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

Lack of community understanding about the true costs of waste management. Perception is that waste management (especially in rural areas) is expensive when in fact fees need to be higher. Community perception on what happens to recycling. Several isolated cases of recycling going to landfill and some people in the community believe that all recycling is landfilled. What is able to be recycled isn't consistent in all areas, which results in contamination of recycling streams. Lack of local established markets for recycled materials. New products that are marketed as recyclable/compostable based on the area or country they are manufactured from, are not considered as recyclable/compostable in the area or country they are sold in. Creates confusion in the community and recycling industry. Rural communities are impacted by the increased cost of transporting waste long distances. Potential introduction of Waste levy in rural areas. Whilst this has been rumoured for some years now if a waste levy was introduced into a non-waste levy region there will be significant back lash from the community when costs associated with waste management increase. Use of VENM at Landfills. We are in essence mining virgin ground to cover waste at Landfills. There needs to be a greater range of acceptable materials that can be used not only as daily cover but intermediate and final capping. Availability and cost impact of purchasing and transporting VENM and cover materials in a rural community. Dealing with rehabilitation of Legacy Landfill Sites. Insufficient funds available to Local Government to rehabilitate old sites. Grant funding opportunities to improve infrastructure/establish new recycling opportunities needs to be expanded with additional funds available.

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

Requires recognition that there is a place for Energy from Waste in the waste hierarchy and preapproval of suitable technologies Lack of willingness from the community to pay the true cost of waste disposal Lack of understanding by the community of the impacts associated with incorrect disposal of materials (contamination) Lack of leadership at the Federal Government level for Waste Management (?it is a State Government issue?) National Waste Strategy while released in 2018, not setting holistic circular economy direction, minimal focus on commencing with the need to use less first, lack of States requirement to follow Strategy (voluntary) and thereby allowing States to guide (mandate) Local Government and the waste industry. Lack of enforceable state/federal government targets and legislation for reducing waste or increasing diversion rates. There is not a robust established recycling industry that produces high quality feedstocks for other manufacturing sectors competitively, consistently and uniformly. There is minimal knowledge, acceptance, requirement of any industry to utilise recycled materials as feedstock. Recognition that landfill sites can be mined for materials. Not all facilities are suitable but many are. Mining can occur as part of waste to fuel strategy and resource recovery strategy

Question 3 - How can we best reduce waste?

Unified and defined education across all community demographics to increase the knowledge and awareness of waste disposal for all aspects of waste management Engage with Advertising industry to reduce the reliance of junk mail and other print media as a form of advertising and moving further into electronic media. Reduce packaging on and around products. Mandate recycled content in all packaging. Public education program detailing acceptance of delivery of food type materials and minimal packaging required for safe delivery. There needs to be legislation around single use products and packaging to force the commercial industry to reduce unnecessary waste. A lot of fruit and vegetables that have a natural protection layer are packaged in plastic e.g. corn

Question 4 - How can we recycle better?

Unified and defined education across all community demographics to increase the knowledge and awareness of waste disposal for all aspects of waste management Create true circular economy opportunities. Put barriers in place which will help to establish a circular economy. Ie there is no market for recycled coloured glass in Australia yet we allow cheap imports of coloured glass products to continue. Use market restrictions to allow a local market to develop, become cost effective and then revert back to an open market in years to come Use product stewardship opportunities more extensively. People don't seem to question paying extra at the time of sale to recycle a product but they do question paying extra at the end of life to recycle. Eliminate comingled recycling where economically viable to do so. Have a recycling system based on streams, cardboard and paper, glass, metals, hard plastics and soft plastics. People want to recycle. Reverting to streams will reduce contamination. Will also allow niche recycling industries dedicated to a specific stream produce high quality feedstocks. Increase FOGO collections systems, either bin collections or FOGO collection centres. Increase compost production opportunities particularly at Local Government Landfills including modification and streamlining of start-up and regulatory requirements and cost impacts. Government sector leadership by moving away from print records and paper based systems to further engaging with electronic records management systems and electronic communication media What is recyclable is largely LGA specific. State and/or Federal government should set a minimum standard for what is accepted at recycling facilities. A minimum standard will enable large scale education on what is accepted at all facilities state wide but still allow for localised markets that can focus education on just their own local small extra recyclable items.

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

Recycling material targets for government procurement. Expansion of community recycling centres. Development of recycling industry and manufacture. Look to establish opportunities in regional areas which can also act as a backload for the transport of materials, reducing the overall cost of moving materials (especially in rural areas) Increase product stewardship programs Expansion and more documentation/education of the resource recovery orders and exemptions

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

Strengthening of partnerships between industry associations and regional waste groups to ensure that any regulatory and industry requirements are being met across the board. This will enable the industry to be on the same footing to provide NSW with a smaller environmental footprint in regards to waste disposal and the reuse of recyclable material