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| Name | Rebecca Prince-Ruiz |
| Role or organisation | Executive Director, Plastic Free Foundation |

Question 1 - What are the key issues facing the NSW waste system?

Pressure on offshore markets for recyclable material and a lack of on-shore processing infrastructure for recyclable materials.

Question 2 - What are the main barriers to improving the NSW waste system?

Long term policy certainty is required for industry to invest in infrastructure that has significant upfront investment and long payback periods. Disconnect between packaging and manufacturing industry and waste industry and increasing number of traditionally durable items being manufactured at low cost for single-use.

Question 3 - How can we best reduce waste?

The Waste Strategy needs to acknowledge and support waste reduction as a key pillar of a successful waste strategy. Consideration of reducing waste at the source must be a key component of this approach and not just consider reduction of waste to landfill as the aim. Support and develop waste avoidance behaviour change best practice programmes with measured outcomes such as Love Food, Hate Waste and Plastic Free July. Funding these initiatives and community uptake and delivery of these programs is a key way to engage the wider community in waste reduction behaviours.

Question 4 - How can we recycle better?

Extended producer responsibility schemes are essential. Look at eliminating problematic packaging types with no markets eg mixed material packaging, polystyrene. Require minimum mandated Australian recycled content in packaging - this needs a national and staged approach. Adopt progressive government procurement policies to help initiate this.

Question 5 - What are the main opportunities for improving the NSW waste system?

National consistency for waste management and resource recovery policies including landfill levies. Ban lightweight plastic bags in line with other states and territories to reduce contamination in recycling as well as organics streams. Look to leaders such as EU and UK for policy directions.

Question 6 - Any other information that you would like to contribute to the waste strategy initiative?