

## VICTORIAN BRANCH COMMITTEE

### MEETING

9.00 - 10.00 am AEST

Wednesday 22 July 2026

Zoom teleconference

### MINUTES

#### 1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Gayle Seddon, Gayle Sloan, Christine Wardle, Kelvin Davies, Jared Roberts, Anthony Douglas, Graeme Stewart, Maarten de Beurs, Catherine ng (for Vince Macolino), Justin Cohen, Kathy Mac Inness, and Lisa Lepore.

Apologies: Sam Lawson, Shaun Rooks, Jess Keyt, Michael Strickland, Nick Simmons.

#### 2. Previous minutes and actions arising

##### i. Previous minutes

The minutes of the 13 May 2026 Branch Committee meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record.  
*Moved:* Maarten de Beurs *Seconded:* Graeme Stewart

##### ii. Actions arising:

No actions arising.

#### 3. National advocacy (CEO)

##### *Packaging and product stewardship reform*

- Not much movement but work should be progressing on the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA), which is expected to follow the model used for national energy reforms, whereby one jurisdiction (i.e.: SA parliament) develops the legislation before it is adopted by other states.
- The IGA is supposed to be progressed ahead of the September Environment Ministers' Meeting (EMM)

##### *Export restrictions*

- The new export contamination threshold of 5% came into effect on 1 July 2026.

##### *National EPA*

- Commenced 1 July this year with John Bradley (ex DEECA) as CEO
- The agency will have responsibility for product stewardship and waste export matters, with main work being the EPBC Act.
- He is scheduled to meet with the WMRR CEO next week.

##### *COP discussions*

- One of the key priorities for COP 31 is halving waste generation by 50%; however, there appears to be limited support for this objective from Minister Bowen.
- Noted that the latest WMRR Bulletin included details of opportunities for participation at COP 31 in Türkiye in November this year.

##### *Carbon policy*

- DCCEEW is convening a roundtable tomorrow to discuss carbon policy opportunities for activities outside existing ACCU methods.

- WMRR input to discussions will focus on pathways for reducing emissions through increased recovery and use of recycled materials.
- Safeguard Mechanism is currently being reviewed as part of the Climate Change Authority's broader review. Noted that there may be concerns about trying to bring EfW under Safeguard.

#### *EfW in media*

- The Smart Energy Council released its waste-to-energy report last week stating that it was “dirty” and not renewable. Strongly opposed by WMRR, and the report got very little coverage.

## **4. VIC Issues**

### **i. Regulatory and policy updates**

#### *New EPA structure with the Circular Economy Division as of 1 July 2026*

- Absorption of RV into EPA now in full effect.
- Noted that Tony Circelli will be finishing this month.
- The group discussed reports that a headcount reduction process may occur ahead of the election. T
- here also remains uncertainty following Sustainability Victoria's transition, with it unclear which staff have transferred to DEECA and how responsibilities are being allocated.
- The group discussed that there may be a head count reduction process ahead of the election.
- Members noted that the ongoing organisational changes and shifting responsibilities are creating uncertainty and making it difficult to progress business.
  - Some councils are concerned about where resources and programs will ultimately sit. While some functions continue to be hosted by councils, a number of contracts have transferred to DEECA, with their future management arrangements still unclear. This is particularly affecting collaborative regional contracts involving multiple councils, with the South East Melbourne Waste Management Group identified as a key concern.
  - WMRR is continuing discussions with the Minister's Office regarding governance and future management arrangements for the South East waste region.

#### *New guidance documents have been issued by EPA*

- A number of guidance pages updated. The group discussed that these are quietly alerted via email some days later, with some members not always receiving all updates. This raises the question of how hard it must be for some licensees to stay on top of the most current guidance.
  - [Development licence application guidance](#) issued
  - [Circular Economy Risk, Consequence and Contingency \(CERCC\) Plan](#) now includes two (2) new priority risks—land use competition and encroachment. RERRC Plans due 30 November 2026
  - Updated [RMMP Guidance issued](#) – this was discussed by the Landfill Group.
  - [Minimise pollution and waste risks in a changing climate](#) - as part of a business' general environmental duty (GED) obligations.

#### *Fire extinguishers*

- EPA has developed a proposed position on the safe disposal of waste fire extinguishers
- Online information session on Wednesday 29 July 2026 from 10.30am - 11.30am . Register [here](#) by Tuesday 28 July 2026.

#### *Glass bin*

- Election commitment from the Liberal National Coalition made last week to abandon the glass-only bin mandate and return decision-making on waste and recycling services to local councils.

### Waste Tracker

- Jared raised the opportunity for EPA to make better use of Waste Tracker data rather than duplicating data collection and analysis efforts. Better use of Waste Tracker data could help address concerns around landfill capacity, material flows and end fates.
- The group noted that similar issues were identified around three years ago, but much of the work stalled following staff turnover at EPA.
- With the increasing use of AI, there may now be opportunities to better utilise the existing data. It was also noted that SA EPA has established a strategic role focused on driving improved use of similar data.

#### Action arising

WMRR to have the issue of how AI can be used to enhance VIC EPA's Waste Tracker data added to the agenda for the Resource Recovery Consultative Group (RRCG) meeting on 26 August. Gayle and Jared to discuss the matter further offline prior to the meeting.

### Media issues

- Illegal Dumping matters ([media coverage](#))
- EfW social licence ([ABC media coverage](#))
- Cleanaway have [announced](#) to the ASX that they have lodged an appeal of the Victorian Supreme Court ruling regarding MRL underpayment of retrospective levy.

### Other

- Kelvin raised that the Soft Plastics Stewardship (SPSA) are currently tendering for MRF capability to handle soft plastics in Queensland. Looking at options for MRF to sort, separate and next stage processing options.

#### ii. Submissions/consultation

Open for consultation:

- [Climate Change Authority - 2026 Annual Progress Advice](#) (closing 9 August 2026)  
*This includes comment on the potential reform opportunities for the Safeguard Mechanism.*

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 \(8 May 2026\)](#)

## 5. Working group updates

#### i. Landfill - Kathy Mac Innes

- The group discussed that the RRMP guidance issued by the EPA (referred to above) suggests that operators essentially "prepare their own audit list for the EPA officers".

#### ii. EfW – Anthony Douglas

- The previous meeting was held on 20 May 2026.
- The APCr regulatory pathway was discussed at the May meeting. In Victoria, APCr has progressed through several regulatory options, including an A16 hazardous waste permit and a designation pathway, before EPA

ultimately issued a letter outlining circumstances where the material may be used. The letter allows use where there is demonstrated market demand, the material meets specified standards, and it has undergone a genuine resource recovery process. However, the approach provides limited regulatory certainty for investors, with jurisdictional differences continuing to present a significant barrier to investment. It is hoped that Queensland's EoW Code may help establish a clearer framework for APCr nationally. More broadly, it remains challenging to transition recovered materials out of the waste regulatory framework in any state.

- The Queensland Incinerator Bottom Ash Aggregate (IBAA) End-of-Waste Code is now expected to be released for public consultation in the coming weeks, having been delayed from the original 20 July timeframe. The Working Group is hoping to get an update on this at the next meeting this month (currently scheduled for 29 July 2026)
  - Current discussions are focused on acceptable input materials rather than the technical specifications of the final product. It is hoped that Queensland's approved IBAA EoW Code could provide a nationally consistent model that other jurisdictions adopt.
- A meeting of Heads of EPA (HEPA) senior officers is scheduled this week to progress nationally consistent frameworks for both IBAA and Air Pollution Control Residue (APCr).
- The market development challenges for ash residues was broadly discussed by the Branch:
  - Jared raised investigating the base mineral value of both IBAA and APCr to identify potential opportunities aligned with the work of the Critical Minerals Council. This could help shift the conversation from waste management towards product and resource value.
  - In Western Australia, uncertainty around the regulatory pathway for fly ash is delaying market development. In the short term, Gayle suggests that it is likely that APCr will need to be stabilised and landfilled for at least the next 18 months while regulatory arrangements are resolved.
- The Victorian Energy from Waste Inquiry is due to report next August.
  - The allocation of the EfW cap continues to create community confusion about the status of EfW projects and creating challenges for project development and social licence.
  - It was also noted that a local Sunbury councillor has sought clarification from WMRR following the inquiry.

### iii. RRMD – Maarten de Beurs

- The RRMD Working Group is setting its agenda for the next 12 months, with a focus on improving the tracking of changes to recovered material specifications and product standards.
- The previous meeting included a presentation on textile recycling (Salvation Army).
- The group is keen to continue discussions on Air Pollution Control Residue (APCr) and Incinerator Bottom Ash Aggregate (IBAA), noting similarities between the digestate regulatory pathway and APCr in Victoria in that the EPA generally does not engage until there is a demonstrable regulatory issue requiring resolution.
- The group is seeking to broaden discussions around circular economy outcomes and continue progressing the broader "end-of-waste" agenda.

### iv. Waste Educators – Gayle Seddon

- At the June meeting, Cleanaway presented its Recycling Behaviours Report (the branch discussed that behaviour change research has traditionally been undertaken by governments and that results can be influenced by marketing priorities).

- For the July meeting, a site visit was also held at the Cleanaway Hallam Education Centre, with considerable discussion on problematic materials.
  - Following on from this, the branch discussed ongoing challenges associated with the 5% fibre contamination limit for waste exports, as composite materials cannot be baled and can only be processed through limited material recovery facility (MRF) lines - particularly liquid paperboard (LPB) packaging and Tetra Paks.
  - Some container deposit schemes accept these tetra pak cartons however, export restrictions relating to contamination and biological content mean that recovered material is currently being exported, mainly to Spain and South Korea. It was noted that Tetra Pak is exploring a product stewardship scheme (take-back arrangements as there is currently little commercial incentive to separate the material)
  - The group also discussed operational challenges within MRFs, including the use of eddy current separators to remove Tetra Pak packaging from aluminium bales. Increasing numbers of aluminium bottles, such as Red Bull bottles, are creating contamination issues due to their high aluminium content. Members also noted that the short fibres contained in liquid paperboard cannot be effectively recovered because they are unable to bond during the recycling process.
- Upcoming meetings will include a presentation from [EKOT](#) (New Zealand) in August on textile recycling followed by a September session on The Great Unwaste.
- The Working Group is preparing a survey to identify future discussion topics.

**v. YPs – (Ray Trevorah)**

- No updates.
- Jared mentioned the mentoring model with ALGA works well, and may be worth considering something similar for WMRR moving forward.

## 6. Events

**i. Review of the [Foundations of Waste and Resource Recovery](#)**

- Pilot delivery in Melbourne on Wednesday 10 June 2026 went well, with plans to roll out the training in other states across the year.

**ii. Webinars**

- [Australia's Circular Clothing Future](#), Tuesday 4 August 2026
- Definition of Waste, 18 August 2026[registrations opening soon]
  - Following the Cleanaway MRL case and the potential impacts for industry arising from the judgement.

**iii. [Australian Landfill and Transfer Stations Conference](#) 21 - 23 October 2026 (Brisbane).**

**iv. Save the Date**

- VIC Women of WARR Leadership Breakfast (Friday 9 October 2026)
- Vic End of Year Drinks (Thursday 3 December 2026)

[Confirmed WMRR events](#)

## 7. Other business

**WMRR NATIONAL OFFICE**  
57 ST JOHNS ROAD  
GLEBE NSW 2037  
  
(02) 8746 5000  
[INFO@WMRR.ASN.AU](mailto:INFO@WMRR.ASN.AU)

i. [State Branch Elections](#)

- Nominations close at 5pm Tuesday 28 July 2026.

ii. **Branch priorities**

A discussion of the Branch Priorities (last updated October 2025) is provided at [Annexure A](#). The branch committee is welcome to add further comments.

**8. Next meeting date**

Wednesday 12 August 2026

**Actions arising from meeting:**

| Item | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Responsible          | Timeline / Notes             |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 4    | "How AI can be used to enhance VIC EPA's Waste Tracker data" to be added to the agenda for the Resource Recovery Consultative Group (RRCG) meeting on 26 August. Gayle and Jared to discuss the matter further offline prior to the meeting. | WMRR National Office | RRCG Meeting 26 August 2026. |

## Annexure A: WMRR Branch Priorities as discussed October 2025

| Issue                                                                                      | Progress / Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Regulatory Challenges within and across departments</b>                                 | <p>(e.g.: EfW cap licence v DAs, Regulatory documents as guidance v compliance documents, Community v Technical (when assessing proposals))</p> <p>Group comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parliamentary Inquiry into EfW is a prime opportunity for advocacy on these challenges</li> <li>• Challenges with guidance approach of regulators may lend itself to 'train the trainer' workshops facilitated by WMRR (once stabilised workforces within DEECA.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Noted that there has been positive experience from the Branch dealing with the science division who have expressed desire to acquire knowledge from industry</li> <li>○ There is an opportunity for education and positioning managing waste as an essential service for Victorians that warrants a consistent approach to regulation and compliance – and not held to ambiguous, uncertain and unforeseeable standards.</li> <li>○ Aware that some regulatory staff are visiting sites and there is opportunity for industry to increase such opportunities for regulators to gain an understanding of industry.</li> <li>○ It was noted that RV have demonstrated a good understanding of the WARR industry and its challenges.</li> <li>○ The groups are keen to reiterate positioning WARR as a good neighbour and essential service - not an adversary (i.e. landfills are a top 5 area of concern...)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Position on the rollout of the Service standards and the glass bin</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WMRR has been active in support for national alignment on the expansion of CDS scheme to support wine and spirit bottle collections. WMRR understands 33 councils oppose the rollout. - councils are planning their budgets based on the financial impacts and they are taking this advocacy lead.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Action on Batteries</b>                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WMRR nationally has pushed for alignment with NSW Framework.</li> <li>• VIC Waste educators have focused on achieving behaviour change for managing batteries and other hazardous item.</li> <li>• <i>Notes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mornington will look to present kerbside figures on batteries in bins.</li> <li>○ WMRR to share recent Queensland data.</li> <li>○ WMRR to follow up on the presentation from DEECA on the next steps for the batteries regulations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Technical specification requirements handicapping procurement of recycled materials</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WMRR nationally working on agreed frameworks for IBAA and APCr and encouraging federal and state agencies equivalent to Ecologi.</li> <li>• WMRR has been active in advocating for recycled content thresholds at national and state level.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

| Issue                       | Progress / Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VIC RRMD group has been looking at successful models affecting increased procurement of recyclable materials.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Definitions of Waste</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback provided by WMRR to the EPA in September on guidance material – awaiting response.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Waste Levy</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The group also added that Levy hypothecation should be addressed. WMRR position is that at least 50% should be coming back to industry. For Victoria, it was agreed that the levy needs to continue to rise and go back to industry</li> </ul> |