



# **Local Government Response to the Draft National Waste Policy Framework: Less waste more resources**

**Contact:**

**Sue Bronstein – Policy Officer**

**GPO Box 1521, Hobart 7001**

**Ph: 03 6233 5961**

**July 2009**

## **Introduction**

Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT), together with the north western, northern and southern Local Government Regional Waste groups, would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Draft National Waste Policy Framework: Less waste more resources Discussion Paper*.

The Association has prepared this response in consultation with the regional waste groups. This response draws on comments already contributed at the consultation forums and provided through the submission on the 'Managing Waste to 2020 Consultation Paper' in May 2009.

It is therefore not proposed to reiterate all matters raised by Local Government in this response but rather to focus predominantly on the key points of clarification and update since the consultation paper.

## **General Comments**

Whilst there is some concern about the short timeframe in which to prepare a response, Local Government in Tasmania welcomes the consultation process undertaken by the Waste Policy Taskforce to inform the development of the draft framework.

Local Government is also supportive of the broad principles outlined in the discussion paper for the development of a strategic framework that delivers enduring change to waste management in Australia, reduces the volumes of waste generated and the levels of contamination of waste streams and establishes a culture of recovery where 'waste' becomes a resource that adds value to the community and our economy.

The Association also agrees that key characteristics such as those identified in the discussion paper and including: a suite of objectives, strategies and actions – will help facilitate and inform the framework's development.

## **Key points of clarification and update since the Consultation Paper**

*National Policy* – The Association recognises that all levels of government, as well as the community and industry, will have a role to play in delivering against the strategies and actions under the National Waste Policy. It is important to reiterate that Local Government is strongly committed to achieving positive waste management outcomes in Tasmania. The Association also agrees that a national approach to resource recovery and waste management does not mean adopting uniform arrangements or a 'one size fits all' approach that cannot be tailored to meet local circumstances. This view is consistent with the concerns already expressed in the submission made by Local Government on the consultation paper.

*Vision and scope* – The development of an integrated National Waste Policy that sets out a clear vision is seen as critical to more effectively drive change.

*Market Arrangements* – Local Government in Tasmania agrees that market arrangements tend to be focused on 'end-of-pipe' solutions for waste disposal and reiterates its support for Extended producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes.

*Maximising benefit* – Local Government recognises that the development of a cohesive, efficient and effective National Waste Policy can help fulfill other goals and that reducing overall waste production and managing waste as a resource also provides an opportunity to innovate and

develop new processes and technologies. However, it is important to reiterate that the issue of scale in Tasmania means that the cost of accessing many new technologies needs to be considered against the financial and technical challenges already being faced by Local Government and its capacity to cope with increasing regulation.

*Product stewardship* – It is acknowledged that in considering the development of a national product stewardship scheme/EPR framework, not every material and product available in the marketplace will be covered. Nevertheless, Local Government reiterates its belief that it is time for producers to take greater responsibility for the products they make, and is therefore supportive of EPR schemes as a means of achieving a greater focus on this end of the waste hierarchy.

*Legacy emissions* – Local Government reiterates that there are significant cost and resource implications for Tasmania in relation to managing and reducing landfill emissions, and the reality is that without financial and other support, the associated costs of compliance would have to be passed directly onto rate payers.

### **Themes and directions**

Whilst supporting the overall themes and directions proposed in the discussion paper, there is a concern in relation to 6.5.7 *'Tailoring Solutions Building capacity in regional, remote and Indigenous communities'* - that not enough importance appears to have been devoted to solutions, bearing in mind that this will be, and has been a significant challenge in Tasmania. Local Government does not have any easy fix or further options to address the issues of distance, lack of volume and low returns for recycled products.

### **Conclusion**

In closing, Local Government supports the overall direction of the framework and welcomes the opportunity to comment on the issues raised in the discussion paper.