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## INITIATIVE

### STRENGTHEN AUSTRALIA'S CIRCULAR ECONOMY

#### WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Australia is producing more waste and its current market solutions, materials pathways and collection services are no longer viable or sustainable.

#### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR COMMUNITIES?

A rise in costs for kerb-side recycling collection services will impact council budgets, and the resultant increase in rates and levies will put further strain on families' hip pocket costs.

#### WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- The reduction of Australian exports of recycled materials to China, coupled with the decline in global prices for recyclates, is an immediate threat to the sustainability of Australia's waste and recycling systems.
- Australians are keen recyclers and local government has a long history in numerous successful education campaigns that have facilitated this positive attitude. Maintaining and improving household-based waste management practices needs to be continued as the industry re-shapes itself.
- Revenue is already being raised through state waste levies with the objectives of reducing the amount of waste being landfilled and promoting recycling and resource recovery.
- Products are being produced from many different materials, with different recycling properties. Infrastructure capabilities and capacities to separate, process, store or landfill waste and recycling materials can vary across the nation and falling prices inhibit investment by both the public and private sectors. Dense urban centres struggle with issues of space and growing quantities of materials, while remote and regional centres may struggle with transport distances and costs and economies of scale.
- The Commonwealth has a critical role in promoting and strengthening a circular economy for a sustainable future including through investment incentives. Failure to do so risks mounting stockpiles of waste manufactured here and overseas, along with the associated safety concerns and ever-increasing amounts of potentially useful materials going to landfill. A coordinated, Australia-wide approach should be adopted to avoid the development of inefficient local (i.e. state-based) circular economies.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROPOSES

- The Commonwealth Government take a stronger role in strengthening Australia's circular economy. This can be achieved by leading, developing and implementing – in collaboration with key stakeholders – a national waste and resource recovery strategy underpinned by circular economy principles, the waste hierarchy, product stewardship and extended producer responsibility.
- The Commonwealth Government coordinate implementation of a national accreditation system for products with recycled-content that can be used by State and Local Governments, industry/business and consumers as a credible method of making responsible purchasing decisions.



**91% support**  
a national action plan  
on recycling



**88% support**  
new requirements for packaging  
to be recyclable, and for national  
education to reduce contamination  
in kerbside recycling

**88%** of recyclates still being  
processed domestically



**89%** want recycled  
content included in  
government procurement