



**ACT**  
Government

Transport Canberra  
and City Services

Waste Contractors and  
Recyclers Association of NSW  
PO Box 6643  
Wetherill Park BC NSW 2164  
Phone: 02 9604 7206

25/2/19

Dear Stakeholder

I am writing to seek your assistance in tackling contamination issues currently affecting recycling collected in the Canberra region.

The Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Hume processes most of the ACT's residential and business co-mingled recycling. This includes packaging, drink containers and paper products collected by commercial waste management operators in the ACT region.

The amount of contaminated material received at the MRF has increased in recent months to around 13%. Contamination risks damaging the machines and must be manually removed, which increases the safety risks to workers, and slows down the facility's ability to process materials.

You may have seen local media reports about the temporary closure of the MRF by WorkSafe ACT from 10 to 16 January 2019. Some of the safety-related matters at the MRF have been exacerbated by the build-up of unprocessed material, which has disrupted operations. The facility has also been under added pressure due to increased volumes over the summer period and market pressures resulting from changes to China's import restrictions on recyclable materials.

When I inspected the MRF with Worksafe ACT I was shocked to see the volume, scale and nature of contamination the workers in that facility are being required to deal with. It is unacceptable and needs to be addressed.

As a result, the MRF operator, Re.Group, is focusing on reducing contamination levels and will reject loads of recycling that are overly contaminated. This is a necessary measure to protect staff at the MRF from potentially hazardous items, and to protect the significant investment in new plant and equipment made by Re.Group.

ACT NoWaste and Re.Group are also talking with recycling collection businesses about these changes to ensure they understand their responsibilities as customers of the MRF.

I am seeking your support to ensure that your recycling bins are used correctly, and in particular to avoid putting the following problem items in recycling bins:

- Batteries
- Gas cylinders
- Material placed in plastic bags
- Metal objects
- Old appliances, equipment and machinery
- Polystyrene
- Shredded paper

And Aersol cans

The recycling bin is for empty containers, packaging, paper and cardboard only. There are alternative options for recycling the above items – you can visit [www.act.gov.au/recyclopaedia](http://www.act.gov.au/recyclopaedia) for more information.

I thank you for your support in this matter.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Trushell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Trushell

Executive Branch Manager

ACT NoWaste

13 February 2019