

NSW BRANCH COMMITTEE MEETING

8.00 - 9.00 am

Tuesday 14 July 2026

Via Zoom

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Ron Wainberg, Gayle Sloan, Mark Glover, Richard Collins, Andrew Pearce, Edward Nicholas, Ezio di Giovanni, Miles Mason, Vanessa Seaton, Phil Carbins, Katherine Dodd, Alarik Wong, Ark Du and Lisa Lepore.

Apologies: Michelle Mandl, Sam Swain, Shaun Devine, Shaun Rainford, Chloe Hyde, Claire Mahenderatta.

2. Previous minutes and actions arising

i. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the 16 June 2026 NSW Branch Committee meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Gayle Sloan *Second:* Richard Collins

ii. Actions arising

No actions arising from previous meeting.

3. National advocacy (CEO)

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) – No Time to Waste Bill

- The Bill is scheduled for debate in the Senate on 13 August 2026.
- WMRR provided evidence to the Senate inquiry in Canberra.
- The Bill, introduced by Senator Peter Whish-Wilson, is based on rolling out federal framework akin to the NSW Product Lifecycle Responsibility Act.

Battery Stewardship

- South Australia is progressing a Cabinet submission to adopt battery regulations aligned with the NSW Product Lifecycle Responsibility framework.
- In NSW, procurement for the Battery Product Stewardship Organisation (PSO) is expected to commence in October 2026, with at least five competitive bidders identified.

Solar PV Stewardship

- NSW continues to lead the development of the national Solar PV product stewardship scheme and Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS), with the proposal expected to be considered by Environment Ministers at the EMM in September 2026.
- This work is being undertaken by a different government team to the battery stewardship reforms

Carbon policy

- A national carbon roundtable will be held next week. WMRR will seek to progress emissions reduction opportunities for the sector beyond landfill gas.
- WMRR is advocating for greater recognition of materials productivity and circular economy measures as emissions reduction strategies and is engaging with Minister Bowen's office ahead of COP31, where halving waste is expected to be a key agenda item.

PFAS and packaging

- APCO is seeking stakeholder feedback on proposals to phase out PFAS in packaging.
- There is concern that this consultation appears disconnected from the existing IChEMS regulatory framework already in place for contaminant (including PFAS) management.

Federal Government

- It appears that not much has yet been done much on the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to enable state-based action, particularly for packaging. The Environment Ministers' Meeting is in September.
 - VISY's packaging roundtable coming up at the end of the month which Minister Watts will be attending – although WMRR does not have an invite.
- John Bradley leading the National EPA, which will impact the sector in terms of national stewardship frameworks, EPBC and export approvals.
- DCCEEW staff have been significantly refreshed – there are 107 staff in Circular Economy, and it was noted in a recent meeting that three (3) of the five (5) DCCEEW staff in the meeting with WMRR CEO had been there less than 11 days. This includes a new lead on the *Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020* (RaWR Act) and a new lead for the Branch, Natalia, who comes from Department of Premier and Cabinet.

4. NSW Issues

i. Regulatory and policy updates

Waste levy and infrastructure

- Noted that the NSW Budget did not include any announcement regarding levy hypothecation.
- Funding has been secured for the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) to progress the NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan with budget approved for additional resources.
 - It was noted that the Waste Assets Management Corporation (WAMC) has grown significantly over the past decade, from approximately eight staff to around 50.
- The Development Coordination Authority (DCA) commenced on 1 July 2026, providing a streamlined approach to infrastructure enquiries through DPC. Kirsten Fishburn was acknowledged for her strong engagement with the waste sector and focus on strategic waste infrastructure.
- The Department of Planning is progressing a Strategic Waste Infrastructure Plan, expected later this year.
 - Early indications suggest it will consider infrastructure needs including hubs and spokes, end-market access and coordination with DPI and the EPA.
- [Protection of the Environment Operations Legislation Amendment \(Miscellaneous\) Regulation 2026](#) has commenced, allowing Virgin Excavated Natural Material (VENM) and Excavated Natural Material (ENM) used as daily cover to qualify for landfill levy deductions, along with several other amendments.
 - Some concerns raised that this may displace alternative daily cover (ADC) products manufactured from recovered materials and that broader market implications may not have been fully considered.

Asbestos reforms

- The [NSW Asbestos Plan of Action](#) reforms are generally viewed positively.
- Work is underway to develop Australian Standards and/or National Environment Protection Measures (NEPMs) relating to testing and sampling methodologies.
- The NSW Government has committed \$16 million to a household asbestos collection trial, initially targeting high-risk areas.
- Initial implementation meetings with local government are expected later this month, although rollout arrangements remain uncertain.
- The reforms aim to improve management of unexpected asbestos finds by placing classification obligations earlier in the supply chain and requiring clearance certificates before material enters the waste and resource recovery sector.

- Following the Government's announcement, councils have received increased enquiries from residents seeking asbestos disposal options, creating uncertainty around local government implementation responsibilities.

FOGO

- The business food organics (FO) mandate commenced on 1 July 2026, with implementation described as well signalled.
- A Ministerial Advisory meeting is scheduled to consider both generic and custom exemptions.
- During the initial three months, the EPA will adopt an education-first compliance approach.
- General exemptions will apply in council areas where FOGO services are unavailable, meaning affected businesses will not be required to separate food organics until council services commence (up to 2028).

Biosolids and RRO/E

- EPA continues discussions with AORA and water authorities regarding the proposed Biosolids Resource Recovery Order and Exemption (RRO/E).
- Current discussions include whether biosolids stockpiles will require ongoing testing and sampling.
- The EPA is considering aligning testing methodologies (batch and continuous) with other RRO/Es, including recovered fines, although members noted that different products require different regulatory approaches (i.e. biosolids can't be stockpiled in the same way as fines).
- Biosolids operators are concerned that continuous production processes may be treated the same as batch processing, creating unnecessary compliance burdens.
- Noted that the proposed RRO/E may change substantially from the consultation draft and expressed concern that significant changes after consultation reduce transparency and meaningful stakeholder engagement.
- Further discussions with EPA are required regarding continuous versus batch processing methodologies.

AS4454 review

- Both industry and regulators remain frustrated with the highly confidential review process for AS4454.
- The revised Standard is expected to be released for public consultation in August 2026.
- Noted that many council procurement contracts reference AS4454 compliance, highlighting the importance of ensuring consistency between the Standard and NSW RRO/E requirements.

Industry updates

- Goterra has entered liquidation following unsuccessful attempts to secure a buyer.

ii. Submissions/consultations (NSW/National)

- [Climate Change Authority - 2026 Annual Progress Advice](#) (closing 9 August 2026)

Recent submissions

- [Expanding Australia's Right to Repair Framework](#) (3 July 2026)
- [Inquiry into the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme for Packaging \(No Time to Waste\) Bill 2026](#) (15 June 2026)
- [Carbon Credits and Other Legislation Amendment \(Integrity and Transparency\) Bill Consultation](#) (25 May 2026)
- [Guideline for safe management of end-of-life lithium ion batteries](#) (15 May 2026)
- [2026 NGER Scheme Updates](#) (8 May 2026)

iii. Grants and Funding

No updates at this meeting.

5. Working group updates

i. **C&D – (Jason Sweeney) Gayle Sloan**

Kick off meeting for the Asbestos Plan to be held in next few weeks.

ii. **Landfill - Ark Du**

- June Working Group meeting with Steve Beaman (NSW EPA) provided further explanation of the recently announced landfill levy exemptions. Landfill operators will be required to apply for approval of the quantity of material eligible for levy exemption. WMRR will follow up with the EPA regarding the associated guidance material that was promised.
- The NSW Solid Waste Landfill Guidelines remain with legal review prior to release.
- The EPA has requested a standing invitation to attend the NSW Landfill Working Group meetings. It was agreed EPA representatives will attend for a defined period to provide updates and facilitate discussion.
- Chemical Control Order (PFAS) is expected to have minimal operational impact on landfill operators. However, concerns remain regarding the interpretation of monitoring data and how results may be assessed by regulators.
- The Branch noted that this was Ark's final meeting with the Branch as he is finishing up with Veolia later this month. A farewell gathering will be held in Sydney to recognise his contribution to WMRR.

iii. **RRMD – (Nicole Greenwood)**

- No update.
- Gayle mentioned the phasing out PFAS from food contact packaging presentation from APCO.
 - APCO is consulting on six key proposals, including expanding the scope of the phase-out, establishing timeframes for implementation, lowering the threshold for "no intentionally added PFAS", and updating testing guidance to reflect emerging regulatory requirements. This indicates that they think they are exempt from IChEMS - this has been raised by WMRR to the federal government.
 - Noted that this work is similar to the work on AS4736 and the work of the Australasian Bioplastics Association.

iv. **EfW – Miles Mason**

- The Working Group has a meeting next Tuesday which will include an update on the Parkes Energy Recovery project, along with other project updates and discussion of the impact of the NSW EPA technical note
- Eligible fuel guidelines with EPA still not progressing
- Quality of questions at the NSW parliamentary inquiry hearing on 1 July 2026 in Sydney were not technically minded – with many loaded questions, such as an indirect accusation of MRA being paid by Veolia (which came from a committee member who owns property in Goulburn)
- Ed raised that communities misunderstand the role of the parliamentary inquiry – i.e. Giving evidence at the inquiry is not an EIS submission
- No update yet on the regulation amendment to change the precinct locations (though this will not impact Parkes and Woodlawn)

v. **YPs – Alarik Wong**

No meeting yet.

vi. **Waste Educators – (Claire Mahendradatta)**

- NSW Educators invited to join the Vic Educator Meeting in June on the Cleanaway Recycling Report.
- Site visit in planning – potentially circular textiles facility.

6. Events & Training

- i. [Australian Landfill and Transfer Stations Conference](#) 21 - 23 October 2026 (Brisbane).
 - Abstracts close this Friday 17 July 2026
 - Assisting councils with the gaps in managing regional council sites will be a key focus for the workshop
 - The program include Foundations of WARR training the day prior the conference.
- ii. **Foundations of WARR Training**
Currently scheduling a date for Sydney before the end of year, in addition to the pre-conference day with ALTS in Brisbane.
- iii. **Webinars**
 - Definition of Waste, Tuesday 28 July 2026 [registrations opening soon]
 - [Australia's Circular Clothing Future](#), Tuesday 4 August 2026
- iv. **NSW Women of WARR Leadership Breakfast** (Friday 28 August 2026)
- v. **Save the Date**
 - NSW Forum (Thursday 24 September 2026)
 - NSW End of Year Drinks (Thursday 26 November 2026)

[Confirmed WMRR events](#)

7. Other business

- i. [State Branch Elections](#)
 - Nominations close at 5pm Tuesday 28 July 2026.

8. Next meeting date

Tuesday 11 August 2026

Meeting closed 9.00am