical implementation considerations
 - A phased approach and recognition of regional disparities in infrastructure availability and capacity were frequently noted.
 - Stakeholders highlighted the importance of ensuring adequate processing facilities, collection services, and market development for recovered materials.
 - Submissions emphasised that the circular economy objective should be flexible enough to accommodate innovative and local solutions, such as commercial composting or co-processing.

While support was broad, some stakeholders noted:

1. the risk of ineffective outcomes without strong government commitment and clear mandates
2. potential policy misalignment risks if federal, state, and local regulations are not harmonised
3. the need for policy design that avoids overly prescriptive or prohibitive measures that could stifle innovation or create undue burden, especially on small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

4.1.2 Climate change mitigation objective

The discussion paper proposed that the W2R EPP objective also be broadened to include a climate change mitigation objective (see Section 7.1 of the discussion paper for more information).

A total of eighty-three (83) responses were received from a broad range of stakeholders. Most supported the inclusion of climate change mitigation in the W2R EPP (see **Figure 3**), recognising that material management and resource recovery systems play a significant role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

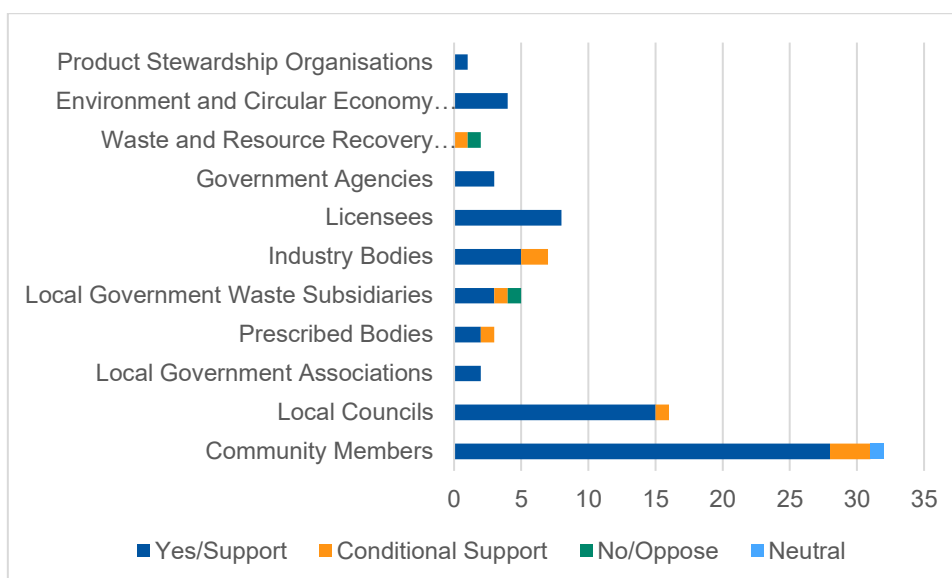


Figure 3 Question 2: Do you agree that 'climate change mitigation' (i.e., limiting, reducing, or preventing greenhouse gas emissions) should be an objective of the W2R EPP?

Respondents saw the proposed inclusion as timely, aligning with South Australia's climate targets, national climate policies, and the increasing global focus on decarbonisation. Many noted that waste and resource recovery activities can significantly contribute to climate change mitigation through avoidance of landfill emissions (particularly methane), promotion of material reuse and recycling, sustainable organics management, and energy recovery from waste streams where appropriate. Submissions often linked the climate change objective to the broader transition towards a circular economy, emphasising that both aims are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Some stakeholders offered qualified support, agreeing with the intent, but raising practical or strategic considerations. These include:

- Regulatory clarity and scope:** Several industry and council submitters sought clarity on how the EPA would measure and enforce climate-related objectives within the W2R EPP. Some noted the potential overlap with roles already led by climate-focused agencies or for added complexity in existing compliance obligations. Stakeholders also highlighted the possibility of unintended duplication with other regulatory frameworks, such as the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007*. Some stakeholders, particularly from industry, indicated that highly prescriptive approaches could inadvertently limit certain recovery options (e.g., energy from waste and alternative fuels like refuse-derived fuel (RDF)).
- Risk of overreach:** A few stakeholders noted that introducing climate mitigation into an Environment Protection Policy could broaden its remit beyond core waste and pollution control, potentially blurring responsibilities or creating regulatory uncertainty.
- Need for supporting mechanisms:** Many stakeholders noted that policy objectives alone would be insufficient, and should be accompanied by funding, incentives, and market development support to drive low-emission technologies, infrastructure upgrades, and improved materials management.

Suggested mechanisms for integrating climate change mitigation into the W2R EPP include:

- incorporating climate mitigation into assessment of beneficial reuse proposals
- promoting material recovery that demonstrably reduces carbon intensity (e.g., co-processing, composting, and anaerobic digestion)
- including emissions reduction as a criterion in the waste hierarchy or reuse prioritisation

- iv. developing guidance or performance standards to support emissions-conscious decision-making across waste and resource recovery systems.

A small number of stakeholders, however, opposed the inclusion of climate change mitigation as a W2R EPP objective (see Figure 3). Their reasons include:

1. a belief that the EPA’s regulatory focus should remain on pollution control and public health, and not extend into broader climate policy, which they argued is better addressed through other frameworks
2. concerns about duplication of effort, as greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector are already addressed under existing federal and state climate legislation and reporting frameworks, such as the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act
3. scepticism about the effectiveness of embedding high-level climate objectives within a policy that regulates operational waste practices
4. the need to avoid regulatory overreach or conflicting obligations for regulated parties
5. preference for the W2R EPP to focus strictly on waste and resource management, with climate goals delivered through broader environmental policy instruments.

Some suggested that climate impacts could be considered indirectly through improved resource efficiency or best practice waste management, without being framed as a stand-alone policy objective. However, even some cautious respondents acknowledged that a reference to climate objectives may be appropriate if clearly scoped and aligned with other legislation.

4.1.3 Additional objectives for consideration in the W2R EPP

Feedback was also sought on other objectives that should be considered for the W2R EPP. **Table 2** summarises other suggested objectives for consideration.

Table 2 Suggested additional objectives for consideration for the W2R EPP

Proposed objective	Stakeholder referenced	Key points raised
Waste avoidance and minimisation	Local government, industry bodies, licensees, prescribed bodies	Strong emphasis on prioritising waste avoidance, especially food waste reduction; optimising resource recovery and increasing diversion rates.
Market development and access to end markets	Local government, industry bodies, licensees, prescribed bodies, local government associations	Importance of developing and supporting end markets, including problematic materials; grant funding and regulation support to enhance markets and innovation.
Policy alignment and harmonisation across jurisdictions	Industry bodies, government agencies, licensees, prescribed bodies	Need for cohesive and consistent policies aligning state and national frameworks to reduce regulatory burden and foster cooperation.
Recognition for energy from waste and alternative fuels	Government agencies, industry bodies	Call for classifying biogas, biomethane, and refuse-derived fuels as higher order than landfill disposal; recognise their role in decarbonisation and energy security.

Proposed objective	Stakeholder referenced	Key points raised
Disaster waste management	Local councils, local government associations	Support for including clear objectives in relation to waste generated from natural disasters and extreme events, such as bushfires, floods, and storms. Emphasis placed on the importance of preparedness planning for disaster waste management, coordinated emergency response, clarified roles and responsibilities among councils, the EPA, emergency services, and waste contractors, and ensuring the safe, timely, and environmentally sound management of disaster waste.
Policy flexibility and regulatory simplification	Industry bodies, government agencies, licensees, waste recovery consultants, local government	Support for adaptable, fit-for-purpose regulatory frameworks; streamlined 'end-of-waste' processes to encourage circular initiatives and innovation.
Product stewardship as a stand-alone objective	Waste recovery consultants, industry bodies	Call for dedicated product stewardship frameworks, either stand-alone or within EP Act.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges and welcomes the strong stakeholder support for embedding circular economy and climate change mitigation as core objectives within the W2R EPP. These objectives are seen as critical to ensuring strategic alignment across government, industry, and the community, while providing the regulatory certainty needed to drive investment, innovation, and behavioural change across the waste and resource recovery sector.

The EPA recognises the critical role of climate change in driving South Australia's transition to a sustainable and climate-resilient circular economy. In parallel, the EPA is developing an Environment Protection (Climate Change) Policy, and the inclusion of a climate change objective in the W2R EPP will be considered in this context to ensure alignment and coherence across policy instruments.

The EPA will consider stakeholder suggestions to include additional complementary objectives, such as social equity, behaviour change, and market development, to ensure the policy reflects a comprehensive and future-focused approach.

The EPA remains committed to working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure the W2R EPP reflects best practice, supports effective and practical implementation, and contributes meaningfully to South Australia's broader environmental and circular economy goals.

4.2 Expanding the waste management hierarchy

The discussion paper proposed expanding the current waste management hierarchy and providing additional guidance on how the hierarchy is to be applied in a practical way (see Section 7.2 of the discussion paper for more information). To gain feedback, the discussion paper asked stakeholders to provide comments on the proposed expanded South Australian waste management hierarchy.

Stakeholders provided a broad range of feedback with many welcoming the updated model while offering constructive comments to improve clarity, consistency, and application. Overall, submissions acknowledged the value of updating the hierarchy to reflect a contemporary circular economy, sustainability priorities and resource recovery practices, while ensuring it remains practical and fit for purpose.

Many stakeholders expressed general support for expanding the waste management hierarchy. They recognised the revised hierarchy as an important tool for:

1. embedding circular economy principles in regulatory and operational decisions
2. clarifying waste management priorities, particularly the emphasis on avoidance and reuse
3. encouraging higher-value recovery pathways and discouraging low-value or harmful treatment and disposal options.

Several respondents commented that the revised hierarchy is more reflective of current industry practices and policy directions, including national frameworks and international waste strategies.

Numerous stakeholders endorsed the stronger emphasis on material circularity, noting that this helps shift the focus away from diversion metrics alone and toward value retention and life-cycle thinking.

Some stakeholders recommended:

- explicit reference to 'highest and best use' as a guiding principle
- greater visibility for design of environment or product stewardship measures in the 'Avoid' tier.

Clarifying tiers and definitions

The majority of submissions (63%) noted that the expanded waste management hierarchy, especially Figure 7 of the discussion paper, introduces a level of complexity that may confuse both the public and industry. Stakeholders cautioned that excessive detail and overlapping categories (e.g., between 'Avoid' and 'Reduce', or between different forms of recovery) could make the hierarchy harder to understand and apply. Some submissions recommended retaining a simplified version of the hierarchy for public education purposes, while reserving the more detailed, expanded version for industry and regulators.

Concerns were also raised regarding the lower tiers of the hierarchy, especially the distinction between energy recovery and thermal treatment, as well as the placement of disposal methods required for hazardous or contaminated materials. Stakeholders emphasised the need for clarity in these categories to ensure appropriate interpretation and application across different waste streams.

Feedback on terminology within the hierarchy was mixed. Some stakeholders noted that certain terms including 'downcycling', 'recover', and 'avoid' could benefit from clarification to better reflect environmental outcomes and the intent of the hierarchy.

There was support for distinguishing between 'closed loop' and 'open loop' recycling within the W2R EPP. These stakeholders argued that recognising closed-loop recycling, where materials are returned to the same product system, as a higher-order outcome would incentivise technologies and practices that preserve material quality and promote sustainable product design. Conversely, while open-loop recycling, where materials are repurposed into different, often lower-value products, was still considered preferable to disposal, it was noted to result in material degradation and reduced circularity benefits over time.

A consistent theme among these submissions was the call for the W2R EPP to move beyond generic recycling metrics and incorporate these distinctions into regulatory and policy frameworks. They argued that doing so would provide clearer guidance to industry, support investment in higher-value recovery, and better reflect circular economy principles.

Additionally, stakeholders highlighted the need for clarification of definitions related to 'reuse' and 'energy recovery', particularly in the context of technologies such as refuse-derived fuel and anaerobic digestion. Several submissions urged the EPA to ensure that all terminology and categories within the hierarchy are clearly and consistently defined across regulatory instruments, to avoid ambiguity in implementation and compliance. Some also called for a clearer separation between recovery and treatment categories to preserve the integrity and intent of the hierarchy.

Alignment with existing policies and standards

Stakeholders urged consistency between the expanded hierarchy and existing EPA standards, such as the RDF Standard, and federal waste and product stewardship policies. They suggested that this alignment is critical to avoid contradictions and regulatory confusion, particularly concerning how alternative fuels and waste-to-energy processes are classified.

Regulatory and operational considerations

Concerns were raised about the potential regulatory burden that a more complex hierarchy could impose, especially on small businesses and SMEs. Stakeholders noted the need for a balance between aspirational goals and practical feasibility. Some stressed that the hierarchy should be flexible enough to accommodate different industries, regional capabilities, and operational realities.

Some local councils and industry stakeholders sought greater clarity on how the expanded hierarchy would be applied in practice, particularly in licensing decisions, regulatory enforcement, infrastructure approvals, and levy structures. There was concern that the hierarchy, while conceptually strong, might lead to unintended consequences or be inconsistently applied without robust guidance.

Stakeholders recommended the following mitigation measures:

- i. publishing detailed supporting guidance or case studies
- ii. ensuring alignment with existing policy tools (e.g., levy exemptions and procurement frameworks)
- iii. recognising regional constraints where higher-tier options may not be feasible.

Data measurement and outcomes

Some submissions (68%) noted the importance of aligning the hierarchy with performance measurement and reporting frameworks. They recommended development of clear indicators and targets to track progress up the hierarchy, not just total diversion from landfill.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA recognises the continued importance of the waste management hierarchy as a foundational regulatory principle in the current W2R EPP. As part of the policy review, the EPA is considering ways to enhance clarity around its practical application in regulatory decision-making without compromising its flexibility.

The EPA acknowledges the need for a flexible framework that can accommodate varying waste types, economic and industry conditions, technological maturity, infrastructure availability, and regional circumstances. It also recognises that different resource recovery pathways can contribute meaningfully to advancing South Australia's position on the hierarchy.

To address these considerations, the EPA will explore articulating a set of guiding principles, rather than prescribing specific outcomes, to assist in interpreting the hierarchy in a way that is consistent, adaptable, and practical. Considerations regarding a proposed activity may include its degree of circularity, economic viability, technological feasibility, and alignment with broader policy frameworks such as the objects of the EP Act and general environmental duty.

The EPA will continue to engage with industry, local governments, and non-government stakeholders to ensure the revised waste management hierarchy remains a meaningful, integrated, and adaptable tool for driving improved environmental and resource recovery outcomes.

4.3 Managing resources to preserve value

Feedback was sought on whether new concepts such as 'highest value reuse', 'beneficial use or reuse', 'dilution prevention', 'source separation', and 'treatment for resource recovery' should be incorporated in the W2R EPP to give practical effect to circular economy principles in the EPA's regulatory decision-making (see Section 7.3 of the discussion paper for more information). A total of eighty-six (86) responses were received.

Prioritisation of highest-value use or reuse

A majority of stakeholders (72%) agreed that the concept of 'highest-value use' or 'reuse' should be incorporated into the W2R EPP. However, there was divergence on how prescriptive the definition should be, as follows:

1. Flexible, principles-based guidance was preferred by many stakeholders (particularly from industry and local government) to allow for innovation, market variability, industry diversity, regional differences, and material-specific contexts.
2. Others (36%), including environment and circular economy non-government organisations (NGOs) and regulatory stakeholders, favoured greater prescriptiveness in high-risk sectors (e.g., food waste, organics, and construction waste) to ensure environmental integrity and alignment with circular economy goals.

Respondents highlighted the importance of avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach, and having clear standards, risk management, and infrastructure support alongside transitional solutions like downcycling, to enable practical, equitable, and futureproofed implementation that preserves material value and supports a stable recycling market.

A significant proportion of respondents agreed that higher-value reuse options should be prioritised, but there were key nuances in how they felt proposals should be progressed, as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3 Question 1b: Should a reuse proposal be rejected if there is a higher-value reuse option available for that material?

Support for rejection of proposal	Respondents	% of responses	Key points raised
Yes, reject if higher-value reuse is available	Environment and circular economy NGOs, local councils, prescribed bodies	37%	Strong advocacy for rejecting lower-value proposals to prevent downcycling. Belief that higher-value reuse will drive economic and environmental benefits in the long run.
Yes, but only if the higher-value reuse option is economically viable and market ready	Licensees, industry bodies, government agencies	22%	Higher-value reuse should be prioritised, but only if economically and logistically viable. A more cautious approach, advocating for market readiness and practicality.
No, reject only when practical high-value options exist	Local councils, prescribed bodies, waste and resource recovery consultants	41%	Rejecting proposals based purely on theoretical higher-value options could disrupt the recycling process. Preference for case-by-case evaluation considering specific circumstances.

In summary, there was broad consensus about the following:

- i. Proposals should not be automatically rejected if a theoretically higher-value option exists.
- ii. Decisions should consider practical feasibility, local market conditions, cost, infrastructure availability, and potential environmental impacts.
- iii. Highest-value use should be an aspirational target, not a rigid threshold.

Mechanisms to maximise higher-value reuse

Submissions from different stakeholders emphasised that maximising high-value reuse of materials requires a comprehensive approach that prioritises financial incentives over penalties, aligns with market conditions, and considers material characteristics, volumes, and location-specific factors. A wide range of mechanisms were suggested (see **Figure 4**), reflecting a balance of regulatory, economic, and voluntary levers as follows:

1. **Regulatory tools:** Clear prioritisation in policy, thresholds for land application, end-of-waste criteria.
2. **Economic tools:** Targeted levy relief, subsidies, product stewardship, procurement standards.
3. **Market and system tools:** Source separation mandates, infrastructure funding, quality standards for recovered materials.
4. **Education and collaboration:** Public campaigns, sector-based capacity building, innovation pilots.

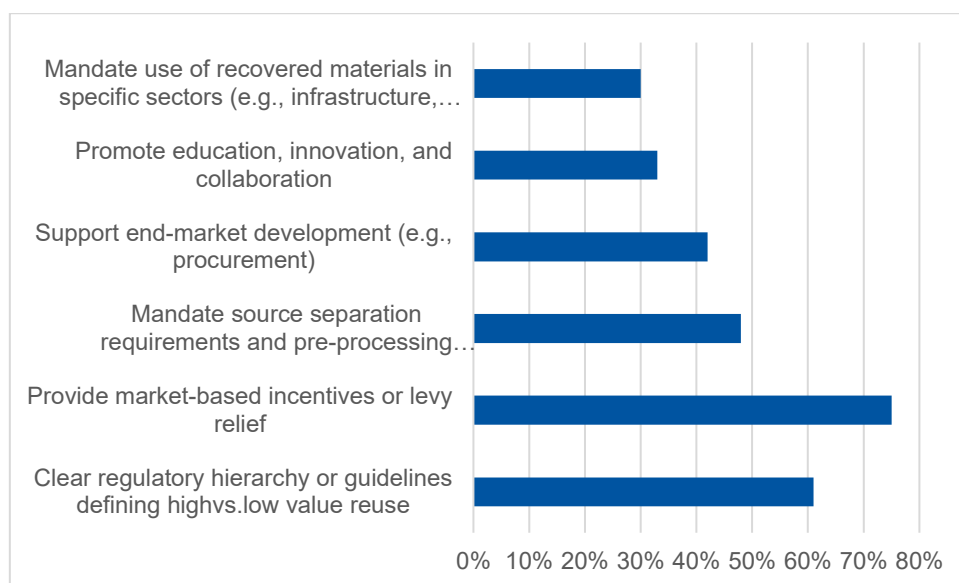


Figure 4 Question 1b: What mechanisms should be considered when thinking of maximising higher-value reuse of materials?

Respondents also highlighted the importance of considering processing and stockpiling costs, regional feasibility, circular procurement, and reforming levies to better support recycling instead of landfill, while ensuring economic value and functional utility-driven decision-making.

Demonstrating beneficial and genuine reuse

Nearly all stakeholders (95%) agreed that reuse must be beneficial and genuine, with:

- i. clear demonstration of functionality or value
- ii. evidence of environmental benefit
- iii. no undermining of existing recycling markets
- iv. avoidance of greenwashing or waste concealment.

These principles were seen as essential for public trust, market development, and regulatory clarity.

Dilution of waste materials

Most submissions (60%) supported a general prohibition on dilution, with allowances in specific cases:

1. blending for product quality (e.g., compost bulking)
2. use of fillers or additives in manufacturing (e.g., refuse-derived fuels)
3. meeting contaminant thresholds or regulatory specifications.

Concerns were raised that uncontrolled dilution could mask hazardous content or reduce recovery value. Stakeholders suggested using case-by-case assessment with transparent criteria.

Source separation requirements

There was strong support (82%) for incorporating mandatory source separation into the W2R EPP. Most agreed it should apply to:

1. commercial and industrial sectors
2. multi-unit dwellings
3. large venues and events.

Some proposed that requirements should focus only on large-scale generators or be phased in with:

- i. sector-specific thresholds
- ii. support for SMEs
- iii. alignment with waste service capability.

Additional circular economy concepts proposed

Stakeholders proposed a range of additional tools and concepts:

- i. closed-loop recycling and open-loop distinctions
- ii. recognition of upcycling and downcycling as actions rather than hierarchy levels
- iii. leakage or loss from the system (e.g., litter, dumping)
- iv. end-of-waste certification pathways
- v. circular procurement guidelines
- vi. material flow mapping and transparency mechanisms
- vii. investment in advanced processing infrastructure
- viii. circular design and producer responsibility
- ix. performance-based outcomes.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the thoughtful and diverse feedback received on integrating circular economy principles, particularly the concept of 'highest-value use' or 'reuse', into the W2R EPP. In response, the EPA intends to adopt a principles-based approach to defining 'highest-value use' or 'reuse', supported by material-specific guidance and practical examples. This approach aims to provide regulatory clarity while maintaining the flexibility needed to accommodate evolving technologies, market conditions, and material contexts.

The EPA recognises that while clear and consistent definitions are essential for guiding decision-making, it must not be so prescriptive as to hinder innovation or fail to reflect practical realities. The proposed approach is designed to balance these needs, enabling adaptive management and supporting informed regulatory assessments.

The EPA also agrees that reuse proposals should not be dismissed solely because a higher-value option may theoretically exist. Instead, proposals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering practical feasibility, economic and logistical factors, environmental outcomes, and prevailing market dynamics. 'Highest-value use' is viewed as an aspirational goal, with proponents expected to demonstrate reasonable efforts to maximise value within environmental and safety parameters.

On the issue of dilution, the EPA generally supports prohibiting the practice to avoid masking waste characteristics or undermining resource value. However, it acknowledges that some blending may be

justified in specific circumstances, such as maintaining product consistency, safety or regulatory requirements or enhancing technical performance in manufacturing.

Through this flexible yet robust approach, the EPA seeks to ensure that the W2R EPP fosters innovation, enables responsible reuse, and contributes meaningfully to South Australia’s transition to a circular economy. Ongoing engagement with stakeholders will be central to refining these measures, thereby helping to ensure the policy remains practical, adaptable, and effective in supporting implementation while advancing long-term sustainability objectives.

4.4 Defining waste

Reclassification of waste

A total of sixty (60) stakeholder responses were received in relation to the proposal that waste should only cease to be considered waste if it complies with an approved EPA standard or specification. Feedback was mixed, reflecting a diversity of views across stakeholder sectors (see **Figure 5**).

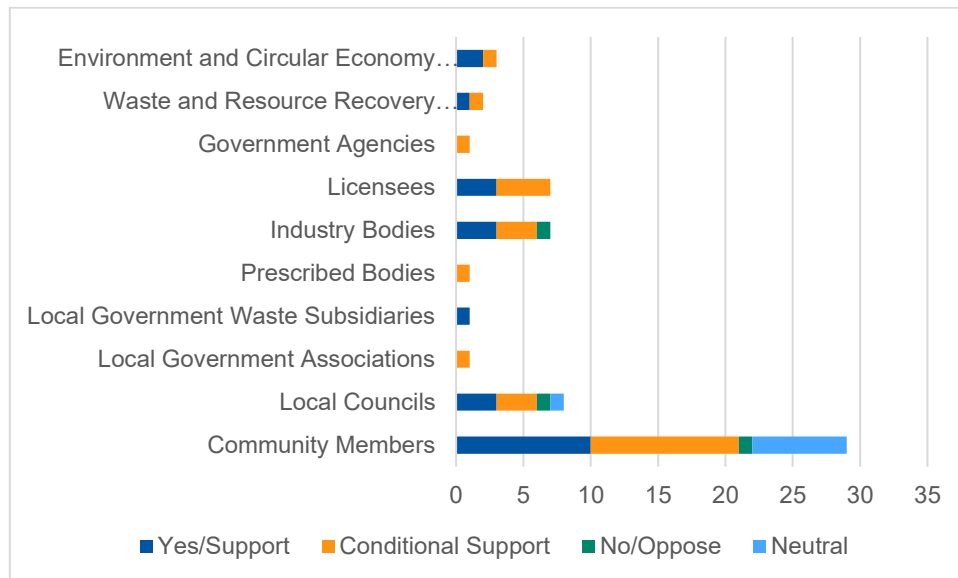


Figure 5 Question 1: Should waste only cease to be waste if it complies with an approved EPA standard or specification? If so, what would be the benefits and costs of this approach?

Submissions revealed both support and notable concerns regarding the proposal, with views often reflecting the stakeholder’s role within the waste and resource recovery system. Many stakeholders expressed support for the proposal on the basis that it provides:

- i. regulatory certainty and clarity for operators, regulators, and the community about when waste-derived materials can be used without triggering waste obligations
- ii. environmental protection benefits, by ensuring materials are fit for purpose, free from contamination, and pose minimal risk to human health and the environment
- iii. consistency in application of the waste framework, which could reduce the potential for illegal or inappropriate reuse under the guise of ‘resource recovery’.

Some industry stakeholders also supported the concept in principle, but emphasised the need for flexibility. Key points raised include:

1. The approach should not be overly prescriptive and should allow for flexibility to accommodate emerging technologies, market innovations, and context-specific reuse opportunities.
2. EPA standards or specifications should be co-developed with industry, reflect fit-for-purpose risk, and include appropriate transitional arrangements to avoid market disruption.
3. In some cases, a tiered framework or a risk-based system was suggested, where lower-risk materials may cease to be waste based on documented risk assessments or recognised industry practices, even in the absence of a formal EPA standard.

Several submissions also emphasised the importance of ensuring that standards are developed and reviewed in a timely manner, so they remain responsive to evolving knowledge, market conditions, and best practices. At the same time, stakeholders cautioned that an overly rigid reliance on formal standards could limit innovation or delay the uptake of new beneficial reuse methods. Flexibility—such as allowing for case-by-case assessment—was seen as necessary in some circumstances as they offered a more responsive and adaptable alternative to codified specifications.

Conversely, some stakeholders, particularly small operators and certain parts of the resource recovery industry, raised concerns about the potential impact of the proposal. Specific issues include:

1. Requiring EPA-approved standards for all recovered materials may be cost-prohibitive and administratively burdensome, particularly for smaller businesses or niche reuse markets.
2. This approach may disincentivise innovation, delay the development of new recovery pathways, and limit opportunities for beneficial reuse in areas not yet covered by a standard.
3. It may create uncertainty or regulatory bottlenecks if standards are not available in time, are too narrow, or are unable to keep pace with technological progress.

Waste materials containing harmful chemicals/contaminants

There was strong consensus (91%) that certain waste types require targeted regulation due to their risks to human health and the environment. These categories include asbestos-containing materials, contaminated soils and sediments, e-waste with heavy metals, treated timber with chemical additives, and industrial sludges. Stakeholders emphasised the need for robust controls and clear regulatory capture of these materials.

Principles to determine whether material is waste (aside from meeting approved standards)

Most respondents (79%) agreed that a combination of principles should be applied, rather than a single test. These include:

- i. reuse consistent with the original intended purpose of the material
- ii. imminent use for a beneficial purpose
- iii. genuine market value demonstrated through trade or imminent beneficial use
- iv. no risk of environmental harm
- v. no risk of harm to human health.

Stakeholders stressed that these principles support sound decision-making and reflect practical realities of resource recovery.

Defining 'genuine market value' and 'beneficial use' or 'reuse'

Stakeholders suggested defining 'genuine market value' and 'beneficial use' or 'reuse' based on evidence of trade, demand, price, and imminent beneficial use. They emphasised that it should reflect both economic and practical value in the marketplace, supported by contracts or agreements.

Beneficial use was commonly described as use that retains the material's utility, does not cause harm, and contributes positively to circular economy goals. Stakeholders emphasised that it should be consistent with environmental and human health protections.

Adoption of a cost-recovery model for assessment

Feedback was sought on whether the EPA should adopt a cost-recovery model for assessment of new resource recovery proposals. **Figure 6** shows stakeholder positions on the proposed policy option.

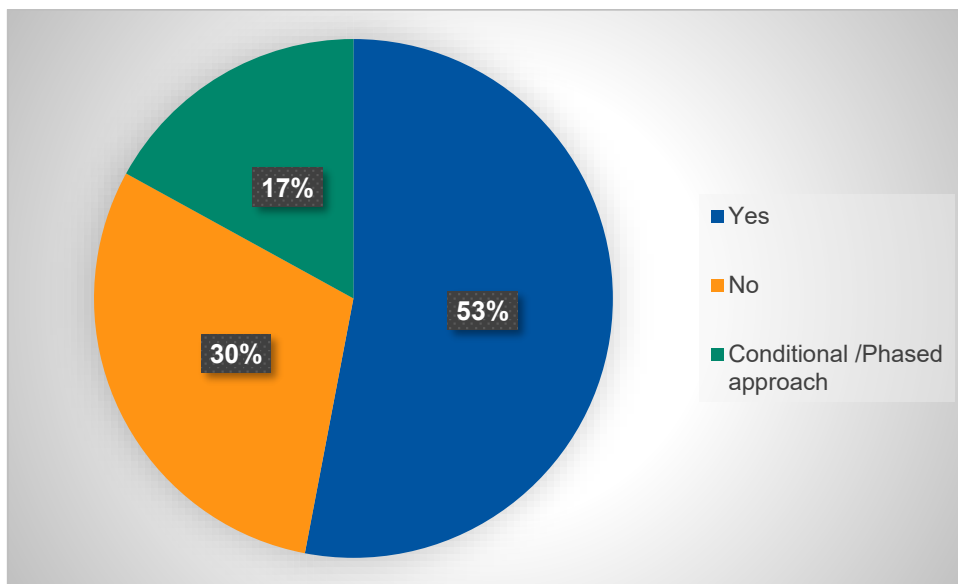


Figure 6 Question 6: Should the EPA adopt a cost-recovery model for assessment of new resource recovery proposals?

Stakeholder views were mixed. While many supported cost recovery to ensure sufficient resources for thorough assessment and timely decisions, some were concerned about the impact on small and medium-sized businesses who may be less able to absorb the additional cost associated with developing new products. Several recommended a tiered or scaled fee approach, with possible exemptions or government subsidies to support innovation and smaller operators. Other suggested cost-recovery options include:

1. tiered fees based on proposal scale (e.g., lower fees for smaller projects)
2. government grants or subsidies to support innovation, particularly for SMEs
3. collaborative funding models (i.e., shared costs with industry or stakeholders) to balance resource needs with fairness.

Barriers raised by stakeholders include:

1. **Increased administrative burden:** Stakeholders argued that complex fee structures may increase bureaucracy.
2. **Risk of delays in approvals:** Stakeholders pointed out that longer timelines may reduce project viability.
3. **Potential deterrence of new initiatives due to costs:** Stakeholders argued that increased compliance costs could deter innovation.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges strong stakeholder interest in the regulation of waste-derived materials, particularly around the potential requirement for such materials to meet EPA approved standards or specifications before ceasing to be classified as waste. While standards play a vital role in protecting human health and the environment, building industry confidence, and supporting consistent regulation, a uniform approach may not suit the diversity of materials, risks, and end uses.

To address this, the EPA is considering a tiered and flexible approach. EPA approved standards or specifications would be required for higher-risk materials, but not for lower-risk materials meeting certain principles-based criteria, such as genuine market, beneficial purpose, and no potential environmental harm. This approach aims to balance clarity, risk, and flexibility to enable responsible innovation in resource recovery.

To support consistent interpretation of regulatory concepts, the EPA, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, will develop working definitions for key terms such as 'genuine market' and 'beneficial purpose'.

The EPA supports introducing a transparent, risk-based, cost-recovery model for assessing resource recovery proposals. The EPA will further consider an approach with scaled fees according to complexity, risk, and scope, which has clear structures, indicative time frames, and opportunities for early engagement including pre-lodgement advice. It is noted that this may be progressed at a later time via amendments to the Environment Protection Regulations.

The EPA remains committed to a regulatory approach that safeguards environmental and human health, encourages responsible and innovative reuse of materials, and supports risk-based and consistent decision-making. Ongoing engagement with stakeholders will continue to shape the development of a practical, adaptive framework aligned with South Australia's transition to a circular and sustainable economy.

Key area 2: Avoiding waste generation

This policy review area has two policy proposals: product stewardship requirements and edible food donations (see Sections 7.5 and 7.6, respectively, of the discussion paper for more information).

4.5 Product stewardship requirements

The first proposal under the policy review area regarding avoiding waste generation is about whether South Australia should develop a state-based product stewardship framework similar to the New South Wales legislation (see Section 7.5 of the discussion paper for more information). Feedback was sought on the potential establishment of a state-based product stewardship legislative framework in South Australia. A total of eighty-two (82) responses were received from a broad range of stakeholders.

Establish a state-based product stewardship legislative framework

Survey results and written submissions show strong support (86%) for establishing a product stewardship legislative framework at the state level, particularly where national action is lacking. Stakeholders highlighted the need for shared responsibility across the product life cycle, especially for products with complex environmental, health, or recovery challenges. A state-based approach was seen as a way to enable timely and targeted responses to problematic products where there is no national action.

Support was especially strong among local governments, environmental organisations, and some industry groups, who viewed a state framework as a means to raise environmental standards and ease local waste burdens. They also noted opportunities for innovation, market development, and improved circular economy outcomes through better product design and end-of-life management. However, many submissions stressed the importance of aligning with national policies to avoid duplication, reduce regulatory complexity, and maintain consistency. A clear legislative foundation was considered essential to ensure South Australia remains coordinated and competitive at national and international levels.

Support for product bans, design standards, and stewardship requirements

Many stakeholders (85%) expressed support for incorporating product bans, mandatory design standards, and product stewardship requirements within a state-level framework, provided these measures are introduced through a transparent, risk-based, and consultative process. These mechanisms were seen as necessary to reduce environmental and human health risks, improve product design for repairability, recyclability and durability, increase producer accountability, and reduce the cost burden on local governments and communities.

Some industry stakeholders emphasised the need for alignment with national and international best practices to maintain consistency across markets. Stakeholders also proposed a range of specific measures for a South Australian product stewardship framework, such as mandatory take-back schemes (for batteries, e-waste, and soft plastics), eco-design standards, labelling requirements, recycled content mandates, and extended producer responsibility (EPR) obligations, including reporting and funding collection systems. A few submissions also recommended incorporating incentive-based mechanisms like deposit-refund systems or rebates for returned products.

Design standards were widely regarded as essential for reducing waste generation at the source, improving resource recovery, and minimising contamination in recycling streams. Stakeholders cited benefits such as promoting product circularity through better design, phasing out materials that hinder recycling (e.g., polyvinyl chloride (often referred to as PVC) and polystyrene), enhancing consistency in packaging materials, and reducing reliance on virgin resources. Several submissions advocated for co-designing standards in partnership with industry, designers, and material recovery operators to ensure they are practical, effective, and enforceable.

Alternative to state legislation in the absence of national action

In addition to supporting a legislative framework, several stakeholders proposed alternative or complementary approaches that could be pursued in the absence of national action. These suggestions include voluntary, industry-led codes of practice or agreements, which could be supported by government through monitoring, incentives, and recognition programs. Some submissions also recommended leveraging state procurement policies to prioritise sustainable products and stimulate demand for materials containing recycled content.

Other ideas include consumer education campaigns aimed at shifting market demand toward more sustainable product choices, as well as pilot or demonstration projects to test stewardship models before implementing them on a broader scale.

While these non-regulatory approaches were acknowledged as potentially valuable, many stakeholders emphasised that regulation remains necessary, particularly in instances where voluntary or market-based measures have not achieved meaningful or consistent outcomes.

Overall, submissions demonstrated strong stakeholder interest in a proactive, flexible, and enforceable product stewardship framework tailored to South Australia's needs. There was clear support for the use of bans, design standards, and shared producer responsibility as mechanisms to address problematic products and drive better environmental and resource recovery outcomes.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the constructive feedback provided by stakeholders on the potential development of a state-based product stewardship legislative framework. The EPA considers that product stewardship schemes are most effective when implemented at a national level and underpinned by mandatory regulation and will continue to advocate for national approaches. However, the EPA supports progressing a state-based product stewardship legislative framework as a strategic means of addressing delays or gaps in national action and enabling tailored responses to South Australia's specific waste and environmental management challenges.

A state-based framework would provide the necessary authority to introduce targeted stewardship solutions where justified by environmental risk, market failure, or the scale and impact of particular materials. The EPA will collaborate closely with GISA and other jurisdictions to ensure that any South Australian approach complements national policy and supports the broader transition to a circular economy.

The framework may include mandatory product stewardship schemes in cases where greater producer accountability is needed. Consistent with EPR principles, these schemes would require producers to contribute to the design, funding, and operation of end-of-life management systems. Transparency, performance monitoring, and fair cost-sharing across the supply chain will be key considerations in scheme design.

In some instances, the EPA recognises that bans on the sale, distribution, or disposal of certain products may be necessary to protect human health and the environment. Such measures would be considered for products with no feasible recovery pathway, known harmful impacts, or available safer alternatives. Any proposed bans would be assessed through a risk-based process, including stakeholder consultation and market readiness evaluation.

To progress this work, the EPA will collaborate with GISA and explore the feasibility, scope, and design options for a state-based product stewardship framework.

4.5.1 Product stewardship requirement: Tethered single-use drink bottle lids

Feedback was sought on the proposed design standard for tethered lids on single-use plastic bottles and the recyclability of bottle and lid materials. A total of fifty-six (56) submissions were received, with most stakeholders (84%) expressing support for a design standard requiring single-use plastic bottles to have tethered lids, citing multiple environmental and operational benefits. Key reasons given include:

1. **Litter reduction:** Many submissions noted that lids are among the most common littered items and pose risks to wildlife. Tethering was seen as an effective measure to prevent lids from being discarded separately.
2. **Improved recovery:** Stakeholders observed that lids are often lost during collection and sorting, reducing recovery rates. Tethered lids could increase the likelihood that lids are captured and recycled with bottles.
3. **Alignment with international trends:** Some respondents highlighted that the European Union has already adopted similar requirements, and Australia could benefit from harmonising standards with international partners and suppliers.
4. **Behavioural change:** It was suggested that tethered lids could help shift consumer behaviour by reducing mindless discarding of small plastics.

A few stakeholders raised practical or implementation concerns, including:

1. **Manufacturing and cost implications:** Industry stakeholders noted that redesigning bottles and lids may involve retooling and additional costs for beverage manufacturers and packaging suppliers.
2. **Usability concerns:** Some submissions questioned whether tethered lids could negatively affect consumer experience, particularly for people with limited dexterity or for larger bottle sizes.

Despite these concerns, most stakeholders indicated that these issues could be resolved through careful design and transitional arrangements.

Design standards for recyclable lid and bottle materials

Stakeholders showed strong and near-unanimous support for introducing a design standard that ensures single-use plastic bottles, and their lids are made from materials compatible with Australia's recycling systems. A clear majority (89%) endorsed the proposal outright. The remaining 11% also supported the idea, but with conditions, highlighting the need for clear definitions, regulatory flexibility, and alignment with national policy settings.

Submissions highlighted several anticipated benefits from such a standard. These include improved material recovery through better sorting and less contamination at material recovery facilities, a reduction in landfill and plastic pollution through recyclability embedded at the design stage, and stronger domestic recycling markets. Many stakeholders emphasised the need to focus on real-world recyclability to ensure that packaging can be effectively processed within Australia's existing recycling infrastructure.

To maximise these benefits, stakeholders recommended that the standard explicitly exclude polymers or additives known to interfere with recycling processes. There was also strong support for encouraging mono-material packaging to simplify sorting and improve the quality and value of recovered materials. Additionally, stakeholders advocated for alignment with existing national tools and guidelines, such as the Australasian Recycling Label and the Sustainable Packaging Guidelines prepared by the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO).

Some submissions noted the need for clear and consistent definitions of 'recyclability' in the Australian context, acknowledging that infrastructure capacity varies across jurisdictions. Industry and technical

stakeholders also urged that the standard allow room for material innovation, provided it meets established recyclability thresholds.

These groups supported design approaches that enable remanufacturing into high-quality products, including food-grade applications, and called for labelling requirements to help consumers correctly dispose of packaging. They also favoured compliance approaches that strike a balance between enforceability and support for continuous improvement.

While most stakeholders preferred national consistency, many recognised South Australia's leadership in plastic regulation and product stewardship. In the absence of timely national action, they expressed support for the state taking the lead by implementing this design standard, noting South Australia's proven track record and policy readiness.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for introducing design standards that require material compatibility and recyclability for plastic bottles and lids. Such standards are recognised as having the potential to significantly enhance resource recovery and reduce contamination in recycling systems.

Considering this support, the EPA agrees that further exploration of a design standard is warranted to help achieve improved environmental outcomes. As there are often limitations in the ability of a jurisdiction with a smaller market size to take the lead on design standards that will impact a product that is sold into markets nationally, working with other jurisdictions and progressing this action through the national packaging regulatory reform process will be prioritised. These discussions will help inform the development of practical, performance-based design requirements that are technically and economically feasible.

National consistency remains a key priority. The EPA will work closely with APCO, other jurisdictions, and relevant Commonwealth agencies to support alignment with national policy settings and avoid fragmented regulation. Subject to the outcomes of these consultations and feasibility assessments, the EPA may consider progressing regulatory options.

The EPA remains committed to encouraging packaging design that supports effective recycling and the transition to a circular economy, while ensuring that any proposed requirements are proportionate, workable, and developed in close partnership with industry and other stakeholders.

4.5.2 Product stewardship requirements: Plastic microbeads

The discussion paper proposes phasing out the use of microbeads in rinse-off personal care products and cleaning products that are washed down the drain (see Section 7.5.2 of the discussion paper for more information). A total of fifty-three (53) responses were received from various stakeholders who expressed strong and consistent support for phasing out the use of microbeads in rinse-off personal care and cleaning products. Most submissions agreed that such products pose a direct risk to aquatic environments, contribute to microplastic pollution, and are largely unnecessary due to the availability of safer and effective alternatives.

Strong support for phase-out of microbeads

The vast majority (92%) of submissions endorsed a ban on microbeads in rinse-off products, citing the following key reasons:

1. **Environmental harm:** Stakeholders highlighted the persistence of microplastics in marine and freshwater ecosystems and their accumulation in the food chain, noting the difficulty of removing microbeads once they enter wastewater systems.
2. **Preventable pollution:** Several submissions argued that the environmental impacts of microbeads are entirely avoidable, as alternative, cost-effective abrasives (e.g., salt, sugar, oats, crushed nut shells, and silica) are readily available and already used in many products. They asserted that a ban would not limit consumer access to effective products and could, in fact, stimulate innovation in cleaner product design.
3. **Alignment with international and national trends:** Many stakeholders supported aligning with jurisdictions that have already banned microbeads, including other Australian states and territories, New Zealand, the UK, and the EU.
4. **Public and industry acceptance:** It was noted from the feedback that some manufacturers have already voluntarily removed microbeads in response to consumer pressure and regulatory signals, and that this suggests further action would be broadly supported.

Some submissions, particularly from industry stakeholders, highlighted the importance of aligning any state-based actions with national product stewardship initiatives and existing voluntary agreements, such as those facilitated by APCO. While generally supportive of a microbead phase-out, these stakeholders strongly advocated for nationally harmonised implementation to avoid regulatory inconsistency and fragmentation. Many acknowledged the Commonwealth’s voluntary industry phase-out initiated in 2018 but felt that regulatory action is now needed to address ongoing gaps and ensure comprehensive compliance.

A small number of stakeholders expressed conditional support or raised key considerations for implementation. These include the need for a clear, science-based definition of ‘microbeads’ to differentiate them from other microplastics or naturally occurring particles. Questions were also raised about the scope of the ban, specifically whether it would apply only to rinse-off products or extend to other categories such as cosmetics, detergents, and industrial cleaning agents, including products in solid or semi-solid form. Several submissions again emphasised the need for consistency with existing or emerging national regulations to minimise compliance complexity.

Suggested time frames for implementation

A clear majority of stakeholders (84%) supported a ban within 1–2 years (See Figure 7), with some calling for immediate action. Longer time frames were only proposed to accommodate industry adjustments or product reformulation. Some submissions proposed tiered phase-outs, beginning with rinse-off products and potentially expanding to other uses in future.

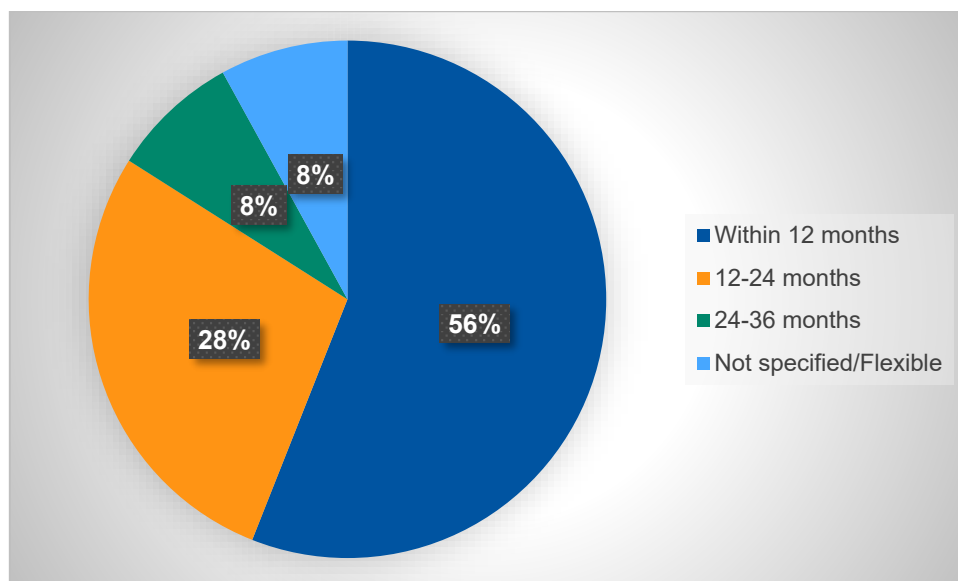


Figure 7 Question 2: What would be an appropriate time frame for bans on these products to commence and why?

There is clear readiness from government, industry (in principle), and the community to phase out these products.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the broad stakeholder support for phasing out microbeads in rinse-off personal care and cleaning products. It recognises the significant environmental and public health risks posed by microplastic pollution. Given that microbeads are an avoidable source of pollution and that viable non-plastic alternatives exist, the EPA considers regulatory action to be justified.

Other states and territories have progressed state-based legislation, and microbeads in rinse-off personal care and cleaning products are one of the 24 items in the *National Roadmap: Harmonising action on problematic and unnecessary plastics*. Furthermore, microbeads in personal care products have already been subject to a voluntary phase-out at a national level.

The EPA supports further exploration of measures aimed at reducing microplastic contamination and encouraging cleaner product design. To advance this, the EPA will further consider implementing a state-based ban on microbeads in rinse-off products. This measure could potentially be incorporated within product stewardship or single-use plastics legislation, subject to government approval.

Engagement with stakeholders will be a priority to ensure that the scope, definitions, and implementation of any regulatory approach are clear, practical for industry, and beneficial for the community and environment. The EPA also intends to continue working closely with other jurisdictions to promote a nationally consistent approach, helping to avoid regulatory fragmentation.

Overall, the EPA remains committed to reducing avoidable plastic pollution, safeguarding marine ecosystems, and supporting the industry's transition towards more sustainable and innovative product design.

4.5.3 Product stewardship requirements: Plastic microfibres

Feedback was sought on whether South Australia should introduce a design standard requiring all new residential and commercial washing machines sold in the state to be fitted with microfibre filters. A total of fifty-two (52) submissions were received from a wide range of stakeholders, offering diverse views on the proposal.

A majority of respondents (71%) supported the introduction of a design standard. Key reasons given include:

1. **Environmental protection:** Many saw mandatory filters as an effective way to reduce microplastic pollution from synthetic textiles, highlighting their value as a preventative measure that lessens reliance on downstream wastewater treatment.
2. **Alignment with circular economy goals:** Submissions noted that requiring filters supports product stewardship and waste avoidance by addressing pollution at its source, consistent with circular economy objectives.
3. **Feasibility and global momentum:** Several stakeholders pointed to international examples, such as France's upcoming requirements, as evidence of technical feasibility and growing international consensus, with some encouraging South Australia to show national leadership.

Some submissions expressed qualified support or raised implementation considerations, including:

1. **Cost and equity:** Concerns were raised about potential cost impacts, especially for low-income or regional households. Suggestions include phased implementation, cost-benefit assessments, and support mechanisms to ease the transition.
2. **Effectiveness and maintenance:** Some stakeholders emphasised the need for robust technical standards and public education, noting that filter effectiveness depends on proper use and maintenance.
3. **Regulatory complexity:** A few submissions questioned whether such appliance standards should be introduced at the state level, preferring nationally harmonised approaches developed in consultation with industry.

In addition to, or instead of, a mandatory standard, some stakeholders suggested:

- i. voluntary uptake through industry programs or ecolabels
- ii. reforms to reduce the use of synthetic fibres in textiles
- iii. consumer education campaigns on microfibre pollution and sustainable washing practices.

Overall, there was strong interest in addressing microfibre pollution, with most stakeholders supporting microfibre filtration as part of a broader suite of solutions.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges strong stakeholder support for introducing a design standard requiring new residential and commercial washing machines sold in South Australia to be fitted with microfibre filters. Reducing microfibre pollution in wastewater is recognised as an important goal, and a design standard is seen by many as a potential contribution toward achieving it.

At the same time, the EPA recognises stakeholder concerns regarding the technical feasibility, costs, and limitations of relying on filters alone. Submissions highlighted the need for any mandatory standards to include clear performance criteria, certification processes, consumer education, and sufficient lead-in time to allow industry to adapt.

It is noted that the Australian Government's National Plastics Plan includes a measure to 'work with the textile and white goods sectors on an industry-led phase-in of microfibre filters on new residential and commercial washing machines by 1 July 2030'. Further progress on this measure will be monitored before considering pursuing a state-based regulatory requirement.

The EPA will continue to monitor international developments and explore opportunities to collaborate with other Australian jurisdictions and national bodies to support a coordinated, evidence-based approach to addressing microfibre pollution.

4.5.4 CCA-treated timber posts

The discussion paper sought views on whether the use of copper chrome arsenate (CCA) treated timber should be restricted or regulated in South Australia, and whether producers should be responsible for end-of-life management. A total of fifty-one (51) submissions were received.

A significant majority of stakeholders (80%) supported stronger regulation of CCA-treated timber, citing environmental and human health risks, particularly from arsenic leaching, groundwater contamination, and unsafe disposal. CCA-treated timber was identified as a persistent contaminant in landfill, agriculture,

composting, and organics recycling systems. Several local governments and waste consultants highlighted the burden of managing these impacts and called for regulatory action.

Most stakeholders (73%) advocated for regulations that extend beyond viticulture to cover residential, agricultural, construction, and commercial uses—especially where timber is used near sensitive environments or by consumers unaware of the associated risks. International bans and restrictions were referenced as models for South Australia to follow.

Some stakeholders, particularly from the viticulture industry, expressed caution regarding the introduction of immediate or broad restrictions on the use of CCA-treated timber. These stakeholders emphasised the current lack of cost-effective and durable alternatives, particularly for applications such as vineyard posts where longevity and pest resistance are critical.

Concerns were also raised about the potential economic impact that such restrictions could have on regional industries and communities, especially if implemented without adequate transition measures. In addition, stakeholders highlighted the importance of nationally consistent policy settings, noting that inconsistent regulations across jurisdictions could lead to market fragmentation and competitive disadvantages.

In light of these issues, many submissions from this sector advocated for a phased regulatory approach. They recommended that any future restrictions be supported by further research into viable alternatives, comprehensive stakeholder engagement, and strategic infrastructure planning to ensure a practical and equitable transition.

End-of-life management and product stewardship

There was strong support (85%) for mandatory producer responsibility. Stakeholders argued that:

- i. Current disposal options are limited, expensive, or potentially environmentally harmful, resulting in significant stockpiling.
- ii. Without intervention, the cost and risk of managing CCA waste falls on landholders, councils, and the community.
- iii. A product stewardship scheme would incentivise safer design, clearer labelling, and the development of collection or waste management processes.

Stakeholders proposed a range of actions to address the end-of-life impacts of CCA-treated timber. Common suggestions provided include:

1. mandatory take-back schemes
2. industry contributions to collection and waste management infrastructure
3. investment in non-toxic, reusable and recyclable alternatives.

While a minority of industry stakeholders (10%) supported the continuation or expansion of voluntary initiatives, the majority of submissions advocated for a regulated and nationally coordinated framework. This was seen as essential to ensure consistent accountability across the supply chain and to drive meaningful change. Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of providing adequate lead-in time to allow industry to adapt and transition to safer practices.

Overall, submissions demonstrate strong support for increased regulation of CCA-treated timber use and end-of-life management, with broad agreement on the need for coordinated, evidence-based action. While views diverged on the scope and timing of regulatory measures, there was consistent recognition of the environmental risks and a shared call for greater industry accountability.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong consensus among stakeholders on the need to address the risks associated with CCA-treated timber.

The EPA agrees that particular attention should be given to high-risk settings such as areas near waterways or agricultural land, locations where treated timber could contaminate organic material streams, and regions prone to bushfires, where combustion of CCA-treated timber poses significant environmental and health risks.

The EPA supports, in principle, the development of a product stewardship or EPR scheme to ensure producers are involved in managing the full life cycle of CCA-treated timber. It is noted that a South Australian Government working group (including GISA, Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA, Invest SA, and the EPA) is currently working with industry to develop sustainable end-of-life solutions for CCA-treated timber. In March 2025, the South Australian Government and federal government announced \$800,000 in funding for the Treated Timber Product Stewardship Working Group to develop a new national stewardship framework to address the reuse, recovery, management, and safe disposal of treated timber.

The EPA will continue to engage with other jurisdictions to explore national solutions, promote alignment of regulatory frameworks and contribute to national product stewardship discussions.

4.5.5 Liquid paperboard beverage containers

Feedback was sought on whether South Australia should introduce a product stewardship requirement for liquid paperboard (LPB) beverage containers to improve their recyclability and circularity. A total of fifty-two (52) submissions were received and the majority of respondents (76%) supported introducing a product stewardship scheme for LPB containers. Key reasons given include the containers' low recoverability due to their complex, multi-layered composition (typically paperboard bonded with plastic and aluminium), which limits their compatibility with standard recycling systems. Many noted that without targeted intervention, valuable fibres and materials are lost to landfill or incineration.

Stakeholders also highlighted the growing market share of LPB containers, particularly due to the rise in consumption of alternative milks, shelf-stable soups, and similar products, which exacerbates waste management challenges. Respondents viewed stewardship as an opportunity to promote circularity through improved product design, viable end markets, and shared producer responsibility. There was also a strong desire for equity with other beverage containers already covered under South Australia's Container Deposit Scheme (CDS).

A recurring concern was consumer confusion. Some stakeholders, particularly councils and NGOs, reported that many residents incorrectly believe LPB containers are recyclable due to their appearance or inclusion in CDS schemes in other jurisdictions. This misinformation undermines public trust in recycling systems.

Design and end-of-life improvements

Many submissions advocated for design changes to enhance recyclability. Recommendations provided include simplifying material composition, improving labelling to guide disposal behaviour, and shifting to mono-material or fibre-based alternatives more compatible with existing paper-recovery infrastructure.

Calls for national coordination and accountability

Stakeholders widely supported a nationally consistent approach to avoid fragmentation and ensure efficient implementation. Suggestions provided include harmonising requirements with national product stewardship frameworks, involving producers and retailers in funding and delivering end-of-life solutions, and establishing performance targets, public reporting obligations, and investment in recovery infrastructure.

A minority of stakeholders, primarily from industry, expressed reservations. Key concerns raised include:

1. the limited domestic infrastructure to process LPB materials
2. potential cost impacts, especially for small producers and importers
3. the need for further research into alternative packaging materials and their environmental impacts
4. risk of duplicating existing national initiatives without appropriate coordination.

These stakeholders recommended phased implementation, accompanied by feasibility assessments, consultation, and investment in supporting infrastructure and markets. Some preferred design standards or incentives over a full stewardship scheme and emphasised the importance of proportionality and minimal disruption to the existing CDS.

Overall, submissions demonstrated strong support for considering a product stewardship requirement for LPB beverage containers in South Australia. While there was recognition of infrastructure, cost, and coordination challenges, most stakeholders agreed that a regulated or market-based mechanism is needed to address the recyclability and environmental impacts of LPB packaging. A nationally harmonised, phased, and evidence-based approach, with clear roles for industry and government, was widely viewed as essential to ensure the policy's effectiveness and sustainability.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder consensus that liquid paperboard beverage containers present a significant challenge, largely due to their complex, composite structure and appearance, which can mislead consumers about their recyclability.

While there was considerable support for state-based intervention, the EPA also recognises the widespread call for nationally consistent action through established frameworks such as APCO and the Container Deposit Scheme.

It is noted that LPB is being considered as part of national packaging regulatory reform and the proposed Design for Kerbside Recyclability Grading Framework. The EPA will continue to engage with the Commonwealth Government in progressing the national packaging regulatory reform process, as well as consider what options the CDS may offer once the proposed reforms to modernise the scheme in South Australia have been implemented to explore options for a nationally coordinated response.

4.5.6 Other problematic products recommended for regulation

Stakeholders also identified several product types as priorities for regulation, including non-recyclable composite plastic packaging, single-use vapes and e-cigarettes, soft plastics without processing infrastructure, problematic e-waste and batteries, and mixed-material consumer goods such as tyres, textiles, synthetic turf, and coffee pods. Submissions emphasised that regulatory decisions should be guided by environmental impact, the feasibility of recovery, and the availability of sustainable alternatives.

Several stakeholders also recommended creating a watchlist of emerging problem products, such as lithium-ion batteries and synthetic turf, to inform future regulatory focus and enable early intervention.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges stakeholder concerns about a range of problematic products and supports, in principle, the need for more targeted regulation based on environmental risk, recovery feasibility, and the availability of sustainable alternatives. Effective regulation should be grounded in a clear understanding of environmental impacts and end-of-life challenges and, where appropriate, aligned with national approaches, particularly for products with complex supply chains or where cross-jurisdictional consistency is critical.

The EPA also recognises strong stakeholder support for developing a watchlist of emerging problem products. This is a valuable suggestion that could help monitor risks, such as those associated with lithium-ion batteries, and enable proactive engagement with industry. The EPA will explore the feasibility of such a tool as part of its ongoing monitoring and policy development.

Any future regulatory proposals will be subject to further consultation and assessment to ensure that actions are proportionate, achievable, and targeted at products and materials with the greatest potential for environmental harm or recovery benefit.

4.6 Edible food donations

The discussion paper proposed preventing certain businesses from disposing of unsold edible food and requiring that these businesses instead donate these foods to food rescue organisations (see Section 7.6 of the discussion paper for more information). A total of sixty-six (66) responses were received from a diverse range of stakeholders, who offered varied perspectives on the proposal.

A majority of stakeholders (see **Figure 8**) supported mandating food donations as a key strategy to reduce food waste and improve food security. They highlighted the policy's alignment with positive social outcomes, particularly in alleviating food insecurity, as well as its environmental benefits, such as reducing landfilling, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, and promoting circular economy principles. Economic advantages were also noted, including potential cost savings for businesses and enhanced corporate reputation.

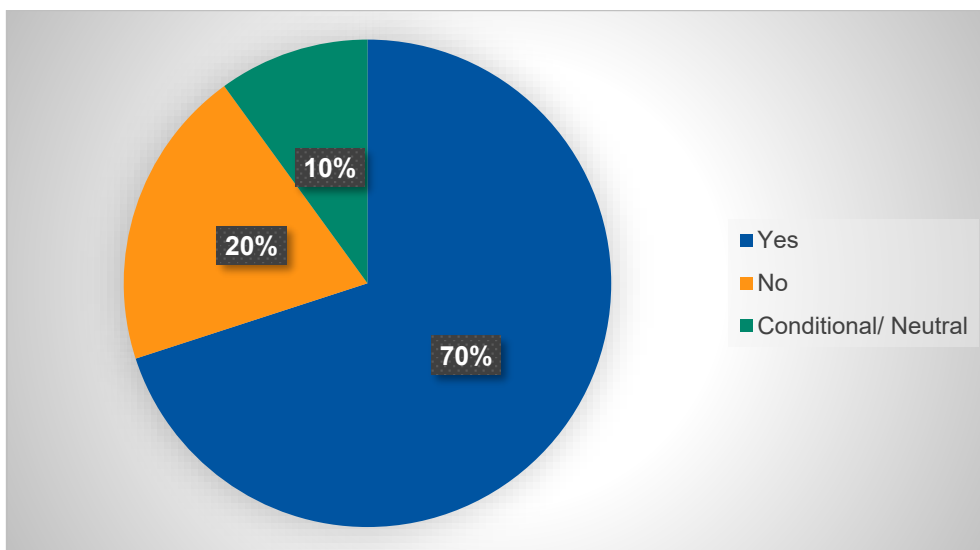


Figure 8 Question 1: Do you agree that food-waste-generating businesses should be required to donate unsold edible food to food rescue charities or recipient agencies?

As shown in Figure 8, 80% of stakeholders expressed full or conditional support for the proposed policy, while 20% opposed it:

- **Support (70%):** Broad support from community members, local councils, licensees, and food rescue organisations. Cited benefits include improved food security, environmental gains (e.g., reduced waste and emissions), and alignment with state waste-reduction goals.
- **Conditional/neutral support (10%):** Supportive in principle, but contingent on legal protections, infrastructure readiness, and clear implementation guidelines. Stakeholders emphasised the need for a carefully managed rollout.
- **Opposition (20%):** Mainly from industry bodies, waste and resource recovery consultants, and some supermarkets. Concerns include operational burden and disruption to current voluntary systems, and these stakeholders had a preference for flexible and incentive-based approaches.

Criteria for capturing businesses

Feedback was sought on the criteria that should be used to determine which businesses the edible food mandate should apply to. Consensus held that supermarkets, grocers, food manufacturers, wholesalers, caterers, institutional kitchens, and hospitality venues should be targeted first due to high volumes of edible food that is discarded. **Figure 9** shows stakeholder positions on which businesses should be captured by the mandate.

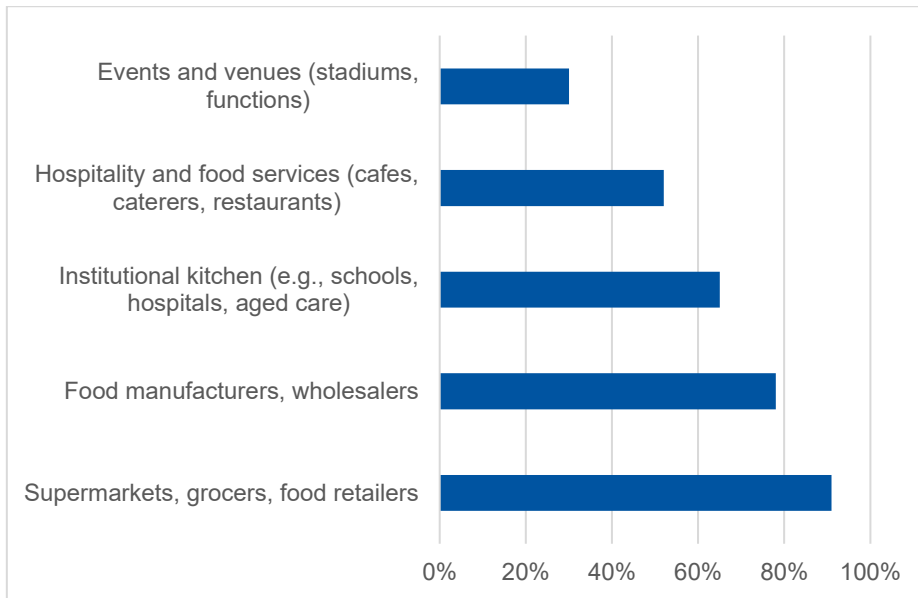


Figure 9 Question 2a: Business type: what type of food-waste-generating businesses should be captured?

Conditional support for including small businesses exists, provided that appropriate support mechanisms are in place. A phased approach was recommended, beginning with larger operators before extending to small businesses.

Stakeholder views on criteria and implementation of the mandate

Many stakeholders supported using a volume-based threshold to identify initial businesses, with 33% of respondents supporting gradual lowering of the threshold over time to expand coverage. There was moderate support for including floor space as a secondary filter, particularly for supermarkets or retailers over 400–500 m². A strong majority of submissions (91%) advocated for statewide implementation, with a phased rollout beginning in metropolitan Adelaide and regional centres, followed by more remote regions. Infrastructure and logistical constraints in remote areas were noted. Figure 10 summarises stakeholder positions regarding factors to support successful implementation of the mandate.

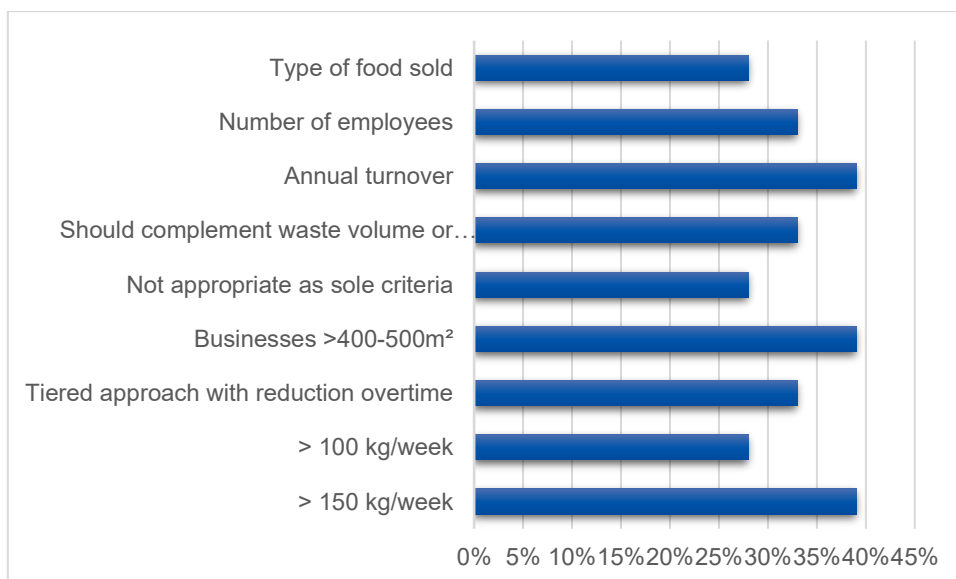


Figure 10 Stakeholder support for additional criteria for including businesses within the mandate

Optimal time frame for implementation

Feedback was sought on the optimal time frame for commencement of this proposed requirement. Most stakeholders (see **Figure 11**) recommended a phased approach, with large businesses included first. Suggested lead-in periods ranged from 12–24 months, allowing time for infrastructure upgrades, guidance, and partnerships with food rescue agencies.

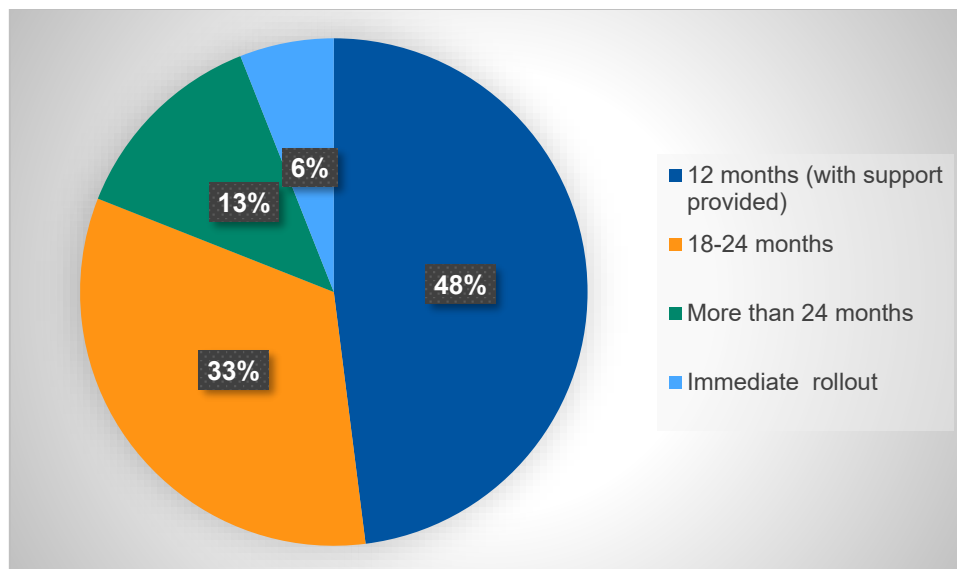


Figure 11 What is the optimal time frame for this proposed requirement to commence and why?

Definitions of unsold food

Feedback was also sought on how 'unsold edible food' should be defined. Stakeholders showed strong support for a definition that includes food that is safe for human consumption, including items past their best-before dates (but not use-by), cosmetically imperfect food, and overstock. Foods posing a risk due to temperature abuse, tampering, or lacking traceability were recommended to be excluded. It was also recommended that food safety standards be clearly communicated.

Implications for food models

Feedback was sought on the implications for current food rescue models arising from the implementation of a mandatory food donation policy. Submissions indicated that a mandatory donation policy could place considerable strain on current food rescue systems that operate with a large volunteer base. Increased volumes may overwhelm storage, transportation, and processing capacity. Stakeholders, especially from the charity and food rescue sector, raised the need for increased funding, staffing, storage, and transport to meet the demands of expanded donation streams.

To enable policy success, all stakeholder groups recognised the need for:

- cold chain infrastructure investment (e.g., cool rooms and refrigerated vehicles)
- standardised logistics and collection processes
- training for donors and recipients
- digital platforms for matching supply with need
- waste data reporting mechanisms.

Opportunities identified

The discussion paper sought feedback on opportunities arising from this proposed policy. The following opportunities were identified by stakeholders:

- **Environmental benefits:** Diverting edible food from landfill reduces methane emissions and supports South Australia's resource recovery targets.
- **Social impact:** Strengthens food relief networks, improves access to nutritious food for vulnerable groups, and builds community resilience.
- **Circular economy leadership:** Enhances South Australia's reputation as a circular economy leader and may encourage innovation in food logistics and redistribution.

Some stakeholders proposed alternative or complementary pathways for managing unsold edible food. These include diverting non-donatable food to composting or animal feed, community-based redistribution models to keep food local, and organising 'free food' events for vulnerable populations. Others recommended mandatory organics collection for hospitality and commercial sectors. Some industry stakeholders advocated for voluntary or incentive-driven models rather than regulatory mandates.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for a mandatory food donation framework, noting concerns that voluntary approaches have not delivered consistent outcomes. At the same time, the EPA recognises the practical challenges associated with mandating food donation, including implementation, logistics, and potential cost implications.

In light of this, the EPA will continue to engage closely with relevant stakeholders, particularly food rescue organisations, food retailers, and government agencies supporting food relief service providers, to explore the most appropriate and workable approach. This will include targeted consultation to inform potential obligations, thresholds, definitions, timelines, system readiness, and funding priorities, as well as consideration of other government policy frameworks to support food donations, such as the Social Supermarket Program provided by the Department of Human Services.

Ensuring food safety is a critical aspect of promoting edible food donations. The EPA will work with SA Health on development and implementation of any reforms to ensure alignment with food safety requirements.

Key area 3: Maximising resource recovery

This policy review area discusses two policy proposals relating to: municipal solid waste (MSW), and commercial and industrial (C&I) waste (see Sections 7.7 and 7.8, respectively, of the discussion paper for more information).

4.7 Municipal solid waste

4.7.1 Household waste: Metropolitan Adelaide, large regional centres and townships

Standardised three-bin system for residential premises

The discussion paper sought feedback on mandating a three-bin kerbside collection system (recyclables, organics, and general waste), with a staged approach (see Section 7.7.1 of the discussion paper for more information) for metropolitan Adelaide, and large regional centres and townships.

A total of sixty-six (66) responses were received on the proposal, with broad support for implementing such a system. Councils and local government waste subsidiaries generally supported the proposal, particularly where implementation is feasible and accompanied by adequate funding and education.

Stakeholders emphasised that any mandate must ensure equitable access, with specific consideration given to socioeconomic diversity, including the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, renters, and vulnerable households. **Figure 12** illustrates stakeholder support for the mandate by geographic area.

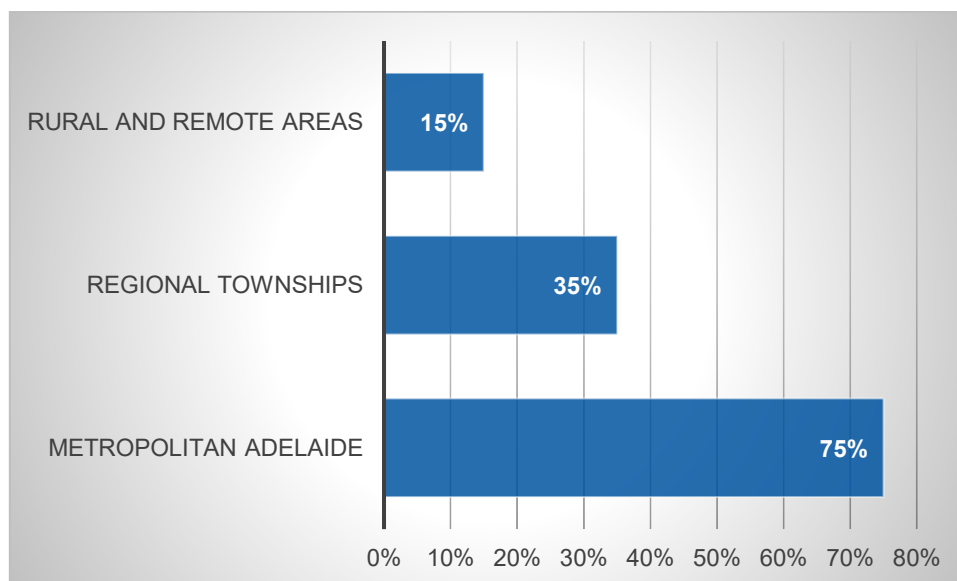


Figure 12 Question 1: If a requirement to provide a standardised three-bin system (recyclables, organics, and general waste) to all residential premises, in particular metropolitan Adelaide areas, was mandated, which councils or which areas should this apply to and why?

Key considerations identified include financial and logistical constraints in implementation, especially for smaller councils or areas with limited infrastructure. Stakeholders suggested tailoring implementation based on community readiness, geographic constraints, and demographic factors.

All metropolitan councils, particularly those with low diversion rates or limited kerbside organics services, and high-density areas, including central Adelaide and inner-city suburbs, were recommended for inclusion in the mandate by 70% of submissions that stressed equity and standardisation.

Standardised three-bin system in multi-unit dwellings

Feedback was sought on whether a requirement to provide a standardised three-bin system to all residential premises in metropolitan Adelaide should apply to multi-unit dwellings (MUDs) serviced by private waste contractors. Most submissions (90%) agreed that MUDs should be included in the mandate, but with recognition of specific challenges, such as bin storage space, tenant turnover, and contractor inconsistencies. **Figure 13** shows stakeholder support for mandating the three-bin system in MUDS.

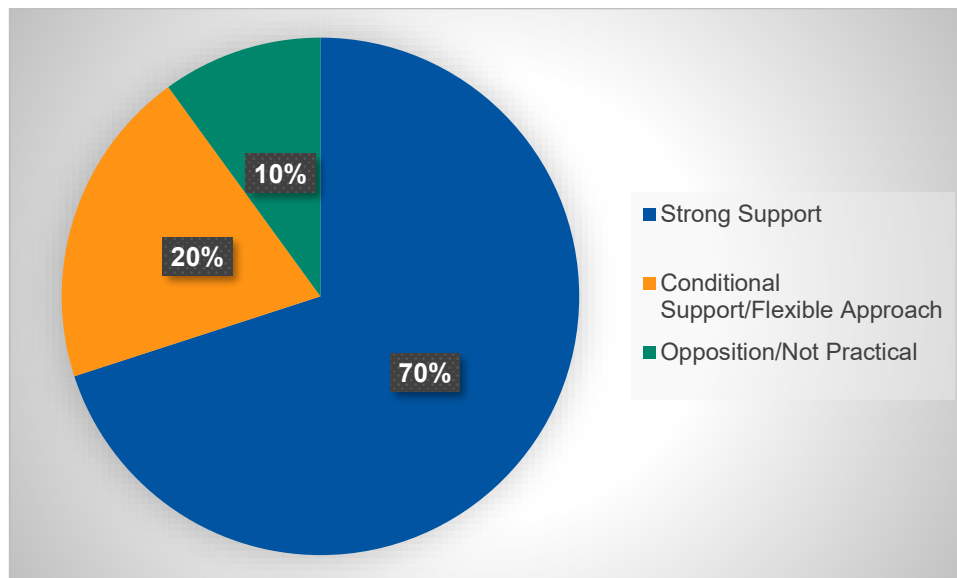


Figure 13 Question 2: Should a requirement to provide a standardised three-bin system to all residential premises in metropolitan Adelaide apply to multi-unit dwellings serviced by private waste contractors?

The need for better regulation of private waste contractors was highlighted to ensure alignment with council systems and contamination minimisation. Stakeholders stressed the need for a phased implementation supported by planning code reforms.

Key considerations identified include:

1. **Infrastructure barriers:** Space for bins and truck access.
2. **Contractual clarity:** Alignment of council and private sector responsibilities.
3. **Education and behavioural change needs:** Targeted strategies for MUDs residents.

Stakeholders recommended mandating the three-bin system in MUDs where feasible, with exceptions requiring resource recovery treatment and regular compliance reviews.

Resource recovery requirements if separate collections are not feasible

A total of fifty-four (54) responses were received on the proposal to require resource recovery treatment prior to landfill disposal where separate collections for recyclables or organics are not feasible. Submissions on this proposal reflect a diversity of views, shaped by stakeholder type (e.g., councils, licensees, and regional/local contexts) and practical experiences with collection infrastructure. While some stakeholders support a conditional or phased requirement for resource recovery treatment, others express concern about feasibility, cost, and unintended consequences. There was widespread agreement that if separate recycling or organics collection cannot be provided, there must be a requirement for waste to undergo treatment for resource recovery before landfill disposal. **Figure 14** outlines an overview of stakeholder positions on the proposed requirement.

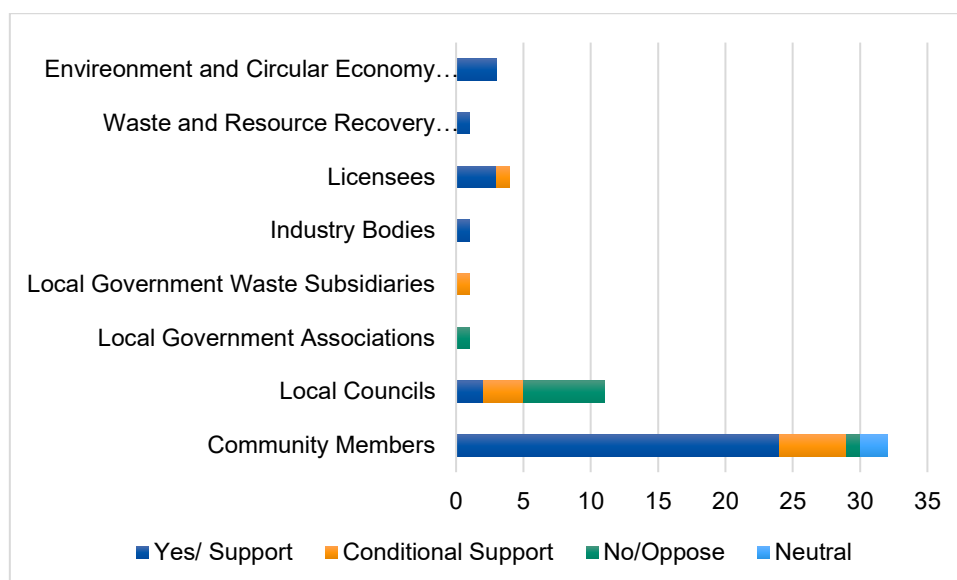


Figure 14 Question 3: If separate collections for recyclables or organics, whether by council or private waste contractors, are unable to be provided due to lack of access or infrastructure, should this trigger a requirement for the waste collected to be treated for resource recovery prior to disposal to landfill?

Several submissions expressed qualified support for the proposed requirement to treat waste for resource recovery in the absence of separate collections. However, this support was generally contingent on a range of practical and contextual factors, including the proportion of recoverable materials in the waste stream, the availability of suitable infrastructure, and the cost implications of implementing treatment systems.

Across submissions, there was strong and consistent support for continued prioritisation of source separation as the most effective, economical, and publicly accepted method for resource recovery. Stakeholders emphasised that source separation achieves higher recovery rates and helps maintain community confidence in the integrity of the waste system.

Local councils and local government associations highlighted significant potential cost associated with mandating treatment in the absence of separate recycling or organics services. This includes expenses for additional collection, sorting, and processing, as well as the need for specialised infrastructure, which is particularly problematic in regional and rural areas where smaller councils face limited economies of scale. Many councils also noted the lack of suitable treatment facilities capable of recovering materials from mixed waste to a high standard.

In addition to cost and infrastructure constraints, several councils noted that mandatory treatment might undermine community engagement with source separation if households perceive that all waste will be sorted after collection. This could result in increased contamination and reduced system effectiveness.

In response to these challenges, many councils called for a flexible approach to implementation that allows for discretion based on local conditions, contractual arrangements, and service delivery constraints, such as high contamination rates, public misuse, or limited rural access.

Some submissions acknowledged that, if implemented carefully, mandated treatment requirements could serve as policy levers to incentivise public and private investment in post-collection infrastructure. Suggested investments include waste-to-energy technologies, advanced material recovery facilities (MRFs), and organics extraction systems.

Rollout to additional areas

Recommendations for expansion include regional centres with demonstrated waste generation, community readiness, or prior pilot experience. Examples suggested include Mount Gambier, Port Augusta, and Whyalla. Most stakeholders indicated readiness for commencement within the next 2–4 years, provided there is adequate planning, engagement, and infrastructure funding.

Other policy measures to support enhanced resource recovery

The following policy measures were identified as key to enhanced resource recovery:

1. **Consistency in kerbside services:** Strong advocacy for a statewide standardised bin system and waste acceptance list to reduce confusion, streamline messaging, and simplify contractor operations.
2. **Source segregation and collections:** There was widespread support for mandating source separation for both households and businesses. Suggestions provided include planning code updates to embed waste infrastructure in new developments and enhanced collection systems in public places.
3. **Reduction in contamination:** Proposed measures include bin inspections, enforcement measures, targeted education, and the use of certified compostable liners to improve food organics and garden organics (FOGO) stream quality.

Cross-cutting issues included:

1. **Behaviour change:** Stakeholders stressed that long-term waste avoidance and proper segregation depend heavily on inclusive ongoing education and community engagement.
2. **Incentives and levies:** Use of increasing landfill levy financial support mechanisms (grants and subsidies) was seen as vital to drive system change and cover transition costs.

There is clear support across stakeholders for an enhanced, harmonised, and more accountable kerbside system.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for mandating a consistent three-bin system (recyclables, organics and general waste) across metropolitan Adelaide, larger regional centres and townships. The EPA will continue to explore a phased implementation approach, taking into account infrastructure readiness, regional capacity, cost considerations, and service feasibility.

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for the inclusion of MUDs in a standardised system and the associated logistical and planning challenges. It is noted that the *Greater Adelaide Regional Plan* includes an action to ‘promote best practice waste management (including segregated collection systems) in residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use developments to support resource recovery activities’. This action includes updating the *Better practice guide for waste management in residential & mixed use developments*, which is being led by GISA.

While source separation remains the preferred approach for household waste, the EPA recognises that separate kerbside collection may not be feasible in all regional and remote settings. The EPA will work with GISA and councils to assess best practice waste management options available in regional and remote settings with consideration of infrastructure, transport logistics, and population thresholds, to inform suitable time frames and service models.

The EPA will also explore complementary policy tools and opportunities for national alignment to reinforce regulatory reforms, reduce contamination, and enhance consistency and recovery outcomes.

4.7.2 Household waste: Outer regional and rural areas

Feedback was sought to help identify options for outer regional and rural collection service provision, recognising that for some of these areas, a three-bin system may not be suitable (see Section 7.7.2 of the discussion paper for more information).

Submissions consistently emphasised the need for tailored, flexible, and place-based approaches to waste and resource recovery in outer regional and rural areas. The vast geographical distances, low population densities, and high transport costs mean that a uniform or metro-centric three-bin kerbside system is often not viable or cost-effective in these contexts.

Modifications to collection services to improve resource recovery

A total of thirty-four (34) responses were received regarding how waste and resource recovery collection services in outer regional and rural areas could be improved. Stakeholders consistently emphasised the importance of adopting flexible, place-based approaches that take into account the specific circumstances and opportunities within individual regional and rural communities. **Figure 15** outlines the various modifications proposed by respondents.

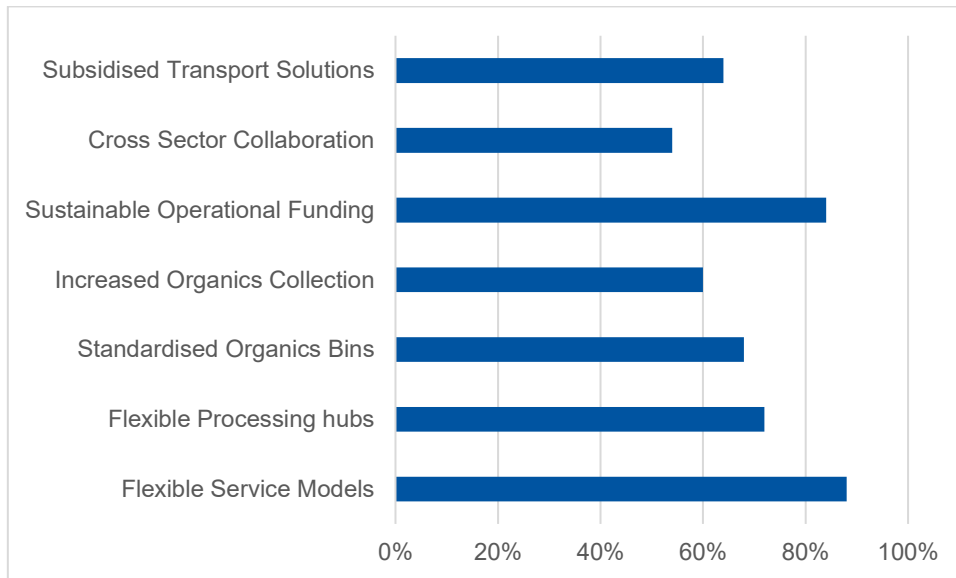


Figure 15 Question 1: How might waste and resource recovery collection services in outer regional and rural areas be modified to achieve cost-effective improvements in rates of resource recovery and diversion of organics?

Stakeholders identified several interrelated challenges hindering resource recovery outcomes in outer regional and rural areas (see **Figure 16**).

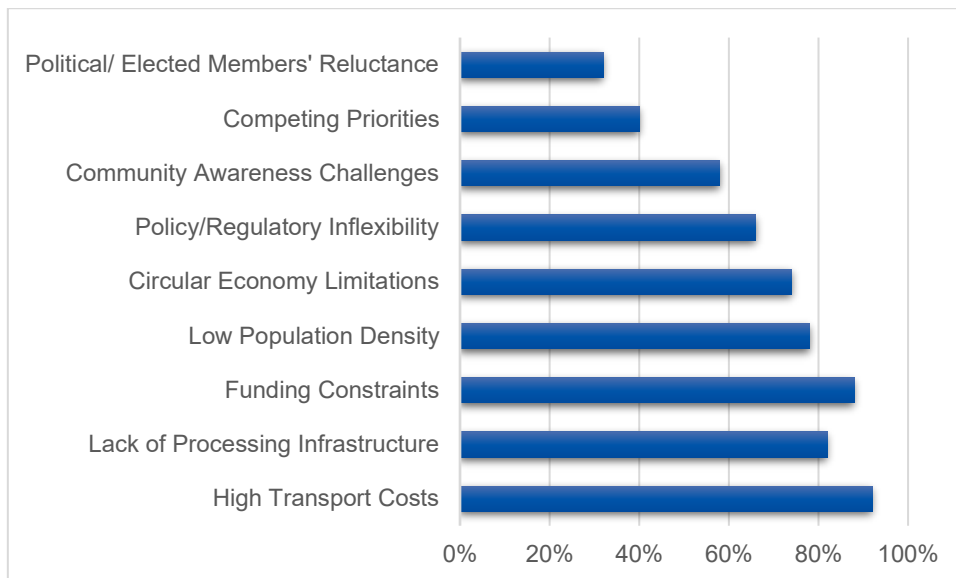


Figure 16 Question 2: What are the barriers to improving resource recovery outcomes in outer regional and rural areas?

Despite the challenges, submissions highlight numerous opportunities (see **Figure 17**).

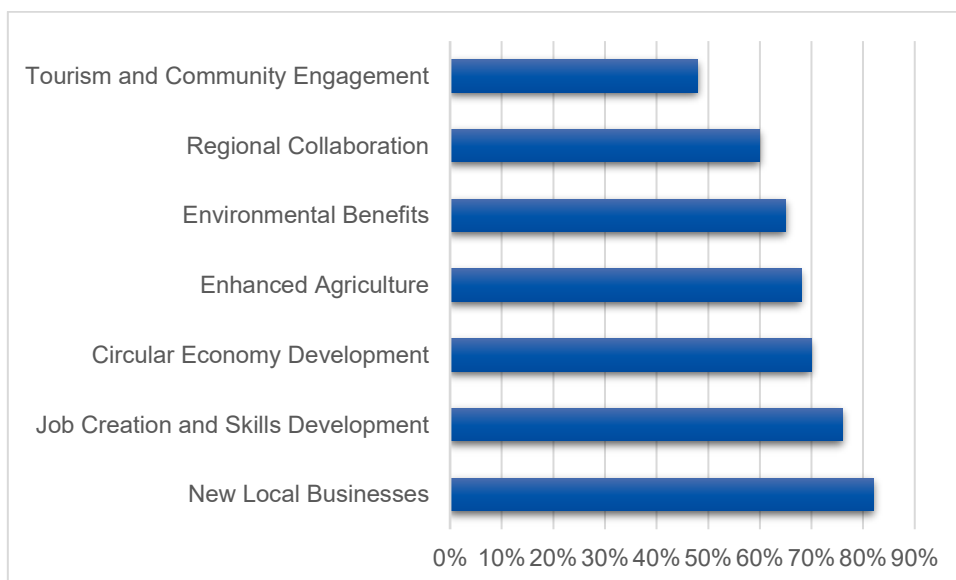


Figure 17 Question 3: What are the opportunities for these areas that may arise from improved resource recovery outcomes (e.g., new local enterprises, skills development, job creation)?

4.7.3 Household waste – Remote Aboriginal and unincorporated outback communities

Feedback was sought to help identify sustainable long-term solutions to assist communities achieve improved waste management and resource recovery outcomes and reduce the impact of waste on the environment and communities while honouring cultural values and connection to Country (see Section 7.7.3 of the discussion paper for more information).

Challenges and barriers to improved outcomes

Submissions consistently identified multiple intertwined challenges that hinder improved waste management and resource recovery outcomes in remote Aboriginal and outback communities, as follows.

1. **Geographical isolation and logistics:** Remote communities face significant logistical challenges due to their distance from major waste processing facilities. Transportation costs are high, roads are often poor, and freight options limited, making waste removal and resource recovery expensive and inefficient.
2. **Limited infrastructure and capacity:** A widespread lack of essential infrastructure, such as sorting centres, recycling facilities, composting units, and transfer stations, severely limits local processing capacity, forcing dependence on distant facilities and increasing overall costs.
3. **Funding and resource constraints:** Funding tends to prioritise capital investments with insufficient ongoing operational support. Many local governments have limited budgets, restricting their ability to maintain and staff waste services effectively.
4. **Community awareness and cultural factors:** Waste management programs sometimes do not align with local cultural practices or community priorities. Language barriers and lack of tailored education reduce community engagement and participation, and contribute to contamination.
5. **Inconsistent standards and messaging:** Variability in kerbside collection systems, bin colours, labelling, and accepted waste types causes confusion among residents and businesses, limiting recycling effectiveness and increasing contamination risks.

Addressing challenges and barriers

Stakeholders proposed a suite of interrelated approaches that collectively can overcome barriers by recognising the unique characteristics of remote communities.

1. **Tailored, localised solutions:** Waste management systems must be flexible and adapted to community size, culture, and logistical realities. Small-scale, on-site composting and local recycling units are preferred over metropolitan-style centralised systems. Mobile waste processing units and drop-off hubs offer promising localised infrastructure.
2. **Collaborative partnerships and community engagement:** Strong cooperation between local governments, Aboriginal communities, industry, and government agencies is essential. Community involvement in decision-making and program design, coupled with culturally appropriate education, enhances ownership and program success.
3. **Targeted investment and subsidies:** Sustained financial support is critical, including subsidies for transport costs, grants for infrastructure development, and ongoing operational funding. Investment in baling and storage facilities operated locally can improve commercial viability.
4. **Improved education and communication:** Tailored, in-language programs that respect cultural differences are necessary to raise awareness and foster positive waste behaviours. Behaviour change campaigns should be realistic and incremental, recognising modern lifestyle demands.

Opportunities for cost-effective resource recovery

Several innovative approaches that offer potential to improve cost-efficiency and enhance resource recovery rates were identified (see **Figure 18**).

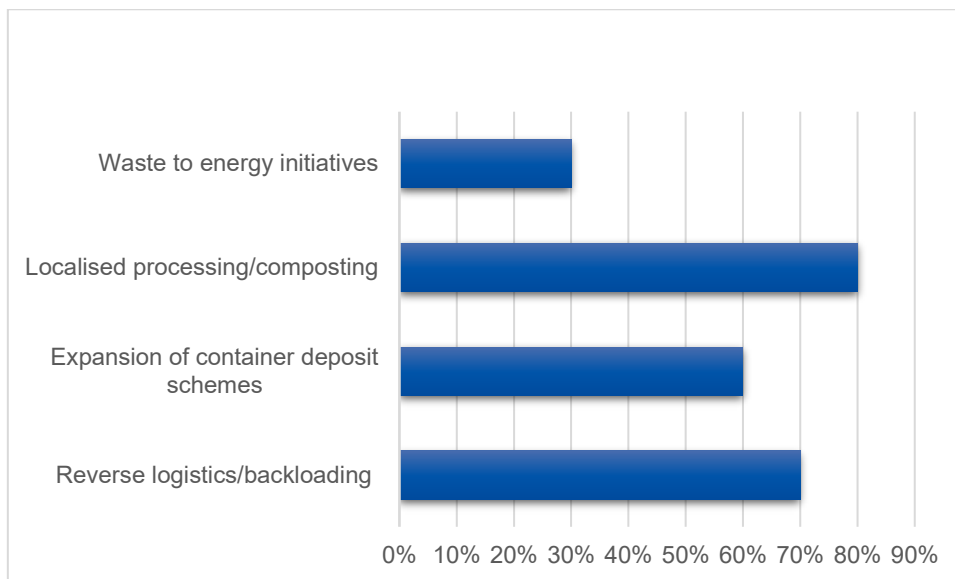


Figure 18 Question 3: Are there opportunities that could be explored that facilitate cost-effective resource recovery (e.g., using reverse logistics/backloading to utilise the space in the food trucks returning to Adelaide empty)?

Opportunities to develop local skills and create jobs

Many submissions stressed that improved waste management provides significant potential for employment and skills development in remote communities, as shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4 Question 4: Are there opportunities to develop local skills and create jobs?

Opportunity area identified	% of submissions mentioning	Key points raised
Waste collection, sorting, baling, and processing jobs	75%	Training locals in waste management operations
Education and environmental awareness programs	60%	Youth engagement, community education initiatives
Development of recycling/composting enterprises	55%	Small businesses processing organic and recyclable materials
Government investment required for job creation	50%	Funding needed to support skills development and employment

Support needed for communities

Submissions suggest that effective waste management requires multi-faceted support tailored to community needs. **Figure 19** summarises identified support needs to assist communities in the management of waste and recovery of valuable materials for recycling.

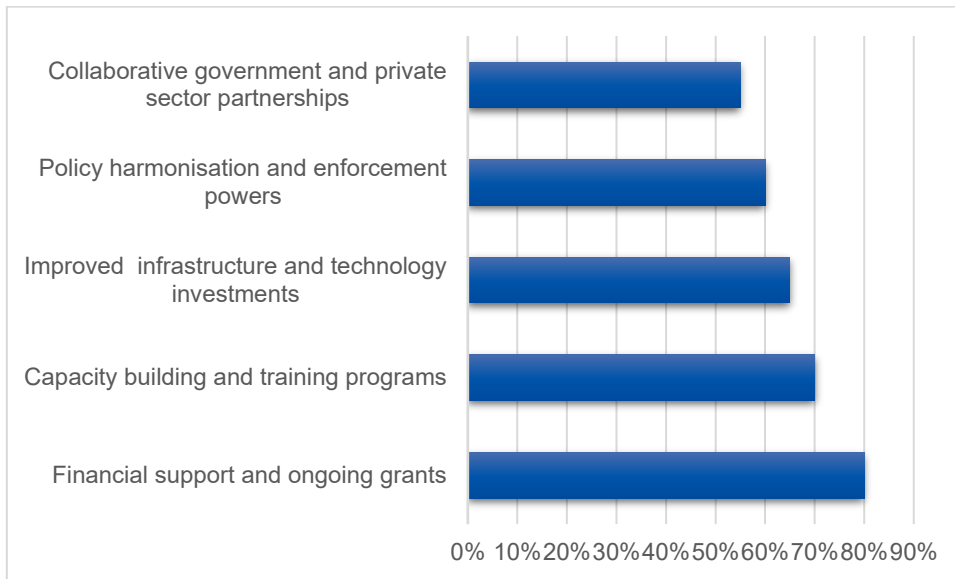


Figure 19 Question 5: What support would assist communities in the management of waste and the recovery of valuable materials for recycling?

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the valuable feedback provided by stakeholders on the unique challenges and opportunities for improving waste management and resource recovery in South Australia’s outer regional, rural, and remote Aboriginal communities. These communities face distinct geographic, economic, and logistical constraints that require tailored, locally driven, and collaborative approaches.

While the EPA’s primary role is regulatory, we are committed to working in partnership with government agencies, local councils, regional bodies, Aboriginal communities, and industry to support improved A number of stakeholders recommended a more balanced approach, using anonymised or contextually presented data to facilitate learning, knowledge-sharing, and improvement, rather than competition. Contextualised performance measures that account for varying resources and community needs were considered essential to ensure fair and meaningful outcomes. Achieving lasting progress will require coordinated effort, sustained investment, and strong cross-sector partnerships.

The EPA supports flexible and regionally designed service models, and encourages continued collaboration with GISA, the Outback Communities Authority, local governments, regional local government associations (LGAs), and the Local Government Association of South Australia (LGA SA). Effective implementation relies on a shared understanding of the environmental and economic benefits of improved resource recovery in these communities.

The EPA recognises the importance of continued investment in infrastructure, service innovation, and market development—areas primarily led by GISA and local partners. While these responsibilities fall outside the EPA’s direct remit, we support initiatives that align with the state’s goals for economic development, community wellbeing, and environmental sustainability. Accordingly, we will refer the relevant stakeholder recommendations to GISA for further consideration.

Improving waste outcomes in remote Aboriginal communities requires culturally appropriate, place-based, and community-led solutions. The EPA will continue to support whole-of-government coordination and engage with relevant agencies and community representatives to co-design effective responses. We remain committed to identifying scalable models and supporting initiatives that build local capacity and create employment opportunities aligned with circular economy principles.

Feedback received through this process will inform the EPA's future policy and regulatory considerations. We will continue to work with key partners to promote regionally led, environmentally responsible waste and resource recovery outcomes.

4.7.4 Household waste: Standardisation of waste bins

Feedback was sought from stakeholders on whether South Australia should require adherence to the *Australian Standard AS4123.7-2006 Mobile waste containers, Part 7: Colours, markings, and designation requirements* in relation to colour designation for two-wheel containers with a capacity up to 400 L (i.e., kerbside collection bins) (see Section 7.7.4 of the discussion paper for more information). It is noted that a revised version of the Standard (AS4123.7:2024) has since been released.

A total of sixty-one (61) responses were received from a range of stakeholders, with the majority (75%) expressing in-principle support for the proposal, recognising it as a key step toward statewide consistency. Stakeholders noted that standardised bin lid colours would reduce public confusion, improve household waste separation, and help decrease contamination in recycling and organics streams by providing clearer visual cues. Interregional consistency was also highlighted as important for residents who move or commute across council boundaries.

There was strong consensus (79%) that the transition should primarily occur through natural attrition—replacing bin lids or entire bins only as they reach end-of-life, rather than immediate wholesale replacement. Suggested time frames primarily ranged from 1–5 years, balancing the need for practical implementation with the urgency of standardisation. Many submissions specifically recommended a 3–5-year period to allow adequate time for planning, procurement, and community engagement, with a progressive rollout starting in metropolitan areas before expanding to regional and remote communities. This approach was widely endorsed as both financially responsible and environmentally sustainable.

Several councils requested flexibility or longer time frames for regional and remote areas due to logistical challenges unique to these locations.

Cost and resourcing implications

Cost was a central concern raised across submissions, particularly by councils managing large bin fleets or operating within limited budgets, including those in regional and remote areas. To better manage costs and operational complexities, some councils and waste service providers suggested aligning the transition with the renewal of existing waste service contracts. Some stakeholders suggested a voluntary approach in the short term, combined with financial incentives or co-investment from the state government, to assist with bin procurement and associated community education. Without such assistance, councils warned that costs may be passed on to residents through increased waste service rates or may require diverting resources from other essential waste and resource recovery initiatives.

Stakeholders across sectors identified the following as key barriers:

1. manufacturing and supply chain capacity to meet a surge in bin or lid demand

2. managing contamination risks and maintaining consistent service during transition periods
3. transport costs and accessibility in regional areas.

Some stakeholders recommended coordinated bulk procurement to achieve cost savings and prevent inter-council competition.

Several councils advocated for flexibility in achieving bin lid colour compliance, particularly where existing systems are functioning effectively and contamination rates are low. They cautioned that a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach may undermine successful local arrangements tailored to specific community needs or geographic contexts, advocating for exceptions where there may be disproportionate costs or unnecessary disruption.

Additionally, many submissions emphasised that replacing functional bins prematurely would be both environmentally and financially inefficient, leading to unnecessary plastic waste and under-utilisation of existing infrastructure. Some submissions, notably from environmental NGOs and waste subsidiaries, argued that minor colour variations (e.g., dark green vs lime green for organics) have limited impact on user behaviour or recycling rates. The ‘green is green’ perspective suggests tolerance for slight colour differences during transition periods without compromising education or compliance goals.

Communication and education needs

Stakeholders across sectors highlighted the importance of a coordinated, statewide communication strategy to prepare residents for changes and avoid confusion during transition periods when multiple lid colours coexist. **Figure 20** shows stakeholder positions on communication and transitional needs.

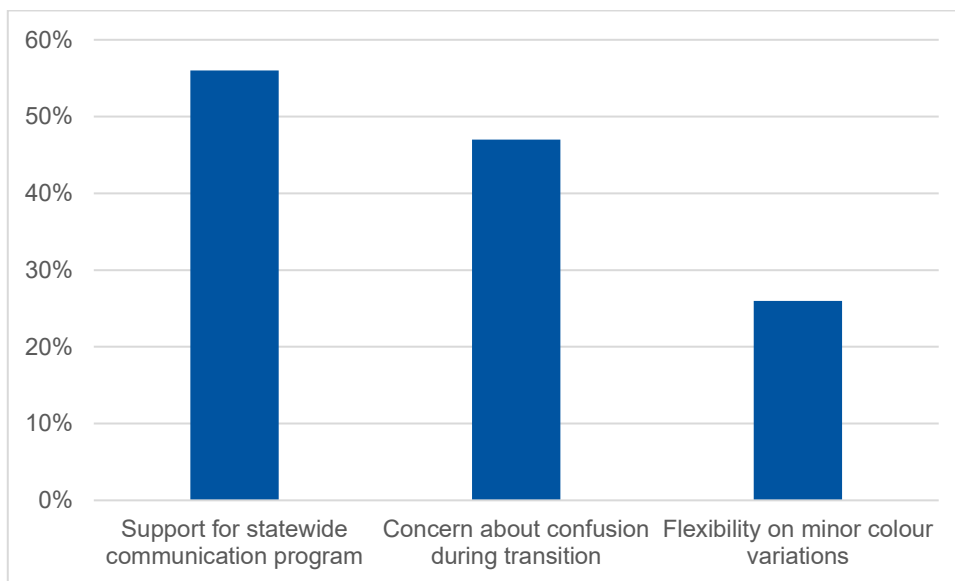


Figure 20 Support needed for successful implementation

Multi-unit dwellings and commercial premises

Submissions suggested that flexibility should be provided for multi-unit dwellings that often have bespoke collection arrangements. Some advocated for standardisation here as well, but with realistic time frames and tailored education strategies.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for standardising kerbside bin lid colours in line with Australian Standard AS4123.7–2006. Stakeholders identified this as a practical measure to reduce public confusion, improve source separation at the household level, and minimise contamination across waste streams. Consistency in bin lid colours was widely seen as a way to provide clearer visual cues and support a more cohesive waste system, particularly across council boundaries.

In response, the EPA will propose a gradual, attrition-based approach to standardisation, replacing bin lids or entire bins only when they reach the end of their serviceable life or during planned infrastructure upgrades. This approach is consistent with the National Kerbside Collections Roadmap that was endorsed at the December 2024 Environment Ministers' Meeting and is designed to minimise financial impacts on councils and the community, while avoiding the creation of unnecessary waste from early disposal of functional bins.

The EPA will continue to work with GISA, which will support councils through targeted community education and engagement initiatives. This staged and flexible approach ensures consistent service improvements while accommodating local implementation needs.

4.8 Commercial and industrial waste

4.8.1 C&I: Source separation and collections of co-mingled recyclables

Feedback was sought from stakeholders on mandating source separation and collections of recyclables in the C&I sector and what recyclable materials should be included (see Section 7.8.1 of the discussion paper for further information).

A total of sixty-six (66) submissions were received, with many submissions supporting the need for source separation of recyclable materials in the C&I sector, particularly where businesses do not have access to council kerbside bin services. The rationale includes:

1. enhancing resource recovery rates
2. reducing landfill use and emissions
3. aligning business practices with household and public systems
4. supporting the transition to a circular economy.

Figure 21 summarises stakeholder support for mandatory source separation of co-mingled materials.

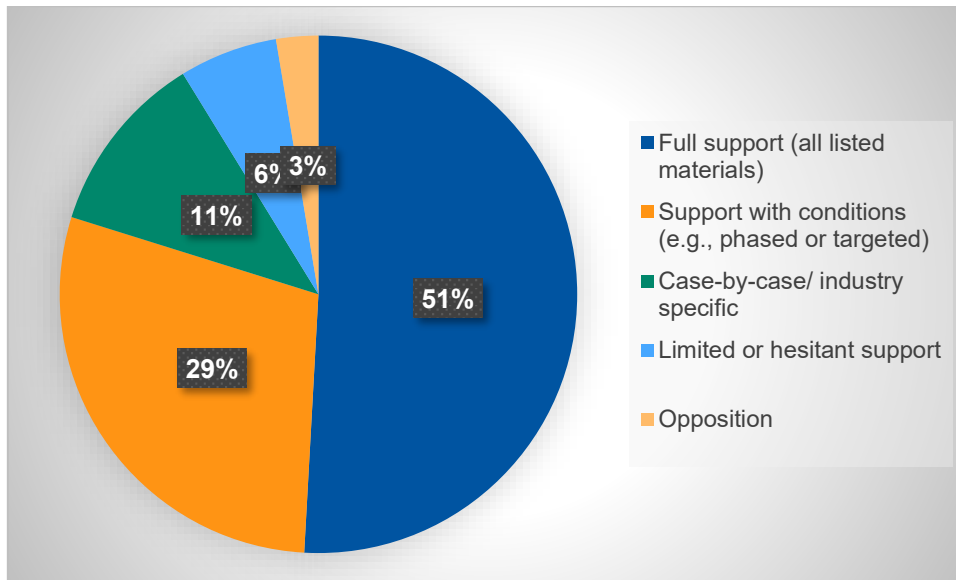


Figure 21 Support for mandatory source separation of co-mingled materials

Recyclable materials for separation

There was strong consensus (see **Figure 22**) across stakeholders on the core recyclable materials that should be prioritised for separation by businesses without council kerbside access.

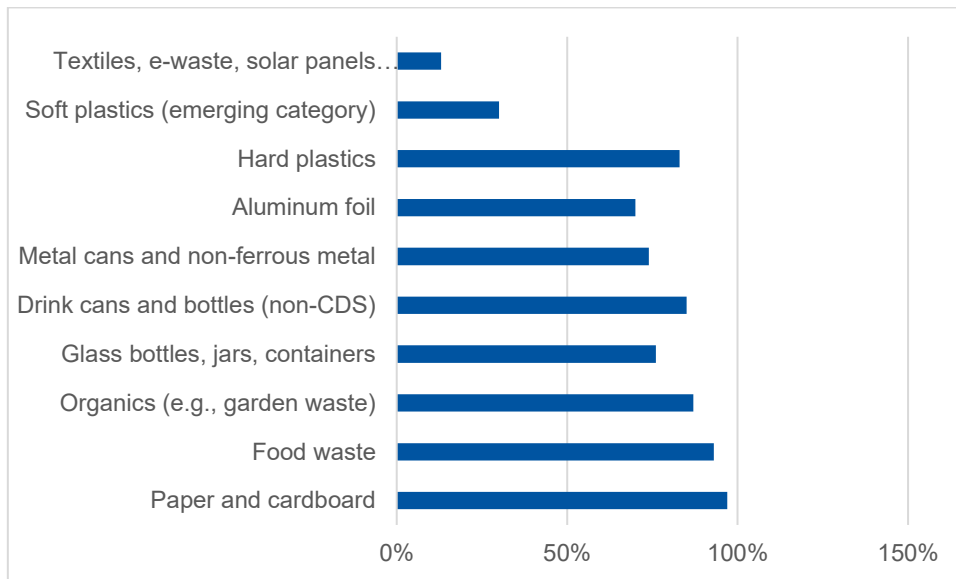


Figure 22 Question 1: For South Australian businesses and organisations that do not have access to council collected kerbside bins, what recyclable materials should be required to be separated for resource recovery collection?

Materials identified for mandatory source separation include:

- Paper and cardboard:** Recognised as a high-value, low-contamination stream that is straightforward to separate.
- Food waste and organics (garden waste, commercial food scraps):** Identified as a priority material stream due to its high volume and impact on landfill diversion, but also the most challenging to manage due to contamination and infrastructure needs.
- Empty drink cans and bottles (metal and plastic):** Frequently cited as essential recyclables due to their volume and established market demand.

4. **Hard plastics, plastic trays, pots, and food containers:** Supported but with concerns regarding contamination from food residues and the complexity of mixed materials.
5. **Glass bottles, jars, and containers:** Generally supported but with caution around contamination risks and handling challenges.
6. **Metal cans and non-ferrous metals (including aluminium foil):** Valued for resource recovery, though sometimes overlooked.

Stakeholders suggested that implementation should prioritise materials with established processing pathways and high recovery value, while accounting for contamination risks (e.g., food-packaging composites).

Scope of mandate and phased implementation

Most stakeholders (65%) supported a statewide requirement for businesses to separate recyclables, while acknowledging that a phased implementation was critical to ensure feasibility. Universal separation mandates were viewed as key to achieving consistency in waste behaviour and supporting industry-wide service development. However, a risk-based approach was also recommended to avoid burdening small businesses or regions with limited infrastructure.

Stakeholders (85%) across sectors recommended that the first phase (years 1 to 2) of any mandate target should include:

1. government offices and buildings (to demonstrate leadership)
2. large businesses and high-waste generators, including
 - a. food service and hospitality (due to high organic waste)
 - b. manufacturing and processing (generating >50 tonnes/year)
 - c. large office buildings and retail chains (generating >50 tonnes/year)
3. businesses located near existing resource recovery infrastructure
4. franchises and multi-site operations (for consistency).

Second phase (years 3 to 4) and beyond could include:

1. small to medium-sized enterprises
2. small food retailers and cafés
3. regional and rural businesses
4. agricultural producers
5. education and healthcare institutions.

Prioritisation criteria proposed to identify the first phase include:

1. waste volume generation (priority on high volumes)
2. business size and capacity to implement systems
3. proximity to existing processing facilities
4. business type (focus on sectors producing easily recyclable materials).

Barriers to implementation

Several practical and systemic barriers were raised:

1. **Space limitations:** Particularly for small and medium businesses lacking room for multiple bins or storage.

2. **Financial costs:** Expenses related to bin purchase, ongoing collection fees, and operational costs.
3. **Infrastructure availability:** Limited processing facilities or collection services in some regions, especially rural and regional areas.
4. **Staff capacity and knowledge gap:** Need for training and education to ensure correct separation and reduce contamination.
5. **Logistical challenges:** Including collection frequency, contamination control, and truck movements in dense urban areas.

Support measures required

The proposed mandate was seen as an enabler of broader sustainability goals and presented key opportunities:

1. **Financial assistance:** Grants or subsidies to offset costs of equipment and operational adjustments.
2. **Education and training:** Tailored to business sectors.
3. **Guidelines and standards:** Clear, consistent, sector-specific, best practice guidelines and standards.
4. **Shared infrastructure:** Shared infrastructure solutions, such as precinct-level bins and compactors, to help small businesses overcome space and cost barriers.
5. **Consultation and partnerships:** Ongoing engagement with businesses and waste contractors to address sector-specific challenges, tailor support and foster collaboration between businesses, councils, and waste contractors.
6. **Regulatory clarity:** Regulatory clarity and enforcement coupled with support to build capacity rather than punitive measures.

Opportunities that could be created by the requirement

The submissions highlighted multiple opportunities arising from mandated source separation:

1. **Shared infrastructure:** Shared infrastructure and precinct approaches could enable cost efficiencies and collaborative waste management among businesses, particularly in dense urban or industrial zones through shared compactors, bins, and collection services.
2. **Job creation:** New roles in recycling collection, sorting, and environmental education.
3. **Circular economy advancement:** Increased material recovery, reduced landfill use, and promotion of sustainable business practices.
4. **New business models:** Emergence of specialised recycling services, composting businesses, and resource recovery innovation.
5. **Improved waste diversion:** Enhanced environmental outcomes with increased diversion of food and packaging waste.

Stakeholder submissions demonstrated broad support for implementing mandatory recyclable material separation for South Australian businesses without kerbside bin access, provided there is adequate time, support, and infrastructure. They argued that a phased, evidence-based approach could achieve significant environmental benefits, drive circular economy innovation, and align South Australia with best-practice resource recovery globally.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the broad range of views provided by stakeholders regarding the separation of recyclable materials by South Australian businesses and organisations without access to council kerbside collection services.

The EPA will consider a staged approach to mandating separation of recyclable materials, with an initial focus on organics (particularly food waste – see further discussion in next section) and paper and cardboard generated by high-volume producers. This priority reflects the potential for significant environmental benefit and landfill diversion. Any regulatory proposals will be informed by further cost–benefit analysis, targeted engagement with affected businesses and sectors, and the development of appropriate support measures in partnership with GISA.

The EPA recognises that businesses vary widely in their size, waste generation profiles, and access to collection services and infrastructure. Criteria such as business type, volume of waste generated, and proximity to resource recovery facilities will be key considerations in determining phased implementation. The EPA will also give careful attention to practical barriers raised by stakeholders, including space limitations, access to collection services, and financial constraints, and will explore opportunities for precinct-based models to support compliance.

To provide certainty and allow adequate preparation, the EPA will propose appropriate lead time before any mandated separation requirements come into effect. Furthermore, the EPA will consider the need for additional resource recovery and waste management obligations for licensees as part of ongoing regulatory development. This approach aims to balance the need for improved environmental outcomes with the practical capabilities and support needs of the business community.

4.8.2 C&I: Source separation and collections of food waste

Feedback was sought on the potential options for mandating food waste separation and collection for businesses and organisations that generate food waste (see Section 7.8.2 of the discussion paper for further information).

Most stakeholders (see **Figure 23**) supported mandatory separation and collection of food waste for businesses, with 14% expressing conditional support. It was seen as critical to achieving state and national waste reduction targets, including under South Australia’s Waste Strategy and the National Food Waste Strategy.

Some stakeholders supported mandates with caveats regarding infrastructure readiness, cost impacts (especially for small and medium businesses), and the need for phased implementation to allow businesses and waste management systems to adapt.

A few submissions expressed concern over enforcement challenges, lack of current data for threshold-setting, and the financial burden on smaller businesses and rural areas. Some urged a focus on incentives and voluntary programs before mandating.

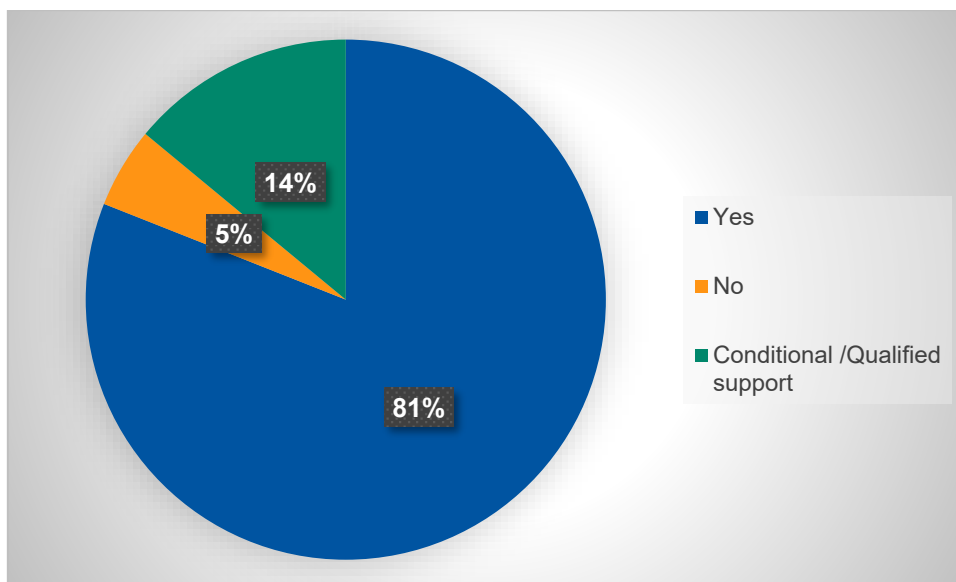


Figure 23 Question 1: Should the separation and collection of food waste for businesses that generate food waste be mandatory?

Defining food waste

Stakeholders expressed differing views on how ‘food waste’ should be defined. **Table 5** provides a summary of these perspectives.

Table 5 Question 2: How should ‘food waste’ be defined?

Scope preference	% of responses	Notes
Broad definition (includes packaged food, preparation waste, expired stock, processing waste)	70%	Favoured by councils and industry bodies
Exclusions recommended (e.g., contaminated food, non-compostable packaging)	20%	Mostly operational concerns
No comment / general agreement	10%	Implicit or aligned with EPA’s proposed definition

Priority businesses/organisations and thresholds

A majority suggested prioritising businesses based on the quantity (volume or weight) of food waste, as it better reflects environmental impact. Food retailers, supermarkets, restaurants, catering services, and large commercial kitchens were frequently mentioned as priority sectors due to the volume and nature of their waste. Some community members advocated for all food waste generators to be included eventually, while most stakeholders favoured phased or threshold-based inclusion to reduce administrative burden. **Table 6** summarises stakeholder views on which businesses/organisations should be given priority.

Table 6 Question 3: Which businesses/organisations should be given the priority

Prioritisation criteria	% of submissions	Notes
Quantity of food waste generated	60%	Volume-based triggers
Business type (e.g., food retailers, caterers, supermarkets)	25%	Especially where food is directly sold or handled
General waste volume as proxy	10%	Supported by some stakeholders where food-specific data is not available
All businesses	5%	Some community stakeholders calling for universal approach

Thresholds for large and small food waste generators

The majority of submissions (75%) suggested that thresholds for large food waste generators should be based on volume of food waste generated weekly or monthly, rather than store size or floor area. (Suggested thresholds varied, but many proposed metrics such as >5 kg/day or operationalised volume audits.)

Submissions suggested that small generators should also be subject to thresholds, potentially lower than large generators, with suggestions to use bin sizes (e.g., 140 L bins) or volumes aligned with council kerbside service eligibility. Phased inclusion was broadly supported to allow time for adjustment.

Geographic scope of requirement

Stakeholder perspectives on the geographical scope of the requirements are summarised in **Figure 24**.

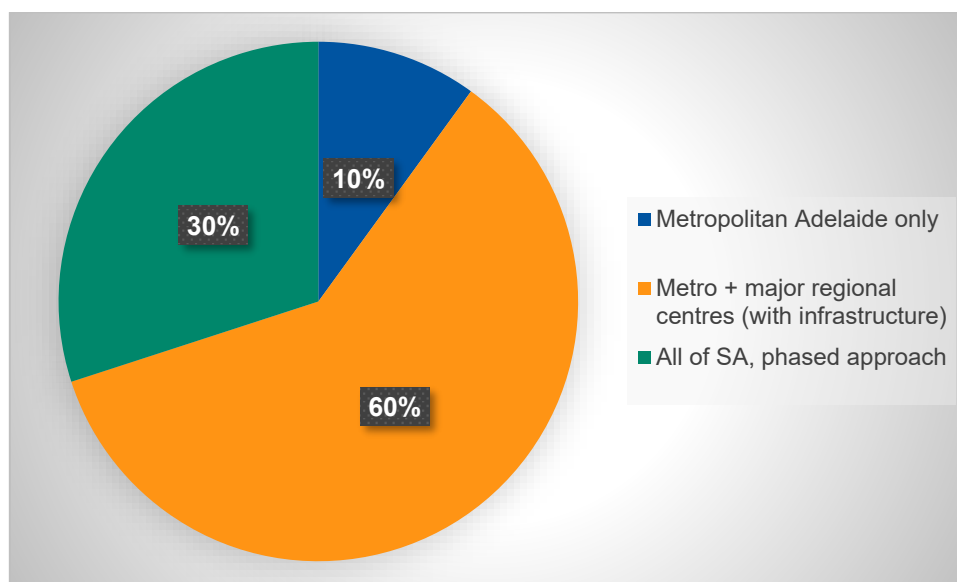


Figure 24 Geographical scope of the requirements

Most submissions (60%) supported initial implementation in metropolitan Adelaide and regional centres where processing infrastructure exists. Thirty per cent supported extending requirements statewide through a phased approach, considering infrastructure development and local logistics, especially for rural and remote areas.

Many submissions highlighted the importance of supporting regional areas with infrastructure investments and assistance programs to ensure equitable access to food waste diversion.

Phased rollout and time frames

There was wide consensus across sectors that the mandate should be phased. Suggested time frames for implementation are:

1. **Large generators:** To comply first (within a 1–2-year time frame) to establish systems.
2. **Small/medium:** 2–4 years post phase 1 were commonly suggested to accommodate business readiness and infrastructure expansion.
3. **Rural areas:** Longer lead times (4–5+ years) recommended due to logistical challenges and processing capacity constraints.

Time frames should be informed by ongoing consultation with businesses and waste management providers.

Other options considered

Other key strategies suggested include:

1. infrastructure investment for regional organics processing, improved collection logistics, and alternative technologies for food waste unsuitable for compost (e.g., bioenergy)
2. supporting early adopters and small businesses through financial incentives, grants, or reduced fees
3. business education programs similar to successful campaigns like ‘Replace the Waste’ for plastics.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the broad support from stakeholders for introducing mandatory food waste separation and collection requirements for food-waste-generating businesses. Submissions generally recognised the environmental and economic benefits of diverting food waste from landfill and supported regulatory action, provided it is implemented in a practical and equitable manner.

In response, the EPA will undertake further cost-benefit analysis to design an appropriate staged approach and support further policy development. This process will include further targeted engagement with stakeholders and a formal public consultation period on the proposed changes to ensure the final framework is well-informed, practical, and proportionate.

The EPA will consider a staged implementation approach, initially focusing on larger businesses that generate significant volumes of food waste. The use of volume-based thresholds will be explored to help define which businesses are subject to the requirement, while ensuring that regional equity and service accessibility are taken into account.

The EPA recognises that successful implementation depends not only on regulation, but also on the availability of supporting infrastructure, appropriate support for businesses, and access to education and guidance. These supporting measures will be further developed in partnership with GISA to help ensure that businesses are well-equipped to meet the requirements over time.

The EPA will also engage with SA Health on development and implementation of policy reforms to ensure alignment with food safety requirements.

4.8.3 C&I: Business waste reduction plans

Feedback was sought on whether businesses or organisations should be required to prepare a waste reduction plan:

- i. to reduce their waste generation by practically applying the waste management hierarchy
- ii. to provide for source separation and collection of their waste and recyclable materials (where source separation of co-mingled recyclables and/or food waste is already a requirement)
- iii. against which record keeping will be used to assess how they are complying with their plan, with these records to be made available to the EPA upon request.

A total of sixty (60) responses were received with a range of views on the proposed mandate. Stakeholder perspectives on the proposed requirement for South Australian businesses and organisations to prepare waste reduction plans are summarised in **Figure 25**.

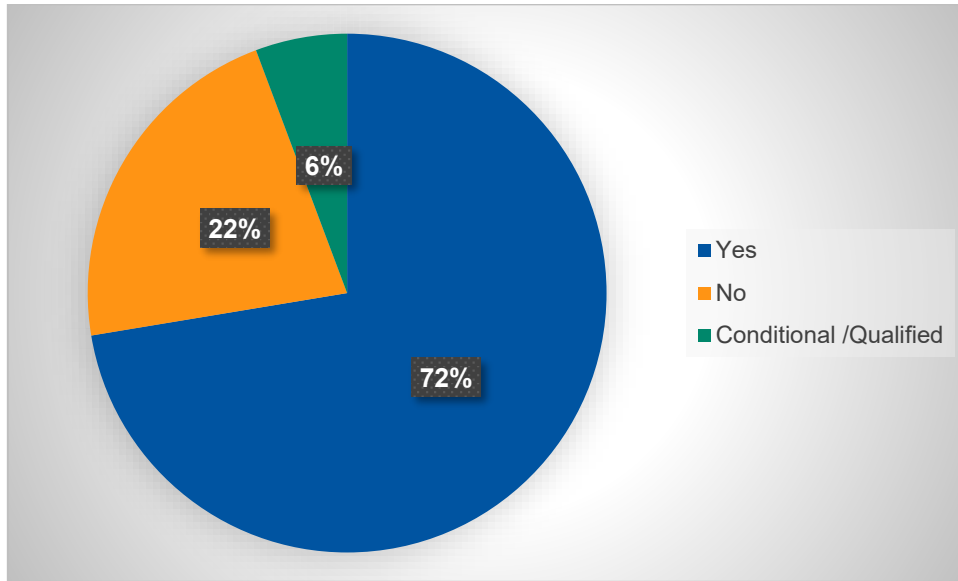


Figure 25 Question 1: Should South Australian businesses and organisations be required to prepare waste reduction plans?

Most stakeholders (72%) supported the introduction of mandatory waste reduction plans, emphasising their role in driving accountability, continuous improvement, and aligning business practices with circular economy principles. These submissions highlighted the environmental benefits of reducing landfill waste, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, and improving resource recovery.

However, several stakeholders stressed the importance of providing clear guidance, templates, and support (e.g., training and financial assistance) to businesses, especially smaller ones, to help them develop and implement effective plans. Some expressed concern about the administrative and financial burden on small businesses, advocating for threshold exemptions or phased implementation.

Large waste generators were often noted as already having plans or sustainability programs in place. Therefore, policy should avoid duplication for these entities but provide support for smaller or less-prepared businesses.

Stakeholders raised the need for government to ensure such requirements are practical and proportionate, particularly for smaller businesses. Concerns included potential duplication for businesses already engaged in waste planning and sustainability reporting and the need for regulatory clarity.

Scope of mandate on businesses in South Australia

Stakeholders were asked if all businesses in South Australia should be required to develop waste reduction plans. There was mixed feedback regarding which businesses should be required to prepare waste reduction plans. **Figure 26** shows stakeholder responses to the proposed mandate.

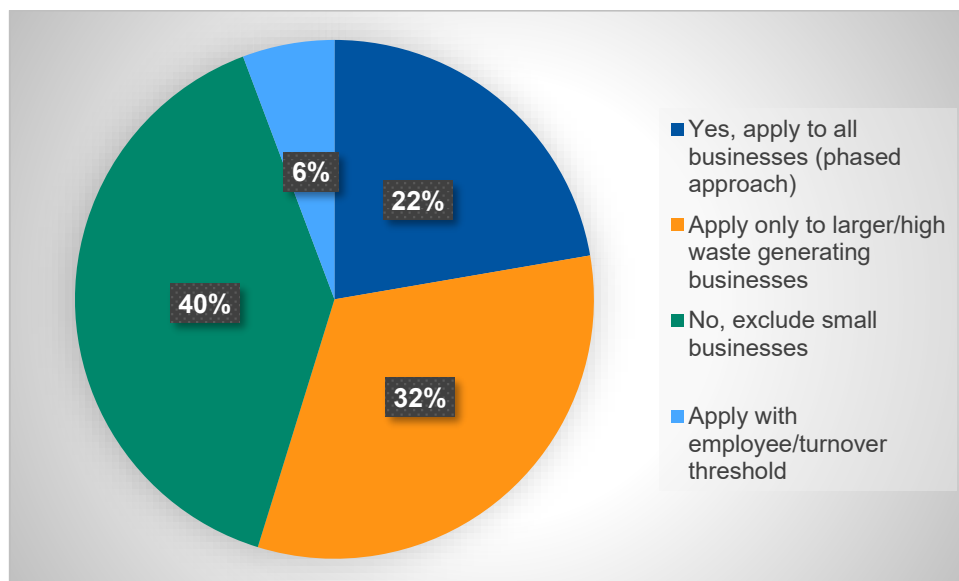


Figure 26 Question 2: Should this apply to all South Australian businesses and organisations?

Many respondents supported applying the requirement to medium-to-large businesses or those generating significant volumes of waste such as government offices and sectors with significant consumer interface (e.g., supermarkets and hospitality). Several stakeholders specifically suggested that EPA-licensed businesses should be prioritised for this requirement, noting they already operate within a regulated framework and typically have higher environmental risks and larger waste outputs.

Others advocated for a phased or risk-based approach rather than immediate universal application, recommending initial application to businesses with high waste generation, followed by broader rollout over time. Some submissions recommended excluding micro and small businesses due to limited capacity and low waste volumes. Some suggested specific criteria for inclusion based on waste volume, employee numbers, or turnover thresholds. A minority supported universal application, often with the caveat of phased implementation to allow for capacity building.

Opportunities arising from mandatory waste reduction plans

Stakeholders identified multiple opportunities from requiring waste reduction plans:

1. cost savings through reduced landfill fees, material costs, and more efficient use of resources
2. environmental benefits including waste avoidance, reduced emissions, increased recycling and resource recovery
3. corporate reputation and competitiveness gains, as businesses demonstrating sustainability commitments can attract customers and investors
4. knowledge and capacity building through staff education and improved understanding of circular economy principles
5. industry collaboration, such as shared waste infrastructure and business networks
6. regulatory alignment and futureproofing, supporting South Australia's waste strategy and international best practices
7. potential job creation in waste management, recycling, and circular economy sectors.

Several submissions noted that such requirements could also stimulate innovation in product design, service models, and supply chain practices.

Barriers to mandating waste reduction plans

A number of barriers were raised that could limit the effectiveness or feasibility of waste reduction plan requirements:

1. capacity constraints in small businesses, including lack of knowledge, financial resources, and staff time
2. financial burden related to plan preparation, implementation, monitoring, and reporting
3. complexity and variability of waste streams and business types, making standard plans less effective
4. challenges in monitoring and enforcement, particularly ensuring compliance and meaningful outcomes
5. risk of duplication for businesses that already have effective waste management systems
6. regulatory complexity and potential overlap with other requirements.

Other ideas on how the EPA could require producers of waste to identify opportunities to reduce and reuse waste

Several submissions proposed alternative or complementary strategies to encourage waste reduction planning:

1. mandating regular waste audits to identify specific reduction and reuse opportunities
2. developing and providing templates, guidelines, and training tailored to industries and business sizes
3. offering incentives and recognition programs such as grants, awards, and star rating schemes
4. facilitating business collaboration through sharing platforms, networks, and industry clusters
5. expanding reuse and repair initiatives, e.g., repair cafés, reuse centres, and promoting design for disassembly in manufacturing
6. encouraging producer responsibility by holding manufacturers accountable for product life-cycle impacts.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the general stakeholder support for requirements for businesses to prepare waste reduction plans, noting the potential for reduced waste, increased resource recovery, and improved data and information on business waste management practices.

The EPA will give further consideration to the potential for mandatory waste reduction plans for businesses, particularly for those generating significant volumes of waste and where plans and information would support other EPA regulatory requirements, such as the introduction of source separation and collection requirements or to support improved waste management practices at EPA licensed sites.

4.8.4 C&I: Prohibiting the recombining of separately collected materials

The discussion paper proposed prohibiting the recombining of waste and resource recovered materials that have been separately collected (see Section 7.8.4 of the discussion paper for more information). A total of fifty-two (52) responses were received, with most stakeholders (see **Figure 27**) strongly supporting prohibiting the recombination of waste and resource recovered materials collected separately. Key reasons given include:

1. maintaining quality of material and reducing contamination

2. preserving source separation to maximise resource recovery
3. increasing operational efficiency by reducing sorting and processing costs
4. maintaining consumer trust in recycling systems and encouraging correct sorting behaviour.

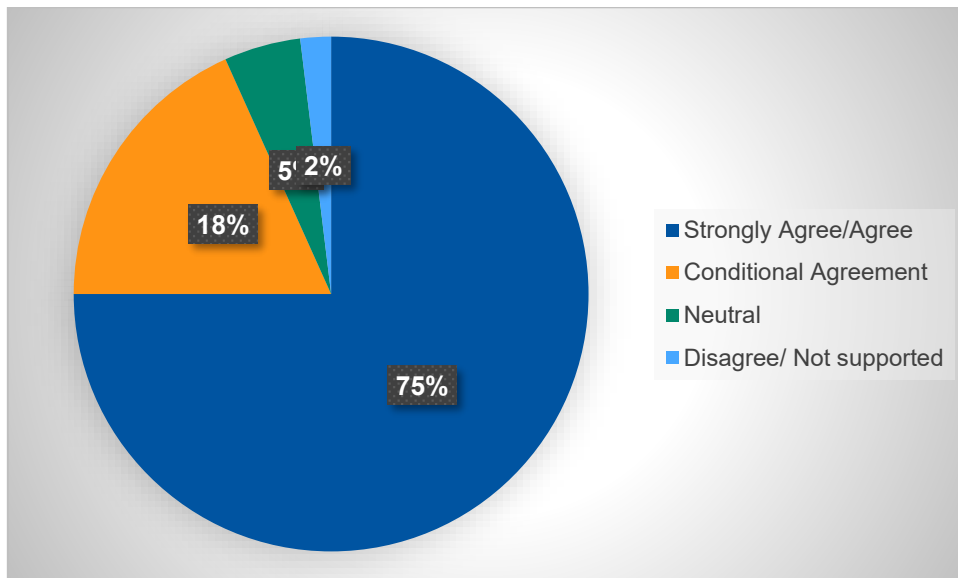


Figure 27 Question 1: Do you agree that the recombining of waste and resource recovered materials that have been collected separately should be prohibited?

Several stakeholders emphasised that while prohibition is important, practical exceptions should exist for:

1. **Advanced processing facilities:** Recombining may be acceptable if materials are transferred to advanced technologies that can effectively re-separate mixed streams.
2. **Emergency situations:** Natural disasters, biohazards, or health risks may necessitate temporary suspension of prohibition to protect public health and manage waste safely.
3. **Infrastructure and operational constraints:** In areas with limited local infrastructure, temporary mixing may be required, with proper downstream treatment to recover recyclables.

Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of clear classification of materials and contamination thresholds to guide practical application of the prohibition.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the general stakeholder support for prohibiting the recombining of waste and resource recovered materials that have been collected separately, particularly where this practice undermines source separation efforts and results in reduced resource recovery or increased contamination.

The EPA will give further consideration to prohibiting recombination. To support clarity and effective implementation, the EPA will explore options for providing clear guidance on acceptable practices and identifying circumstances where exemptions may be justified. This approach aims to ensure regulatory certainty while maintaining the integrity of source separation systems and supporting improved resource recovery outcomes.

4.8.5 C&I: Public place recycling and organic waste bins

Feedback was sought on whether recycling bins and organic waste bins should be required to be provided in public places (see Section 7.8.5 of the discussion paper for more information).

A total of sixty-seven (67) responses were received, with a majority of stakeholders (87%) supporting the provision of recycling and organics bins in public places, viewing this as a way to encourage responsible waste disposal, reduce landfill and align public behaviour with household waste practices.

Around 10% of respondents expressed conditional support, recognising the benefits, but raising concerns about contamination due to diverse and transient users. These stakeholders emphasised the need for adequate infrastructure, community education, and ongoing resourcing to ensure effective implementation. Some cautioned against a one-size-fits-all approach, recommending that bin placement and design be adapted to suit local conditions, particularly in regional or high-traffic tourist areas. A small proportion (3%) questioned the overall practicality and cost-effectiveness of public-place bins, citing challenges such as cleanliness, contamination control, and the increased costs of servicing.

Prohibition of disposal of public place recycling/organic bin materials to landfill

A majority of stakeholders (see **Figure 28**) supported the principle that materials placed in public place recycling or organics bins should be diverted from landfill wherever feasible. They emphasised the environmental and social importance of upholding public confidence in recycling systems, noting that landfilling these materials undermines the purpose of separate bin infrastructure and risks reducing community participation in resource recovery. Some stakeholders further suggested that a landfill prohibition could drive improvements in sorting practices, infrastructure, and contamination management.

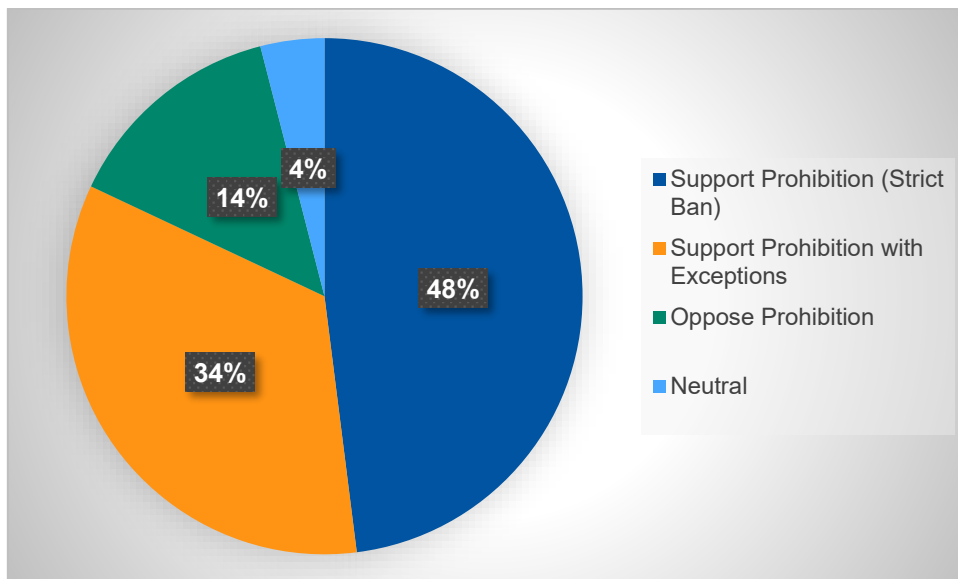


Figure 28 Question 2: Should materials in public place recycling or organic waste bins be prohibited from disposal to landfill?

However, many stakeholders cautioned that high and unpredictable contamination rates in public-place bins present a significant barrier to implementing a strict landfill ban. They expressed concern that processing heavily contaminated materials could be financially inefficient and operationally challenging, potentially resulting in negative environmental impacts. As a result, stakeholders recommended that any regulatory approach allow for reasonable exceptions, particularly in instances where contamination levels render materials unrecoverable.

Suggested exceptions include situations where contamination exceeds a specified threshold verified through audits, where composters or recyclers reject the materials, or in remote areas lacking access to resource recovery infrastructure. Some also proposed exemptions during special events or high-use periods where bin misuse is more likely. Several respondents supported a phased approach to implementation, allowing time for public education, infrastructure upgrades, and the establishment of clear compliance frameworks.

Local councils and waste contractors, in particular, highlighted the need for investment in education campaigns, improved bin design, and consistent signage to reduce contamination and improve source separation. They warned that imposing strict landfill bans without addressing contamination challenges could place undue financial pressure on councils and service providers.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for the provision of recycling and organic waste bins in public places. At the same time, the EPA recognises the significant practical challenges around high rates of contamination associated with public-place bins and the variability of infrastructure and resourcing across regions.

The EPA supports a collaborative approach and will work with GISA, local councils, and waste service providers to identify suitable locations and implement practical solutions to minimise contamination in public-place bin systems. GISA will play a key role in supporting councils by developing targeted education materials and engagement initiatives that promote correct use of bins and encourage positive behaviour change in diverse community settings.

Any future regulatory or policy direction will be developed cautiously and in consultation with relevant stakeholders and implemented in a way that is practical and proportionate.

4.8.6 C&I: Event and venues recycling and organic waste bins

The discussion paper sought feedback on whether recycling and organic waste bins should be required to be provided for all major events and large venues (see Section 7.8.6 of the discussion paper). A total of sixty-four (64) responses were received.

A significant majority of stakeholders (79%) expressed strong support for mandating three-bin systems at major events and venues, emphasising the benefits of increasing resource recovery and fostering consistent waste separation behaviours across home, work, and recreational environments. These submissions highlighted that events and venues generate large volumes of mixed waste, presenting both a challenge and an opportunity for improved diversion outcomes when appropriate infrastructure is in place.

Several councils, environmental organisations, and waste service providers noted that standardised bin systems help educate the public and reinforce positive behaviour change, particularly when combined with visible signage and waste education volunteers or staff. Some stakeholders also noted that implementing three-bin systems at events can reduce downstream sorting costs and improve the quality of recovered materials.

While support was strong, many stakeholders cautioned that implementation should be proportionate to the size and nature of the event or venue. Some recommended that requirements apply only to 'major' events—defined by attendance thresholds, waste volumes, or frequency—rather than small community gatherings, where the costs and logistical burden may outweigh the benefits. Suggestions given include developing clear guidance or criteria for which events and venues would be captured under such a mandate.

Challenges and opportunities

Several submissions identified practical challenges to implementation. These include:

1. contamination risk, particularly where patrons are unfamiliar with correct bin use or bins are unsupervised
2. space limitations in some venues, particularly those not designed with recycling infrastructure in mind
3. cost implications for event organisers, especially for smaller or non-profit-run events
4. availability of suitable collection services, particularly in regional or remote locations.

Regional councils and waste subsidiaries raised concerns about the limited infrastructure and transport costs for organics and recycling in remote areas, suggesting the need for adaptive approaches.

To address these challenges, stakeholders recommended:

1. access to education resources and signage, potentially developed by the state government or GISA
2. training or staffing support for waste station monitors during events
3. funding support or incentives for implementation, particularly in the early stages
4. guidance documents to assist event organisers in designing effective waste management plans.

Several stakeholders proposed an initial phased or voluntary approach, to allow event organisers to adjust practices and build capacity. Others recommended trialling the approach at government-run or government-funded events first, before extending to private organisers.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for providing three-bin systems at major events and large venues. However, the EPA also recognises the practical challenges raised by stakeholders, including issues relating to scale, cost, venue design, and contamination management.

The EPA will continue working in partnership with GISA, local councils, and industry stakeholders to support successful implementation of practical solutions. This will include the development of updated guidance and tools that can be easily adopted and tailored for events of varying sizes and contexts.

In recognition of the diversity of event types and venues across South Australia, the EPA will further consider whether regulatory requirements are appropriate in certain circumstances and explore alternative compliance pathways and staged implementation approaches. These could include transitional arrangements or targeted assistance for smaller or regional operators.

Through this considered and collaborative approach, the EPA aims to support improved waste outcomes at public gatherings while ensuring that new requirements are flexible, practical, and responsive to stakeholder needs.

4.8.7 C&I: Resource recovery treatment for public-place bins

The discussion paper proposes that public place general waste bins be required to be treated for resource recovery prior to disposal to landfill. A total of fifty-three (53) responses were received.

Stakeholder views were mixed (see **Figure 29**). While some stakeholders supported the principle—citing environmental benefits and alignment with circular economy goals—others raised concerns about the practical, financial, and logistical challenges involved.

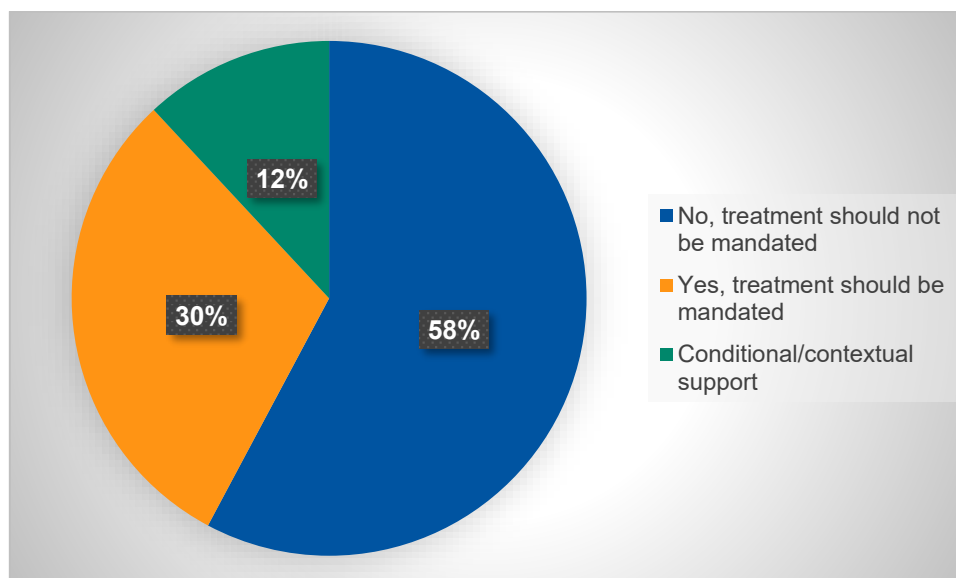


Figure 29 Question 1: Should public place general waste bins require treatment for resource recovery prior to disposal to landfill where recycling and organic waste bins have not been provided?

Some stakeholders, including community members, licensed operators, and environmental organisations, supported requiring treatment of general public place waste where recycling and organics bins are not provided. They emphasised the environmental benefits of recovering resources and reducing landfill. It was also seen as a potential driver for improved upstream source separation.

Stakeholders identified technologies such as mechanical sorting and Waste to Energy as feasible options, provided they are supported by adequate infrastructure and are economically viable. Several also noted that ongoing technological advancements may enhance the viability of recovering materials from mixed waste.

However, many submissions expressed concerns, including:

- i. high levels of contamination, reducing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness
- ii. limited availability of suitable sorting and treatment infrastructure, particularly in regional areas
- iii. increased operational and financial burdens on local governments and waste contractors.

Some stakeholders expressed conditional support for a phased or risk-based approach, with consideration of waste generation volumes and infrastructure availability.

Many local councils, local government bodies and industry representatives strongly opposed mandatory treatment requirements, highlighting several key barriers:

- i. insufficient infrastructure, particularly outside metropolitan areas
- ii. significant additional costs and administrative complexity for councils
- iii. ongoing challenges with contamination in public bins
- iv. risks of creating monopolies if limited treatment providers are mandated.

These stakeholders generally favoured a voluntary or flexible approach, supported by funding, clear guidance, and education programs.

There was broad agreement that any new requirement should be introduced cautiously and accompanied by:

- i. a phased implementation strategy aligned with infrastructure and behavioural improvements
- ii. comprehensive education and public awareness campaigns to reduce contamination
- iii. regionally tailored solutions based on local capacities and needs
- iv. collection of further data to assess feasibility, effectiveness, and cost impacts.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the mixed stakeholder feedback and concerns raised in relation to practical, financial, and logistical challenges and high levels of contamination.

The EPA supports GISA and local government in the rollout of recycling and organic waste bins in suitable public places alongside general waste bins, in alignment with South Australia’s Waste Strategy. Further development of infrastructure and public education may support further consideration of regulatory measures at a future time.

4.8.8 C&I: Requirement for treatment of waste prior to disposal to landfill

Feedback was sought on whether the existing requirement in the W2R EPP for specified waste or other matter to be treated prior to disposal to landfill should be expanded beyond metropolitan Adelaide.

A total of forty-eight (48) responses were received from a range of stakeholders. Stakeholder submissions reflected a broad range of perspectives. While there was general support for the intent of increasing resource recovery across the state, views diverged on the feasibility, timing, and conditions under which such an expansion could be implemented.

A number of stakeholders, including some local governments, environment groups, and waste industry representatives, supported the principle of expanding treatment requirements to areas beyond metropolitan Adelaide (see **Figure 30**). These stakeholders highlighted the environmental and economic benefits of increased resource recovery and greater equity between urban and regional communities.

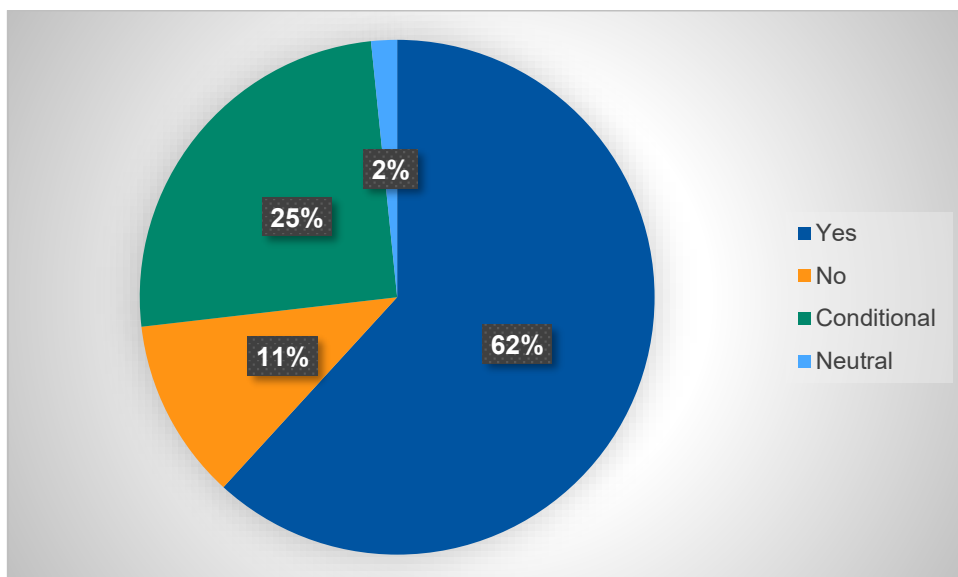


Figure 30 Question 1: Should the requirement for waste or other matter to be treated prior to disposal to landfill be expanded beyond metropolitan Adelaide?

Several respondents proposed that regional centres or high-volume waste areas, such as major towns, tourism hotspots, or peri-urban zones, could be logical next steps for phased expansion, particularly where existing infrastructure is in place or planned. Others suggested aligning expansion with catchment areas served by regional MRFs or transfer stations.

Many stakeholders advised that any expansion of treatment requirements beyond metropolitan Adelaide should be phased over time and aligned with the development of supporting infrastructure. Suggested time frames ranged from 3–10 years, depending on the readiness of individual regions. Some recommended piloting the approach in selected areas to evaluate effectiveness before broader rollout.

Key barriers and suggested support needs

Despite general support for the objectives of expanded treatment, many stakeholders, particularly regional councils and waste operators, raised concerns about implementation challenges. Commonly cited barriers include:

1. **Infrastructure limitations:** Many regional and remote areas lack access to appropriate waste treatment facilities, such as advanced sorting, composting, or energy recovery infrastructure.
2. **Economic viability:** Smaller volumes and long transport distances can make treatment cost prohibitive.
3. **Operational complexity:** Regional waste systems often rely on long-term contracts or shared services, which may limit flexibility and increase lead times for change.
4. **Capacity and funding constraints:** Councils noted limited financial and staff resources to manage system upgrades or new compliance obligations without dedicated support.

To address these barriers, stakeholders recommended a range of enabling actions, including:

- i. state-led investment in regional resource recovery infrastructure and transport solutions
- ii. flexible policy design, including region-specific exemptions and staged implementation
- iii. education and engagement programs to support behaviour change
- iv. planning and procurement guidance to help councils align contracts and systems with treatment objectives
- v. collaboration across levels of government to coordinate infrastructure planning, funding, and regulatory rollout.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the wide range of perspectives shared by stakeholders regarding the potential extension of treatment requirements for waste and other matter beyond metropolitan Adelaide. While many expressed strong support for improving resource recovery outcomes across South Australia, the EPA recognises the practical challenges raised, particularly by regional stakeholders, including limited access to treatment infrastructure, higher transport costs, lower waste volumes, and the complexity of existing service arrangements.

In light of these challenges, the EPA will work collaboratively with GISA, local governments, regional bodies, and the waste and resource recovery sector to explore regionally appropriate and practical solutions. This may include identifying priority areas for staged implementation, supporting pilot initiatives and local needs assessments, exploring funding and investment models, and developing educational resources to assist with local adoption.

Any potential expansion of treatment requirements will be informed by available evidence, community engagement, infrastructure readiness, and capacity for implementation. The EPA will continue to engage with stakeholders and gather data to ensure that any future approach is effective, proportionate, and tailored to local conditions.

The EPA will carefully consider whether it is feasible to extend treatment requirements to specific regional areas, taking into account infrastructure availability and the potential for funding support through GISA. If pursued, this type of change could be made through an amendment to Schedules 2 and 3 of the W2R EPP via Gazette notice, rather than requiring a formal legislative amendment. This approach would allow for flexibility and the potential for a staged rollout, subject to further assessment and engagement.

4.8.9 C&I: Standardising bins to Australian Standard AS4123.7-2006

Feedback was sought from the public on whether adherence to the Australian Standard AS4123.7-2006, in relation to colour designation for four-wheel containers with a capacity of between 500 L and 1,700 L, should be required in South Australia.

A total of forty-four (44) submissions were received. Stakeholders expressed a range of views, with widespread recognition of the potential benefits of consistency tempered by concerns regarding cost, practicality, and implementation.

Approximately 66% of stakeholders supported aligning C&I bin colours with the Australian Standard. Of these, 25% gave unqualified support, citing improved public understanding, reduced confusion in shared-use environments, and better alignment with council-led education efforts. A further 41% expressed conditional support, particularly dependent on factors such as time frames and financial assistance.

Supporters noted that colour standardisation could enhance source separation, reduce contamination, and promote harmonised waste management practices across jurisdictions. Some proposed alternatives to total bin colour standardisation, including limiting changes to bin lids only or using signage or decals.

A small number of stakeholders expressed the view that while colour standardisation may support education efforts, it may not significantly reduce contamination rates, which are influenced by broader behavioural factors.

A gradual, attrition-based approach was the most widely supported implementation pathway. Stakeholders recommended replacing bins or lids only as they reach the end of their service life, avoiding unnecessary environmental and financial costs. Preferred transition time frames ranged from 3–5 years, with some suggesting up to 10 years if government funding was not available.

Stakeholders identified several other key considerations that should inform any future implementation:

1. **Financial considerations and support:** The cost of replacing or modifying bin fleets was raised as a significant barrier. Many stakeholders urged the provision of government funding or subsidies.
2. **Implementation challenges:** Practical challenges were highlighted, such as difficulties replacing bin lids where bin designs are not standardised or where lids and bins are integrated.
3. **Education and communication:** Stakeholders stressed the need for strong, consistent public education campaigns to accompany colour standardisation to reduce misuse and contamination.
4. **Operational feasibility and review:** A phased approach was strongly supported, with review after the initial transition period to assess implementation progress and address challenges.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA will further consider a gradual, attrition-based approach to standardisation, replacing bin lids or entire bins only when they reach the end of their serviceable life or during planned infrastructure upgrades. This approach aims to minimise financial impacts on councils and the community, while avoiding the creation of unnecessary waste from early disposal of usable bins.

The EPA will continue to work with GISA, which will support councils through targeted business education and engagement initiatives.

Key area 4: Supporting a strong market for recovered resources

4.9 Circular procurement

Feedback was sought on whether South Australian public authorities should be required to adopt a whole-of-government circular procurement policy or, alternatively, embed circular economy principles and considerations into their public procurement decision-making (refer to Section 7.9 of the discussion paper for more information).

Seventy-seven (77) responses were received from a broad range of stakeholders. There was strong stakeholder support (89%) for a whole-of-government circular procurement policy that incorporates circular economy principles. Stakeholders saw this as key to creating demand for recycled and reused materials, demonstrating government leadership, and providing consistent, long-term procurement signals to support recycled product innovation and investment.

Environment and circular economy NGOs and some councils called for urgent adoption, while other stakeholders preferred a coordinated, phased approach. Some stakeholders highlighted the importance of aligning with existing sustainable procurement frameworks to avoid duplication, and a few cautioned that circularity should not override core procurement priorities such as value for money, quality, and fitness for purpose.

Mandatory regulation and role of EPA

Stakeholder views were mixed on whether a circular procurement policy should be mandatory and regulated by the EPA. Just over half (53%)—mainly environmental groups and community members—supported a mandatory approach, with regulatory oversight by the EPA to ensure consistency, accountability, and measurable outcomes. Some argued this would reduce greenwashing and address inaction.

Others cautioned against potential EPA overreach, suggesting its role be limited to setting compliance frameworks and monitoring performance rather than directing procurement decisions. Several stakeholders proposed that operational responsibilities sit with agencies such as the Office of the Industry Advocate, Treasury, or Green Industries SA, with the EPA focusing on environmental benchmarks and oversight.

Reporting requirements for government agencies

There was strong support (76%) for requiring government agencies to report on their performance against circular procurement criteria or targets, with stakeholders highlighting benefits such as increased transparency and accountability, support for continuous improvement and benchmarking, and improved data collection to assess impact and inform policy development. However, views differed on the appropriate reporting authority. While some supported a role for the EPA, others suggested shared responsibility with agencies such as Procurement SA or Infrastructure SA.

Mandating circular procurement for industry and business

Submissions presented mixed views on extending mandatory circular procurement requirements to industry and business. Supporters argued that such measures are essential for levelling the playing field, driving innovation, and expanding demand for recycled materials beyond the public sector. They emphasised the role of business in contributing to a broader circular economy and fostering market development.

However, concerns were raised about the feasibility of mandatory requirements, particularly for SMEs that may lack the resources, scale, or supply chain influence to implement circular procurement practices in the short term. To address these concerns, many stakeholders recommended limiting mandatory obligations to larger businesses. Suggested thresholds include those employing more than 20 or 50 full-time equivalent staff, generating over \$10 million in annual turnover, or operating in sectors with significant procurement influence, such as construction, infrastructure, and retail.

Suggested business reporting mechanisms and implementation time frames

There was strong stakeholder support for implementing flexible and scalable reporting mechanisms that align with existing obligations, such as environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting or other environmental disclosures. Many advocated for the establishment of a centralised EPA or government-managed portal to collect and publish circular procurement performance data.

Stakeholders also supported the use of voluntary templates or dashboards to help businesses track and report progress in a consistent and accessible format. Some submissions suggested that third-party audits or certifications could complement self-reporting to enhance credibility and accountability.

There was broad agreement on the need for a phased implementation approach. Larger businesses or sectors with existing capacity were seen as capable of commencing reporting within 1–2 years, while smaller or less mature sectors may require up to 3–5 years. A tiered framework, scaled according to business size, industry type, or procurement volume, was also widely supported. Several stakeholders noted that early guidance and pilot programs would be valuable in identifying practical issues and refining the approach before introducing broader regulatory requirements.

Priority collaborative actions by government to grow sustainable markets for recycled materials

Stakeholders strongly emphasised the need for coordinated action among government, industry, and the community to grow demand for circular products and strengthen the supporting supply chains. A key priority was for government to lead by example, particularly through the adoption of procurement targets or minimum recycled content requirements. Collaborating with industry and local manufacturers was also seen as essential for building trust in the quality, standards, and performance of circular products.

Submissions highlighted the importance of joint research and development focused on high-value material recovery and product innovation, as well as public-private procurement partnerships to demonstrate the viability and scalability of circular solutions. Other priorities included community education to boost understanding and demand for recycled content, the introduction of standardisation and certification schemes to ensure product quality, and the formation of cross-sector partnerships to drive market development.

Incentivising highest-value use of recovered materials by councils and businesses

Stakeholders identified a range of mechanisms to increase the value extracted from recovered materials. These include financial incentives such as grants and subsidies for manufacturers and businesses that incorporate recycled content into their products. The introduction of certified standards—whether national or South Australian—was also suggested to support confidence in the performance and quality of recycled materials. Additional measures identified include public recognition through rating schemes, awards, and registers to highlight industry leadership, as well as mechanisms to reduce risk, such as insurance, guarantees, or public-private partnerships.

While some stakeholders advocated for regulatory approaches, such as mandating minimum recycled content, others stressed the importance of ensuring recycled materials can compete on quality and cost. These stakeholders highlighted the need for support to overcome higher production costs and market resistance to non-virgin materials.

To support circular procurement, stakeholders proposed a variety of targeted incentives for councils and businesses. Suggestions provided include assigning preferential scores to tenders that incorporate recycled content, access to dedicated funding streams for circular procurement projects, and public recognition through awards or certification programs. Some also recommended reduced levies or regulatory offsets for businesses that meet or exceed recycled content targets.

Additionally, several stakeholders called for the reform of procurement policies or product specifications that act as barriers to the uptake of recycled materials. Examples include outdated material standards and short-term cost criteria that prevent fair comparison with recycled alternatives.

Some stakeholders also recommended reform of procurement rules or product specifications that currently create barriers to recycled product uptake (e.g., strict material standards or short-term cost prioritisation)

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges strong stakeholder interest in establishing a whole-of-government circular or sustainable procurement policy to support markets for recycled materials. While many submissions supported regulatory intervention, views were mixed on whether the EPA should mandate such a policy or extend requirements to businesses.

Consultation feedback highlighted that there are some efforts already being made to embed sustainable procurement practices in South Australia, particularly within some state government agencies and councils, and that doing so while addressing other procurement priorities can be complex. Therefore, at this stage, the EPA does not intend to mandate circular procurement requirements under the W2R EPP.

The EPA notes that GISA has led the development of South Australia's Waste Strategy 2025-2030, which includes specific actions to develop whole-of-government environmentally sustainable procurement practices together with local government, business, and industry. These efforts aim to strengthen market demand for recycled content and are being undertaken in partnership with the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Local Government Association of South Australia.

4.10 Prohibited landfill waste

The discussion paper proposed extending landfill bans to a range of materials including aggregated organics, clothing textiles, batteries (single-use alkaline batteries, button cell batteries, and lithium-ion batteries), e-waste, wind turbine blades, mattresses, and child car seats. Detailed feedback in relation to each of these is provided in the following subsections of this report. However, there was common feedback received in relation to all landfill bans.

Many stakeholders supported expanding landfill prohibitions as a way to maximise resource recovery, reduce environmental harm, and stimulate growth in the recycling and remanufacturing sectors. Submissions also emphasised the importance of a prioritised approach, guided by assessments of environmental impact, recovery potential, market readiness, and infrastructure capacity.

Submissions consistently highlighted that adequate recycling infrastructure is required to avoid unintended consequences, such as illegal dumping, high resource recovery costs, stockpiling and contamination of recovered resources. Development of new infrastructure should be supported through appropriate lead times before the commencement of any ban, nationally aligned product stewardship schemes, the provision of grants and funding and support in planning and development processes, and clear regulatory guidance and reporting. Clear, nationally aligned regulatory guidance and education programs were consistently noted as a necessary part of implementing landfill bans. These factors will be taken into consideration in the development and implementation of any landfill bans.

4.10.1 Prohibited landfill waste: Aggregated organics

The discussion paper proposes that all organic matter aggregated for recycling be prohibited from disposal to landfill. Thirty-five (35) responses were received.

Stakeholder positions on the ban of aggregated organic matter disposal to landfill

Most stakeholders (75%) expressed clear support for prohibiting the disposal of aggregated organic matter to landfill. The proposed ban was widely supported for maximising resource recovery, reducing landfill dependency, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, and advancing circular economy objectives. Many stakeholders regarded such a measure as a logical extension to proposed source separation requirements and food organics diversion initiatives. Several submissions emphasised that once organic materials have been purposefully aggregated for recycling, sending them to landfill should no longer be considered an acceptable outcome.

However, submissions emphasised that any ban must be implemented only where viable organics processing options are locally available (especially in regional and remote areas). Adequate lead times before commencement of any ban are necessary to allow businesses to adapt, implement necessary operational changes, and invest in new infrastructure. Appropriate time frames may vary based on existing infrastructure and likely volumes in different geographic areas, as well as planning and development time frames.

Flexibility in the implementation of a ban was also seen as important to manage contaminated or exceptional loads to ensure the quality of organics product is not compromised. This could be supported by establishing clear contamination thresholds and enforcement mechanisms.

Stakeholders also encouraged the EPA and relevant agencies to work collaboratively with the organics processing sector, councils, and C&I generators to ensure a practical and effective rollout.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges strong stakeholder support for prohibiting the disposal of organic matter, which has been aggregated for recycling, to landfill in South Australia, particularly within the commercial and industrial sector. This is consistent with broader circular economy and emissions reduction goals.

The EPA supports a measured, phased approach, recognising the need to ensure adequate processing capacity is in place before any regulatory ban is implemented. Any ban introduced through the W2R EPP will include appropriate lead-in times with consideration of geographic processing capacities.

The EPA will continue working closely with Green Industries SA, industry, local government, and other partners to assess capacity, support infrastructure development, and plan for a sustainable transition away from landfill disposal of aggregated organic matter.

4.10.2 Prohibited landfill waste: Clothing textiles

Feedback was sought from stakeholders on the need to ban clothing textiles from disposal to landfill. Thirty-seven (37) responses were received. Stakeholder views on banning unwearable textiles from landfill are divided and nuanced (see **Figure 31**).

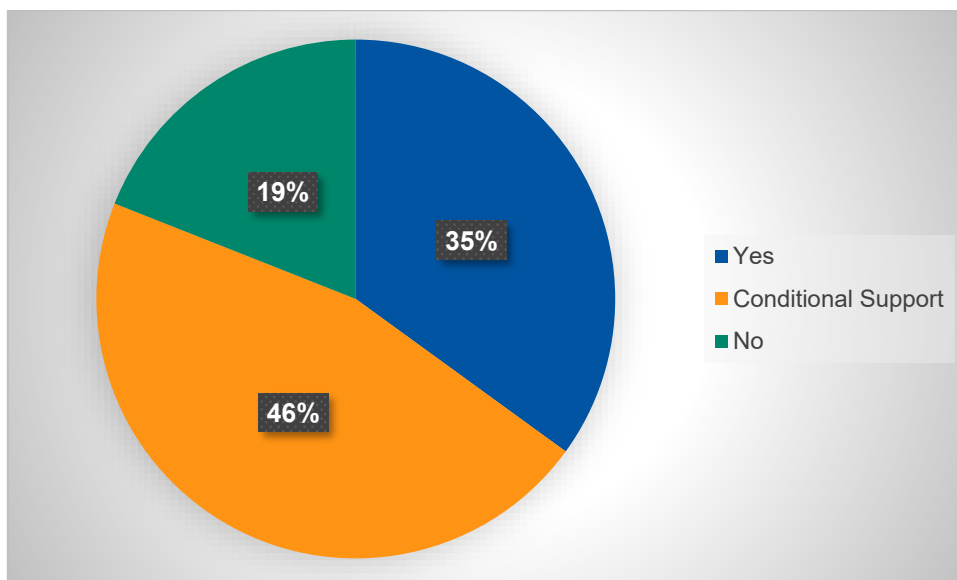


Figure 31 Question 1: Should unwearable clothing textiles be prohibited (banned) from disposal to landfill in SA?

While the majority of stakeholders (85%) agreed that bans could stimulate investment in recycling infrastructure, encourage innovation in textile processing technologies, and contribute to local job creation, the overwhelming consensus (80% of submissions) was that South Australia currently has very limited to no significant local capacity for textile recycling and reprocessing. Existing recycling infrastructure was seen as minimal and primarily involved collection schemes or take-back initiatives with limited throughput. Processing of textiles mostly occurred interstate or overseas, with little domestic market development for recycled fibres.

Some stakeholders noted emerging initiatives, including product stewardship schemes (e.g., Seamless Clothing Stewardship Scheme) and pilot programs, but these are in early stages and insufficient to handle large volumes. The need for investment in infrastructure, development of reliable markets, and expanded collection systems was widely emphasised. There was strong support for national coordination and the implementation of consistent policies to provide greater scale and investment certainty for industry stakeholders.

Risks if clothing textiles were prohibited from landfill

Most stakeholders (90%) highlighted the risks associated with implementing a premature ban on the disposal of unwearable clothing textiles to landfill. In particular for textiles, charities and community organisations may face added pressures due to a rise in inappropriate textile donations. Stakeholders also noted the current dependence on international markets for textile recycling, which are subject to volatility and shifting global policies.

Suggested time frames, to allow development of necessary infrastructure, markets, and collection systems, ranged from 3–10 years or beyond, with some advocating for post-2030 implementation or only after demonstrated system readiness.

EPA response and next steps

Noting the current infrastructure and end-market challenges for textile recycling, the EPA is not proposing to implement a landfill ban on unwearable clothing textiles at this time. The EPA notes that clothing textile waste has been identified as a problematic waste in South Australia's Waste Strategy 2025-2030 and a number of actions have been included to address the current challenges.

The EPA will continue to work collaboratively with GISA, industry, local government, and other stakeholders to explore viable policy options, infrastructure requirements, and market development opportunities.

Future decisions on any regulatory measures will be guided by the availability of processing capacity, the development of viable end markets, and the strategic directions set through the South Australian Waste Strategy.

4.10.3 Prohibited landfill waste: Batteries

The discussion paper proposed that all batteries that are covered by the B-cycle product stewardship scheme be included in the list of prohibited landfill waste. A total of fifty-eight (58) responses were received.

A majority of stakeholders (86%) supported a future landfill ban on single-use alkaline batteries, citing their recoverable metal content, contamination risks, and growing recycling opportunities through the national B-cycle scheme. However, this support was generally conditional on the availability of accessible drop-off, collection infrastructure, and consumer education.

While some stakeholders felt a ban could be implemented within 1–2 years, others recommended a longer lead-in period of 2–5 years to allow for broader B-cycle coverage, increased participation, and improved public awareness.

Stakeholders (92%) expressed particularly strong and urgent support for a landfill ban on button cell batteries, primarily due to the presence of mercury in some types and the significant human health and environmental risks associated with their disposal. There was broad agreement that button cell batteries should be prioritised for early prohibition, with some recommending immediate or near-term implementation. Submissions highlighted the availability of safe recycling options, the well-documented dangers of accidental ingestion and mercury leaching, and the alignment of such a ban with international efforts to restrict mercury-containing products.

Several stakeholders proposed additional battery types for landfill bans due to their recyclability and hazardous materials content, including Nickel-Cadmium (Ni-Cd), Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH), zinc-carbon and zinc-air batteries and other specialty batteries (e.g., watch, camera, and hearing-aid batteries). Many of these are already covered by the B-cycle scheme.

There was also support for aligning any future bans with the expanding scope of the B-cycle stewardship scheme, including improved guidance on which battery types can be accepted under the program.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for prohibiting the disposal of certain batteries to landfill. Subject to formal government approval, the EPA will progress the development of legislative measures to prohibit the disposal to landfill of batteries in alignment with the B-cycle product stewardship scheme coverage to commence in the next 1–3 years.

In support of any ban, the EPA will work with GISA to implement community education campaigns to support safe disposal practices.

The EPA will also continue working closely with national stakeholders, including the Battery Stewardship Council and relevant state and territory counterparts, to ensure South Australian regulations complement existing national initiatives.

4.10.4 Prohibited landfill waste: Lithium-ion batteries

Stakeholder feedback was sought on the need to provide clarity on lithium-ion batteries being banned from landfill. It was also proposed that this be extended to all kerbside collection bins, i.e., adding co-mingled recycling (yellow lid) bins and food organics and garden organics (FOGO green lid) bins (see Section 7.10.4 of the discussion paper for more information). A total of forty-six (46) responses were received.

State-level needs for safe recovery and recycling of lithium-ion batteries

Stakeholders broadly agreed that strengthened state-level support is critical to ensuring the safe collection, handling, and recycling of lithium-ion batteries, which pose fire, chemical, and health risks if improperly disposed. Key needs identified include:

1. improved collection infrastructure with clear guidance and accessible drop-off points, including in regional and remote areas
2. enhanced safety protocols and training for waste collection workers, transfer stations, and recyclers to manage fire and chemical hazards
3. investment in local or regional processing facilities to reduce transport risks and costs associated with exporting hazardous batteries for recycling
4. coordination between government agencies, industry, and emergency services to develop incident response plans and regulatory frameworks
5. public education campaigns to raise awareness of proper battery disposal and the risks of incorrect handling.

Several stakeholders noted existing gaps in infrastructure and resourcing that could hinder effective recovery and recycling without further government intervention.

Extending the prohibition to all kerbside bins

There was strong support (96%) for extending the current landfill disposal prohibition on lithium-ion batteries from general waste bins to all kerbside collection bins, including co-mingled recycling and organic waste bins. Stakeholders highlighted:

1. Batteries can enter various waste streams, not just general waste, risking fires and contamination.
2. Extending the prohibition would reduce contamination and improve safety across all collection systems.

3. Clear communication and labelling would be necessary to ensure community compliance.

A few stakeholders raised practical challenges about enforcing such a ban, particularly in co-mingled streams, and stressed the importance of supportive infrastructure.

National versus state-based product stewardship schemes

Most stakeholders agreed that the current national product stewardship scheme (Battery Stewardship Scheme/B-cycle) covers the majority of lithium-ion battery types used in consumer and commercial products. However, some noted gaps, including certain specialised or industrial lithium-ion batteries that are not yet included, as well as exclusions of electronic medical devices and vaping products, which pose biohazard risks and require different management approaches. Additionally, emerging battery chemistries and new applications may not yet be addressed by existing national programs. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of ongoing review to ensure stewardship schemes remain comprehensive and keep pace with evolving battery technologies.

Stakeholder opinions were mixed, but generally supportive of establishing a state-based product stewardship scheme for lithium-ion batteries. Supporters argued that a state scheme could accelerate local infrastructure investment and provide tailored solutions to regional challenges. They also viewed it as a safety net in case national schemes prove inadequate or slow to develop, positioning South Australia as a leader in battery waste management through proactive action.

Conversely, opponents and cautious stakeholders raised concerns that a state-based scheme could lead to duplication and increased regulatory complexity. They emphasised the importance of national consistency for effective industry engagement and clear messaging to consumers.

There was broad agreement that any state-level initiatives should complement, rather than conflict with, national efforts and be carefully coordinated to avoid fragmentation and inefficiency. Some suggested monitoring developments in other jurisdictions (e.g., NSW) before finalising South Australia's approach, to leverage lessons learned and ensure compatibility.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA recognises the importance of safe recovery and recycling pathways for lithium-ion batteries. While the disposal of lithium-ion batteries to landfill is currently prohibited in South Australia due to their associated hazards, it is clear that there is a need to provide more explicit clarification of this policy position as stakeholders have identified ongoing challenges.

The EPA will continue to engage with industry, government agencies, community groups, and state and national regulators. Key focus areas will include assessing the feasibility of extending disposal prohibitions to all kerbside collection bins to reduce fire and contamination risks, identifying infrastructure and funding needs to support effective collection and recycling statewide, and collaborating on public education to improve disposal practices.

Given the evolving nature of battery technologies and stewardship models, the EPA will work with GISA to further explore a state-based product stewardship framework for lithium-ion batteries, in alignment with action being taken in other jurisdictions such as NSW. This framework would complement national schemes as well as accommodate emerging battery types not yet covered nationally. The EPA views this stewardship framework as a cautious, but necessary, step to enhance the safety, sustainability, and circularity of lithium-ion battery management, aiming to protect both the environment and public health.

4.10.5 Prohibited landfill waste: E-waste

The discussion paper proposed including small solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on the South Australian list of prohibited landfill waste in order to ensure that these items are recovered for recycling and not sent to landfill (see Section 7.10.5 of the discussion paper for more information). A total of forty-three (43) responses were received.

Stakeholders generally supported expanding the landfill disposal ban to cover a broader range of e-waste items beyond those currently regulated. Feedback also demonstrated the need to further clarify what items are covered by the existing landfill ban on 'electrical or electronic equipment' to avoid confusion among consumers and waste handlers.

Stakeholder views on including small solar PV systems within the e-waste definition were mixed, but generally supportive. Many stakeholders (88%) advocated for the inclusion of small-scale systems, such as rooftop panels and off-grid units, highlighting the presence of hazardous materials like heavy metals and the growing volume of PV waste as installations reach end-of-life. Inclusion was viewed as a valuable opportunity to improve end-of-life management and promote resource recovery, particularly given the widespread adoption of solar panels in residential and commercial settings.

However, some stakeholders expressed caution, noting that solar PV systems may require distinct handling and recycling processes due to their size, material composition, and integration with building infrastructure. These differences may not be adequately addressed under existing e-waste frameworks. A few submissions opposed inclusion altogether, citing concerns about regulatory complexity, overlap with other waste management systems, and the current limitations of the recycling market to effectively process PV waste.

Overall, there was broad recognition of the need for a clear and practical strategy for managing solar PV waste. While opinions varied on the best regulatory mechanism, most stakeholders agreed that any approach should promote recovery of valuable materials and safe disposal where recovery is not possible.

Stakeholders strongly supported mandatory EPR schemes for solar PV systems to fund collection and recycling infrastructure. Producers and importers were seen as key to driving responsible end-of-life management and supporting circular economy outcomes.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for expanding the current prohibition on the disposal of e-waste to landfill in South Australia, and the need to further clarify electrical items included under the existing ban.

The EPA will further consider including additional e-waste items such as solar PV systems as prohibited waste to landfill under the W2R EPP, with careful consideration of collection and processing infrastructure and progress of a national product stewardship scheme for solar PV systems.

The EPA will work with the Department for Energy and Mining, as the lead regulator for large-scale solar, to consider policy mechanisms for addressing circular economy in the energy sector.

The EPA will work with GISA regarding the need for targeted education initiatives to improve community and business understanding of e-waste obligations and available services.

4.10.6 Prohibited landfill waste: Wind turbine blades

Stakeholder feedback was sought on whether wind turbine blades should be banned from disposal to landfill in South Australia (see Section 7.10.6 of the discussion paper for more information). A total of thirty-eight (38) responses were received from a broad range of stakeholders.

Stakeholder submissions showed majority in-principle support (68%) for prohibiting the disposal of wind turbine blades to landfill in South Australia. Stakeholders noted the size and material complexity of the blades, their growing volume due to ageing infrastructure, and alignment with South Australia's circular economy and renewable energy objectives. Stakeholders emphasised the need for any landfill prohibition to be feasible, environmentally effective, and implemented in a safe and well-managed manner.

Submissions highlighted that while turbine blades are primarily composed of complex composite materials such as fibreglass and epoxy resins, there is growing interest in emerging recycling methods, including mechanical grinding, pyrolysis, and cement co-processing, that could enable recovery of materials and reduce waste. Stakeholders expressed concern that allowing renewable energy infrastructure to end up in landfill could undermine public confidence in the environmental integrity of the sector.

Many stakeholders saw the proposed ban as a valuable opportunity to stimulate innovation in composite material recycling, drive circular design practices in the wind energy sector, and encourage the development of local processing industries. Several submissions referenced international examples where turbine blades have been successfully reused or repurposed for applications such as construction materials, bridges, or insulation. These were seen as models that South Australia could adapt to position itself as a leader in this emerging field.

Stakeholders identified a number of risks and challenges for recycling of wind turbine blades, as follows:

1. limited availability of current recycling infrastructure and technologies capable of processing composite blade materials
2. high transportation costs associated with moving large and heavy turbine blades
3. a lack of established end-use markets for recovered materials.

Timing and implementation considerations

Most stakeholders supported a phased or delayed implementation of a landfill prohibition, recommending alignment with the projected decommissioning schedule of existing wind farms. A lead time of 3–5 years was commonly proposed to allow sufficient time for the development of infrastructure, markets, and operational readiness. Others called for the rollout of pilot projects, clear regulatory guidance, and the use of incentives to encourage industry preparedness before any ban becomes mandatory.

To support successful implementation, stakeholders proposed several complementary actions:

- i. government investment in research and development for composite recycling technologies
- ii. co-design of solutions in partnership with the wind energy sector
- iii. integration of wind turbine blade recovery into future product stewardship or EPR schemes
- iv. provision of planning and education support for regional councils and waste facility operators that may receive decommissioned blades.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the growing importance of addressing the end-of-life management of wind turbine blades, particularly as South Australia continues to transition towards a renewable energy future.

The EPA recognises that significant groundwork is required to support the effective resource recovery of wind turbine blades before a landfill ban can be considered. The EPA will continue to work with industry and government stakeholders to consider whether a landfill ban may be appropriate in the longer term.

In particular, the EPA will work with the Department for Energy and Mining, as the lead regulator of wind farms, to consider policy mechanisms for supporting circular economy principles in the energy sector

4.10.7 Prohibited landfill waste: Mattresses

Stakeholder feedback was sought on whether mattresses should be banned from disposal to landfill in South Australia and what the requirement for minimum percentage of material recovery should be (see Section 7.10.7 of the discussion paper for more information). A total of fifty-eight (58) responses were received.

A strong majority of submissions (84%) supported the principle of a landfill ban, citing several key reasons. These include: the substantial volume and bulk of mattresses, which limit efficient use of landfill space; the recoverability of valuable materials such as steel, timber, and foam; and the environmental risks associated with improper disposal, particularly illegal dumping.

Concerns were raised about the need for sufficient mattress processing capacity across the state, equitable access to disposal and recycling options in regional and remote areas, and the establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms to support collection and recovery. Several stakeholders noted that metropolitan areas may be better positioned for early implementation, while regional and remote communities could require longer lead times and tailored support to achieve compliance.

Many cautioned that, without adequate systems for collection, transport, and processing, a ban could lead to an increase in illegal dumping. Cost burdens were another common concern, particularly for local councils and community members in areas where recycling logistics are more complex and expensive. Several stakeholders responded that a uniform approach could disproportionately impact rural communities or low-income households. To mitigate these risks, numerous submissions called for a carefully planned transition period, supported by state-level coordination, targeted funding, and comprehensive public education.

Minimum resource recovery requirements

There was broad stakeholder support for establishing a minimum resource recovery threshold for mattress recycling, with the aim of promoting consistent and meaningful environmental outcomes and discouraging poor practices such as shredding without material separation. Suggested recovery rates generally ranged from 75% to 90%, with some submissions recommending alignment with interstate schemes or existing industry best practice benchmarks. However, some cautioned that setting targets too high at the outset could discourage participation or unfairly disadvantage operators still in the process of building capacity.

Stakeholders emphasised that targets should be developed in consultation with accredited recyclers and the Australian Bedding Stewardship Council (ABSC) and designed to encourage innovation and continuous improvement, with periodic review to reflect advancements in recycling technologies.

Proposed time frames

Few stakeholders proposed a specific start date for a potential ban. Those that did generally recommended a lead time of 2–5 years, depending on investment in infrastructure and availability of government support. The need for a phased approach, starting with metropolitan or high-volume-generating areas, was a common theme.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA will continue to explore the feasibility and scope of a landfill ban on mattresses, including consideration of regional infrastructure, affordability, end markets and resource recovery thresholds. This will be considered in consultation with industry, local government, manufacturers, recyclers, and product stewardship organisations.

In particular, scope and implementation would seek to align with, and be developed in consultation with, mattress product stewardship schemes, such as that implemented by the ABSC.

Any future landfill prohibition will be subject to further feasibility assessment, stakeholder input, appropriate implementation time frames and the provision of education and support programs.

4.10.8 Prohibited landfill waste: Child car seats

A total of forty-six (46) responses were received in relation to the proposed landfill prohibition on child car seats. Stakeholder submissions reflected mixed views. While many recognised the potential environmental benefits and the opportunity to divert valuable materials from landfill, there were also significant concerns regarding infrastructure readiness, collection logistics, and the practical challenges of implementing such a ban.

Several stakeholders (72%) expressed in-principle support for prohibiting the disposal of child car seats to landfill, highlighting the significant volume of recoverable and reusable materials, such as plastics, metals, and fabrics, that could be diverted from landfill. Stakeholders emphasised, however, that successful implementation would depend on the establishment of a suitable product stewardship or take-back scheme to ensure responsible and efficient recovery of these items.

A landfill ban was seen as a potential driver of industry innovation, particularly in promoting the design of car seats for easier disassembly and recyclability. This could incentivise manufacturers to adopt more sustainable product designs and contribute to the development of circular product systems.

There was also support for the expansion of existing voluntary take-back initiatives, such as SeatCare, into a formal product stewardship framework. Many stakeholders saw this as an effective mechanism to facilitate recovery, reduce waste, and ensure shared responsibility across the supply chain.

Timing and implementation considerations

A key issue identified was the current lack of infrastructure in South Australia to support the collection, dismantling, and recycling of car seats, particularly in regional and remote areas. Concerns were also raised about cost allocation, with uncertainty about whether local councils, manufacturers, or consumers would bear the financial burden of collection and processing. Additionally, stakeholders noted that health and safety requirements, such as expiry dates and strict safety standards, limit the potential for reuse, thereby complicating second-hand markets and disposal pathways.

Stakeholders who supported a future landfill ban on child car seats generally recommended a multi-year lead-in period, with most suggesting a time frame of 3–5 years. This transitional period was considered

necessary to establish effective recovery and recycling systems, allow manufacturers and retailers to adjust to new requirements, and ensure consistent statewide communication and public education on the changes.

Many stakeholders emphasised that any prohibition should be contingent on the introduction of a formal product stewardship scheme in partnership with retailers and manufacturers to establish collection points. Others proposed a staged approach, beginning in metropolitan areas where infrastructure and access are more advanced, before expanding to regional and remote communities.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA notes that while resource recovery of child car seats offers significant potential benefits, current infrastructure is insufficient to support this. A landfill ban may be considered in the longer term, contingent on the development and availability of product stewardship schemes to facilitate collection and recovery.

It is noted that child car seats are on the Federal Environment Minister's Product Stewardship Priority List, with initiatives underway through the SeatCare scheme, which is a voluntary, industry-led program supported by grant funding from the National Product Stewardship Investment Fund.

4.10.9 Prohibited landfill waste: What else

The discussion paper invited stakeholder feedback on whether additional priority products or materials should be considered for future landfill prohibition in South Australia (see Section 7.10.9 of discussion paper). A total of thirty-six (36) responses were received, offering a diverse range of suggestions informed by environmental, economic, and practical considerations, and largely aligned with circular economy objectives.

Suggested priority products and materials

1. **Tyres:** Tyres were frequently mentioned due to their long decomposition time and fire risk in landfills. Several stakeholders noted existing recovery pathways and proposed strengthening regulations to ensure tyres are consistently diverted from landfill. Others suggested aligning with national product stewardship efforts. It is noted that whole tyres are already banned from landfill disposal in South Australia.
2. **Composite furniture and mattresses:** Several submissions reinforced the need to prohibit large, bulky composite items such as upholstered furniture and mattresses, highlighting landfill space concerns and opportunities for increased recovery of timber, metal, and foam components.
3. **Metals and soils:** Metals and soils were addressed, with proposals for mandatory metal recovery prior to disposal and improved management of contaminated soils, particularly in the context of large infrastructure developments. It is noted that aggregated metals are already banned from landfill.
4. **Non-contaminated medical waste:** Some stakeholders proposed prohibiting the disposal of non-contaminated medical waste to landfill, citing the need to reduce risks of chemical contamination within landfills and alternative resource recovery pathways. They emphasised the importance of effective segregation and treatment systems for medical waste to support this.
5. **Construction and demolition waste:** Construction and demolition (C&D) waste, particularly recyclable materials like timber, bricks, metals, and cement, was highlighted as a candidate for bans to increase recovery rates.

Time frames and implementation considerations

Stakeholders generally recommended phased implementation time frames, ranging from 3–10 years depending on product type, to allow for system development, market readiness, and community education. Some materials were considered suitable for earlier bans due to the existence of some collection and processing systems, while more complex materials would require longer lead times.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the diverse stakeholder suggestions regarding additional priority products or materials for potential landfill prohibition. Any new prohibitions will require further consultation and system analysis to ensure they are practical, cost-effective, and supported by adequate collection, processing, and end-market systems.

In collaboration with GISA and relevant government partners, the EPA will continue to monitor national policy developments and stewardship initiatives to ensure alignment and shared responsibility in waste management.

It is noted that many of the items suggested, such as tyres, metals, soils and construction and demolition waste, are already subject to resource recovery requirements and landfill bans under the W2R EPP. The EPA will consider whether amendment or expansion of these requirements is appropriate to further support resource recovery.

All decisions will be guided by waste data, material flow analysis, and stakeholder engagement, with a commitment to a staged and evidence-based approach that aligns with South Australia's Waste Strategy and circular economy objectives.

Key area 5: Protecting the environment and human health from waste pollution

4.11 Unlawful disposal of waste

The EPA sought feedback on whether clause 10(1)(f) of the W2R EPP should be removed, which effectively allows waste to be disposed of lawfully to private land without a licence, provided it does not result in environmental harm defined under clause 10(3) (see Section 7.11 of the discussion paper). Thirty-seven (37) submissions were received.

Respondents expressed varied views on the appropriateness of allowing waste disposal without a licence, either on one's own land or with the landowner's consent. Submissions also explored which waste types may be suitable or unsuitable for such disposal and questioned the continued relevance of unlicensed disposal in light of current standards, such as the Waste Derived Fill (WDF) Standard.

Circumstances for disposal to one's own land without a licence

Many stakeholders (61%), particularly local councils, licensees, and community members in regional areas, acknowledged that limited, low-risk waste disposal on one's own land may be appropriate under specific and controlled circumstances, particularly for small-scale rural or farming operations. Examples cited include the disposal of inert materials such as natural soils, rocks, and uncontaminated fill for land improvement or minor landscaping purposes. Similarly, the use of agricultural wastes, such as manures or organic matter, for legitimate farming activities was seen as acceptable. Some stakeholders also noted that domestic waste generated on-site, such as green waste or untreated timber, could be suitably managed through self-disposal where there is no risk of environmental harm and where appropriate safeguards, such as buffer distances and burial depth, are applied.

However, several respondents stressed that even where such self-disposal may be considered appropriate, it must not result in cumulative environmental impacts or become a mechanism for avoiding regulatory oversight. The importance of clear boundaries and consistent enforcement to prevent misuse of any exemption provisions was a recurring theme in submissions.

Submissions highlighted that the absence of clear guidance or effective enforcement may lead to unregulated and illegal dumping, resulting in risks of groundwater contamination, the generation of odours, attraction of pests, and the potential introduction of harmful substances into soil or waterways.

Disposal to land with landowner permission and without licence

Most submissions (72%) opposed unlicensed waste disposal with landowner consent, unless strictly limited to non-harmful materials such as compost, clean fill, or uncontaminated soil. Stakeholders, particularly licensees and local councils, raised strong concerns about the environmental risks and potential for third-party waste transactions that may evade regulatory oversight.

Many submissions argued that disposal with landowner consent should only be permitted under tightly defined conditions, supported by clear controls and ongoing monitoring. Suggested safeguards include limiting disposal to inert, non-hazardous, and clearly defined materials, requiring a demonstrable beneficial use (e.g., legitimate fill) supported by documentation, and ensuring the receiving landholder is responsible for compliance and site management.

Concerns were also raised about the potential misuse of landowner-approved disposal to disguise illegal dumping, with stakeholders highlighting enforcement and monitoring challenges on private land.

Types of waste appropriate for disposal to one's own land

There was a strong consensus that only organic wastes such as vegetation, garden clippings, untreated wood, and animal manures should be considered for unlicensed disposal on one's own land due to their natural breakdown and soil benefits. The rationale is that these materials are biodegradable or inert, pose minimal risk to human health and the environment, and can contribute positively to soil health and land rehabilitation. Furthermore, their use aligns with circular economy principles by promoting reuse and reducing dependence on landfill disposal.

There was broad agreement that disposal of the following waste types on one's own land without a licence should never be allowed due to risks:

- hazardous and toxic chemicals
- asbestos, engineered stone (silica), and other carcinogens
- treated timber, plastics, tyres, and persistent materials that do not degrade
- batteries, solar panels, and electronic waste
- radioactive materials
- contaminated soil or waste that contains heavy metals
- human and animal remains (unless specifically licensed for burial).

Environment and circular economy NGOs, academia, and industry groups particularly emphasised long-term contamination, risks to groundwater, and public health concerns. Improper disposal can lead to long-term contamination of soil and groundwater. Such wastes require specialised treatment and disposal facilities to mitigate risks.

Relevance of existing standards and necessity of licensing

The majority of stakeholders, including licensees, councils, and consultants, expressed strong agreement that unlicensed sites should not receive or dispose of waste to land without it serving an immediate beneficial purpose (such as landscaping), even when materials meet quality standards such as the WDF Standard.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the diverse stakeholder views on waste disposal to land without a licence, whether on one's own land or with landowner permission. We recognise that, under specific low-risk conditions, such as limited disposal of inert or agricultural materials on private property, this may be appropriate if conducted with proper environmental safeguards.

The EPA will continue to explore amendments to clause 10 of the W2R EPP to ensure that unlicensed disposal does not occur where there is potential for environmental harm or to undermine circular economy principles, particularly when waste is disposed of on land not owned by the generator or involves hazardous or unknown materials. Such practices pose risks to soil, groundwater, and public health, and may bypass regulatory oversight.

4.12 Contaminants and chemicals of concern

Stakeholder feedback was sought on whether the W2R EPP should be amended to address chemicals of concern as they are added to national or international agreements, such as the Stockholm Convention or the National Strategy for the Management of Scheduled Waste (refer to Section 7.12 of the discussion paper for more information). A total of forty-six (46) responses were received from a broad range of stakeholders.

Incorporation of PFAS National Environment Management Plan aspects into the W2R EPP

Many stakeholders (80%) expressed support for explicitly referencing or integrating key aspects of the PFAS NEMP into the W2R EPP. The following points were commonly highlighted:

1. **Consistency and clarity:** Including PFAS NEMP provisions in the W2R EPP would enhance regulatory clarity and consistency for industry, regulators, and the community regarding PFAS (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances) management requirements in South Australia.
2. **Improved risk management:** Incorporation would support improved risk-based management of PFAS contamination, reflecting best practice approaches nationally.
3. **Regulatory alignment:** Explicit reference could facilitate alignment with national frameworks, reduce duplication, and streamline compliance expectations.
4. **Stakeholder confidence:** Clear policy articulation within the W2R EPP was seen as important for community confidence, particularly at sensitive sites such as defence lands, airports, and industrial areas.

Some submissions noted that care should be taken to avoid overly prescriptive language in the W2R EPP that might reduce flexibility to adapt to evolving scientific knowledge and site-specific conditions.

Incorporation of emerging chemicals in the W2R EPP

Stakeholders generally supported the W2R EPP adopting a flexible and adaptive approach that allows for the incorporation of emerging chemicals as they are identified in relevant national and international frameworks. Examples cited include the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the National Strategy for the Management of Scheduled Wastes, and other pertinent environmental and chemical management instruments.

Key reasons for this approach include the ability to respond promptly to new environmental risks, ensuring South Australia can act proactively without unnecessary regulatory delays. Additionally, harmonising with national and international agreements was seen as essential to maintaining regulatory consistency and fostering cooperation across jurisdictions. The precautionary principle was also highlighted, with early incorporation of emerging contaminants viewed as critical to protecting human health and ecosystems.

Several submissions recommended that the W2R EPP retain sufficient flexibility to assess emerging chemicals individually, taking into account local conditions, scientific evidence, and risk assessments before formal inclusion

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the valuable input from stakeholders regarding the incorporation of aspects of the PFAS National Environment Management Plan (NEMP) into the W2R EPP. The EPA intends to incorporate appropriate references to the PFAS NEMP into the W2R EPP. This will help ensure that regulatory controls align with best practice management and effectively address risks associated with PFAS contamination in waste streams.

Furthermore, the EPA considers it important to maintain flexibility within the W2R EPP to incorporate emerging substances of concern as they are added to national or international agreements, such as the Stockholm Convention or the National Strategy for the Management of Scheduled Waste, while allowing for consideration of local factors in applying regulatory requirements. This flexible approach supports timely and adaptive regulatory responses in line with evolving scientific knowledge and international commitments, thereby promoting the ongoing protection of human health and the environment.

4.13 Greenhouse gas emissions from landfill

Feedback was sought on the feasibility of providing further reductions in licence fees or reduction or rebate of the solid waste levy for waste depots that capture emissions produced in landfill (refer to Section 7.13 of the discussion paper for more information).

A total of twenty-four (24) responses were received and they provided views on the adequacy of current incentives for landfill gas (LFG) capture, the effectiveness of the reduced licence fee, and potential alternative mechanisms such as waste levy reductions or rebates. Feedback generally acknowledged the environmental benefits of LFG capture, while also highlighting financial, regulatory, and practical barriers that may limit uptake or delay investment in gas capture infrastructure.

Sufficiency of the current reduced licence fee as an incentive

Stakeholders generally supported (85%) the intent of incentivising LFG capture. However, industry stakeholders and operators indicated that the fee reduction offers only modest financial benefit, especially when considered against the high capital and operating costs associated with LFG infrastructure, noting that it is unlikely to drive new investment without additional support measures. Others observed that for large or well-established landfill operations, the discounted licence fee has minimal influence on overall business decisions.

Stakeholders also recognised the pivotal role of the Australian Government's Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme as the primary driver for LFG capture. The scheme's success was widely acknowledged, with many emphasising that any local incentives should be carefully designed to complement the ACCU Scheme, avoiding duplication or undermining of existing federal efforts.

Other disincentives to gas capture and final capping

Many stakeholders highlighted a range of barriers that act as disincentives to the timely capture of LFG. These include the high upfront capital costs and extended return on investment periods associated with gas capture infrastructure, as well as regulatory uncertainty surrounding capping requirements and energy recovery obligations. Declining gas yields over time, particularly at smaller or ageing sites, were noted as reducing the commercial viability of investment. Additionally, the complexity of accessing carbon credits and other market-based incentives, along with operational challenges in regional areas, such as limited availability of contractors and specialised equipment, were cited as further obstacles to implementation.

Support for a waste levy rebate or reduction

Many stakeholders expressed strong support for using waste-levy-based incentives, such as rebates or reductions, to stimulate investment in LFG capture and final capping. A targeted approach was widely preferred, with submissions emphasising that incentives should be performance-based or tiered to reward active and verifiable gas capture, rather than applied as a flat rate.

Stakeholders considered levy reductions or rebates to be more meaningful and impactful than the current licence fee discount, particularly when they directly offset capital or operational costs associated with LFG infrastructure. Suggestions for how such incentives could be structured include: linking rebates to measurable outcomes, such as the volume of methane captured; limiting eligibility to landfills with compliant environmental performance and operational gas capture systems; and offering time-limited incentives aligned with infrastructure upgrades or capping milestones.

Additional proposals include tiered rebate models based on site-specific factors like size, location, or energy recovery use and combining financial incentives with technical or planning support, especially for regional councils and operators. Many submissions stressed the importance of robust verification, recommending that incentives be tied to proven performance outcomes to uphold environmental integrity.

While broadly supportive, some stakeholders urged caution to avoid unintended consequences, such as delaying site closure or encouraging extended landfill operations. To promote accountability and consistency, many respondents called for clear eligibility criteria, transparent assessment processes, and a structured application framework to govern any future rebate scheme.

Some stakeholders warned that over-reliance on financial incentives might suppress innovation. Instead, they recommended reflecting the full environmental costs of landfill disposal in gate fees to drive market-based innovation and improved waste practices.

Many industry stakeholders, including licensees and peak bodies, called for mandatory gas capture requirements as part of landfill licensing. They emphasised the need for consistent enforcement of regulatory standards by the EPA, viewing LFG capture as best practice. However, it is noted that this would limit licensees' ability to access the ACCU Scheme for LFG capture due to additionality requirements.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the range of views provided by stakeholders on the adequacy of current incentives for landfill gas capture and the barriers that may be limiting broader uptake of LFG infrastructure. The EPA will further consider these issues in consultation with stakeholders in future.

It is noted that this may not form part of amendments to the W2R EPP but may form part of broader climate change mitigation requirements under a future Climate Change EPP (currently under development) or future review of the EPA's landfill guidelines.

The EPA notes that the ACCU Scheme is currently the primary driver for LFG capture. Any changes to EPA policy or regulation in relation to LFG capture will aim to align with and support the incentives provided for LFG capture by the ACCU Scheme. It is noted that the landfill gas methodology for the ACCU Scheme is currently under review by the Australian Government.

4.14 Medical waste

Stakeholder feedback was sought on whether clauses 16, 17 and 18 of the W2R EPP require updating or amending in order to ensure that medical wastes are managed and disposed of safely and that human health is protected (see Section 7.14 of the discussion paper for more information). Nineteen (19) responses were received.

Several stakeholders, including licensees and waste consultants, expressed mixed views on the current Division 2 clauses relating to medical waste management. While some reported no significant issues, others suggested that medical waste management requirements of the W2R EPP could be strengthened by addressing the following:

1. **Clarification of responsibilities:** Updated guidelines would assist in clarifying responsibilities for various parties involved in medical waste management, including requirements for documentation, tracking, and approved treatment options.
2. **Alignment with national standards:** Division 2 clauses could be reviewed to ensure alignment with national definitions and frameworks to reduce confusion, support consistent implementation, and lessen regulatory burden.
3. **Medical sharps:** Increased regulation and education on proper medical sharps disposal would reduce risks posed to waste and resource recovery workers. It was recommended that the current offence to dispose of medical sharps to council kerbside waste collection services under clause 18 of the W2R EPP be expanded to include other types of bins.
4. **Pharmaceutical waste:** The W2R EPP could be expanded to address pharmaceuticals and expired medications, which are often disposed of to landfill, but should, instead, be returned to pharmacies for disposal.

Additional matters suggested for consideration

Several submissions highlighted challenges associated with high volumes of healthcare-generated plastic waste. Waste and resource recovery consultants recommended improved source separation and metal recovery within medical waste streams. Environmental NGOs pointed to initiatives such as the Princess Alexandra Hospital's Green Hospital program as best-practice models and encouraged Industry Action Plans to leverage opportunities for waste reduction and recovery in health care.

One submission noted that accessibility and affordability barriers to repair and servicing often lead to unnecessary disposal of medical devices and assistive technologies and supported implementation of the Productivity Commission's Right to Repair recommendations as a means to reduce waste.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA is committed to reviewing Division 2 of the W2R EPP to ensure provisions remain current, effective, and continue to support the safe and environmentally responsible management of medical waste in South Australia.

In particular, the EPA will review provisions to support the safe management of medical waste such as medical sharps and pharmaceuticals and consider opportunities for greater regulatory alignment and guidance to support implementation.

It is noted that, due to the potential human health risks, management and handling of medical waste is complex, and any new regulatory requirements must be considered in consultation and partnership with health authorities.

Key area 6: Circular economy metrics, reporting and transparency

4.15 Circular economy metrics

Stakeholder feedback was sought on the additional metrics that would help measure the state's progress in the areas of waste avoidance, resource recovery and material flow (refer to Section 7.15 of the discussion paper for more information).

A total of forty (40) responses were received. Submissions reflected broad support for improved data collection and transparency, with many calling for more granular and targeted metrics to complement existing indicators.

Most stakeholders supported the development of additional, more nuanced metrics to better assess South Australia's systemic progress towards circular economy objectives, beyond waste generation and diversion rates. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of aligning metrics with South Australia's circular economy goals and using them to inform policy development, investment, and community engagement.

The following additional metrics were recommended by stakeholders:

1. **Waste avoidance metrics:** Submissions emphasised the importance of measuring waste avoidance at its source, proposing a range of indicators to capture progress. These include:
 - a. *Per capita waste generation (by sector):* Measuring total waste generation per person and by economic sector to assess avoidance efforts at both household and commercial levels.
 - b. *Consumption-based metrics:* Tracking upstream consumption of materials and products (e.g., packaging use and food-purchasing behaviour) to better identify avoidance opportunities.
 - c. *Avoided waste through behaviour change or design:* Estimating waste prevented through avoidance, redesign, reuse, and business model innovations (e.g., refillable systems and leasing models).
2. **Resource recovery metrics:** Submissions commonly called for disaggregated recovery data to better reflect the quality and destination of recovered materials, including:
 - a. *Material-specific recovery rates:* Disaggregated recovery data by material type (e.g., plastics, textiles, organics, and construction materials) to assess performance.
 - b. *Recovery quality indicators:* Measure not just quantity but quality of recovered materials, including contamination rates, end-market suitability, and reprocessing value.
 - c. *Carbon and energy savings:* Tracking emissions avoided or energy saved through recycling and composting compared with landfill disposal.
3. **Circular economy and material flow indicators:** Some stakeholders advocated for a shift toward metrics that reflect circular economy outcomes and whole-of-system performance. Suggestions include:
 - a. *Circularity rate:* Measures the proportion of materials reused or recycled back into the economy.
 - b. *Material productivity:* Tracks the value created per tonne of material used, as a way to monitor decoupling of resource use from economic growth.
 - c. *Product life span and durability:* Estimates product longevity or maintenance and repair rates.
 - d. *Residual waste destinations:* Clearer tracking of where residual waste ends up, including landfill, energy from waste, or interstate export.

4. Social, economic and behavioural indicators: The following complementary indicators were recommended to enhance material-focused metrics by capturing behaviour change, investment, and equity outcomes:

- a. *Community awareness and participation:* Tracking engagement in avoidance and recovery initiatives to assess shifts in public behaviour and program effectiveness.
- b. *Economic and employment outcomes:* Measuring job creation and economic value generated through resource recovery industries as indicators of sector growth and impact.
- c. *Equitable access to services:* Assessing access to waste and recovery services and infrastructure across urban, regional, and remote communities to ensure inclusive outcomes.
- d. *Investment in waste minimisation:* Public and private sector investment in technologies and programs that support long-term waste reduction.

Other circular economy metrics

The following additional indicators were proposed to support broader circular economy objectives:

1. **Fuel consumption tracking:** Measuring diesel and other fuel use in waste and resource recovery operations to assess associated environmental impacts.
2. **Scheme performance monitoring:** Regular evaluation of uptake and effectiveness of extended producer responsibility and container deposit schemes.
3. **Repair and reuse activities:** Metrics capturing both formal and informal initiatives, such as repair cafés and sharing libraries, to reflect community-led circular practices.
4. **Waste-to-energy and emissions:** Tracking waste-to-energy conversion rates alongside greenhouse gas reductions achieved through material recovery compared with virgin material use.
5. **Recycled content market demand:** Measuring the market uptake of recycled materials and the extent to which they displace virgin resource.

Challenges and considerations

Multiple submissions recognised the scale and complexity of establishing comprehensive metrics, noting the need for phased implementation and adequate support. Concern was raised about the potential for duplicated efforts and excessive regulatory burdens, calling for efficient data collection that balances value with cost. Some stakeholders stressed the importance of managing commercial-in-confidence data carefully to protect business interests while maintaining transparency.

It was suggested that effective data collection be supported by:

- **Standardised methodologies and definitions:** Supporting consistency and transparency in how metrics are calculated to enable year-on-year comparisons and national benchmarking.
- **Improved data sharing:** Expanded data sharing agreements (such as shared access systems for government, industry, and academia), use of digital tools to streamline reporting, and the development of public dashboards with up-to-date data to track key performance indicators over time.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges stakeholder support for the development of additional metrics to better track South Australia's progress in waste avoidance, resource recovery, and material flow.

It is noted that the annual Circular Economy Resource Recovery (CERR) report, prepared by GISA, already includes a broad range of metrics, including some of those suggested by submissions, and is progressively improved each year to include additional metrics. This includes tracking and reporting on the state's performance against waste strategy targets, i.e., reduction on per capita waste generation and landfill diversion by sector. The report also includes material flow analysis by key material types, economic value of recovered materials, and environmental benefits (greenhouse gas emissions, and energy and water emissions).

The South Australia Waste Strategy 2025-2030 also includes new circular economy targets and metrics, such as circularity rate, material footprint, material productivity, and material circularity, as well as kerbside bin contamination targets.

The EPA has a key role to play in relation to the gathering of data through regulatory measures, such as mass balance and waste levy reporting, and sharing of data with agencies like GISA to support development of the CERR report to support tracking against waste strategy targets and other reports aimed at understanding and enhancing the circular economy. In partnership with GISA, the EPA will continue to consider where further regulatory measures are necessary and appropriate to expand the provision of data (many of these are discussed in more detail in the following subsections).

The EPA remains committed to enhancing the state's ability to monitor and report on waste and resource flows, and to supporting continuous improvement in the evidence base that underpins policy and regulatory responses.

4.16 Waste depot reporting

Stakeholder responses were sought on the consultation questions on public reporting, mass balance data, and waste tracking proposals (refer to Section 7.16 of the discussion paper for more information).

A total of sixty-two (62) responses reflecting a broad interest in improving transparency and accountability across the waste and resource recovery sector were received from a wide range of stakeholders. While there was general support for greater public access to waste depot performance information, many stakeholders also raised important caveats regarding the practical, legal, and commercial implications of such measures.

Support for public reporting of waste depot information

Many stakeholders (90%) expressed support for requiring waste depots—particularly recovery, reprocessing, and disposal facilities—to publish performance-related information on a publicly accessible platform. This was viewed as a way to empower customers to make informed choices, drive better environmental outcomes, and foster competition based on performance. The information most commonly suggested for publication includes:

- i. tonnages of material received, recovered, processed, or disposed
- ii. recovery rates
- iii. end destinations and fates of recovered materials
- iv. waste acceptance criteria and operating hours

- v. environmental performance indicators (e.g., compliance history).

A number of submissions recommended that all classes of waste depots be included in this requirement to maintain a level playing field and prevent information gaps between different parts of the industry. Industry submissions emphasised practical reporting requirements and equitable treatment for all operators, including smaller businesses, to avoid compliance gaps and competitive disadvantages.

Reporting frequency and auditing

There were mixed views on the preferred reporting frequency. While some supported annual reporting, others, particularly licensees, consultants, and academia, advocated for more frequent intervals (e.g., quarterly) to enhance relevance and timeliness. Stakeholders commonly emphasised the need to balance the frequency of reporting against costs and operational feasibility.

Many stakeholders supported independent auditing of reported data to ensure integrity and credibility, although some flagged cost concerns, particularly for smaller operators, and noted that existing regulations already include penalties for false reporting. Some suggested audits be conducted annually by the EPA. Auditing could focus on high-risk or large facilities rather than all operators.

Concerns and limitations identified

Several stakeholders raised concerns about the feasibility of implementing public reporting, particularly in the following areas:

1. **Commercial sensitivity:** Stakeholders emphasised that disclosing certain operational data, such as customer identities, volumes, or destinations, could compromise commercial confidentiality. References were made to the confidentiality provisions under Section 121 of the EP Act.
2. **Data quality and consistency:** Stakeholders noted that ensuring accurate and comparable data across facilities would be challenging unless clear definitions and standardised reporting methods are adopted.
3. **EPA's capacity:** Concerns were raised regarding the EPA's ability to effectively receive, securely store, and analyse the large volumes of data generated. Stakeholders highlighted the need for investment in robust systems and additional resources to manage reporting requirements effectively.

To address these barriers, stakeholders proposed several solutions, including:

1. **Clear definitions:** The EPA should provide explicit guidance on what constitutes commercially sensitive information.
2. **Data aggregation and anonymisation:** Combining and anonymising data to protect individual business information.
3. **Penalties for false reporting:** Implementing strong sanctions to ensure data integrity.
4. **Industry engagement:** Ongoing consultation to balance transparency with commercial realities.
5. **Incentivising data sharing:** Encouraging participation through mechanisms such as traceability platforms.

EPA's role in publishing mass balance data on its website and frequency

Stakeholder views were mixed regarding the EPA's role in publishing mass balance reporting data on its website. Many supported publication of the data, emphasising the importance of transparency in building public trust and enhancing sector accountability. However, several stakeholders stressed the need to protect commercially sensitive information. Suggestions to mitigate this include publishing aggregated or delayed data, such as through annual summaries, rather than real-time or facility-specific figures. A balanced approach proposed by some was to make summarised or sector-level data publicly available, while sharing more detailed information confidentially with industry and regulators. For any public reporting of mass balance reporting, annual reporting was the most supported approach. It was noted that this approach is

already used through the annual CERR Report prepared by GISA, which utilises mass balance reporting data.

Mass balance reporting threshold and scope

Stakeholder views were divided on the appropriateness of the current 20,000 tonnes per annum threshold for mass balance reporting. Some supported lowering the threshold to 5,000 tonnes per annum in order to include smaller facilities, arguing that this would enhance transparency and provide a more comprehensive picture of material flows across the sector.

Conversely, other stakeholders urged caution, noting that expanding reporting obligation could impose disproportionate administrative burdens on smaller operators. They emphasised the need to balance transparency with practical considerations, including the usefulness of the additional data collected.

Several submissions also proposed expanding the types of facilities subject to mass balance reporting. Recommendations include the inclusion of smaller transfer stations, organics processing facilities, and construction and demolition waste sites, which together contribute significantly to overall waste flows.

Improving end fate and material flow transparency

There was strong support for extending mass balance reporting to improve transparency across the waste and resource recovery sector. Stakeholders highlighted the need to track both the origin and destination of materials, within and across jurisdictions, and to provide clearer information on the final fate of materials (e.g., remanufacturing, export, energy recovery, or landfill as residuals). Greater visibility of end fates was seen as critical to verifying beneficial reuse, building public trust, and demonstrating genuine circular economy outcomes.

Stakeholders noted that more granular data would enable better policy design, investment decisions, and performance benchmarking. Councils stressed that detailed reporting could strengthen contract management with collection and processing providers, while NGOs and community groups viewed transparency as essential for accountability, particularly where materials are exported.

At the same time, industry representatives cautioned that additional reporting requirements could create administrative burdens, particularly for smaller operators. Concerns were also raised about protecting commercially sensitive information, with calls for a framework that balances transparency with confidentiality.

To support improvements, stakeholders proposed several mechanisms, including enhanced digital tracking systems (such as electronic waste manifests), better integration with national tracking tools, and clearer definitions to ensure data consistency and comparability. However, challenges were acknowledged, including the complexity of material flow pathways, potential cost impacts for industry, concerns about commercial confidentiality, and a lack of harmonisation across jurisdictions.

Waste levy reporting

There was considerable support among stakeholders for expanding waste levy reporting to provide more detailed information on material types disposed of, as well as waste stream categories such as MSW, C&I waste, and C&D waste. This enhanced level of detail was viewed as essential for gaining a clearer understanding of the composition of landfilled waste, which would enable more targeted and effective interventions to reduce environmental impacts.

Lithium-ion battery waste tracking

Several stakeholders also advocated for the inclusion of lithium-ion batteries in both intra- and inter-state tracking requirements. Given the significant safety, environmental, and compliance risks associated with improper handling of these batteries, they argued that specific tracking measures are necessary. However,

others emphasised that such efforts would be most effective if implemented through a national framework with harmonised systems to ensure consistency and coordination across jurisdictions.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the diverse stakeholder feedback on, and valuable suggestions for, enhancing transparency within the waste and resource recovery sector through data. The EPA remains committed to collaborating with industry, local government, and stakeholders to improve transparency, data quality, and accountability in waste management.

Public reporting of data

We recognise the strong support for improving public access to performance information to aid informed decision-making. To support this, the EPA will further consider requirements as part of the W2R EPP review for waste depots to report certain information related to resource recovery rates and end use, with consideration of auditing, business costs, and confidentiality requirements.

Mass balance reporting thresholds

The EPA will continue to assess the scope and effectiveness of mass balance reporting and may make targeted changes to facility coverage to better capture relevant waste streams. This will occur in accordance with existing regulation 74(2) of the Environment Protection Regulations 2023.

Waste levy reporting

The EPA will further consider expanding waste levy reporting to capture material types and streams. It is noted that this would require amendments to the Environment Protection Regulations and upgrades to EPA IT systems. There is currently no time frame set for such work.

Lithium-ion batteries waste tracking

Recognising the risks posed by lithium-ion batteries, the EPA is working with other jurisdictions to improve their traceability, including exploring integration into state and national waste tracking systems.

4.17 Reporting by local government

4.17.1 Kerbside waste collection performance

Stakeholder feedback was sought on whether local government should be required to report on kerbside waste collection performance. Sixty-five (65) submissions provided varied but insightful perspectives, with a view to improving circular economy metrics and informing policy at all government levels.

Support for reporting requirements

Many stakeholders (85%) strongly supported mandatory reporting by local governments, viewing timely and accurate data on household waste and recovery as essential for tracking progress toward circular economy goals. Reporting was widely seen as a key tool to enhance transparency, accountability, and resource planning, while also enabling better community engagement and education.

However, some submissions cautioned against imposing excessive administrative burdens, particularly on smaller councils with limited resources. These stakeholders recommended streamlined reporting requirements, clear guidelines, standardised data definitions, and phased or flexible implementation to ensure manageable and consistent data collection.

Many local councils and industry bodies noted that while reporting was vital for informed policymaking and measuring outcomes, new requirements should align with existing practices to avoid duplication. They also highlighted challenges related to resource variability and differing regional waste services, emphasising the need for adequate support, such as technical assistance and funding, to enable successful and equitable reporting across all councils.

Types of information to be reported and reporting frequency

The majority of stakeholders agreed that local governments should, at a minimum, report on key metrics including:

- i. total household waste generated per capita (tonnage)
- ii. amount and percentage of waste diverted to resource recovery streams and landfill
- iii. composition of kerbside waste streams (e.g., plastics, paper and organics)
- iv. contamination rates within recycling and organics.

Some stakeholders recommended collecting more detailed data, such as participation rates in recycling and organics programs, performance evaluations of specific initiatives, financial data related to waste management and recovery costs, and outcomes related to community engagement and education.

These data points were valued for their ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of local waste streams, support benchmarking efforts, identify areas for improvement, and inform policy development aimed at increasing higher-value resource recovery.

The majority of stakeholders (70%) supported annual reporting as the most practical and balanced approach. They argued that annual reporting aligned with existing government reporting cycles and would help minimise the administrative burden on local councils. Some stakeholders advocated for quarterly reporting to enable more timely data availability, which could support more responsive decision-making and the early identification of emerging issues. However, this approach was acknowledged to require additional resourcing and was considered potentially unfeasible for some councils. Monthly reporting or more frequent data collection was generally regarded as excessive and only deemed justifiable in circumstances where urgent or significant issues necessitated closer monitoring.

Benchmarking local government on the basis of their kerbside performance

Stakeholders expressed mixed views on the issue of public benchmarking and ranking of local government waste and resource recovery performance. Supporters argued that public benchmarking could foster healthy competition, motivate continuous improvement, and enhance transparency for residents. It was viewed as a way to celebrate high-performing councils and apply positive pressure on those falling behind, thereby encouraging sector-wide progress.

However, others raised significant concerns about the fairness of direct comparisons. They pointed out that differences in council size, geographic location, population demographics, and available resources could make simple rankings misleading. Some feared that public scrutiny could lead to reputational harm and discourage collaborative efforts to improve performance.

A number of stakeholders recommended a more balanced approach, using anonymised or contextually presented data to facilitate learning, knowledge-sharing, and improvement, rather than competition. Contextualised performance measures that account for varying resources and community needs were considered essential to ensure fair and meaningful comparisons.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA supports the principle of improved local government reporting on household waste generation and resource recovery performance, recognising its value in tracking progress towards a circular economy, and acknowledges stakeholder support.

The EPA will work collaboratively with GISA, the Local Government Grants Commission, local government associations, and councils to explore the development of a harmonised reporting framework that minimises duplication and leverages existing data collection systems. This may include introducing reporting requirements via the W2R EPP to ensure consistency if necessary.

In relation to benchmarking and performance comparisons, the EPA acknowledges that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be feasible given regional variations. It is noted that GISA already undertakes reporting via South Australia's Kerbside Waste Performance Report, which includes consideration of various factors affecting recovery rates and opportunities for improvements. The EPA will support GISA by facilitating the timely provision of information for such reports.

4.17.2 Standardising kerbside waste collection bin audits

Stakeholder feedback was sought on the requirement for local government to conduct audits using consistent audit methodology and frequency. A total of forty-five (45) responses were received providing varied insights.

Current audit practices and waste types covered

Responses from councils currently conducting kerbside bin audits indicate a range of methodologies in use. These include manual visual assessments at kerbside or transfer stations, as well as compositional analyses involving the sampling and weighing of waste materials. Some audits were performed by contractors employing either standardised or customised approaches tailored to council requirements. Many councils and local government waste subsidiaries based their methods on the Zero Waste SA (2007) guide, often supplemented by more detailed techniques.

A key focus across audits is measuring contamination rates, diversion rates, and material composition by weight, with some councils additionally using volume-based metrics to better account for lightweight contaminants like soft plastics. Targeted audits addressing specific materials or contamination issues are also reported. While these methodologies effectively measure waste composition and contamination, insights into householder behaviour are more indirect, inferred from factors such as bin presentation frequency, fullness, contamination types, and occasional surveys or engagement activities. Several councils noted that behavioural patterns evolve over time and suggested conducting audits every 2–3 years to effectively track these changes and inform waste management strategies.

Standardisation of kerbside waste collection bin audit methodologies

Most stakeholders (75%) expressed strong support for standardising kerbside bin audit methodologies, highlighting the need for consistent, comparable, and reliable data across councils. Standardisation was widely regarded as essential for improving data accuracy, enabling meaningful benchmarking, and informing targeted policy interventions. Stakeholders also noted that consistent methodologies would support transparent reporting, better evaluation of education and collection programs, and alignment with statewide or national waste performance metrics.

However, there was broad consensus that any standardised approach must retain flexibility to reflect the diversity of local circumstances. Stakeholders pointed out that councils vary significantly in terms of demographics, geographic layout, waste service models, and priorities. For example, rural or regional councils may face different challenges than metropolitan ones, and socio-economic factors can influence waste behaviours. As such, a rigid 'one-size-fits-all' methodology may not accommodate these differences or meet specific policy objectives.

Concerns were also raised about the potential administrative burden and costs associated with implementing standardised audits. Some feared that overly prescriptive requirements could limit innovation and responsiveness in audit design. To address these concerns, several stakeholders proposed the development of updated guidelines or tiered methodologies that offer consistency while allowing councils to tailor certain aspects to their unique contexts. A few submissions also supported the creation of a nationally consistent framework that still provides scope for local adaptation.

Measurement of household behaviour

Several stakeholders highlighted that bin audits can provide useful insights into householder behaviour, including contamination patterns, participation rates, improper bin use, and behavioural response. However, a few submissions note the need to combine audit data with surveys and community engagement to understand behaviour correctly.

Additional measures in bin audits

Opinions were mixed on whether additional data points, such as bin placement, number of bins presented, or fullness levels, should be incorporated into audits. Supporters argued that these measures could improve understanding of user behaviour, service uptake, and operational efficiency. Concerns raised include added complexity, increased costs, and potential for inconsistent measurement. Some stakeholders recommended that such data should be included only where it adds demonstrable value or is already being collected through other means (e.g., collection vehicle technologies).

Audit frequency

There was broad agreement that audits are resource-intensive and should be scheduled with balance in mind. Most councils supported an audit frequency of every 2-3 years, aligning with resource availability and allowing enough time to observe behavioural or system changes. Some suggested longer intervals (4-5 years) for routine audits, supplemented by additional audits triggered by significant service changes or trials.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA will explore standardised kerbside waste collection bin audit requirements through the W2R EPP, in collaboration with GISA and local government. This will include developing minimum audit standards and frequencies while allowing flexibility for local adaptation to reflect diverse contexts and capabilities. GISA is currently updating kerbside bin audit methodologies and will work with the EPA and local councils on this process. The EPA will consider how the updated methodology could be mandated to ensure consistency and standardisation.

4.17.3 Publishing waste management plans and performance outcomes

Feedback was sought on whether local governments should be required to publish their waste management plans and strategies and report on kerbside waste collection performance and related circular economy outcomes on their websites. Feedback was also sought on whether waste contract tendering information should be made public (see Section 7.17.3 in the discussion paper for more information).

A total of fifty-four (54) submissions were received reflecting a broad support for enhancing transparency and public accountability in local government waste management.

Publication of local government waste management plans and strategies

The majority of submissions (80%) supported requiring local governments to publish their waste management plans and strategies online, highlighting the importance of transparency, community accountability, and public engagement. Stakeholders viewed publication as a way to help residents better understand council priorities, encourage participation in waste initiatives, and align local actions with broader state and national circular economy goals. Several stakeholders noted that many councils already publish such documents voluntarily, and formalising this practice would help ensure consistency across jurisdictions.

However, some stakeholders cautioned against a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. They recommended that publication requirements be flexible, particularly for smaller or regional councils that may not have dedicated waste plans or the resources to develop them. In such cases, incorporating waste strategies within broader environmental or strategic documents was considered acceptable. To ensure accessibility, stakeholders also suggested including plain-English summaries and avoiding overly prescriptive formatting requirements.

A few submissions raised concerns about administrative burden, duplication of reporting, and the potential disclosure of commercially sensitive information. Some proposed that regional collaboration could provide a more efficient and practical approach, reducing duplication while still meeting transparency and policy alignment objectives.

Publishing kerbside collection performance and circular economy outcomes

There was similarly strong support (90%) for requiring local governments to publish kerbside waste collection performance data and related circular economy outcomes. Stakeholders cited several reasons:

- i. promotes informed public engagement and encourages responsible waste behaviour
- ii. enables benchmarking by residents and between councils
- iii. drives performance improvements by fostering transparency and community accountability
- iv. supports data-driven policy and service design.

However, some respondents cautioned that raw data should be accompanied by clear explanations and context to ensure it is understandable and not misinterpreted. Several submissions also emphasised the need for standardised metrics and formats to ensure consistency across councils.

Information to include in online reporting, including frequency and format

Stakeholders proposed that the following information be included in publicly accessible online reporting to improve transparency and community understanding of local waste management performance:

1. **Waste volumes:** Total tonnage collected across general waste, recycling, and FOGO streams.
2. **Diversion and performance metrics:** Landfill diversion rates and progress toward waste minimisation.
3. **Audit results:** Contamination rates, sorting behaviour, and kerbside bin audit methods and results.
4. **Target tracking:** Performance against local and state resource recovery and waste reduction targets.

5. **Illegal dumping:** Statistics on incidents and council responses.
6. **Circular economy practices:** Use of recycled-content products in procurement and updates on circular economy initiatives.
7. **Community engagement:** Information on waste education campaigns and community participation.
8. **Environmental impacts:** Reporting on greenhouse gas emissions reductions linked to waste activities.
9. **Material-specific data:** Detailed breakdowns of waste types to identify recycling pathways and contamination sources.

Most submissions (55%) recommended that performance information be updated at least annually, while some suggested quarterly updates for key metrics (e.g., contamination rates and diversion rates). Updates should align with existing reporting cycles and be timely, consistent, and easy to access. Stakeholders encouraged the use of visual formats such as infographics, dashboards, or interactive charts to improve clarity and accessibility for the general public.

Public disclosure of local government waste contracts and tenders

Stakeholders generally supported enhancing transparency in local government waste contracting, with many viewing the publication of tender information as a way to improve trust in procurement processes, promote fair competition, and provide greater clarity on how public funds are allocated and what services are delivered. Key benefits identified include strengthened public confidence, increased accountability, and improved contractor performance, particularly when communities are given visibility into council decisions, costs, and environmental outcomes.

Specific information proposed by stakeholders for publication includes evaluation criteria and weightings, contract duration and renewal options, the scope of services, ESG, and circular economy requirements, and non-commercial performance indicators or key performance metrics. Some stakeholders recommended that this information be presented in a summary or dashboard format to ensure clarity without overwhelming users with excessive detail.

However, views were mixed. While community members, industry bodies, NGOs, licensees, and some consultants advocated strongly for mandatory public disclosure, many local councils and local government waste subsidiaries expressed caution or opposition. Concerns focused on the need to protect commercially sensitive information, particularly pricing and strategic details, to maintain the integrity of competitive procurement processes. Councils noted that public platforms such as SA Tenders & Contracts already provide visibility of procurement activity and questioned the necessity for further disclosure without a clear policy rationale. There was concern that overly prescriptive transparency requirements could deter bidders or increase administrative complexity, particularly for smaller councils with limited resourcing.

Integrating ESG into waste contracts: Challenges and opportunities

Stakeholders broadly supported embedding environmental, social, and governance principles into waste contracts, particularly to drive sustainable procurement, support ethical labour practices, promote innovation and local economic development, and encourage climate-conscious waste management practices.

However, stakeholders also identified several key challenges:

1. **Limited expertise and capacity** in some councils to effectively define, assess, and apply ESG criteria.
2. **Absence of standardised frameworks or metrics** to measure ESG performance within the waste and resource recovery sector.
3. **Cost implications**, with concerns that ESG-aligned services may be more expensive and difficult to justify within constrained budgets.

4. **Contractor readiness**, particularly for smaller or regional service providers who may lack resources to meet ESG expectations.

To address these challenges, stakeholders proposed several opportunities:

1. **Development of guidance and templates** to assist councils in integrating ESG criteria into waste and resource recovery contracts.
2. **Capacity-building initiatives** for procurement staff, including training programs and case studies to build practical expertise.
3. **Collaboration between the EPA, GISA, and LGA South Australia** to promote consistency and shared approaches across the sector.
4. **Phased implementation** to allow sufficient time for industry adjustment and gradual adoption of ESG requirements.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for increased transparency in local government waste management, particularly regarding the publication of waste management plans, performance outcomes, and contract-related information.

The EPA acknowledges the potential benefits of consistent publication of waste management plans, strategies, and performance outcomes. While many councils already publish such documents voluntarily, making this practice standardised across jurisdictions could promote alignment with broader state and national waste and resource recovery targets. The EPA will, in collaboration with GISA, LGAs and councils, further explore whether introducing minimum requirements via the W2R EPP is appropriate and necessary.

With regard to publication of local government waste contract tendering information, the EPA acknowledges the potential benefits for transparency and market fairness but also notes the need to protect commercially sensitive data. Any future policy changes in this area would require careful evaluation of risks, benefits, and appropriate disclosure levels.

The EPA further notes growing interest in integrating ESG criteria into local government waste contracts. While this approach offers opportunities to strengthen sustainability outcomes, stakeholder feedback identified several implementation challenges. It is noted that the South Australian Waste Strategy 2025-2030 highlights that GISA and LGA South Australia will work to encourage the development and implementation of environmentally sustainable procurement policies and practices across local government. The EPA will await the outcomes of this work before considering regulatory requirements further.

4.18 Transparency in waste levy component of service fees and charges

Stakeholder feedback was sought on whether landfill depots should be required to disclose, on customer invoices, the portion of fees and charges attributable to the solid waste levy. A total of fifty-five (55) submissions were received, representing a diverse range of stakeholders.

Submissions reflected a broad spectrum of views, with strong overall support for increased transparency in invoicing practices. Many stakeholders saw the disclosure of the waste levy component as a positive step toward improving public understanding of waste management costs and fostering accountability. At the same

time, several responses acknowledged the need to consider potential practical and commercial implications, including impacts on contract arrangements, administrative processes, and competitiveness across the sector.

Requirement for landfill operators to disclose the waste levy on invoices

Most stakeholders (78%) supported requiring landfill depot operators to disclose the waste levy component of fees and charges on customer invoices. Submissions highlighted several key benefits of this measure:

1. **Improved transparency and accountability:** NGOs, industry bodies, and councils stressed that disclosure helps customers distinguish regulatory charges from service costs, reducing misinformation.
2. **Informed decision-making:** Increased visibility of the levy empowers customers to better evaluate cost structures and make more informed choices.
3. **Enhanced community trust and behavioural change:** Public disclosure was viewed as a way to build confidence and encourage waste avoidance, separation, and recycling.
4. **Alignment with existing practices:** Some licensees and councils noted that levy information is already shared with councils or published by the EPA, so extending disclosure to customers would impose minimal additional burden. Several stakeholders pointed out that many landfill operators voluntarily disclose levy amounts, and formalising this would ensure consistency across the sector.

While the majority were supportive, a few submissions, notably councils, raised operational and practical concerns regarding levy disclosure. They highlighted the complexity of pricing structures, noting that some waste depots employ itemised or volume-based pricing rather than weight-based charging, which complicates accurately isolating the levy component. Additionally, subsidised or behaviour-influencing fees—such as free disposal of recyclables despite associated processing costs—further complicate transparent disclosure.

Concerns about confidentiality and commercial sensitivity were also expressed, particularly where mixed or transferred waste loads make disaggregating levy amounts likely to reveal sensitive cost structures or competitive pricing. Some operators and councils warned that mandatory disclosure could increase administrative burdens and potentially confuse customers, suggesting that such requirements might complicate billing systems or produce levy information that is not meaningful to all users. A few submissions cautioned against imposing rigid disclosure mandates without considering operator capacity and billing system limitations, especially for smaller or remote facilities. While the majority supported disclosure in principle, these practical challenges underscore the need for flexible and context-sensitive approaches.

Extending the disclosure requirement to other waste and resource recovery operators

Stakeholder views on extending the levy disclosure requirement beyond landfill operators were mixed. While a majority (62%) supported broader application, they stressed the importance of clearly defining the scope and ensuring consistent implementation to prevent confusion and undue compliance burdens. Many advocated for including transfer stations, MRFs, and commercial waste collection services, arguing that a uniform, sector-wide approach would improve transparency of levy-related charges throughout the waste supply chain. This, in turn, would empower waste generators to better understand and potentially reduce landfill disposal costs, while promoting fairness across the entire value chain.

Some stakeholders (14%) expressed conditional support, emphasising that only operators who directly pass on the waste levy should be subject to disclosure. They noted the need to differentiate these operators from others further along the supply chain. Concerns were raised about the complexity of cost pass-through, especially when invoices cover mixed or bundled services, which could impede clear and transparent reporting. Additionally, small operators may require extra assistance to meet compliance requirements, and disclosure formats should be adaptable to accommodate varying business models and invoicing systems.

A minority (24%) opposed the proposal, highlighting administrative burdens for small or regional operators and commercial sensitivities around revealing detailed pricing information. They also warned that partial levy pass-throughs might be misunderstood by customers as full government charges.

Implementation considerations

Stakeholders recommended several considerations to support effective implementation of a levy disclosure requirement:

1. **Education and guidance:** Many emphasised the need for clear communication materials to help customers understand what the waste levy is and how it supports broader objectives.
2. **Clear definitions and templates:** Respondents called for consistent regulatory definitions and standardised invoicing templates to minimise confusion and support uniform application.
3. **Phased implementation:** Some suggested a staged or voluntary-first rollout to give operators, particularly small or regional businesses, adequate time to adapt billing systems and processes.

A few stakeholders proposed alternatives to invoice-level disclosure, such as public reporting or aggregated summaries, to improve transparency without placing excessive administrative burden on operators.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges the strong stakeholder support for increased transparency in the communication of waste levy charges, particularly through the disclosure of the levy component on customer invoices issued by landfill depot operators.

The EPA will continue to assess the feasibility of introducing a requirement via the W2R EPP for landfill depots to increase transparency of fees and charges on invoices. This assessment will consider implementation options that support clarity for customers while recognising the operational realities faced by landfill operators.

In relation to the proposal to extend disclosure requirements to other waste and resource recovery operators, the EPA acknowledges the practical difficulties and mixed views raised in submissions. Requirements for other waste and resource recovery operators may be considered at a later stage with consideration of current voluntary practices and the level of influence operators have over pricing transparency.

4.19 Additional questions

Additional feedback was sought from stakeholders on their experiences with the current W2R EPP, including its impacts, views on the effectiveness of South Australia's existing regulatory framework for resource recovery and waste management, and suggestions for further policy measures to enhance waste avoidance, resource recovery, and the circular economy. Stakeholders were invited to provide any other comments in response to the discussion paper (refer to the discussion paper for more information). A total of fifty-six (56) responses were received, offering diverse perspectives on these topics and highlighting opportunities for regulatory improvement and policy development.

4.19.1 Impact of the current W2R EPP across sectors

A significant number of stakeholders reported being impacted by the current W2R EPP, although the nature and extent of these impacts varied across sectors. Feedback underscores the diverse and significant influence of the W2R EPP across the waste and resource recovery sector. Submissions expressed a

combination of recognition for the current regulatory framework's role in advancing waste management outcomes alongside calls for improvements. Key themes identified include:

1. **Clarity and consistency:** Many stakeholders emphasised the need for clearer, more consistent definitions to reduce uncertainty, support compliance, and promote uniform application of regulations.
2. **Alignment:** Several submissions advocated for improved alignment between state, national, and local regulations, particularly regarding waste classification and reporting. Stakeholders called for reduced duplication of regulatory requirements to simplify compliance and lessen administrative burden.
3. **Flexibility:** There was widespread interest in increasing the framework's adaptability to accommodate technological advancements and shifting market conditions while maintaining strong environmental protections.
4. **Support and capacity building:** Local governments and smaller operators requested enhanced technical guidance, education, and funding assistance to help them meet compliance obligations and transition to improved waste management practices effectively.
5. **Performance monitoring:** Many supported stronger accountability measures and reporting requirements, particularly related to publicly visible outcomes such as kerbside recovery rates.

Additionally, some stakeholders noted that the current waste and resource recovery framework tends to focus more on waste management than on waste avoidance and wanted greater emphasis on upstream interventions like design for reuse and material efficiency. While some expressed confidence in the policy's overall direction, they called for improved enforcement and transparency to ensure better environmental outcomes.

Suggestions for additional policy measures

Policy measures additional to those already explored in the discussion paper primarily relate to:

1. **Infrastructure and innovation incentives:** Submissions recommended additional targeted support such as grants, levy relief, or fast-tracked approvals for facilities demonstrating high recovery rates or deploying innovative technologies, particularly in regional areas.
2. **Market development and local processing:** There was strong support for incentives to strengthen domestic reuse and reprocessing markets. Suggestions made include grants, infrastructure investment, and support for industry collaboration to reduce reliance on exports and foster local circular economy.
3. **Standardisation and community engagement:** Submissions recommended clearer labelling and coordinated education campaigns to reduce contamination and improve public participation in recycling programs.

In general, these proposals reflected a shared view that progress requires an integrated approach combining regulatory reform, economic incentives, infrastructure investment, and cultural change.

Other general comments on the discussion paper

Several stakeholders provided broader reflections and strategic advice beyond the specific consultation questions, highlighting key principles to guide ongoing reform of the W2R EPP:

1. **Phased implementation and practicality:** Many submissions emphasised the need for staged implementation of reforms to allow sufficient adjustment time, particularly for councils and operators in regional and remote areas. Several cautioned against overly prescriptive measures that could impose undue burden on smaller businesses or less-resourced jurisdictions.
2. **Equity and regional considerations:** Challenges faced by rural and regional communities were noted, where infrastructure and service delivery models differ significantly from metropolitan areas. Stakeholders stressed that future policy settings must account for these differences to ensure equity.

3. **Transparency and accountability:** There was strong support for improved data transparency and information sharing to support performance benchmarking, enable better public accountability, and inform continuous improvement across the sector.
4. **Collaboration and stakeholder engagement:** Many respondents welcomed the discussion paper and the opportunity to provide input, with several requesting that the EPA continue engaging with stakeholders throughout policy development and implementation. Ongoing partnerships with local government, industry, and community groups were seen as essential to maintaining an effective framework.
5. **Support for reform direction:** Numerous stakeholders expressed general support for the direction of the review, particularly efforts to modernise and clarify the regulatory framework. However, some urged the EPA to balance ambition with practicality, ensuring that reforms are achievable and proportionate to sector capacity.
6. **Alignment with broader policy agendas:** A few submissions encouraged stronger alignment between waste policy and broader circular economy, climate, and sustainability objectives. This includes suggestions to integrate ESG principles into procurement processes and strategic planning.

Collectively, there was broad endorsement for a more coordinated, flexible, and forward-looking approach, with an expectation that the EPA and its partners will continue to provide leadership and support in delivering the next phase of waste and resource recovery policy reform.

EPA response and next steps

The EPA acknowledges and appreciates the valuable feedback received from stakeholders in response to the discussion paper. Submissions affirmed the role of the W2R EPP in providing consistent regulatory expectations across the waste and resource recovery sector, while also identifying a range of operational, regulatory, and structural challenges. The EPA recognises the diversity of experiences across regions and stakeholder groups, including local government, industry, and the broader community.

The EPA remains committed to progressing a regulatory framework that is robust, equitable, and effective. Stakeholder input will inform key areas of ongoing and planned work. This includes policy refinement to improve clarity in definitions, enhance alignment with national and interstate frameworks, and ensure that regulatory settings are appropriate for metropolitan, regional, and remote contexts.

The EPA will continue to engage and collaborate with local governments, industry, GISA, and the Local Government Association of South Australia to build sector capability, support education initiatives, and promote the development of infrastructure that improves resource recovery.

Recognising the importance of transparency and innovation, the EPA will explore ways to strengthen data collection and public reporting systems. It will also assess opportunities to adopt digital solutions that streamline compliance and improve sector-wide reporting efficiency.

To support circular economy objectives, the EPA will progress development of a state-based product stewardship legislative framework for government consideration. It will also continue to support national and voluntary stewardship schemes, while working with agencies to foster demand for recovered materials and invest in local market development.

Finally, the EPA will strengthen efforts to deter illegal dumping and reinforce the responsibility of all waste generators in supporting waste avoidance and recovery goals.

Abbreviations

ABSC	Australian Bedding Stewardship Council
ACCU	Australian Carbon Credit Unit
APCO	Australian Packaging Covenant Organisations
C&D	construction and demolition
C&I	commercial and industrial
CCA	copper chromium arsenic
CDS	Container Deposit Scheme
CEER Report	Circular Economy Resource Recovery Report
EFW	Energy from Waste
EPA	South Australian Environment Protection Authority
EP Act	<i>Environment Protection Act 1993</i>
EPP	Environment Protection Policy
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
ESG	environmental, social and governance
EU	European Union
E-waste	electronic waste (discarded electrical and electronic devices)
FAQS	Frequently Asked Questions
FOGO	food organics and garden organics
GISA	Green Industries SA
LFG	landfill gas capture
LGA	Local Government Association
LPB	liquid paperboard
MRF	material recovery facility
MSW	municipal solid waste
MUDs	multi-unit dwellings
NEMP	National Environmental Management Plan
NGO	non-government organisations

Ni-Cd	Nickel-Cadmium
NiMH	Nickel Metal Hydride
NSW	New South Wales
PFAS	perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances
PV	photovoltaic
RDF	Refuse Derived Fuel
SA	South Australia
SMEs	small to medium-sized enterprises
UK	United Kingdom
W2R EPP	<i>Environment Protection (Waste to Resources) Policy 2010</i>
WDF Standard	Standard for the production and use of Waste Derived Fill

