



**NSROC Submission to the  
Review of the Waste Strategy and Policy in NSW (Richmond Report)  
and the  
NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy  
(Draft Implementation Plan 2011- 2015)**

**4 February 2011**

The Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) is comprised of seven councils (Hunter's Hill, North Sydney, Willoughby, Ku-ring-gai, Ryde, Hornsby and Lane Cove) in the northern part of Sydney which have voluntarily come together to address regional issues, work co-operatively for the benefit of the region, and advocate on agreed regional positions and priorities. All of these councils work closely with their communities to ensure that planning for growth within the region is sustainable and recognises the social, economic and environmental needs of the community.

This NSROC response is limited to key issues given the short timeframe available for comment (with the report's release on 20 December 2010) and the extent of detail in the independent Richmond Review Report and Draft NSW Strategy. For further information on this submission contact NSROC Executive Director, Ms Carolynne James, on 99113595 or [cjames@lanecove.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cjames@lanecove.nsw.gov.au)

**KEY COMMENTS**

- **NSROC Council's performance against municipal targets.**

As noted in the Richmond Review, in 2008-09 the municipal sector in NSW was around two thirds of the way to meeting its targets of 66% diversion of waste from landfill by 2014. NSROC member councils have specifically worked to improve their diversion rates from land fill. In 2008-09 four of our seven member councils (Ku-ring-gai, Willoughby, North Sydney and Hunters Hill) were in the top 20 councils for diversion rates in resource recovery. In 2009-10 our member councils have averaged a 48% diversion rate from landfill.

- **Shift to system enhancements and technology assisted management of waste materials**

The experience of NSROC member councils in waste management mirrors the comments of the Richmond Review, that is, achieving the remaining change necessary to meet the municipal waste targets will be considerably more difficult than the gains achieved so far. NSROC councils have limited capacity to improve compliance at curbside separation level beyond the high standard that has already been achieved. Consistent with the approach recommended in the Review, NSROC councils are now considering options for system enhancements and innovative waste materials management. This may extend to collective (regional) bundling of management and operations and/or associated infrastructure development of waste management facilities.

NSROC view is that the industry and local government should be allowed to consider and clarify the recommendations of Richmond Report separate from the consideration of the NSW Government's response.

Given NSROC's new strategic waste management focus, the Reviews enhancement recommendations that are tied to development of new technology and other supporting financing, waste infrastructure and planning elements are most significant. These include:

- Enhancement 5 – Best practice for managing municipal waste<sup>1</sup>
- Enhancement 8 - Local infrastructure for collection of other wastes
- Enhancement 10 - Place-based waste management
- Enhancement 12 - Funding better waste outcomes
- Enhancement 13 - AWT output exemption
- Enhancement 15 - Energy from Waste
- Enhancement 16 - Waste Infrastructure and Sustainability Fund
- Enhancement 17 - Innovation and investment
- Enhancement 21 - Land use planning
- Enhancement 22 - New entrants to the infrastructure market.

In general NSROC councils support these enhancements although further discussion and clarification would be desirable.

○ **NSW Strategic Direction –Facilitating investment in waste infrastructure**

Consistent with this emphasis on infrastructure, NSROC councils are particularly interested in the NSW Government's Focus Area 4 – Facilitating Investment in waste infrastructure. NSROC welcomes the acknowledgement by the State Government that there are "market failures where councils need to be able to aggregate to a 'critical mass' level to better procure services and infrastructure in non rural areas."

This "market" failure is not only related to a lack of expertise within councils about new waste markets and systems but also relates to statutory restrictions on collective activities imposed by the Local Government Act. Section 337 of the Act effectively restricts councils capacity to delegate to third parties to jointly raise funds, tender, negotiate and build infrastructure or profit making assets. This restriction applies across any regional activity or enterprise across councils and limits councils market options compared with the approaches available to the private sector. This market failure in the context of waste management is an exemplar for a broader reform required for NSW local government management.

NSROC agrees with the Actions proposed in Focus Area 4 (Actions 4.1 to 4.8) but believes they could be strengthened and take up more of the specific enhancements proposed by the Review. In particular, NSROC recommends that the Focus Area 4 Strategy be expanded to include a greater focus on local government waste management options and impediments.

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<sup>1</sup> NSROC supports best practice approaches however this does not necessarily require standardised processes. Best practice can be measured by achievement of prescribed outcomes and performance goals.

Additional actions should include:

- examination of land use planning instruments to enable effective planning of collection points and AWT and energy to waste facilities; and
- examination of business models for more place-based waste management with the expansion of municipal into commercial waste ie shifting the focus from waste source to waste type processing.

As noted, NSROC member councils are examining many of these elements as part of its ongoing reform and improvement of waste management operations. As such NSROC councils would be available to work with DECCW in the context of a “case management” approach (Action 4.3) for the development of a regional solution for waste management in the NSROC region.

### **CONCLUSION**

NSROC recommends that specific municipal waste initiatives identified in this submission should be incorporated and activated in the NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy - Strategic Directions and Implementation Plan 2011-2015.