

QUEENSLAND BRANCH COMMITTEE

MEETING

9.00 am – 10.00 am

Wednesday 10 June 2026

via Zoom

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies

- i. **Attendees:** Chris Hambling, Michael O'Keefe, Matt Glavina, Kerry Dalton, Jason Grandcourt, Trevor Evans, Ashleigh Saunders, Alex Kanaar, Emma Donovan, Megan Surawski, Christine Blanchard, Kane Mitchell, Lucy Borota, David de Jager, Alix Baltais, Richard Taylor, Amy Bartkowski, Megan Wheeler, Hayley Page, Pawan Govind, Evan Lockhart, Steve Cosatto, Ewan Bell, Linda Nordin, Dilan Patel, Gayle Sloan (late), Shivani Middlemiss DETSI, Renee Lake (DETSI), April Hoyles (DETSI), Claire Andersen (DETSI), Cara McNicol (DETSI) and Lisa Lepore.
- ii. **Apologies:** Richard Harward, Henry Anning, Tobi Spencer, Giles Perryman, Gavin Crawford, Matt McCarthy, Lacey Webb.

The Chair noted that the meeting was focused on a discussion of the proposed legislative amendments to reduce litter and boost recycling, with DETSI presenting to the Branch.

2. Previous minutes and actions arising

i. Previous minutes

The minutes of 6 May 2026 Branch Committee Meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Steve Cosatto *Second:* Pawan Govind

ii. Actions arising:

No actions arising.

3. National advocacy (CEO)

Industry Roundtable

- Federal Ministers Watts, Ayers and Collins facilitated a roundtable in Sydney to talk through fuel supply issues.
- The impact on demand for materials was raised as part of discussions, with the roundtable showing persistent disconnect—one side can't access recycled content, other side can't give it away – resulting in no progress on recycled content uptake even during crisis.

National Environment Ministers

- The intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to progress federal packaging reform in progress but WMRR understands that federal drafting is progressing slowly.
- James Tregatha (CE Lead) departing DCCEEW on 20 June 2026 which may hinder progress.

WMRR NATIONAL OFFICE
57 ST JOHNS ROAD
GLEBE NSW 2037

(02) 8746 5000
INFO@WMRR.ASN.AU

WMRR.ASN.AU

Batteries Regulations

- NSW pushing for October start date with Sydney workshop for PSO happening this month, preceding tender process.
- South Australia drafted Cabinet paper which is expected to progress soon.

PV solar stewardship

- NSW drafting regulations with Minister Sharpe committed to proceed in NSW without federal consensus if necessary. Policy emphasis on prioritizing critical mineral circulation/re-circulation.
- Noted that the \$24 million federal PV trial procurement has been paused, allegedly due to formal complaint.

PFAS

- NEMP 3.1 issued—primarily housekeeping updates.

EfW in Media - ABC 730 Report on Monday 8 June 2026

- Victoria energy-from-waste described as a "Ring of Fire" – with media coverage looking at the cap licence allocation to create a four-corner "ring" around Melbourne
- Coverage does not mention that the 11 cap licenses have been issued without planning/regulatory standing – creating community confusion
- The report also did not allude to the significant residual waste management issue emerging as southeast Victoria landfills face closure for 2029 as they were working towards an EfW facility under the former SWRRP (Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Plan).

4. Legislative amendments to reduce litter and boost recycling (DETSI presentation)

DETSI presented on the proposed ten (10) amendments to the Waste Act definition of waste and end-of-waste framework. The slides from the workshops for this consultation were circulated to branch members on Monday 1 June 2026.

The primary focus for this presentation to WMRR is on clarifying what constitutes 'waste' versus 'resources' to support circular economy innovation. Intention is to keep things out of 'waste' definition but maintain regulatory oversight.

- Noted that the meaning of waste can vary from state to state.
 - South Australia: "Ready for and intended for imminent use" not waste
 - Victoria/WA : If no longer leftover/unwanted, no longer waste
 - New South Wales: Specific exemptions focused on environmental impact; materials applied to land remain waste requiring management
 - Department conducting meetings with NSW and Victoria on their parallel waste framework reforms.

. In particular, DETSI seeking feedback on:

- Whether to retain or remove section allowing Minister to prescribe materials as not-waste – this has never been used.
- What qualifies as "relevant published standard" for recovered products—needs balance between flexibility for innovation and preventing self-created standards

- "Unwanted" definition - this will be a critical term requiring clear statutory guidance with case study examples, which DETSI indicated that they will consult on guidance material.

The key points in the discussion were:

Current Waste Definition Problems

- Existing definition causes inconsistent interpretations across Queensland about what qualifies as waste
- Strict legal interpretation requires end-of-waste codes for nearly all recycled materials, including compost, plastic pellets, textile products, and metals—even when they meet standards and have established markets – can be a barrier to innovation.
- Materials processed with significant investment still legally classified as waste, creating uncertainty for industry.
- Some producers told they must wait 12 months for end-of-waste codes for low-risk products.

Proposed Framework Changes

- Simplified waste definition would consolidate "leftover, unwanted byproduct, surplus" into single definition: "anything leftover, discarded, abandoned, surplus or byproduct from an activity that is unwanted for further use" and clarify new pathways out of waste framework:
 - Reuse: Material reused for same purpose it was designed (e.g., leftover construction bricks) automatically not waste.
 - Recovered product criteria: Self-assessed pathway for materials that meet all four criteria:
 - (1) processed/transformed/remanufactured from waste,
 - (2) immediate and demonstrable market,
 - (3) meets relevant published standards, and
 - (4) won't cause environmental harm
- Retain End-of-waste codes remain for higher-risk materials, particularly those applied to land.
- Regulation-prescribed guidance will be produced to provide worked examples and clarify terminology
- Richard questioned necessity of changes, noting many recycled products (waste oil refineries making base oil) have operated successfully without end-of-waste codes.
 - Concern about "overzealous regulation" creating problems rather than solving industry-driven issues.
 - Worry about diverse industry standards creating administrative burden for DETSI.

Agricultural sector impacts

- Megan raised concern that "byproduct" classification could capture wanted agricultural materials (i.e.: split tomatoes used for vitamin production)
- Agricultural sector prefers term "agricultural residues" over "waste"
- Concern about processed agricultural byproducts (mango/avocado pulp) being prohibited from land application after off-site processing (currently the case in Central Queensland, raised by Evan).

Geographic limits and material ownership:

- Chris questioned whether definition limited to point of generation or if it allows material transfer between sites. For example, TMR hub-and-cluster soil movement arrangements. DETSI clarification was that ERA holders accept waste from generators; generator perspective determines "unwanted" status.
- Illegal dumping loophole if no longer considered a 'waste': Richard raised that reclaimed asphalt pavement dumped roadside might not qualify as 'waste' under new definition – DETSI confirmed disposal/illegal dumping provisions override other exemptions.
- Clarification needed to determine whether internal ERA use requires end-of-waste code compliance (ie RAP and reclaimed concrete).

Specific Material Examples raised by DETSI

Materials potentially not waste under new framework:

- TMR soil reuse between sites (wanted by generator throughout)
- Reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP) for road construction
- Local government mulch given away at transfer stations (reuse, though may not meet AS4454)
- Food rescue and charity donations
- Leftover building materials and secondhand goods
- Marketplace sales items

Materials requiring end-of-waste codes:

- Biosolids, blast furnace slag, foundry sand, coal combustion products, garnet sand (existing codes)
- Materials applied to land with environmental risk (compost, biochar, IBAA)

Other Proposed Amendments

- Soil disposal provisions
 - Transitional 2014 provisions brought into legislation, the amendments allow contaminated soil movement between listed sites for reuse under certain conditions
- Junk mail littering
 - Repeal or delegate chapter to local government level to free DETSI illegal dumping team resources for serious offences
 - LGAQ consultation ongoing however feedback in the meeting highlighted that most Local Governments felt under-resourced to take this on (and away from DETSI).
 - Councils requesting de-identified complaint data by geographic area to assess magnitude, model local laws to implement, and funding to support implementation if required.
- Administrative improvements
Richard had a comment about fuel truck weighing and requested fuel trucks and water trucks be excluded from mandatory weighing requirements, noting operational disruption when councils require weighing during manned hours rather than at 6am refueling.

Next steps

- DETSI reiterated that they had "time to get it right" and were looking at legislation for next year and progress the bill later this year.
- Any statutory guidance will be consulted after Act amendments finalised .

5. Swanbank stakeholder group feedback (Matt Glavina)

- Matt Glavina representing WMRR at Swanbank odour management stakeholder group which was established in response to HEIC inquiry outcome.
- The Stakeholder Group has been supporting DETSI to develop a specific odour management plan and investigation report fact sheets.
- Group includes WRIQ, composters, abattoirs, and regional industry.
- Meetings occur every two months through November 2026.
- More detail on odour management plan expected by next Branch meeting.

6. Other business

i. Standing agenda held over

Due to time constraints, the standing agenda was not progressed for this meeting.

- Regulatory updates, working group updates and events will be further discussed at the July meeting.

ii. Branch priorities

The Branch Priorities table is provided at [Annexure A](#). This item is on hold.

These will be reviewed by the branch following the release of the Waste Strategy.

7. Next meeting date

Wednesday 15 July 2026

Annexure A: Branch Priorities

The following table consists of the proposed branch priorities as of January 2026

Issue	Description of issue	Future state	Strategic response (how we get there) <i>Recent advocacy in italics</i>
Strategic direction	The Queensland Government is reviewing the WMRR Strategy (released 2019) and targets. This review needs to tie into levy settings, both in metro and regional Queensland, and align with targets that are achievable and meaningful, and supported with real policy and funding. The strategic direction and ambitions of the Queensland Government are not clearly articulated. There is also growing concern about the limits of discretion enjoyed by compliance officers whose delegated authority can lead to inconsistencies when regulating. An increased level of scrutiny is needed noting that DES does not have a Board (like other state EPAs) which provides continual oversight over its regulatory arms, nor is there a compliance strategy in place to put officers under some level of accountability for their decisions. The existing regulatory strategy is too high	The review and update of the WMRR Strategy, targets and associated policy is undertaken with open and transparent collaboration across government and industry to provide meaningful, measurable and supported pathway to significantly improve recycling and resource recovery rates, and that the outcomes of the WMRR Strategy update can be incorporated into regional waste management and resource recovery plans across Queensland. Mechanisms – such as a compliance strategy or Board – should be in place to have oversight over the regulatory arm to ensure that the discretion exercised by compliance officers is appropriate and can be scrutinised.	WMRR and members to contribute to advocate for earlier consultation to influence changes. WMRR and members to provide constructive and realistic feedback on proposed changes <i>The issues related to the strategy targets and levy settings are captured in WMRR's response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025).</i> <i>It was noted in that response that many of our (and QTC and other government agency reviews of the previous strategy documents) previous recommendations and comments have remained unactioned over the last decade.</i> <i>The issue of unscrutinized levels of discretion enjoyed by regulatory compliance officers was encouraged to be raised by LG members in the consultation for the Local Government Red Tape Reduction Taskforce. The Taskforce Report is due in August 2025.</i> <i>The July 2025 review of the EP Act was utilised as an opportunity for WMRR to confirm the concerns of EPA regulatory officer discretion and the need for more</i>

	level to provide accountability in this regard. Currently it is impossible to challenge a compliance notice or regulatory officer.		<i>certainty from the regulation about the standards required.</i>
Waste levy settings	The current waste levy settings (annual advance payment for local government and levy rate) do not currently promote and de-risk long-term investment in recycling or energy recovery technologies.	The Queensland Government presents a robust long-term plan for application of the waste levy across Queensland, including schedule of increases.	WMRR to contribute to consultation and provide key information for upcoming review. <i>Initial comments have been captured in WMRR's response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025). It was noted in that response that many of our (and QTC and other government agency reviews of the previous strategy documents) previous recommendations and comments have remained unactioned over the last decade.</i>
WARR Infrastructure	Queensland does not have a clear WARR infrastructure plan that identifies the need for critical transfer, recycling and residual waste treatment facilities across the state. This results in a lack of certainty for investment, as well as lack of guiding principles for funding and government support.	Queensland has a clear WARR Infrastructure Plan that demonstrates the type of infrastructure required to meet current and future waste arisings. This plan links to regional plan implementation. This extends to developing a Regional Commingled Infrastructure Plan and supporting establishment of both Metro and Regional AWT Infrastructure Plans.	WMRR and members to contribute to development (through consultation) and review of a formal WARR infrastructure plan, as well as specific plans for regional and metro Queensland. <i>This feedback was specifically provided in WMRR's response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025).</i>
End of Waste Codes	The End of Waste Framework was reviewed in 2023 with a series of recommendations adopted by the Queensland Government. It is unclear what progress (if any) has been made. The End of Waste Framework should be facilitating the use of IBA from EfW	The End of Waste Framework is refreshed as per the review and clarity is provided on "material no longer a waste" and mechanisms for this to be applied. An EoW Code is developed for IBAA that facilitates clarity for EfW investment in Queensland.	EfW Working Group convening a sub-group in Feb 2025 to look at supporting establishment of an End of Waste Code for reuse of IBAA. The IBAA EoW Code application from Blue Phoenix as of July 2025 is understood to be progressing well and is supported by industry. <i>The group has paused as Blue Phoenix await notification as to whether their nomination for a EoW</i>

	facilities as IBAA products for use in construction.	WMRR has become aware in August 2025 of the contaminant limits for the Approved Glass Fines EoW Code are difficult to meet and causing these products to be sent to landfill.	code has been successful. The key points from that nomination were shared with the IBAA group, and no additional needs for an industry code were noted. Continued engagement / interaction with Department on EoW Codes released for consultation. The Branch discussed issuing a letter from WMRR to remind of the timelines and get a commitment to the implementation of the recommendations from the EoW Framework Review. This was addressed by WMRR in the response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025).
PFAS and other problematic / emerging issues	The current approach to managing PFAS (and derivatives) in waste and waste derived products (e.g., compost) does not facilitate long-term investment in recycling and recovery technologies required to be consistent with the Queensland Waste Strategy and Organics Strategy. This means more material will go to landfill than necessary.	The Queensland Government presents an appropriate level of risk management / environmental protection whilst permitting the safe reuse of recycled material. Particular items of note include PFAS, batteries, CCA, microplastics and nano plastics, and household chemicals amongst other hazardous materials. <u>Generator obligation</u> to designing out hazardous materials like plastics also forms part of the future state to address this issue.	Urgent action needs to be taken regarding battery fires to address and promote the safe collection, processing and end-of-life management of batteries. WMRR continues to work with other industry groups to negotiate around risk values (e.g., EnRiskS report etc) to find pragmatic solution to facilitate safe and environmentally protective deployment of waste derived products. Commentary on this issue also included in the WMRR response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025). As of July 2025, will be no new limits applied to Environmental Authorities at this time. Instead DETSI will work collaboratively with industry to co-develop guidance, initiate monitoring programs, and appoint DETSI is looking to create a guideline which

			<i>has tiers of ranges and actions on testing and reporting. WMRR is proactively working with AORA and others to influence.</i> <i>WMRR issued letter to Minister Powell on 2 October 2025 seeking urgent action on batteries and embedded battery products.</i>
Market Development of Recycled and Recovered Materials	The importance of ensuring sustainable design for the market Development of recycled and recovered products (free of hazardous materials) is a key concern for industry and crucial for achieving circular economy and Net Zero targets.	End of Waste Codes are developed for suitable materials, mandated sustainable design guidelines are enforced for producers and recycle / recovered materials are preferences through government procurement processes over virgin materials.	WMRR continues to call for sustainable design to be enforced in concert with mandatory EPR schemes and to advocate for an equal playing field in market preferences for recycled and recovered materials to be equal to virgin materials. This complements decarbonisation initiatives. <i>WMRR called for recycle targets to be developed and enforced (particularly with upcoming Olympics) in the response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025).</i> <i>RRMD Working Group is exploring procurement of recycled materials from C&D in Q3 2025.</i>
Driving Generator Obligation	Current product stewardship and EPR schemes are largely underperforming, and do not provide fair and equitable coverage across Queensland. Ideal scenario would be a broader directives framework to underpin specific regulation and policy.	Product stewardship schemes are developed and executed and available in all parts of Queensland with mandatory levels of service throughout the state, with costs of collection and processing accounted for in product price. Designing out problematic, hazardous and single use materials are necessary for circular economy goals and needs to be urgently progressed.	Advocate for mandatory design requirements and generator obligations by all levels of government. Advocate for and promote product stewardship scheme development with appropriate financial support from product manufacturers and distributors, allowing for the additional challenges of operating schemes in regional areas.

			WMRR's response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025) , included the above points.
--	--	--	--