

QUEENSLAND WASTE STRATEGY

2025–2030

Less landfill, more recycling



DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



Queensland
Government

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Prepared by: Office of Circular Economy, Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation

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April 2025



MINISTER'S FOREWORD



The Crisafulli Government is committed to protecting the environment by boosting recycling rates and reducing litter to our environment. This commitment will be delivered by working in partnership with councils and the waste industry to explore opportunities for investment in cutting edge waste technologies which reduce the impact on the environment and create jobs for Queenslanders.

There is huge potential for Queensland to unlock the economic opportunity that comes from reducing, reusing and recycling valuable materials as much as possible.

We want to reduce waste to landfill and transition towards a waste free society. We have an opportunity to work together to accelerate progress towards the ambitious waste reduction targets that have been set.

The Queensland Government plays an important role in ensuring the community, industry and stakeholders have the right mechanisms and support in place to manage waste and create new jobs for the future. By increasing recycling rates and reducing litter in our environment, we can protect Queensland's unique environment and create safe and healthy communities.

This draft new Queensland Waste Strategy 2025–2030 sets out a long-term plan for waste reduction and recycling and how we will work in partnership with industry, local and federal governments, and our communities.

Your input is invaluable to ensure the Queensland Waste Strategy puts in place support for businesses and Queenslanders without adding additional costs and implements practical measures to boost recycling and reduce impacts to the environment.

We all have a role to play in progressing opportunities for innovation to better reduce, reuse and recycle and protect Queensland's unique environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Powell".

ANDREW POWELL
*Minister for the Environment and Tourism and
Minister for Science and Innovation*

INTRODUCTION

The draft new Queensland Waste Strategy is our key framework for reducing waste, boosting recycling and supporting jobs. We're developing a pragmatic new Queensland Waste Strategy, not a one size fits all approach. We want to ensure we have the right plan in place to boost Queensland's recovery rates and stimulate economic growth. Your feedback on key focus areas will help us identify and leverage opportunities to divert waste from landfill.

Each year, Queensland produces close to 10 million tonnes of waste. Our vision is for Queensland to adopt a more circular system, where products and materials are designed to minimise the creation of waste in the first place and they are used for as long as possible by reusing, recycling, remanufacturing and sharing resources.

For every three jobs in landfill, there are nine jobs in recycling.

Businesses operating with a more circular model support economic growth and create new revenue opportunities in the areas of design, reuse, remanufacturing and materials innovation. The cycle involves collecting discarded materials, sorting and separating them into material types, and reprocessing them to create new products.

DRAFT NEW QUEENSLAND WASTE STRATEGY 2025-2030 (DRAFT WASTE)

The draft new Queensland Waste Strategy is our key framework for reducing waste, boosting recycling and supporting jobs in a more circular economy.

The Queensland Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy (Waste Strategy) was first released in 2019. A review of the Waste Strategy was completed in 2023, and a review report published in 2024. Recommendations from the review have been considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the draft new Queensland Waste Strategy.

Our draft new Queensland Waste Strategy sets the Queensland Government's vision for waste reduction and recycling and how we will work in partnership with industry and local and federal governments. It supports economic growth and environmental protection by directing the policy, regulatory and investment framework to facilitate a more efficient and sustainable use of the State's resources.

The Queensland Government will continue to work in partnership with industry, local governments and the community to facilitate solutions that fit local contexts, acknowledging that everyone has a role to play in improving the management of Queensland's resources to protect our environment.

Work with the Commonwealth Government and other states and territories will continue to build on collaboration and harmonisation where possible, acknowledging Queensland's unique challenges given the size and diversity of our state.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

The government is seeking feedback from industry, local governments and the community to hear challenges and opportunities to achieving our waste reduction and recycling targets.

Consultation will run for eight weeks and includes feedback through written submissions, online surveys and targeted engagement.

The final Queensland Waste Strategy, incorporating stakeholder feedback, will be finalised in mid to late 2025.



THE BENEFITS OF REDUCING, REUSING AND RECYCLING



Growing the economy

An estimated \$210 billion dollar boost to Australia's economy could be gained from the development of new products, industries and employment derived from waste and recycling resources¹.



Supporting jobs

For every 10,000 tonnes of waste that goes to landfill, it is estimated that fewer than three jobs are supported, but reusing or recycling that same waste is estimated to generate more than nine jobs².



Reducing cost of living

The average Australian household loses an estimated \$2,500 per year through food waste, with an overall cost to the Australian economy of \$36.6 billion per year³.



Reducing environmental impacts

Reducing reliance on landfill will reduce environmental impacts such as odour and land contamination. Reducing, reusing and recycling will also reduce litter and impacts on our natural environment.



¹Source: CSIRO website - *Advancing the Circular Economy - CSIRO*

²<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/waste-and-recycling-employment.pdf>

³Source: End Food Waste Australia - *Food Waste in Australia - End Food Waste Australia » End Food Waste Australia*

MOVING TOWARDS A SOCIETY THAT RECYCLES MORE

In Queensland, we want to ensure that:

- products and materials are used efficiently to minimise the amount of raw materials used and volume of waste created
- waste that is produced can be recovered and beneficially used to make other products and contribute to the economy
- products and materials keep circulating within the economy at their highest value for as long as possible, through remanufacturing, reuse and recycling.

What does this look like?

Reduce

- the need for single-use items such as plastic bags, coffee cups, and excess packaging is eliminated
- items are borrowed, rented, or shared rather than purchasing brand new
- product design uses recycled materials, reduces packaging and is designed for recyclability as much as possible.

Reuse

- items are repaired rather than purchasing brand new
- product design allows for repair, reuse, and recycling, and aims for efficient and safe disassembly at the end of the product's life.

Recycle

- waste is sorted into recyclable components to improve reuse and recycling
- cutting edge technology for collection and recycling of products is utilised and innovation supported
- markets are developed for recycled products.

Harness economic opportunity

- new jobs and industries are created from reducing, reusing and recycling materials
- increased economic opportunities are created from innovation in manufacturing
- more regional and remote job opportunities are created by growing recycling infrastructure.

WHAT WE NEED TO SUCCEED



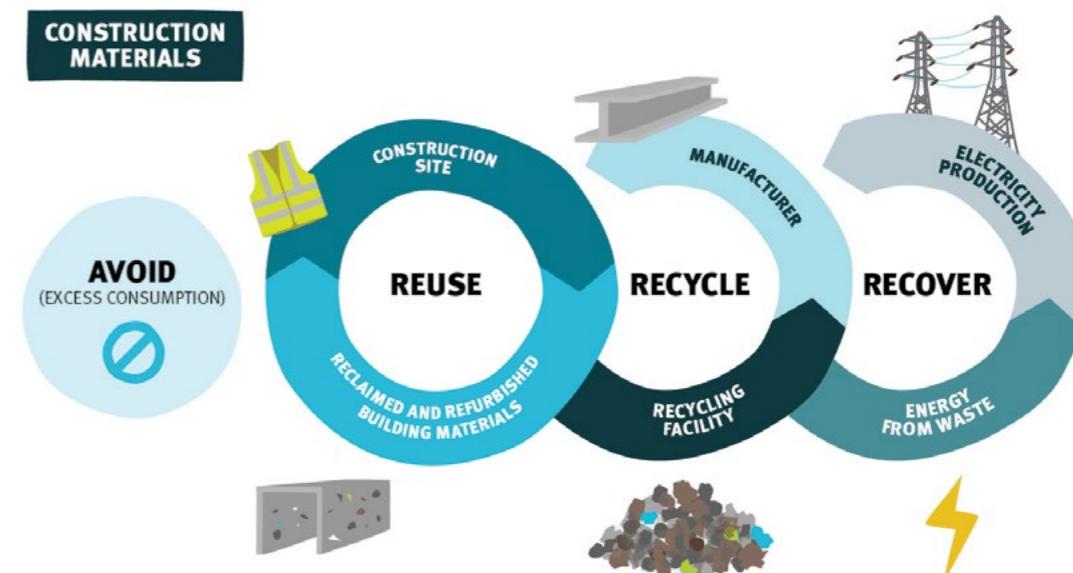
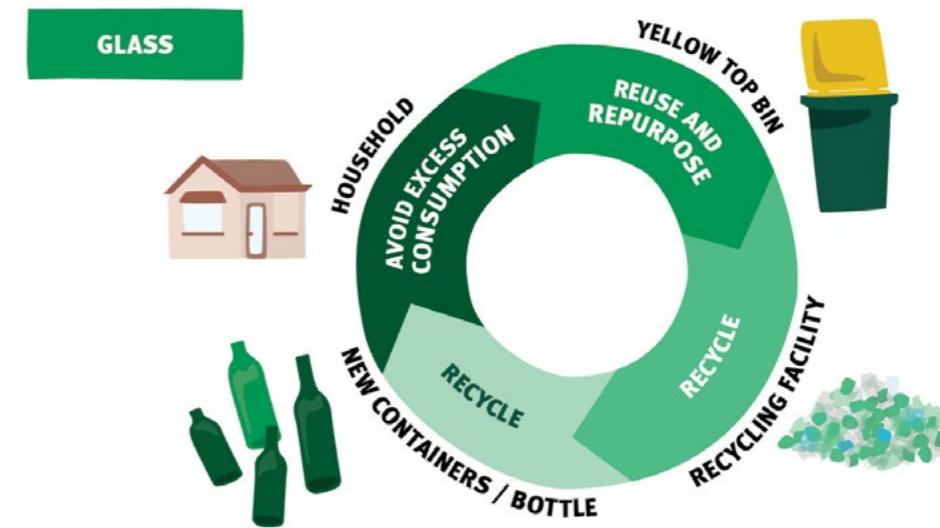
Targeted investment into critical waste infrastructure



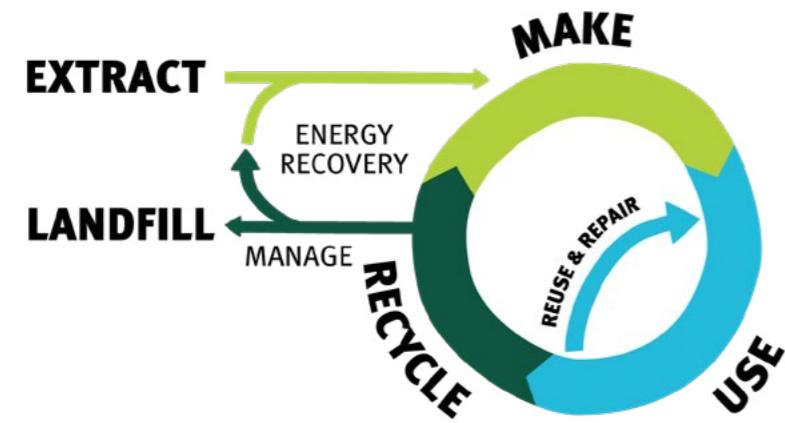
Partnerships between all levels of government and the private sector



The right policy settings and levers to encourage investment



WASTE HIERARCHY



Reduce, reuse and recycle principles are underpinned by what is known as a waste hierarchy.

The waste hierarchy is a nationally and globally accepted model for managing waste.

The hierarchy is important because it guides the order of preference for managing resources. Avoided waste in the first place is the priority. After that comes options for reuse and recycling. Energy from waste and landfill disposal should be reserved for residual waste.

The waste hierarchy is also reflected in the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*, helping support a consistent regulatory framework.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION:

How can the Queensland Waste Strategy better achieve waste avoidance measures and outcomes?

A lot of effort to date has focused on recycling and waste management, should we be doing more to encourage reducing and reusing materials? Where do you think more investment is required? Are the current state government funding opportunities fit for purpose?

QUEENSLAND WASTE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Vision									
Reduce, re-use and recycle to unleash economic opportunity for Queensland									
Strategic focus areas	Targets			Medium-term				Long-term	
	Divert	Recycle	Divert	Recycle	Divert	Recycle	Divert	Recycle	Divert
Actions, enablers and initiatives	% of waste in QLD	65%	60%	80%	65%	85%	70%	90%	75%
	Household waste reduction	10%		15%		20%		25%	
↑ Actions ↑		↑ Outcomes ↑		Unleash innovation				Reduce the cost of living	
Harness economic opportunity		Improve access to recycling and encourage behaviour change		Unleash innovation				Reduce impacts of waste on the environment	
Waste disposal levy framework		Priority products and materials list		Legislation and regulation		Action plans / Cross-Government strategies		Funding programs	
Actions, enablers and initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland's Waste disposal levy acts as a price signal to reduce the amount of materials being disposed to landfill, drive materials' reuse and incentivise recycling. It also underpins funding programs to help achieve the Waste Strategy targets. 		Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A list of priority materials and products identifies government's focus for action. 		Product stewardship schemes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong and modern legislative framework provides certainty and consistency and protects Queensland's environment and communities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides greater detail of specific actions addressing the Priority products and materials (eg Organics Action Plan, Litter and Illegal Dumping Strategy and Action Plan) Whole of Queensland Government strategies (eg Industry roadmap, Battery Strategy). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivers funding programs for local governments and industry to support new infrastructure, cutting edge recycling technologies and other initiatives to deliver diversion of waste from landfill. 	

WASTE AND RECYCLING TARGETS

We want less waste going to landfill.

Recycling and landfill-diversion rates are used as indicators to track Queensland's progress towards a zero-waste society.

Household waste generation is also used as an indicator for waste avoidance and reuse behaviours and activities.

The 2050 targets:

1. **25 per cent reduction in household waste**
2. **90 per cent of waste is recovered and does not go to landfill**
3. **75 per cent recycling rates across all waste types**

Table 1. Queensland Waste Strategy targets

Household waste reduction, diversion and recycling rates have interim targets set for 2025, 2030, and 2040 measuring progress towards the 2050 targets and recognising the potential for significant change in the short to medium term. Performance targets are measured from the initial Waste Strategy commencing in 2019 against baseline data from the 2017–2018 financial year.

	2025		2030		2040		2050	
	Divert target 2	Recycle target 3						
MSW	55%	50%	70%	60%	90%	65%	95%	70%
C&I	65%	53%	80%	60%	90%	65%	95%	>65%
C&D	75%	75%	85%	80%	85%	>80%	85%	>80%
ALL	65%	60%	80%	65%	85%	70%	90%	75%
Household waste reduction⁴	10%		15%		20%		25%	

⁴ The reduction in household waste is calculated by MSW production per capita in Queensland.

OUR PROGRESS

The Queensland Government publishes waste performance data each year by 31 December. The 2023-2024 data indicates good progress in some areas, but poor progress in relation to reducing municipal solid waste (household waste).



78 per cent reduction in interstate waste compared to 2018–2019.



Four out of nine targets are on track or have been surpassed.



Accelerated progress will be needed on the remaining targets, particularly the municipal solid waste targets which are significantly off track and are unlikely to be met.

Looking forward to 2030, the new Queensland Waste Strategy will need to have a renewed focus on increased support for actions that improve avoidance, reuse, recycling and diversion activities for household waste.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION:

Are there any changes needed to the draft new Queensland Waste Strategy to reflect the challenges in meeting some targets?

It is recognised that some short-term targets are likely to be unachievable. Do you agree we need to be clearer about accelerating action in certain areas (e.g. household waste) to move towards the targets?

Do you have a view on the effectiveness of having targets? Should any of the targets be adjusted, or should they remain ambitious? Does the strategy need any new targets? What are the barriers to achieving the targets?

Are there other data or metrics that need to be collected to effectively measure progress against the Queensland Waste Strategy targets?

The Queensland Government has several systems for tracking and monitoring waste streams. This includes the Queensland Waste Data System (QWDS) used by landfill operators to track and report waste. Information about waste recovery, recycling and disposal in Queensland is collected through an annual waste data survey and monthly waste data returns from landfill operators. Other waste reduction measures can be harder to quantify as they relate to measures to reduce waste through avoidance, reduction and reusing products and materials.

WASTE DISPOSAL

LEVY

Queensland's waste disposal levy underpins the Waste Strategy and aims to:

- reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by providing a price signal that disposing waste to landfill is the least preferred option
- encourage waste avoidance
- provides a source of funding to enable better resource recovery practices
- provide certainty and security of feedstocks for advanced technology
- facilitate industry investment in resource recovery infrastructure.

Funded through the waste levy, the \$1.1 billion Recycling and Jobs Fund has been established to increase recycling rates through co-investment to implement projects to reduce waste to landfill.

The levy has supported annual payments to local governments to subsidise the impact of the levy on households. These annual payments decline over time for South-East Queensland and seven major regional councils, while remaining regional councils will remain at 100 per cent.

Levy settings will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain appropriate and provide the necessary incentives to help achieve the new Queensland Waste Strategy targets.

Refer to **Appendix A** for further information about the waste levy and key consultation questions about existing waste levy settings.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION:

Are there other priority products or materials that should be included in the priority products and materials list?

The priority products or materials identified are because they represent a large proportion of current waste going to landfill or are problematic wastes, creating risks to the environment or recycling infrastructure. Do you agree these are the right products to focus on that will have the greatest impact?

Do you support continuing to develop action plans that support the draft new Queensland Waste Strategy?

The draft new Queensland Waste Strategy sets the overall focus areas and priorities, with specific actions outlined in supporting action plans. This allows us to focus our efforts and adjust our actions as needed to achieve the overall priorities of the draft new Waste Strategy and deal with emerging issues like batteries.

What are the barriers to establishing technologies to process problematic waste streams?

Are there specific actions that should be taken by different levels of government to facilitate the development of technologies and address some of the key risks (e.g. from batteries)?

ACTION PLANS

A list of priority materials and products list will be maintained on the department's website, with the objective of focusing resources on key products and addressing problem waste issues. This could be through a priority product statement or through the development of more focused action plans. Action plans aim to focus, accelerate and communicate initiatives including policies, legislation or programs to improve the management of these products and materials where the requirement exists.

- **Organic waste**
- **Batteries**
- **Other e-wastes**
(eg solar panels)
- **Plastics**
- **Built environment**
(including construction and demolition waste)
- **Tyres**
- **Textiles**
- **Litter and illegal dumping**





Photo credit Brisbane City Council

BATTERIES AND FIRE RISKS

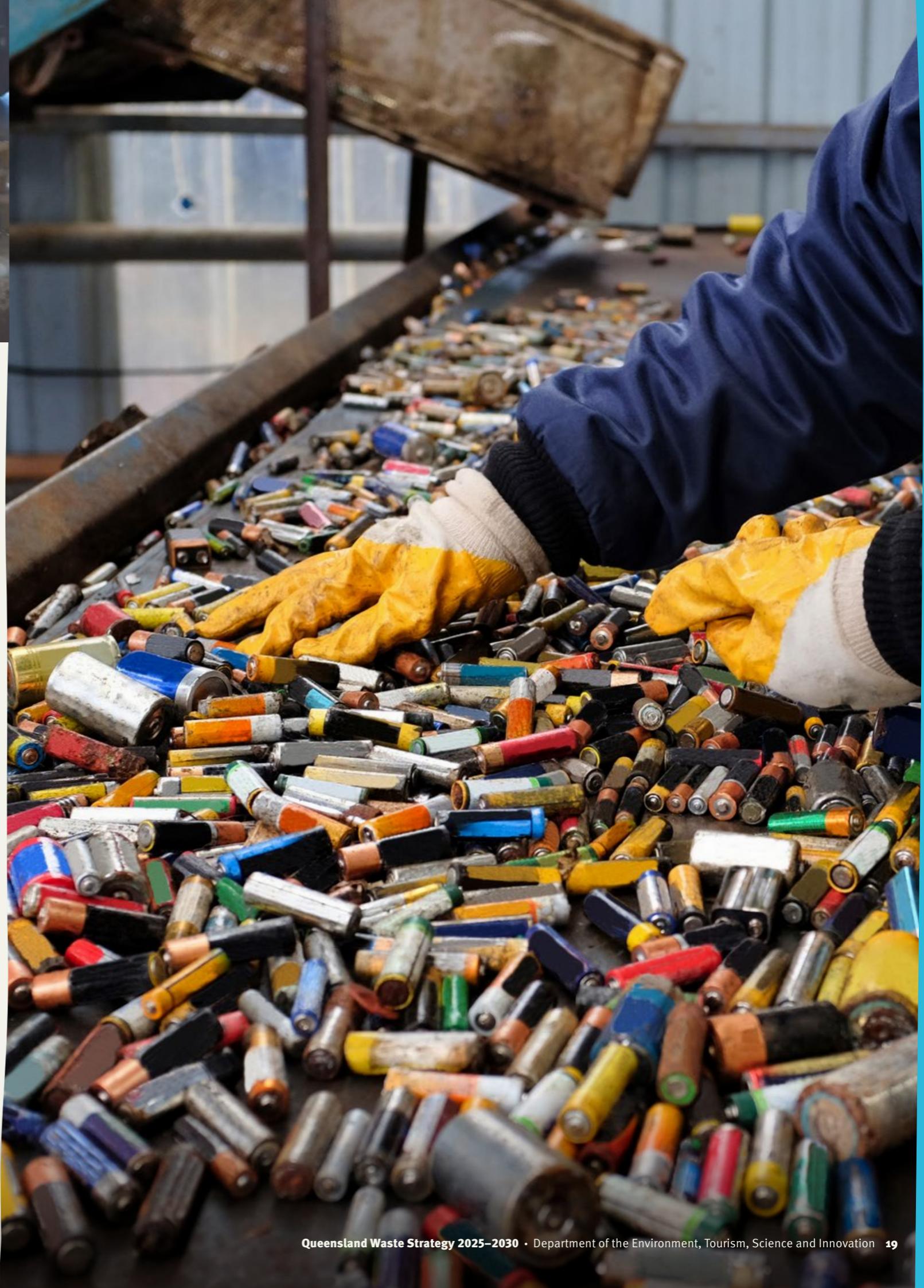
End-of-life batteries can be a real threat to people and property when disposed of incorrectly. Batteries, particularly rechargeable lithium-ion batteries (found in electronic devices, vapes, stick vacuums, electric bikes and scooters) can significantly increase the risk of fires in bins, trucks, waste transfer stations and landfills.

Queensland has experienced several fires at recycling facilities.

Unsafe disposal of batteries has the potential to shut down our essential services for long periods of time, increase costs to councils and ratepayers and puts waste workers lives at risk.

The government has announced a three-point action plan for immediate action to reduce the risks from batteries. This includes:

1. providing \$2 million in grants to support councils in expanding their battery collection points at convenient locations, including for problem batteries like those found in vapes and e-scooters
2. working closely with the waste industry on practical ways to reduce fire risks to protect workers and essential waste services
3. equipping Queenslanders with information to make informed decisions about safe battery disposal through education and awareness initiatives.



IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

To achieve our waste recovery rates all levels of government and the private sector need to work together to make recycling easier for Queenslanders. The following principles underpin our approach:

Collaboration

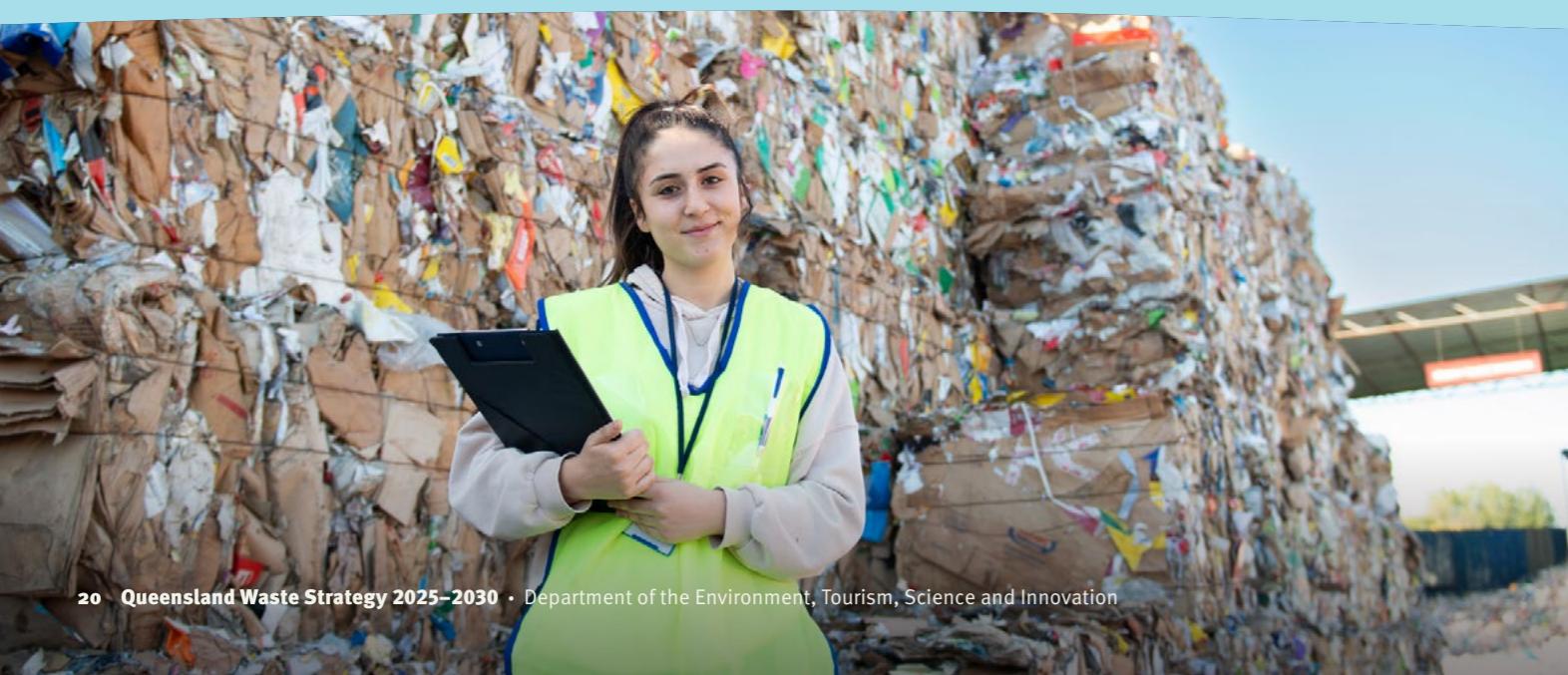
- Collaborative approaches will drive innovation, investment, information sharing and communicate opportunities.
- Aim to be outcomes focused.
- Initiatives and investments will target delivery against the Waste Strategy targets.
- Implementation is actively inclusive of diverse, economic, social, cultural and environmental perspectives so solutions are functional and resilient.

Accountability

- Roles and responsibilities for specific priorities are clearly assigned.
- Progress towards priorities are monitored and reported regularly.

Transparency

- The draft new Queensland Waste Strategy is underpinned by a clear framework and enabling initiatives.
- Information on implementation of priorities, actions, sequencing and funding are clearly communicated.



COLLABORATION IN ACTION: WORKING TO HARMONISE APPROACHES WHERE IT BENEFITS QUEENSLAND

Queensland will support national reforms and initiatives where it provides a direct benefit to Queensland and does not increase costs for Queenslanders. We are committed to working across jurisdictions to achieve the best outcomes for Queensland.

Where it provides benefits to Queenslanders, we will work with the Commonwealth Government and other jurisdictions to:

- identify priority materials and products
- collaborate and advocate for extended producer responsibility and product stewardship schemes
- harmonise approaches, including for kerbside collection, container deposit scheme expansion, single use plastics bans.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION:

What national reforms or harmonisation measures do you support, or not support, in terms of the benefits or costs to Queensland businesses, councils or Queensland more broadly?

Are there particular areas of work that Queensland should focus on with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions that would give greatest benefit to Queensland? What would best practice look like for Queensland?

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

Harness economic opportunity

Queensland has a unique opportunity to enhance resource recovery and stimulate a high value market if we act now.

For every three jobs in landfill, there are nine jobs in recycling. We want to make more jobs for future generations in Queensland.

Reusing and recycling waste delivers benefits across the supply chain for many Queensland sectors, including mining, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, food production, and the waste management and resource recovery sector.

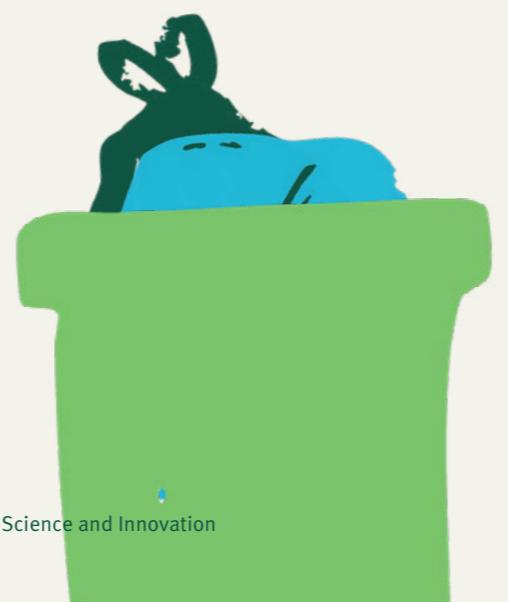
Identifying and treating waste as a resource provides opportunities for both the economy and the environment. Materials that would have otherwise been sent to landfill or exported can be reprocessed and remanufactured into new products.

Advancing resource recovery and reprocessing technologies is one part of how we can innovate and stimulate market demand for recycled content to build economic opportunities and retain our valuable resources.

If we get this right, there will be job growth and upskilling opportunities, improved infrastructure capacity and markets in regional areas and sustainable economic growth for Queensland.

Priorities:

- A clear set of priority materials and products where increased action is needed.
- Recognise the economic value of the waste management and resource recovery sector.
- Support meaningful jobs in product design, manufacturing, reuse, recycling and resource recovery.
- Provide certainty around waste and resource recovery infrastructure planning frameworks.
- Enable development of markets for new and innovative products containing recycled content and market demand for recycled material.
- Creating new industries and meaningful jobs for communities



STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

Improve access to recycling and encourage behaviour change

We know Queenslanders will recycle when given the opportunity. Collective action from Queenslanders is needed to integrate a new way of thinking into daily practices and actions.

By thinking about waste differently, households will be able to save on costs like grocery bills.

We need to innovate and stimulate market demand for products that use low-impact materials, minimise wastage, and are repairable, reusable and recyclable.

All sectors play a vital role in purchasing considerations and choices, and reuse or recycling options for products and materials that have reached the end of their useful life. This includes taking simple steps to correctly sort and segregate wastes at home.

Individuals have an important role in moving towards a more resourceful, less wasteful future. Queenslanders are encouraged to take up the challenge of reducing their own waste, in any way they can, through five simple actions that include:

- avoid generating waste
- reduce waste
- choose to reuse
- recycle more items more often
- find ways to dispose of waste safely, and not litter or dump.

Priorities:

- Contribute to clear standards and guidelines for reuse, recycling and recovery.
- Increase community knowledge and understanding to encourage thoughtful consumption and disposal decisions.
- Increased education and awareness amongst the community to reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Build trust in the sector and demonstrate to the community how materials are recycled and re-circulated as new products.



STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA: *Unleash innovation*

The Queensland Government supports cutting edge technologies and innovation that will reduce waste and minimise the impact on Queensland's environment.

Achieving the targets in the draft new Queensland Waste Strategy will require new ways of thinking and new technologies to sort, process and manufacture materials.

Industry is already leading the way in the use and development of cutting edge technologies, from automated processing of construction and demolition waste, to innovative waste to energy projects like gasification and anaerobic digestion, to development of new products and processes.

Priorities:

- Invest in cutting edge technologies and innovation to reduce waste and boost recycling.
- Support commercialisation of new technology.
- Encourage innovative approaches to increase markets for recycled content.
- Support high value alternatives to landfill for residual waste such as energy from waste facilities which produce electricity or fuels.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA: *Reduce the cost of living*

The Queensland Government is committed to reducing the costs of living for Queenslanders.

We need to work with councils to ensure that the economic benefits of reducing waste and investing in recycling innovation are returned to householders.

Local government is at the front line in delivering waste collection services.

The ultimate goal is diverting waste from landfill, which will reduce waste levy costs to councils and ratepayers.

Priorities:

- Support initiatives that reduce waste going to landfill, whilst minimising any impacts on cost of living.
- Support household initiatives that save money for Queenslanders (e.g. reducing food waste).
- Support councils to implement regional waste management plans by investing in the infrastructure and initiatives needed to boost recycling and reduce waste costs longer term.
- Support the use of recycled content where it is no more expensive and meets the required specifications.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

Reduce impact of waste on the environment

The Queensland Government is committed to reducing the environmental and social impacts of littering and waste, including investing in upgrading stormwater networks through local government partnerships.

Plastic and other litter escaping into our precious waterways can be prevented through education and behaviour change programs and improved infrastructure.

Local government is at the front line in dealing with the effects of litter and illegal dumping. The Queensland Government will continue to work closely with local governments to support on-ground delivery of community awareness and education programs and infrastructure as appropriate.

Priorities:

- Support programs that address litter and illegal dumping, including working in partnership with Councils.
- Work with South East Queensland councils to install pollutant traps to avoid litter entering Moreton Bay.
- Protect Queenslander's lifestyles and the enjoyment of our natural environment by preventing environmental harm from waste activities.
- Reduce the impact on neighbouring communities and amenity value from waste facilities.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION:

What measurable actions can you implement to progress each focus area in the strategy?

Are there other specific priorities that you can identify that would support the draft new Waste Strategy?



APPENDIX A

WASTE LEVY

REVIEW

The draft new Queensland Waste Strategy is underpinned by the waste disposal levy which is administered through the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 (WRR ACT)*.

The waste levy aims to:

- reduce the amount of waste going to landfill
 - encourage waste avoidance
 - provide a source of funding to enable better resource recovery practices
 - provide certainty and security of feedstocks for advanced technology
 - facilitate industry investment in resource recovery infrastructure.

The WRR Act requires the efficacy of the levy is reviewed within three years of its commencement and at intervals of not more than 10 years thereafter. The initial levy efficacy review was undertaken in 2021. The 2021 review focused on specific elements of the levy and resulted in tapering reductions to local government annual payments, creation of separate metropolitan and regional levy zones, and an overall increase in the levy rate.

Local government and industry stakeholders are seeking a review of the waste levy to incentivise recycling, reduce complexity in levy administration, and clarify exemptions, amongst other issues.

A further review is proposed in 2025-2026 which would focus on

- assessing effectiveness for increasing recycling rates and incentivising recycling
 - the impacts of New South Wales potentially increasing its levy, which may result in increases to interstate waste movements
 - the influence of annual payments to councils on achieving municipal solid waste (MSW) targets, including if annual payments should be tied to reductions in MSW to landfill
 - reviewing excluded, exempt, and discounted waste types.

We are seeking initial feedback from stakeholders on the current waste levy settings as part of consultation on the draft new Queensland Waste Strategy.

APPENDIX A WASTE LEVY REVIEW

QUEENSLAND'S EXISTING WASTE LEVY SETTINGS

The waste levy is payable on all waste in Queensland that is:

- disposed to a leviable waste disposal site (landfill) within the levy zone, or
 - generated in a levy zone and disposed of to a landfill outside the levy zone.

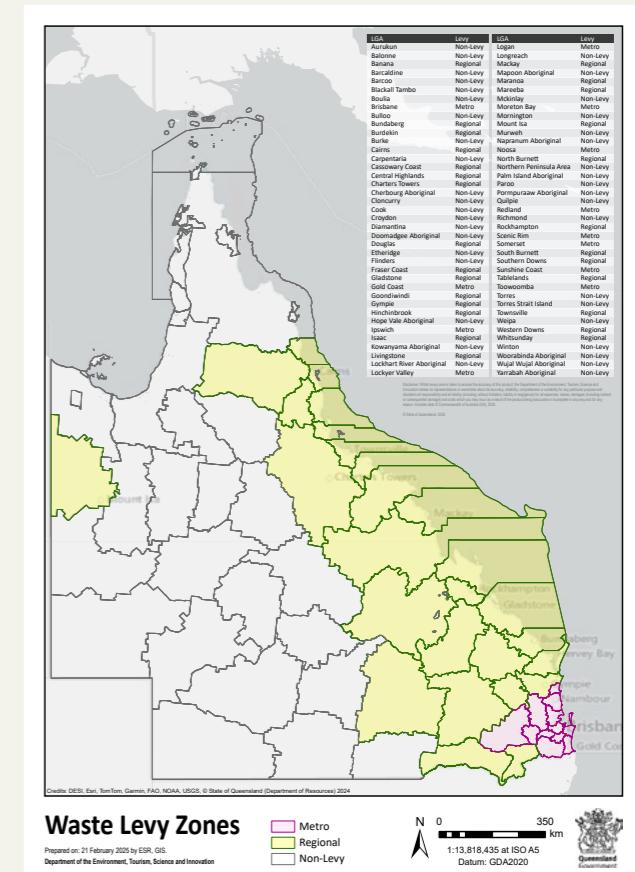
A waste disposal site is a waste facility to which both of the following apply:

- the operator of the facility is required to hold an environmental authority for the disposal of waste at the facility (i.e. ERA 60 under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*)
 - waste delivered to the facility sometimes includes waste that is subsequently disposed of to landfill at the facility.

The levy zone covers 39 out of 77 local government areas in Queensland. It is divided into the metro zone (which includes 12 South East Queensland local government areas) and the regional zone (the remaining 27 local government areas in the levy zone). Regional and remote local government areas are excluded from the levy zone.

The two levy zones attract different rates and increase at different rates to reflect the differences between South East Queensland and regional areas in terms of waste volumes and opportunities for recycling and resource recovery.

- Rates in the metro zone increase by \$10 per tonne, each year, until the general levy rate reaches \$145 per tonne on 1 July 2027. All levy rates will then increase each year in line with the indexation rate published on the departments' website for the financial year.
 - Rates in the regional zone increase each year in line with the indexation rate published on the departments' website for the financial year.



INTERSTATE WASTE TRANSFER

In 2023–2024, Queensland received 2.2 per cent less waste from interstate sources than 2022–2023 (266,563 tonnes received) and 78 per cent less than the 1.19 million tonnes received in 2018–2019 just prior to the introduction of the waste levy⁵.

New South Wales is currently reviewing its waste levy which may result in an increase. This may increase movement of waste from New South Wales to Queensland particularly to landfills close to the border.

2024-25 LEVY RATES GENERAL WASTE, METROPOLITAN AREA	
Queensland	\$115/tonne
New South Wales	\$170/tonne
Victoria	\$132/tonne

⁵<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/circular-economy-waste-reduction/data-reports/recycling-waste>



EXEMPT WASTE

Under the WRR Act, some waste may be exempt from the waste levy. This includes:

- disaster management and serious local event waste
- approved exempt waste (by application only)
- other specific exempt wastes (automatically exempt)
- other declared wastes (exceptional circumstances).

Disaster management and serious local event waste includes wastes generated as a result of a disaster (e.g. flooding or bushfire) or a serious local event. These exemptions are issued following the Queensland Government declaring a disaster situation or a local government notifying the Department of serious local event.

A person may apply to the department for approval of certain waste as exempt waste. The application may be about only one of the following types of waste:

- waste received as part of charity donations that cannot practicably be re-used, recycled or sold
- litter and illegally dumped waste which is collected as part of an organised community clean up activity
- earth contaminated with a hazardous contaminant from land listed on the environmental management register or contaminated land register
- waste necessary for the operation of the leivable waste disposal site, such as for building infrastructure, temporary or daily cover, progressive or final capping, batter construction, profiling and site rehabilitation.

Some waste types are automatically exempt from the levy through the WRR Act. An application for these types of wastes is not required. This includes:

- certain types of lawfully managed and transported **asbestos waste**
- dredge spoil if, for dredge spoil that is acid sulphate soil, the dredge spoil has been treated in accordance with **best practice environmental management** for the treatment and management of acid sulphate soils
- litter and illegally dumped waste collected by or for the State, a local government, or a forestry plantation licensee
- **other waste prescribed by regulation**
- **other declared wastes (exceptional circumstances)**.

The Department may declare a waste to be exempt in exceptional circumstances. These exemptions are granted at the Department's discretion in accordance with section 35 of the WRR Act. Conditions may be imposed on any exemption declaration made.

FUNDING FROM THE WASTE LEVY

As part of the introduction of the Queensland waste levy, the former Government committed to reinvest at least 70 per cent of funds generated by the levy into waste and environmental programs. This has included funding the Recycling and Jobs Fund, advance payments to local councils to mitigate the cost to householders and other environmental programs (such as funding for protected area expansion).

The allocation of funding to waste initiatives over the first six years (2022-2023 and 2027-2028) varies between 60 per cent and 73 per cent.

The waste levy is supporting the existing 10-year, \$2.1 billion Waste and Resource Recovery Package, which includes the \$1.1 billion Recycling and Jobs Fund and \$1 billion for council payments to ensure the waste levy has no direct impact on households.

ANNUAL PAYMENTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Local governments receive annual payments to offset the direct costs of the waste levy liability incurred on the disposal of household and some other municipal solid wastes. The amounts for these payments, over a four-year period are set out in Schedule 5 of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2023.

The Recycling and Jobs Fund has been allocated over the first six-years of the Fund, with key areas including:

- \$30 million for education and behaviour change
- \$157 million for circular economy initiatives
- \$231 million for regional waste management plans and implementation
- \$147 million for industry development and infrastructure
- \$116 million for regulatory assessment and compliance.

WASTE LEVY QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION:

Are the settings for the Queensland waste levy appropriate?

How can Queensland reduce the impacts of waste levy settings in New South Wales on interstate waste transfer?

Are there any wastes missing from the list of wastes that are excluded, exempt, and discounted from the waste levy?

What should waste levy funds be re-invested into?

Are there any other administrative issues with the waste levy that need to be addressed?



QUEENSLAND WASTE STRATEGY

2025–2030



Queensland
Government