

Resources Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan

2021 - 2024

Foreword

The Department of Resources is a diverse organisation with a Queensland-wide footprint. As with any large organisation, it is inevitable that our varied functions will produce waste; waste that Resources is committed to managing responsibly and effectively.

Resources vision is: We will be an influential economic department that advocates in the public interest

Resources Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan is aligned with the 10-year Queensland Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy (2014-2024) and commits us to more accurately measuring the waste we generate; continue to strengthen our management strategies to minimise waste through specific waste reduction and recycling activities; and committing to continuous improvement in the way we address waste management across Resources.

Our goal through this Plan is to firmly embed waste management practices into our operations, to ensure we operate responsibly and with a strong sense of stewardship over the unique natural environment in which we work and live.

*Celia Venables
A/Deputy Director-General*

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Introduction

The *Queensland Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* (the Act) requires each State entity to prepare, adopt and implement a Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan that will contribute to the achievement of the 10-year state-wide targets set in the *Queensland Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy (2014-2024)* (the Strategy).

The Resources Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan (the Plan) sets the overall direction for waste management within the department for the period 1 August 2021 to 30 June 2024 and follows on from the 2018 to 2021 Plan.

An overview of our organisation, the functions we perform, and the types of waste generated because of the department's activities are provided in Sections 1 and 2 of this Plan. Section 3 details our approach in meeting our waste management responsibilities.

The primary focus of the 2021-2024 Plan will be to further improve and consolidate recycling and waste activities to contribute to government targets.

In line with Resources' culture of continuous improvement, the success of the department's Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan will be annually monitored to ensure its objectives are met.

Resources Objectives

The Department of Resources (Resources) will capitalise on Queensland's resources for sustainable economic prosperity and just outcomes.

The Department will contribute to optimising use of land resources throughout the state, increased private sector investment in georesources while ensuring our obligations are met through positive stakeholder and public sentiment on our policies, programs, and people.

Resources will also develop a contemporary workforce set apart by its expertise, innovation, collaboration, and leadership while unlocking the potential of data.

The strategic objectives of the Department will also support the key principles of the Queensland Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy 2014 – 2024 which are:

- Protecting human health and the environment to secure our future prosperity
- Sharing responsibility for avoiding unnecessary consumption and improving resource management
- Recognising the economic, environmental, and social costs of waste generation and disposal
- Recognising regional differences and opportunities
- Full lifecycle management of resources

What wastes are generated from Resources operations?

A significant proportion of the Department's workforce is in the Brisbane CBD. These sites present the greatest opportunity to improve our waste and recycling activities.

Office vs non-office-based operations

For the purposes of waste management, the Department's operations have been divided into two broad categories: Office based, and non-office based. The rationale behind this distinction is the underlying assumption that office-based functions will generate a generic waste stream irrespective of the geographical location or the specific role performed. On the other hand, our non-office-based activities generate waste streams very different to office-based operations.

Waste generated from office-based operations

The majority of the department's staff perform office-based functions. It is anticipated that the office-

based waste stream will likely be consistent with the profile of waste generated in a typical office environment.

Implementation of this plan will focus on our tenanted sites that accommodate Departmental staff and presents the greatest opportunity to improve our waste and recycling management initiatives. These locations are:

- Brisbane CBD
- Regional Centres

It is important to note that these sites are in multi-tenanted buildings, and aggregated data is available for the waste generated by all the building tenants at these locations. Building managers do not collect waste data for individual tenants.

Waste generated from non-office-based operations

Through operational divestment and machinery of government changes, the non-office-based footprint has significantly reduced since the publishing of the previous strategic plan (2018 – 2021). Non-office-based operations performed by Resources now only occur at the following sites:

- depot sites at various locations across regional Queensland.

These operations generate a very low volume of waste however sound waste management practices are employed considering sites are not constantly manned.

Waste management achievements to date

During the past few years, the Department has taken several initiatives to improve the management of waste generated by its operations. These initiatives include:

- the relocation of Resources staff to buildings with very high environmental credentials e.g., 1 William Street. In these buildings Resources has access to best practice principles in waste and recycling management provided by the building manager, comprising paper/cardboard, toner cartridges, batteries, co-mingled and landfill
- the introduction of “print-on-demand” and default double-sided printing facilities as standard practice for Resources tenancies with printer functions
- through DEPW introducing a ‘marketplace’ initiative to facilitate the reuse of surplus office equipment, and
- local auction arrangements for regional locations will also be a priority outcome to office changes.

The department's Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan is designed to build upon these initiatives and to integrate sound waste management practices into day-to-day operations including continuing to rollout “print-on-demand” at new sites.

Resources’ approach to Waste Management

Resources’ vision is: We will be an influential economic department that advocates in the public interest.

Our approach to waste management is guided by the principles set out below.

Understanding our waste profile

Accommodation Services has promoted waste and recycling awareness through tenancy committee meetings and included the objectives of the *“Queensland Waste Avoidance and Resources Productivity Strategy (2014-2024)”* into its procedures for building refurbishment projects.

The waste management hierarchy

The waste and resource management hierarchy (Figure 1 below) sets the order of preference for options to manage waste—from avoiding, to re-using, recovering, treating, and disposing of waste.

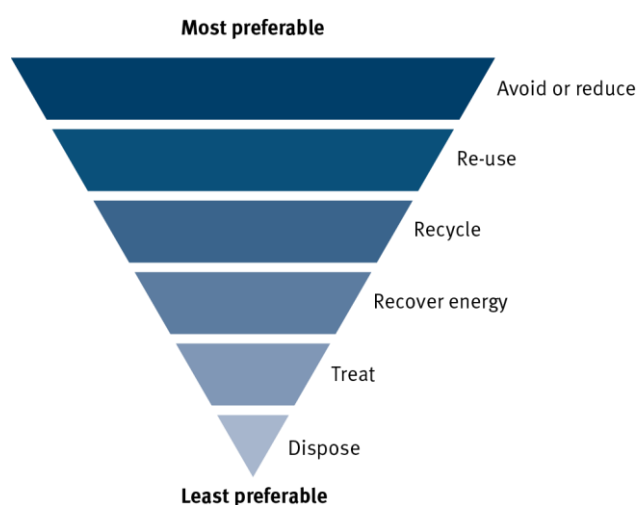


Figure 1: The waste and resource management hierarchy

The hierarchy is a tool to help decision makers prioritise waste reduction and recycling activities. Where avoidance is not possible, options should be investigated for the reuse, and then the recycling of waste materials. As a next available option, waste could be used as a source of energy, if volumes are adequate. Disposal of waste should be the last resort.

Table 1 – Resources use of the hierarchy in managing its waste

Management Option	Definition	Examples of waste reduction and recycling activities ¹
Avoid	<i>Avoid unnecessary resource consumption.</i>	Avoid the generation of paper waste by encouraging the use of electronic copies of documentation and introducing print-on-demand.
Reduce	<i>Reduce waste generation and disposal.</i>	Ensure all printers are set to double-sided printing as a default. Resources has changed its policy to enable the use of e-copies as official records.
Reuse	<i>Reuse waste resources without further manufacturing.</i>	Review policies on the disposal of obsolete IT (or other) equipment with a focus on identifying alternative uses or users. Consider auction or third-party distribution for excess assets that are tagged for disposal.
Recycle	<i>Turning waste resources into similar or different products.</i>	Provide recycling bins in offices and non-office work environments.
Disposal	<i>Dispose of waste only if there is no viable alternative.</i>	Resources will ensure, where possible, that our waste will only be disposed of at landfill facilities that are operated in accordance with prescribed legislation.

¹ Note that these are generic examples.

Resource management principles

The following principles will guide the decisions we make in the management of our waste.

Principle	Definition	Examples of waste reduction and recycling activities
The polluter pays principle	<i>All costs associated with the management of waste should be borne by the persons who generated the waste. The costs associated with the management of waste may include the costs of minimising the amount of waste generated; containing, treating, and disposing of waste; and rectifying environmental harm caused by waste.</i>	Educating staff on the full implications of inappropriate waste activities – e.g. once a co-mingled recycling bin is contaminated, the contents of the whole bin will go to landfill. This has an environmental cost as well as an added financial cost to the organisation.
The proximity principle	<i>Waste and recovered resources should be managed as close to the source of generation as possible.</i>	Reviewing waste management arrangements to ensure that we use local service providers where possible. (Note: This will be particularly relevant to the management of waste in regional and remote locations.)
The product stewardship principle	<i>There is a shared responsibility between all persons who are involved in the lifecycle of a product for managing the environmental, social, and economic impact of the product</i>	Sharing responsibility for avoiding unnecessary consumption and improving resource management.

Continuous Improvement

The diagram below illustrates how the activities that we propose for this Plan will align with a cycle of continuous improvement.



Figure 2: Cycle of continuous improvement in waste management

Long-term Objectives

Waste—Everyone’s responsibility: Queensland Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy (2014–2024) (the State Strategy) sets a range of targets to be achieved by 2024. Resources will contribute to these targets.

The State Strategy states that the Queensland Government will work with industry and the community to identify problem or priority wastes² and determine the most appropriate management option for each waste stream. Actions recommended under the State Strategy will include methods for the improved management of Queensland’s priority wastes.

Resources will continue to support the Queensland Waste Avoidance and Resources Productivity Strategy (2014-2024) in particular those wastes with high disposal impacts (such as toxicity or greenhouse gas emissions), social impacts (such as community concern or amenity), or whose recovery would present resource savings or business opportunities.

In addition to these priorities, the Department’s approach over the period of this Plan will be to contribute to the 2024 state-wide targets by:

- identifying and monitoring the department’s waste profile
- adopting waste management and reduction practices that maximise Resources’ contribution to achieving the State targets, within the context of the wider public interest
- where appropriate, communicating the achievements.

The nine-year timeframe for realising the state-wide targets provides for a trio of agency plans, each with a three-year timeframe. It is envisaged that those three plans will take the following approaches: Plan: 2015-2018 – Completed the baseline data collection, development and implementation of initial

² Priority waste is defined in the Strategy as wastes “with high disposal impacts (such as toxicity or greenhouse gas emissions), social impacts (such as community concern or amenity) or whose recovery would represent resource savings or business opportunities”.

waste reduction and recycling activities

Plan: 2018-2021 – continuous improvement, review and refinement of waste reduction and recycling activities

Plan: 2021-2024 – further improvement and consolidation.

These plans will be integrated with each plan, building on the work of the previous one.

Waste reduction and recycling targets

The *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act (2011)* requires Resources to set waste reduction and recycling targets for the waste generated by the department in carrying out its operations.

Waste generation target

In line with the State-wide reduction target for all general waste, resources will strive towards best practice (as relevant in each of its locations) as a means of contributing towards a 5% reduction in state-wide waste generation by 2024.

Recycling target

In line with the state-wide target for commercial and industrial waste, Resources will strive towards best recycling practice (as relevant to individual locations) as a means of contributing towards a state-wide recycling rate of 50% in the commercial and industrial waste stream by 2024.

Reporting

Resources will review this Plan at least every 3 years and produce an annual report on waste reduction and recycling in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation. Reporting will include progress made against the State Strategy targets and activities set out in this Plan.