



WASTE CONTRACTORS &  
RECYCLERS ASSOCIATION  
OF N.S.W.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

10<sup>th</sup> November 2020



## Annual Report 2020

Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW  
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## Presidents Report, Mr Harry Wilson, Life Member



On 11 March 2020 the World Health Organisation declared that the Corona virus (Covid-19) had reached pandemic status. The unprecedented issues resulting from this pandemic have had significant and lasting impacts on our total way of work, life and travel. Since March, isolation, physical distancing, hand sanitiser, face masks, working from home, staggered start times, border closures, Microsoft Teams and Zoom have all become the new norm. In NSW, the ACT and every other Australian jurisdiction, public health orders were issued to protect the community and to reduce the spread of the infection. Whilst these health orders listed restrictions to activities and places that are closed, the waste and recycling industry which provides an important service for the community and businesses continued to operate. Both the Federal and the NSW Government responded with a range of business stimulus measures including Job Keeper, Job Seeker, instant tax asset write offs, PAYG tax refunds, small business grants, etc.

Everyone across our community is currently facing or has faced some very difficult & challenging public health issues. In the waste management industry, throughout this time (and as always) our Members are at the frontline of providing an essential service to householders and those businesses that continue to trade. Without the efforts of our Members and their wonderful workers, we would be faced with some very major health, hygiene and sanitation issues.

Over the last year there has been a continuation of the widespread concern about the continued impacts of China's National Sword policy and other nations have since placed limits on the amount of recyclables that they are prepared to receive. This has reduced Australia's ability to export our plastics, paper, metal and other waste materials.

The waste management & resource recovery sector continues to face a range of major issues and challenges, including:-

- Lower waste and recycling volumes resulting from the forced closure of many parts of the business, entertainment and travel sector due to Covid-19.
- Further increased regulations leading to complexity and higher compliance costs.
- Increasing insurance premiums.
- Tightening of end product quality specifications, with decreasing end markets.
- Loss of kerbside recycling materials to container deposit schemes (CDS).
- Decreasing revenues for commodities.
- A ban on the use of mixed waste organics outputs (MWO) as a soil conditioner.
- The introduction of minimum standards for C&D recycled products.
- A number of fires & accidents that have led to the formation of a WCRA WHS Group.
- A continued restructure of the NSW EPA with four CEOs in a 12 month period.

Despite these issues and challenges the simple fact is that recycling has never been as important to the Australian community as it is today. For most householders the practice of recycling via the bin with the yellow lid is their single biggest regular environmental contribution or initiative. And what drives many basic recycling programs is the need to conserve our finite, precious natural resources, to save limited landfill space and to save on costly disposal bills. As a result, it has never been more important for Australia's governments, at all levels, together with the waste and recycling sector to co-operatively solve these issues.

We have faced a number of unique regulatory challenges such as the finalisation of NSW EPA's ban on the application of MWO, the lack of a regulatory procedure to deal with unexpected asbestos finds in a C&D recycling facility, the highest waste levy in Australia (most of which goes to Treasury) and major question marks over whether our regulators (EPA, Safe Work and Sydney Water are suitably resourced). We also patiently continue to wait for the NSW Government to deliver their 20-year waste strategy. These issues remain unresolved from previous years and do very little to create investor confidence in the waste sector.

As we move towards a circular economy, energy-from-waste and a focus on a better quality of recycling materials, the waste and recycling industry finds itself in a very interesting place. WCRA is proud of our many Members who through their dedicated workers, day-in, day-out provide for the safe and reliable collection, processing, transfer and disposal of the full range of waste and recyclable materials.

In our 72<sup>nd</sup> year, WCRA continues to play a significant role in highlighting the issues which impact our Members' businesses, in making sure the position of the industry is delivered and understood by other stakeholders and in bringing the key parties together in search of solutions.

We look forward and hope that in 2021 a safe and affordable Covid-19 vaccine is found and as always, we are optimistic that it will be a year of solutions, partnerships and progress.

I thank our WCRA staff and Executive Members for their dedicated service and commend the 2020 WCRA Annual Report to you.



*The vast majority of householders across NSW have access to a yellow-lidded 240 litre bin for the fortnightly collection of recyclable material. For most householders the practice of recycling via the bin with the yellow lid is their single biggest regular environmental contribution or initiative.*

## Finance & Administration

WCRA exists to provide information, advice and support to its Members on a broad range of technical, regulatory, employment and industrial matters. The WCRA membership represents the majority of the waste and recycling transport and processing operators in NSW and ACT.

WCRA funds the services it provides to its Members through:

- Annual fees paid by the Members
- Charges for the provision of training services
- Profits from hosting industry events
- Government grants
- Commercial arrangements with corporate partners and sponsors

WCRA continues to be recognised as a well-managed industry association with a secure financial position.

Stirling Williams provides financial auditing services to WCRA and has approved the 2019/20 financial statements. The surplus of \$48,866 reflects that WCRA is using its income to fund additional services to Members (compliance material, standards, research into training, online communications, etc.)

### Five-year historical comparison

**Table 1**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Net Surplus</b>	\$84,289	\$44,685	\$77,865	\$4,747	\$48,866
<b>Balance Sheet Net Assets</b>	\$1,371,886	\$1,416,571	\$1,494,436	\$1,499,183	\$1,548,049

### Key Ratios

**Table 2**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Current Ratio</b> (Current Assets/Current Liabilities)	2.35	2.13	2.56	2.72	2.47
<b>Total Asset Turnover</b> Revenue/Total Assets	0.37	0.32	0.39	0.37	0.32
<b>Return on Assets</b> <b>Net Surplus/Net Assets*100</b>	6.14	3.15	5.21	0.32	3.16

WCRA's 2019 AGM was held on 12<sup>th</sup> November at Dooleys, Lidcombe. Members were presented with an overview of the years activities by Mr Wilson (President) along with the audited accounts by Mr Roger Williams, Stirling Williams.

Financial statements for year ending 30 June 2019 were lodged with the Registered Organisations Commission and NSW Industrial Relations Commission in November and further letters were sent in December. The S269 certificate was issued. The Annual return for year ending 31 December 2019 was signed by WCRA's secretary Mr Brandstater and lodged with the Registered Organisations Commission.

WCRA is the oldest waste management industry association in Australia and one of the oldest in the world. Since 1948, WCRA has represented the NSW & ACT waste and recycling transporters and processing facility operators. WCRA is an independent association registered with the Industrial Relations Commission of NSW and Fair Work (Registered Organisations) 2009.

# Our People

## Members, Partners & Sponsors

The last twelve months has witnessed the emergence of a number of new smaller contractors to the sector. As in previous years, WCRA continues to represent the majority of waste and recycling operators across NSW and the ACT.

**Table 3**

<b>Members</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
>40 Revenue Earning Vehicles	7	7	6	8	11
7-40 Revenue Earning Vehicles	39	40	40	42	40
Up to 6 Revenue Earning Vehicles	104	104	100	104	114
<b>Associate Members</b>	43	39	36	38	40
<b>Total</b>	193	190	182	192	205
Change on Prior year	4.9%	-1.6%	-4.2%	5.5%	6.8%

## Staff & Support Services

WCRA offices and its services are available to Members via phone or in person Monday to Friday during business hours.

WCRA's current agreement with Transector Pty Ltd expires on 30 June 2021 and is due to be reviewed by the President and Vice-President and then ratified by the Executive. Transector provides the services of Executive Director, Tony Khoury to the Association.

Mr Khoury, is supported by the following staff and specialist advisors:

Administration, Invoicing, Debtors, Creditors and Bookkeeping	Ann Maree Kopos
Reception, Marketing, Events & Office Management	Jamal Alameddine
Environmental Planning & Regulatory Affairs	Ross Fox (Fishburn Watson O'Brien)
Employment & Industrial Relations	Jay Clowes (Fishburn Watson O'Brien)
Projects	Glenn Caffyn
Training Delivery	Tony Khoury Glenn Caffyn
IT and Maintenance Support	Peter Cochrane

## WCRA Executive

The Members of the Executive on 30 June 2020 were:-

Harry Wilson	SMS Municipal Services	President
Susie McBurney	Remondis Pty Ltd	Vice President
Greg Turner	JR Richards & Sons	Treasurer
Jeff Brandstater	Brandster Services	Secretary
David Johnston	United Resource Management	Executive Member
Glenn Gauslaa	Viking Waste	Executive Member
Mark Falanga	Wastefree (Aust) Pty Ltd	Executive Member
David Harrison	Viscount Plastics (Australia) Pty Ltd	Executive Member
Ros Dent	Bingo Industries	Executive Member
Nathan Ung	Polytrade Recycling	Executive Member
David Clancy	Cleanaway	Executive Member

The following movements of the Executive took place in 2019/2020:-

- Ros Dent was elected to the Executive on 14 November 2019
- David Clancy was elected to the Executive on 14 November 2019
- Mick Nicholson resigned from the Executive on 14 January 2020

Executive meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, except for January. The purpose and function of the Executive is particularised in the registered rules of the association. Executive meetings are open to all Members of the Association. Members can contribute to discussion and debate and raise points of general business. Voting is restricted to Executive Members.

Executive Members are drawn from the ranks and are the nominated representatives of Members. All are practising industry professionals with many years of experience and subject to heavy demands for their time. Sponsors are also invited to speak at meetings on matters of interest.

Meetings in the reporting year were well attended with a broad range of matters discussed and actioned. The overall attendance at Executive meetings stood at 59% for the financial year ending in June 2020 (this compares favourably with the minimum provision of 50% in the Rules).

Due to the impact of Covid-19 there was a move from the physical to the virtual world, to comply with social distancing measures. This required Executive meetings to move online. A key challenge created by these online Zoom meetings is the disruption in face-to-face dynamics and the impact this can have on communications and decision making.

Elections for positions on the Executive Committee are conducted every four years according to the Associations rules. The term of office of the current Executive Committee will expire in November 2022. Throughout the year nominations were called to fill two casual vacancies. The Australian Electoral Commission supervised the process where two Members (Ros Dent, Bingo Industries and David Clancy, Cleanaway) nominated for the two available positions. As a result, no election was required. The results were posted on the Association's website in November 2020 and the Registered Organisations Commission was formally notified.

In February 2020 Ms Dent & Mr Clancy attended a Governance of Registered Organisations training course as required by the Registered Organisations Commission to fulfil their statutory obligations.

## Sponsors

WCRA was generously supported by key corporate associates. These organisations contributed essential funding for the Association as well as providing invaluable specialist advice, proposals and assistance to Members.

Wastedge.com	Waste operations and management software
TWU Super	Superannuation
Tyres4U	Heavy vehicle and plant equipment tyres
CJD Equipment/Volvo/SDLG	Construction and waste management plant and equipment
Daimler Trucks Huntingwood	Mercedes Benz, Freightliner and Fuso Heavy Vehicles
Work Options	Injury management
Arthur J Gallagher	Insurance broking
Green Goanna – Shell	Oil specialists
Bucher Municipal	Waste industry equipment

Our corporate Sponsors provide specialist expertise and options to our Members, together with essential funding for the services offered by WCRA.

On behalf of all Members, the Association acknowledges the support of its Sponsors and its gratitude to these organisations and their representatives.

## Life Membership

Life membership is the highest honour that can be given to a member of the waste and recycling industry who is associated with WCRA. Life membership may be awarded to a member in recognition of outstanding service given to WCRA over a prolonged period.

The Executives, in accordance with the Guidelines for life nomination for Life Membership, considers the following with regard to prospective Life Members:

- Must never have brought the Association or the industry into disrepute.
- Must have consistently put the interests of the Association and the industry ahead of their personal and business interests in the discharge of WCRA duties and responsibilities.
- Must have, through their involvement with WCRA, enhanced the operation and reputation of the Association and the industry.

The following former and present Members are Life Members of WCRA (unchanged from 2015)

- Ron Horswell (deceased)
- Mike Creswell (deceased)
- Arthur Baker
- Bernadette Burns
- Terry Dene
- Mike Noble
- Barry Thomas
- Harry Wilson

WCRA stays in touch with our Life Members by inviting them to attend our events such as the Annual Dinner and the Retiree's Lunch.



## Services

### Industrial & Employment Relations

The Association continues to provide Industrial Relations support for all its Members. As well as providing key information about pay rates & conditions, leave, injured workers, HR, unfair dismissals, redundancy, public holidays, etc. WCRA continues to represent members and the industry in various industrial relations discussions and negotiations.

WCRA is a registered body of employers under the Fair Work Act 2009 (Registered Organisation's Act) and NSW Industrial Relations Act 1996. WCRA representatives are involved in negotiations with Trade Unions and assist government bodies such as the Fair Work Commission and the Fair Work Ombudsman with industrial matters affecting the waste management industry. WCRA is recognised as the peak employer association representing the interests of its Members in both NSW and the ACT.

The Waste Management Award 2010 review (AM2014/216) was finalised with an announcement by the Fair Work Commission of the Waste Management Award 2020, effective from 4 May 2020.

The Waste Management Award 2020 was further amended in May to provide for additional leave for those employees affected by Covid-19.

Members are informed about award changes through the year including updates to the Waste Management Award and FWO Pay guide. Information about general employment law has been circulated as well as information about leave accruals, casual employees, JobKeeper and JobSeeker.

On 1 July 2019 the Fair Work Commission announced that the National Minimum Wage along with all Modern Award wage rates was to increase by 3%. Members were informed of this decision.

### Insurance and Workers Compensation

WCRA in collaboration with our sponsor Gallagher (Specialist Insurance Brokers) have provided Members with advice on a broad range of insurance matters. In the last few years there has been an increased number of fires at waste management facilities resulting in significant insurance premium increases.

The Association meets with icare (workers compensation insurer for NSW) on an as required basis, including an insurance care forum in November 2019. An icare flyer for employers affected by bushfires in February 2020 was circulated to the Members.

The Association worked extensively with Fire & Rescue NSW Chief Superintendent, David Lewis and his team to develop Fire Safety Guidelines for NSW waste facilities. Fire & Rescue consulted with industry and WCRA distributed various draft versions of guidelines including a joint meeting with WMRR in August 2019. Amongst a number of concerns, Members raised the concern regarding the safety hazards of undercover storage of baled recyclables. The guidelines were finalised and distributed to Members in August 2019. The VWMA are developing a training and insurance package based on Victorian fire regulations and WCRA has held discussions with the VWMA to leverage off this wonderful initiative.

## Training

WCRA offered Members a broad variety of highly industry focussed training courses dealing with contemporary issues affecting the waste management industry. In the delivery of these training services, WCRA has maintained a formal relationship with TAFE NSW Sydney Institute.

Training is a valuable and well utilised component of the Association's suite of services. Many Members rely on WCRA to provide high quality and industry tailored training for employees and contractors. Through its work in this area, WCRA makes a significant contribution to ensuring that safety, environmental standards and compliance are practiced at a high level of competence across the NSW and ACT sector.

Nationally accredited training courses covering Chain of Responsibility regulations and obligations, Fatigue Management regulations and Work Safely Near Overhead Wires were delivered throughout the year. Whilst most of these sessions were delivered at WCRA Wetherill Park, sessions were also delivered in Queanbeyan, Wollongong, Tuncurry, Minto, Orange, Blacktown, Port Kembla, East Maitland, Newcastle, Mascot and St Marys.

In May 2020 WCRA conducted two non-accredited Chain of Responsibility training sessions via Zoom.

Course	Unit nos.	No. of sessions	No. of Attendees
Chain of Responsibility	TLIF0002	7	102
Chain of Responsibility - Toolbox	N/A	6	100
Chain of Responsibility – non-accredited	N/A	2	12
Fatigue Management	TLIF2010	4	48
Work Safely Near Overhead Wires	CPPWMT3063A	6	90
Incident Cause Analysis Method (ICAM)	RIIWHS301D BSBWHS505B	1	13
Intro. to Waste & Resource Recovery	N/A	3	43



*A Chain of Responsibility training session led by Tony Khoury*

## WCRA working with Government



*Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, MP for Manly, Mr James Griffin visiting Polytrade Recycling in Rydalmere with WCRA Executive Member Nathan Ung & Tony Khoury. A broad range of issues were discussed with Mr Griffin including the current issues around recycling from the impacts of China Sword and the need for the EPA to re-convene the taskforce and discussion group that last met in mid-2018*



*NSW Shadow Minister for the Environment the Hon. Ms Kate Washington with WCRA Executive Member David Clancy and Cleanaway's Nick Schutt. WCRA organised for Ms Washington to attend a number of Western Sydney facilities where a broad range of issues were discussed including the NSW CDS, Energy from Waste and a protocol for managing rogue pieces of asbestos in C&D recycling facilities.*

## Federal inquiry into waste management industry

Following a meeting between WCRA and the Hon. Sharon Bird MP a submission was lodged by WCRA to the Federal Senate Inquiry into the waste management industry. WCRA's submission included comments on a range of issues -: energy-from-waste, threats to the recycling sector and current impediments to innovation (lack of national uniformity of waste laws, a NSW waste levy that largely goes to consolidated revenue and six different CDS operations across the country).

## Federal bans on the export of recyclables

Throughout the year a number of forums were attended by WCRA including a visit to the office of the Hon. Trevor Evans MP, Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environment Management. In summary the Federal Government has passed Recycling and Waste Reduction legislation confirming the following:

- From 1 January 2021, a licence will be required to export waste glass
- From 1 July 2021, the rules for what plastic can be exported are changing
- From 1 July 2022, a licence will be required to export all types of waste plastics
- From 1 December 2021, a licence will be required to export tyres
- From 1 July 2024, a licence will be required to export mixed paper and cardboard.

## Waste industry challenges and developments

In August 2019 WCRA received the final report from A.Prince Consulting which detailed a significant and unprecedented number of issues and challenges. As a result of consultation with WCRA Members, the top five issues affecting their businesses in order of priority are:

1. Regulation compliance and dealing with the NSW EPA
2. China Sword impacts
3. CDS
4. End markets for glass
5. Fire safety compliance

The report identified forty-one proposed actions to support Members in addressing these issues. This report has been sent to EPA, DPIE and the Minister for the Environment. The standard reply to WCRA has been that these issues will be addressed in the NSW 20-year waste strategy.

## Matters involving Government included:

- Member feedback to WCRA is that our industry is poorly represented on the Board of the EPA. This concern has been discussed and agreed by WCRA Executive.
- In July 2019 WCRA met with the Hon. James Griffin MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and visited waste transfer and processing sites in the Parramatta area.
- In July 2019 WCRA met with the Hon. Trevor Evans MP, Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environment Management to discuss issues affecting the waste industry. Mr Evans requested and was sent a copy of a glass recycling study undertaken by WCRA in 2017.
- In July 2019 WCRA met with the Hon. Paul Scully MP, Member for Wollongong to discuss waste management issues relevant to the Illawarra area.
- In October 2019 WCRA met with the Hon. Kate Washington MP and NSW Shadow Minister for the Environment to provide a briefing on waste management issues across NSW.
- In December 2019 WCRA met with the Hon. Sharon Bird MP, in her capacity as Deputy Secretary of the Senate Committee's Federal inquiry into the waste management industry.
- In March 2020 WCRA hosted the Hon. Kate Washington MP, NSW Shadow Minister for the Environment visiting C&D recycling sites to demonstrate a need for an asbestos detection procedure.
- In June 2020 the Hon. Matt Kean MP, NSW Minister for the Environment provided WCRA with a 15-minute, pre-recorded message thanking waste management industry workers for their considerable efforts throughout the very tough Covid-19 period.

## Work Health and Safety – SafeWork NSW

- Following the tragic fatalities at Horsley Park (May 2019) and Camellia (June 2019), a half day Safety Summit was held in August 2019 at Lidcombe.
- A number of SafeWork NSW safety alerts were sent to Members throughout the year, including safety concerns on Covid-19, dangers of high pressure washing of asbestos roofs (July 2019), forklift injury (August 2019), exposure of workers to silica dust (October 2019), roll away vehicles (January 2020), forklift tip over fatality and notification of a vehicle-loading crane crush fatality (both in May 2020).
- The industry needed to take steps to prevent a repeat of these unfortunate, tragic deaths. As a result, WCRA has formed a WHS Group which meets bi-monthly to review, monitor and address WHS issues across the waste management sector.
- WCRA has discussed and agreed with SafeWork NSW the process required for a review of the Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines for the Collection, Transport and Unloading of Non-hazardous Waste and Recyclable Materials 2003.
- The WCRA & Safe Work NSW partnership arrangement is now greater than 10 years, (the original agreement was signed on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009).
- In March 2020 at the height of the first wave of the pandemic, WCRA formed a Covid-19 sub-committee. This committee meet weekly via Zoom with a goal to ensure all Members were kept up to date with the latest information regarding health procedures and business assistance. Thereafter the Executive Director attended a tele-conference with a NSW Government representative weekly (April to June 2020).

## Transport for NSW / NHVR

- WCRA was granted \$33,000 in August 2019 by the NHVR to deliver Chain of Responsibility training workshops and toolbox sessions throughout the NSW & the ACT. The training proved to be very much in-demand and WCRA received excellent feedback from those who attended.
- WRIQ is developing an NHVR endorsed national code for waste vehicle load management compliance. WCRA is participating in this matter which has national importance.
- In October 2019 WCRA met with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development in relation to a national pilot testing potential direct road user charging options for heavy vehicles. Members were invited to participate in the pilot program.
- In December 2019 at the request of the NSW Police WCRA distributed concerns relating to the use of mobile phones by heavy vehicle drivers and the impending installation of detection cameras.
- In April 2020 WCRA met with Austroads and provided commentary on the impacts of aged vehicles in waste and recycling collections.

## EPA / DPIE

The relationship between WCRA and EPA is of critical importance to the effective operation of our industry and on occasions it continues to be challenging. WCRA has long advocated that a healthy dynamic waste management and resource recovery industry needs a strong, well-resourced, well-informed, politically independent & operationally transparent regulator to provide a level playing field for industry.

The current year has seen a further restructure of the EPA and DPIE. This has resulted in a number of staff changes with a new CEO, Ms Tracy Mackey. WCRA via Executive Director Tony Khoury has continued to develop a solid working relationship with regular meetings and communications. There have many interactions between WCRA and EPA staff throughout 2019/20 and whilst we continue to have our differences, all discussions and interactions were conducted with a healthy professional respect. A feature of these discussions was the regular telephone conference between Mr Stephen Beaman and the industry throughout the Covid-19 crisis.

WCRA continued to pursue EPA for a resolution to a broad range of issues such as:-

- The 20-Year Waste Strategy for NSW
- Waste Less Recycle More funding
- Off-balance sheet finance options for Financial Assurances
- To more effectively regulate rogue and unlicensed operators
- The China Sword recycling group
- NSW Fire & Rescue Guidelines for waste management facilities
- A waste levy rebate on shredder floc
- Funding for an industry support officer
- Funding for waste industry worker training
- A position paper on Resource Recovery Orders and Exemptions (prepared by Ross Fox)
- A circular to all Members on dealing with EPA inspections (prepared by Ross Fox)
- A range of recycling industry concerns, with solutions from WCRA
- Cancellation of the 2020 Green Globe Awards
- Critical industry issues resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic
- Bushfire waste and recycling co-ordination
- Waste levy rates for 2020/21
- Audit General's Office review of the NSW waste levy and infrastructure performance

Covid-19 had a major impact on the WH&S of waste management industry workers. In April 2020, the NSW Government issued a fact sheet entitled “Keeping waste and recycling facilities open”. This fact sheet provided valuable advice that addressed the following:-

- Essential waste services continue
- Keeping waste and recycling facilities open for workers
- Worker health and safety
- How to protect yourself and others

In May 2019 the NSW Government announced that the EPA’s responsibility for resource recovery would be transferred to the Department of Planning, Industry and the Environment (DPIE). It has now been confirmed that this responsibility has transferred back to the EPA.

As mentioned elsewhere in this Report, agreement on a procedure or protocol to deal with an unexpected find of asbestos in a C&D recycling facility is no closer now, than what it was in previous years.

Throughout the year there were a number of EPA sessions and draft documents on the proposed 20-year waste strategy. WCRA attended several focus group sessions and was interviewed by several EPA appointed consultants. The development of this strategy is forecast for completion in the second quarter of 2021.

The NSW Waste Levy rates for 2020/21 were advised by the EPA to WCRA and Members -: solid waste metropolitan area \$146 per tonne (2019 \$143.60) and regional areas \$84.10 (2019 \$82.70). It is worth noting that since 2010 the metropolitan area levy has more than doubled from \$70.30 per tonne to \$146.

The sudden announcement by the EPA in October 2018 that the processed outputs from AWT facilities would no longer be lawfully applied to agricultural, forestry and mining land continues to cause unease across the entire industry. The debate and the fallout from this decision has led to genuine wide-spread industry concern that Resource Recovery Orders and Exemptions can be too easily changed and amended by the EPA. This decision has led to concerns for general investment in waste management infrastructure.

The implications of the China Sword recycling decision continued to trouble the recycling sector. To support the sector, WCRA continued to advocate for the Stakeholder Group to be reconvened. These requests were not acted on by either the EPA, DPIE or the NSW Government. WCRA and Members were firmly of the view that more needs to be done and appointed A. Prince Consulting to develop a strategy addressing AWT, CDS, MRF and recycling issues and a pathway forward (detailed earlier in the report).

# Relationships

## WMRR

WCRA has a good working relationship with Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia's (WMRR) NSW C&D Waste Group, chaired by Mr Jason Sweeney, where we jointly continue to work with the EPA to develop a procedure for the management of a small piece of asbestos at C&D recycling sites.

## NWRIC

WCRA is the NSW and ACT Affiliate of the National Waste & Recycling Industry Council. Membership of the Council is restricted to organisations with national operations. The current Council members are: Cleanaway, Veolia, JJ Richards, Remondis, Resource Co, Sims and Solo. State and Territory Associations represented at Council meetings as observers are: WRIQ, WRINT, WRIWA, WRISA, VWMA and WCRA. Council meetings are held approximately every three months with venues alternating to different state capitals. WCRA NSW & ACT has been represented by Harry Wilson and Anthony Johnston. Executive Officer meetings are held each month – either by teleconference or face-to-face meetings, where Tony Khoury provides a short update on relevant NSW and ACT matters. WCRA's involvement in NWRIC is an opportunity to progress contentious and national issues. These regular meetings & updates maximise the potential for better communication across all Australian jurisdictions. It should be noted that NWRIC competes with WMRR & ACOR.

## AORA

Australian Organics Recycling Association. WCRA collaborates with AORA on matters of joint interest including the NSW Guidelines for waste facilities (Fire + Rescue NSW) and NSW Resource Recovery Orders and Exemptions.

## VWMA

Victorian Waste Management Association. VMWA led by Executive Officer Alex Serpo and WCRA continue to enjoy a close relationship and work together on a number of matters including insurance and training.

## WRIQ

Waste Recycling Industry Queensland. WRIQ, led by CEO Mark Smith who replaced long serving Mr Rick Ralph. WCRA maintain a good working relationship, specifically in regard to representation on the National Waste & Recycling Industry. WRIQ is currently leading the national project on a code of practise for load management.

## ALOA

Australian Landfill Owners Association (ALOA) and WCRA continue to collaborate on matters of mutual benefit to our Members.

## ACOR

Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR) is the peak national industry recycling association. WCRA continues to work with ACOR on matters of joint interest, in particular Project Yellow Sail (to reduce contamination in kerbside recycling), general recycling, AWT (MWOO ban) and discussions on accreditation for recycling facilities.

## Boomerang Alliance

Comprises 47 national, state and local allies of environment and government organisations, focussed on the reduction of plastic packaging and waste. WCRA discusses relevant matters with Boomerang Alliance including CDS and unlawful waste disposal.



## Other Organisations

WCRA collaborates and cooperates with a large number of organisations whose interests and expertise are relevant, including -:

- Civil Contractors Federation
- Asbestos Diseases Foundation
- Clean Up Australia
- Keep Australia Beautiful NSW
- Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation
- Institute of Public Works and Engineering
- Waste Recycling Industry South Australia
- Waste Recycling Industry Western Australia
- Waste Recycling Industry Northern Territory
- Fiji Waste Management & Resource Recovery Association
- Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

## AWRE

Australian Waste and Recycling Expo was held in Darling Harbour on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 where Mr Khoury chaired a panel discussion on “The Future is Recycling”. WCRA & AWRE continue to enjoy mutual support and promotion through an ongoing agreement which covers 2020 and 2021.

## Groups

Within WCRA there are a number of single-sector, industry or regional sub-groups.

Meetings and workshops for these groups are scheduled and facilitated by WCRA and reported in the WCRA Executive monthly meetings.

### WCRA ACT GROUP

The drop off locations for the ACT Container Deposit Scheme have been expanded to 21 return points in operation, including 9 express points at charity shop fronts. The scheme is administered by “Exchange for Change”, with “Return it” as the scheme operator. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic the Scheme continues to operate.

Throughout the year representatives from the ACT Government met with WCRA to discuss a possible ACT waste levy. Based on experience with the NSW waste levy, WCRA then provided detailed information to the ACT Government. Throughout the year there were a number of media reports speculating that a levy would be introduced). The introduction of the waste levy in the ACT from July 2020 was placed on hold due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Effective from 1 July 2019 the NHVR took control of heavy vehicle compliance & enforcement across the ACT.

At the WCRA ACT Group meeting in December 2019 discussion was focused on the proposed export ban on recyclables and the proposed ACT waste levy.

### Liquid & Hazardous Waste Group

In mid-2019 the Executive decided to broaden the scope of this group to include hazardous waste issues.

Many specific issues affecting this group relate to Sydney Water (who regulate the disposal of grease trap waste and trade waste discharges). Amongst the issues referred to Sydney Water were a software issue that could have caused potential competition issues (fixed), reminder notices for missed scheduled services, adjustments to service frequencies resulting from business shutdowns due to Covid-19, potentially non-compliant operators & concerns relating to waste tracking (lawful disposal).

## Liquid & Hazardous Waste Group (cont'd)

Members continue to be concerned that Sydney Water has inadequate resources to fulfil its regulatory oversight of the sector. WCRA continues to seek reassurance and to address these concerns by obtaining a re-commitment from Sydney Water via our existing Code of Practice.

The EPA's waste levy on liquid waste was set at \$78.20 for 2020/21 (previously \$76.90). These funds are not hypothecated back for the benefit of the NSW liquid waste sector.

Looking ahead into the coming year, this sector will face a number of potential challenges including PFOS acceptance criteria at liquid treatment facilities, question marks over EPA's Resource Recovery Orders (treated grease trap waste) and a strategy to pressure the regulators (EPA & Sydney Water) to enforce compliance with the NSW liquid waste & grease trap waste regulations.

## C&D Waste Group

Throughout the year the Group met several times to discuss and address a range of issues including -:

- The appointment of Mr Brent Lawson from Concrete Recyclers to chair the activities of this group.
- An allowable asbestos limit or procedure for dealing with a rogue piece or two of asbestos in a C&D recycling facility. This group along with WMRR's C&D group have had numerous meetings with EPA in an attempt to address this matter. With a first draft having been produced in November 2011, however we seem to be no closer now to a resolution than we were in 2011.
- Meetings with Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, MP for Manly, Mr James Griffin and the Office of the Minister for the Environment (Mr Christian Dunk) to detail the Group's concerns relating to the lack of an allowable asbestos limit or procedure for dealing with a rogue piece or two of asbestos in C&D recycling.
- The impacts & management of Asbestos on the NSW Construction and Demolition Industry, an Industry based exercise supported by the industry associations, WMRR and WCRA. The industry has collectively contributed \$111,500 to cover the cost including consultant's scientific report, economic analysis and legal advice. As at, 30 June 2020 a balance of \$108,700 remained unspent.
- The Group continues to work closely with WMRR C&D Group and meets jointly from time to time presenting a united voice in response to (often ill-considered) Government regulatory proposals.
- WCRA promoted the EPA's Standards for Managing Construction Waste in NSW to Members. These Standards detail how an incoming load is to be inspected. Further sections include sorting, storage and transport. There is also a section on training. On behalf of Members, WCRA lobbied the EPA and the Minister for the Environment seeking clarification on sorting requirements, inspection points, storage, rejected loads, funding for asbestos detection equipment and the education of waste generators.

In August 2019 the NSW Court of Criminal Appeal in EPA v Grafil Pty Ltd and Mackenzie overturned a decision of the NSW Land and Environment Court that lifted the standard of proof for waste dumping offences and challenged the statutory definition of asbestos waste. The court's decision determined that one fragment of asbestos (regardless of its type or size) in a waste stockpile (no matter how large it is) will mean that the whole stockpile is classified as "asbestos waste". This judgement has significantly impacted the C&D recycling sector, in particular recovered fines and aggregates.

Looking ahead into the coming year, this sector is facing a number of major issues including an EPA review of the Resource Orders and Exemptions for recovered fines and a continuation of the debate on a procedure for managing asbestos in recycling facilities.

## Scrap Metal Group

Throughout 2019/20, a 50% waste levy concession applied on floc waste landfilled within NSW. This concession is a Waste Less Recycle More initiative designed to encourage scrap metal recyclers to accept scrap from regional areas along with products that had a marginal scrap metal value (eg. fridges, washing machines, etc. that contain significant plastic, non-scrap metal parts). An additional benefit of this concession was that it removed incentives to transport floc waste residue to cheaper SE QLD landfills. This concession will reduce to 25% by 1 July 2023.

Throughout the year, there were several fires at car wrecking yards across NSW. It was noted by Members and advised to Fire + Rescue NSW (and NSW EPA) that these yards are not be covered by the NSW Fire Waste Guidelines. One such fire at a car wrecking yard in western Sydney had to be extinguished with access to bulk water tanks from a compliant neighbour (a WCRA Members' scrap metal yard).

NSW regulations pertaining to no cash payments for scrap metal continue in NSW, albeit with the Police no longer having a dedicated unit for the proper enforcement of these laws. This lack of enforcement continues to cause business issues for legitimate operators, whilst the business model of rogue operators flourishes.

In late 2019 WCRA submitted to the Federal Government that the proposed ban on plastic exports may have an unintended consequence on the export of an ~400,000 tonnes of insulated copper wire.

In May 2020 WCRA facilitated a discussion by the Group with the NSW Audit Office on the importance of metal recycling to the NSW economy and the steel manufacturing sector.



*In July, WCRA represented by Mr Wilson & Mr Khoury met Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, MP for Manly Mr James Griffin, in his electoral office. Mr Griffin then visited Concrete Recyclers, Camellia with WCRA C & D Chair, Brent Lawson & Tony Khoury. Arising from this visit, Mr Griffin invited WCRA to formally write to him in relation to the need for a protocol or formal procedure to deal with a rogue piece or several pieces of asbestos in a C & D recycling facility.*

## The Issues We Address

### NSW Container Deposit Scheme

The NSW CDS has now been in operation for two and a half years with the NSW Government reporting that the scheme has been a phenomenal success story. Conceived as a litter reduction initiative, Return and Earn has now collected more than 4 billion containers in just over two years.

A number of Members with MRFs requested that transfers of unprocessed recyclables (during seasonal peaks, breakdowns, upgrades, etc.) be eligible for credits under the MRF protocol. WCRA has successfully negotiated with EPA for a resolution.

A number of issues remain unresolved:

- To assist the parties to reach agreement on revenue sharing under MRF refund sharing protocol, WCRA has developed a proforma agreement. Whilst many Councils have agreed to revenue sharing, a number of Councils do not have revenue sharing agreements.
- Several Members expressed concerns to WCRA that bin raiders are taking eligible CDS containers from kerbside bins. These concerns include public liability, personal injury, littering and loss of revenue.
- The issue of CDS refunds for commercial co-mingled materials remains unresolved.

### Glass Recycling

As detailed in both the 2018 & 2019 annual reports the issues surrounding glass recycling were referred by EPA to the China Sword Taskforce. We reiterate our comments that this is a confusing concept since glass is not exported to any great extent and therefore not impacted in any way by the National Sword Policy. There was further confusion when the Federal Government decided to ban the export of recycled glass.

Several positive discussions have taken place with RMS who have indicated that they propose to increase the percentage of recycled glass content in asphalt mixes.

WCRA continues to lobby the NSW Government to mandate the prioritisation of recycled glass content in road-making materials.

### Load Management Waste & Recycling Industry Code of Practice

WRIQ is leading the development of a NHVR endorsed Waste & Recycling Industry Code of Practice for Load Management. The code is currently being assessed by the NHVR.

### Long Distance Transport of Waste

Despite the failure by EPA to enforce the Proximity Principle, it continues to retain its place amongst NSW regulations. Despite the QLD waste levy, substantial volumes of waste continue to be transported north. Disappointingly, there were several major road accidents involving waste carted by long-haul trucks.

### Weight Based Charging

Across the waste management industry there are several weighing systems that have NMI approval. The NMI have advised WCRA they are currently investigating the industry to ensure that customers billed by weight are via NMI approved systems. In WCRA's meetings with NMI they have advised that the waste industry was a significantly larger scale and more complex task than had been anticipated.

### Standards Australia – MGBs and Mobile Bin Lifting Equipment

In early 2020 the Technical Committee established for a review of the Mobile Waste Container Standard along with an additional part for mobile bin lifters was deemed unconstitutional and never met. At the time of writing this report, Standards Australia is again constituting Technical Committee PL-047 with responsibility for Standards review and development to commence in late 2020.

## Media

WCRA continues to review the industry and general media articles of specific interest to WCRA Members. Across 2019/20, approximately 15 media articles per month were brought to the attention of the Executive. Amongst the key media themes were the following-:

- Waste not, want not, COAG pledges to stop the export of waste plastic, paper, glass & tyres.
- Fires in Waste Management facilities.
- NSW Police responds to truck fatality with five-day blitz.
- Global garbage to be shipped home.
- NSW Court of Criminal Appeal ruling on asbestos waste case explained.
- Berejiklian Government must stop plans for Western Sydney incinerator.
- NSW EPA's decision on MWOO gains backlash from industry.
- Consultation has closed on EPA's 20-year waste strategy – what now?
- Truck driver killed man, moved corpse, say Police.
- Councils need to budget more for recycling.
- Waste industry & Covid-19.

## What do WCRA Members want from Government ?

### **WCRA Members**

- We want a level commercial playing field;
- Regulations should provide certainty;
- We should be consulted & listened to;
- Waste including recyclables should be managed in a safe, sustainable & environmentally sound manner;
- Regulations and proper practices need to be enforced by all regulators, the EPA, DPIE, RMS, NHVR, Police, ATO, SafeWork NSW, Councils, Health, etc.
- NSW Government (with ~ \$750 m of waste levy to consolidated revenue) is well placed to intervene and assist in addressing issues that affect the waste management sector.

## Functions and Events

### WCRA Annual Dinner and Awards night – November 2019

The very popular WCRA Annual Dinner was held on 29th November 2019 in The Sales Arena at the luxurious William Inglis Hotel at Chipping Norton. 238 Attendees from across the industry enjoyed the evening where the winners were announced for the President's Award iQ Renew, with the WHS Award winners Ben Tate & Kerry Browning from Brandster Services.

With much of the ACT and NSW experiencing severe drought and bushfires, the Guests took it upon themselves to auction off a range of items including hi-vis vests and truck tyres. A total of \$12,950 was raised and donated to the Children's Hospital Westmead (burns unit) & St Vincent de Paul Orange (drought relief rural and farming families' assistance fund).



*Danny Gallagher from iQ Renew accepting the President's Award at the WCRA Annual Dinner. Also, on stage are Tony Khoury (WCRA), Mark Bramley (Gallagher Insurance Brokers, Sponsor) & the Hon. Kate Washington MP, Shadow Minister for the Environment.*



*Ben Tate & Kerry Browning from Brandster Services accepting the WHS Award at the WCRA Annual Dinner. Also, in the photo are Tony Khoury, Varenya-Mohan Ram (TWU Super, Sponsor), Jeff Brandstater and Michael Darmanin (TWU Super).*

## Industry Update Conference – June 2020



This annual event was due to be held at the Kirribilli Club in June 2020 however was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In lieu of this event, WCRA hosted a ZOOM meeting on Thursday 11th June 2020 with special guest speaker the Hon. Trevor Evans MP, Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environment Management. Mr Evans detailed the government's proposed ban on the export of recyclables & other current recycling issues. A number of Members raised questions on the potential impacts for the recycling sector. A range of other issues affecting the waste management industry such as Covid-19 & the Federal Government's response, long distance transport of waste (and waste levy portability) were also discussed.

## Breakfast Briefing 12 November 2019

106 Members, Sponsors & other Stakeholders attended a breakfast at Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club. Dr Kar Mei Tang, Executive Director, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, along with Mr Mark Gifford, Chief Environmental Regulator, NSW EPA delivered updates on the 20-year waste strategy (see slide below), resource recovery issues, regulatory matters, EPA priorities and AWT update. In the Q & A session, an attendee requested that the Chair of the EPA address a future WCRA breakfast briefing session.

### Key issues from 20-year waste strategy stakeholder feedback

- ▶ Waste infrastructure
- ▶ Domestic processing and demand for recycled material
- ▶ Product design and packaging
- ▶ Address confusion about what is/isn't recyclable
- ▶ Regulatory certainty
- ▶ A systems-based approach needed, with a long-term view



- ▶ LT strategic view of waste as an essential service
- ▶ Waste levy
- ▶ Waste infrastructure gaps
- ▶ WARR KRAs and performance metrics
- ▶ FOGO, AWT
- ▶ MUDs
- ▶ Community appetite for recycling

## Breakfast Briefing 10 March 2020



Ms Carolyn Walsh, Chair of the Board, NSW EPA addressing 117 Members, Sponsors & other Stakeholders with a presentation on the objectives of the NSW EPA. Earlier, the industry outlined its position via a series of short presentations delivered by:-

- Ms Ros Dent, Bingo, commercial & industrial waste
- Mr Brent Lawson, Concrete Recyclers, construction & demolition recycling
- Mr David Clancy, Cleanaway, municipal waste contracting & infrastructure
- Ms Anne Prince, A. Prince Consulting, recycling including the proposed export bans

## WCRA Golf Day



The Ron Horswell Memorial WCRA Golf Challenge was held on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at Cabramatta. Eighteen teams of Members, Sponsors and their Guests enjoyed a wonderful day and spectacular weather. The four ball Ambrose format is a popular event, with the winning team for the second successive year captained by David Harrison from SULO / Viscount Plastics.



## Retirees Luncheon

The annual luncheon for Retirees from across the waste management industry was held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at the Dooleys venue in Lidcombe. This is a very popular and well attended get-together. One of the guests was a very happy semi-retired, Nick Koorey who sold his business, Koorey Liquid Waste to Remondis in the early 2000's. Another guest was an equally happy Jim Gorman who retired from Cleanaway in 2005 after 20 years of service.

## Harness Racing, WCRA Sponsor's Night

This annual event was due to be held at the Penrith Harness track on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## WCRA Premises

The premises owned by WCRA in Wetherill Park provides the Association and our Members with an excellent location for meetings, training and administration at no additional cost. The convenience of plentiful parking is an added advantage. WCRA is the only waste and recycling industry association in Australia to own its own premises. With the advent of Covid-19, the boardroom has been fitted out with the necessary hardware, laptop, speakers, camera and screen so that meetings can be held via either Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

**“We live in a disposable society.  
It's easier to throw things out  
than to fix them. We even give it  
a name, we call it recycling.”**

**- Neil LaBute**

## WCRA's valued Sponsors

We would like to thank our generous Sponsors for their continued support of the Association. Sponsors assist us to provide better services to our Members and to the industry. When seeking a product or a service, we encourage Members to please support our Sponsors by requesting a proposal for their product or service offering.



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## Executive Director of WCRA Tony Khoury



Many across the industry have formed the view that the NSW EPA appears to have lost touch with how to regulate to support good, legitimate waste management business operators. This issue was further highlighted in a recent media release where the NSW Minister for the Environment the Hon. Mr Kean referred to ‘dodgy individuals and organisations’ in the waste sector.

However, if the EPA is to be a true ‘world-class regulator’ and we are to achieve our resource recovery goals, then the EPA and the NSW Government needs to have an action plan for disrupting unlawful business models, without there being unintended impacts for legitimate operators. One way to address this issue is to convince the NSW Government that a position needs to be created on the Board of the NSW EPA for a highly experienced waste industry representative.

As we look forward to WCRA’s 73<sup>rd</sup> year, that would be a great outcome for the waste management industry.

On behalf of the WCRA staff and the Executive, a massive thankyou to all Members, Sponsors and Stakeholders for your support and engagement with WCRA.

**“When you put the whole  
picture together, recycling is  
the right thing to do.”**

**– Pam Shoemaker, Author**