



WASTE CONTRACTORS &
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Ms Kate Mihaljek
A/Principal Council Officer
Upper House Committees, Legislative Council
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW, 2000 Australia

By e mail as PDF file to Kate.Mihaljek@parliament.nsw.gov.au

WCRA response to the NSW Government's response to the 36 recommendations of the Energy from Waste and Related Waste Matters Inquiry

Dear Ms Mihaljek

Attached to this letter is our Association's response to the recommendations of the Energy from Waste Inquiry.

It is somewhat disappointing to see that the NSW Government's response has failed to take the recommendations of this Inquiry seriously.

This poor response merely undermines the Inquiry process and the public money spent on this review of government policy has been wasted. The response concerns our Association greatly and it should be of concern to the whole NSW community. The proper planning and management of waste and resources is a matter of great interest to the public and it is unacceptable to simply ignore most of the recommendations that have resulted from many hundreds of hours of consultation with almost every expert in the field.

It has been 20 months since the NSW Premier the Hon. Ms. Gladys Berejiklian appointed the Hon. Ms. Gabrielle Upton to the role of NSW Environment Minister. And in that time, there has been a failure to address the state's waste crisis. This is particularly apparent with the inability of the NSW Government to halt the million tonnes of waste per annum that is transported from NSW to south east Queensland. To put this into a financial context, it represents approximately \$140 million pa in uncollected Waste Levy funds and with the majority of the Levy currently going to consolidated revenue, it represents lost funding for NSW schools, NSW hospitals and NSW services. The NSW waste industry has been complaining about these issues to the NSW Government since mid-2012.

There have been a series of major reforms for the managing of waste that the Minister's office has failed to process, with many of the matters having been handed across from the previous Minister (The Hon. Mr Mark Speakman).

There have been many submissions and numerous meetings with NSW EPA staff with little or no progress. These delays are unacceptable in the context that the NSW Government is apparently keen to promptly address key industry issues. This includes reforms such as removing the failed proximity principle, addressing poor practices at unlicensed facilities, stopping landfills from exhuming waste (and obtaining a waste levy credit) and waste reporting improvements. We are at a loss to understand why the Minister will not take action on these matters and the Government's response to this Inquiry further highlights our concerns.

The waste and recycling industry which provides essential collection, processing and disposal services to households and businesses across NSW, is extremely disappointed with the reply from Ms Upton's office to the 36 recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiry into waste management in NSW.

We can only conclude from the response tabled by the Minister in Parliament in September that the NSW Government is in no hurry to address some very serious issues such as illegal dumping, criminality and an inadequately resourced NSW EPA.

The NSW Government seems happy to continually refer to the "unprecedented investment to support recycling through its \$802 million Waste Less Recycle More initiative". But again, to put it in perspective the NSW Government collects an estimated \$700 million per annum in waste levies. If they invest \$802 million over 9 years that is a mere 12% investment back into our industry. It should be noted that from the 1970's through to the mid-90's 100% of the Waste Levy waste levy was hypothecated for waste management purposes.

Our industry is at the critical stage where we require the NSW Government to provide more funding for new facilities and meaningful reform of the Regulator. With China no longer accepting our recyclables and the EPA closing the door on the AWT sector, we need that investment and commitment from the NSW Government sooner, rather than later.

Please direct any questions or comments to the undersigned.

Yours faithfully



Tony Khoury
Executive Director

Attach.