

National Waste Policy Action Plan

South Australian Government
Implementation Plan
2025



Government
of South Australia

Green Industries SA

Minister's foreword

South Australia has a proud history of leadership in resource recovery and waste management. We lead the nation in diverting recyclable materials from landfill, achieving a resource recovery rate of 82.3% in 2022–23. In 1977 we became the first state or territory in Australia to establish a container deposit scheme, and since then have been the first to ban lightweight plastic bags at the checkout, and the first to introduce bans on single-use plastic products.

Despite our achievements in resource recovery, more still needs to be done to accelerate our state's transition to a circular economy and meet the targets under the *National Waste Policy Action Plan 2024*. We need to reduce our reliance on virgin resources, use resources more efficiently, and enable the continued circulation of materials through the economy. This is essential to eliminating waste and pollution, tackling biodiversity loss, and achieving net zero emissions while supporting the needs of current as well as future generations of South Australians.

South Australia's next circular economy and waste strategy - *Accelerating SA's transition to a circular economy: South Australia's waste strategy 2025-2030* is in development, with public consultation recently undertaken on the draft strategy. It will set ambitious goals and targets, and identify key priorities and actions for the transition to a circular and sustainable economy. The strategy, alongside this implementation plan, lays out a plan for strong, coordinated action at the national, state and local level, laying the groundwork for the transition.

This is the first iteration of the South Australian government implementation plan, and will be updated following the release of the circular economy and waste strategy.

Hon Susan Close MP

Minister for Climate, Environment and Water

About this plan

The *South Australian government implementation plan* [the plan] sets out the initiatives being actioned by SA to support the strengthened 2024 *National Waste Policy Action Plan* [NWPAP], agreed by Australia's environment ministers in December 2024. For completeness, this plan should be read in conjunction with the 2024 NWPAP.

This plan builds on the achievements by government, industry, business and the not for profit sector under the former 2019 action plan.¹

This plan recognises that the Australian, state and territory governments share responsibility for implementing the 2024 NWPAP and are jointly accountable for achieving its 7 targets. This approach reflects the different roles and responsibilities of government in managing waste and the effective recovery of resources nationally.

In accordance with the 2024 NWPAP, the initiatives in this plan focus on the priority areas where the SA government can have the most influence, and the material types where the greatest gains can be made against the targets. Action in these areas will contribute to progress towards the national targets and help Australia's transition towards a circular economy.

The initiatives in this plan complement, or are in addition to, other priority work being undertaken by SA. This includes work being progressed collectively by governments through the Environment Ministers' Meeting that does not fall within the scope of the 2024 NWPAP.

¹ National Waste Policy Action Plan 2019; National Waste Policy Action Plan Annexure 2022; National Waste Policy Summary Report 2021; National Waste Policy Action Plan Progress Summary Report 2023

2024 National Waste Policy Action Plan

Targets

1. Ban on export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres, commencing in the second half of 2020
2. Reduce total waste generated in Australia by 10% per person by 2030
3. 80% average resource recovery rate from all waste streams following the waste hierarchy by 2030
4. Significantly increase the use of recycled content by governments and industry
5. Continued phase out of problematic and unnecessary plastics
6. Halve the amount of organic waste sent to landfill for disposal by 2030
7. Make comprehensive, economy-wide and timely data publicly available to support better consumer, investment and policy decisions

Priorities

- Government legislation, regulation, policies, standards and guidelines
- Investment in infrastructure, procurement and funding support
- Market development and support through innovation, reducing barriers and generating demand

Material types

- Organics [food and garden]
- Building and demolition
- Ash
- Hazardous waste
- Paper and cardboard
- Timber [target 6]

South Australia's draft strategy 2025–2030

Accelerating SA's transition to a circular economy: South Australia's waste strategy 2025–2030 (the strategy), which is currently being developed, will set a framework of strategic objectives, targets and priority actions to accelerate the state's transition to a circular economy and help meet SA's priorities for a sustainable economy and net zero emissions by 2050.

Public consultation on the draft strategy has recently been undertaken. The final strategy, incorporating feedback received during public consultation, will be published by the end of 2025.

At this stage, this plan has been developed with high level deliverables aligned to the focus areas in the draft strategy. Following the publication of the strategy, this plan will be updated to align with the actions in the strategy.

Reporting on progress

The South Australian government will report annually on the initiatives identified in this plan, which will be made publicly available.

Data supporting progress against the targets will also be provided each year to the Australian Government to contribute to a national report on progress against the targets.

Review of the plan

This plan will be reviewed biennially, in-line with the 2024 NWPAP review process, but may be updated as needed to ensure it remains relevant and effective.



Initiatives

Initiative	Impact/s	Deliverable/s	Target alignment						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS									
Support national harmonisation efforts on problematic wastes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Products are designed and manufactured for circularity including designing out problematic waste and hazardous materials• The safe recovery of resources for problematic and emerging wastes is increased• National or nationally aligned state-based product stewardship schemes are developed and implemented for problematic wastes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the national packaging reform process for packaging to be regulated under Australian Government legislation.• Support national progress to develop a pathway and criteria to soft plastics collection and recycling at scale in Australia.• Support the establishment of a national product stewardship regulatory scheme for solar photovoltaic systems.• Advocate for a national solution for the safe management of legally sold end-of-life vapes.• Support and advocate for measures that require chemicals of concern and hazardous substances, including PFAS, to be designed out of products.• Support the implementation of the PFAS National Environmental Management Plan and support actions to update relevant standards to manage PFAS and other chemicals of concern, including emerging ones.							
Increase the uptake of recycled content materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• End markets for recovered resources are developed and increased• Use of virgin resources is reduced through increasing material productivity and circularity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support national efforts to develop national standards and specifications for the use of recycled content in a broad range of capital works projects.							
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT-LED INITIATIVES									
Avoid waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waste generation is reduced• Products are designed for circularity, including to eliminate waste and pollution, provide longevity and enable repairability• Lifespan of products is extended through an increase in repair and reuse activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate for the design and manufacturing of products and components that increase durability, repairability and recyclability and replace virgin materials with recycled materials• Raise awareness with consumers to influence consumption habits – encouraging sustainable consumption choices and supporting local circular initiatives.• Explore options to support growth of SA's reuse and repair sector.• Pilot and promote reusable systems at scale, replacing single-use products.• Consider support for SA businesses to develop business waste reduction plans, including through the development of 'better practice' guides to assist with implementation.							



Initiative	Impact/s	Deliverable/s	Target alignment						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reduce and divert food waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food waste is reduced across the supply chain, along with associated greenhouse gas emissions Nutrient loss in food systems is reduced Food insecurity is reduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand messaging on food waste avoidance actions in households, including through enabling technology and tools to help households use up foods they already have. Consider mechanisms that enable and facilitate unsold edible food being donated to food rescue charities for redistribution, accompanied by the necessary supporting systems, agreements, infrastructure, and capacity. Develop resources to support and encourage businesses to take action to avoid and reduce food waste along the supply chain. Support the rollout of area-wide, high-performing food waste collection systems, including within suitable multi-unit and higher density developments. Encourage and support the establishment and enhancement of resource recovery infrastructure, processes and technologies that divert food waste into productive use. Support improved source separation and collection to enable the recovery of high-quality organics and food waste from the commercial and industrial (C&I) sector. 							

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Reduce material loss and preserve value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The safe recovery of recyclable materials is maximised The circular flow of materials safely through the economy for continued use at their highest value is maximised Recycling efficiency at all stages [collection, preprocessing – including separation and sorting – and end processing] is maximised to reduce material losses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to national harmonisation of kerbside collections through implementation of the <i>National Kerbside Collections Roadmap</i>. Incentivise investment in high performing resource recovery systems and infrastructure that support circular material flows and high value circularity outcomes. To increase the recovery of organics, food waste, and recyclables in household kerbside bins, support staged implementation of 3-bin kerbside collection systems for households, aligned with the <i>SA Better Practice Guide: Sustainable Kerbside Services</i>. Review best-practice waste management guidance for residential and mixed-use developments. Encourage increased source separation and collection of co-mingled recyclables and organic waste for the commercial and industrial [C&I] sector. Develop a statewide circular economy resource recovery infrastructure plan that informs and assists investment decisions for high circularity outcomes and supports the transition to a circular economy. Maximise the effectiveness and performance of SA's container deposit scheme [CDS], including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » modernising the governance and systems of the CDS to unlock unrealised value in SA's circular economy and remove barriers to expanding community participation » positioning SA for the 3 proposed elements of national integration and harmonisation – a single container approvals portal, increased scope of containers accepted in the scheme, and an increased deposit/refund amount. 							

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Address emerging and problematic wastes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Products are designed and manufactured for circularity, including designing out problematic waste and hazardous materials Reliance on fossil-fuel derived feedstocks is reduced Plastic consumption and subsequent waste and litter on land and in waterways is reduced The safe recovery of resources for problematic and emerging wastes is increased Safe collection and disposal pathways for hazardous waste are provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for extended producer responsibility schemes that achieve high level outcomes relevant to the waste management hierarchy (such as through improved product design) and improved reuse, repair and recycling outcomes. Continue to phase out single-use and other problematic and unnecessary plastic products in SA, and consider other measures to address plastic and plastic packaging. Establish safe and effective collection systems for battery types with high-risk profiles supported by a public awareness campaign. Consider approaches to nationally aligned, state-based product stewardship scheme for batteries, prioritising battery types with the highest risk profile. Support the development of an industry-led product stewardship scheme for CCA treated timber that includes addressing sustainable end-of-life management and circular opportunities for new and legacy waste. Continue to support implementation of the Seamless product stewardship scheme for clothing textiles, including through community education and events. 							
Develop and support circular markets and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End markets for recovered resources are developed and increased. A more sustainable and resilient economy is developed, supporting the generation of more circular economy jobs. Use of virgin resources is reduced through increasing material productivity and circularity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the adoption of environmentally sustainable procurement in state and local government. Support the implementation of environmentally sustainable procurement in state and local government through education, awareness raising, addressing barriers and sharing of knowledge. Support implementation of the <i>National Framework for Recycled Content Traceability</i>. Explore measures to provide a level playing field for businesses with circular business models and support local market development for remanufactured products. Unlock circular economy opportunities and support circular economy resource recovery infrastructure, innovation, market development and resource efficiency. 							

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			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Build a circular built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and development legislation and policies support and enable circular outcomes Demand for virgin resources is reduced through a reduction in material footprint of the built environment Demand for circular products is increased Waste generation is reduced Waste diversion is increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support, promote and implement circular economy principles in urban planning, infrastructure and development projects. Develop guidelines for 'design of the built environment' practices and the adoption of sustainable building materials. Support implementation of recommendations in the Circular economy in SA's <i>built environment Action Plan 2023</i>. 							
Develop circular economy knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge about the circular economy and circularity thinking are increased Awareness about sustainability and the circular economy is increased to influence and foster long-term cultural and behavioural change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide coordinated and centralised recycling and waste avoidance education and awareness information to reduce the amount of waste generated, increase resource recovery, maximise the economic value of resources and reduce confusion. Deliver information to council-serviced premises on reducing waste and the correct use of kerbside recycling and organics bins as well as other collection systems, through the statewide Which Bin education program. 							
Measure our transition to a circular economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of reuse, repair, recycling and resource recovery, including performance of sectors, waste streams, and across SA is improved Understanding of areas needing additional support to help a transition to a circular economy is improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide industry intelligence via the annual Circular Economy Resource Recovery Report, reporting on resources diverted from landfill in SA, material flow analysis, and economic and environmental benefits. Report on metropolitan and regional kerbside waste and recycling collection performance. Report on reuse activities and their impact in SA. Explore opportunities for improved reporting by local government to state government on household waste generation and resource recovery performance, to provide an accurate and timely circular economy metric for all levels of government. Consider reforms to improve EPA waste data relating to material flows and end fates, to increase transparency and inform evidence-based policy, regulation and targets relating to specific materials. Develop an updated kerbside waste collection bin audit guidelines to ensure consistency and enable comparison of results across councils. Report on litter using the Australian Litter Measure. Continue to contribute to national waste reporting. 							



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