

VICTORIAN BRANCH COMMITTEE

MEETING

9.00- 10.00am AEST

Wednesday 8 April 2026

Zoom teleconference

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Christine Wardle, Gayle Seddon, Gayle Sloan, Graeme Stewart, Kelvin Davies, Kathy Mac Innes, Maarten de Beurs.

Apologies: Adrien Scott, Lisa Lepore, Samuel Lawson, Michelle Mandl, Mark Biddulph, Trevor Thornton, Vince Macolino, Maarten, Anthony Douglas. Allard Bernhofen, Megan Surawski, Justin Cohen, Shaun Rocks, Ray Trevorah.

2. Previous minutes and actions arising

i. Previous minutes:

- Minutes of the 11 March 2026 Branch Committee meeting were circulated without comment and thereby considered to be a true and accurate record.

ii. Actions arising:

Issue	Action	Status
Nitrous Oxide Cannisters – illegal dumping	Further work will occur offline, with follow-up actions to be coordinated between councils, EPA and WMRR	In progress and considered a watching brief to be updated as required in policy updates. (Closed)
Branch priorities	Standing item. Review as required.	Noted and considered a watching brief to update as required (Closed).

3. National advocacy (CEO)

i. Environment Ministers' Meeting (27 March 2026)

Overall feedback on recent discussions was positive, with outcomes considered better than expected.

Intergovernmental agreement

- EMM has established an intergovernmental agreement, exploring a model similar to the electricity market where one jurisdiction (e.g. SA) leads and others adopt; Queensland is considering how this would operate consistently across jurisdictions.
- Priority materials: Packaging and solar panels identified as first materials for stewardship action, with ministers committed to reconvene in August. NSW is leading development of the Solar PV Regulation Impact Statement (RIS). Due to provide update at the next meeting in August.
- The CEO noted potential momentum for the Parliamentary Secretary/Minister to align with NSW's lead on battery regulation.

CDS

- In principle agreement on the CDS scheme for beverage registration was achieved.

Batteries

- Responsibility will largely sit with states.
- Victoria noted as progressing slowly but retaining carriage of drafting guidelines on HEPA's behalf.

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ii. Fuel Supply & Service Continuity

- Fair Work Commission considering emergency fuel cost pass-through clause for all transportation (not just TWU contracts) on a weekly basis
- Access to fuel supply posing some regional challenges, but main concerns are around costs rather than access.
 - No councils are considering stopping or withdrawing services but there is concern that not all waste customers have funds to absorb passed-through fuel costs.
- Victorian Premier-led fuel discussions being held with WMRR CEO involvement. The discussions are focused on access (service prioritisation) rather than price solutions.

Sector impacts for recycled materials

- Hormuz Strait reopened temporarily, though diesel supply issues remain unresolved, impacting the supply of materials. However, Recycled Materials opportunities are not resulting from the crisis. The branch discussed:
 - Geomembrane shortage: Landfill construction materials (geomembrane) on indefinite hold; with three (3) projects known to be requiring design variations to use alternative materials.
 - Facilities are being decommissioned: RMF-funded manufacturers are closing or significantly downsizing despite current need for plastics. Eg: RPM was decommissioned due to insufficient orders and is now operating with single staff member while decommissioning HDPE pipe production.
 - Noted that Greenpipe (HDPE drainage pipe) could pivot back into production if demand increases.
 - Market failure noted as contractors and councils refusing recycled plastic pipes despite months-long waits for virgin plastic or concrete alternatives during supply shortage.
 - WMRR has identified the opportunity to connect stakeholders with suppliers of onshore remanufactured materials.
- The branch noted the importance of supporting demand creation to sustain local recycling markets.
 - The group discussed the lack of oversight: Sustainability Victoria failed to monitor grant recipients' sales uptake or raise alarms about commercial failure over past two years. This highlights the government disconnect - industry and environment departments not coordinating despite funding these facilities specifically for current crisis conditions.
 - Branch agreed that status review needed for multiple RMF grant recipients.

iii. Export Restrictions

- The Minister is not inclined to grant exemptions for LDPE, despite low domestic demand. Risk identified of this material going into landfill.
- Noted that the incoming Federal EPA will have export permits and enforcement.

4. VIC Issues

i. Regulatory and policy updates including:

- *Batteries regulations*
 - This is not progressing as quickly as hoped.
 - Victoria maintaining 2027 timeline despite Cabinet approval expected in December 2026; Gayle Sloan publicly challenged Minister Dimopoulos on the lack of urgency.
- *Restructuring of Departments*
 - [Entities Legislation Amendment Consolidation and Other Matters Act](#) passed 31 March 2026 gives EPA flexibility to pause or extend approval timeframes, likely impacting landfill project timelines
 - Collapse from 4 to 2 Victorian departments has eliminated the industry champion role previously held by Sustainability Victoria. Sustainability Victoria closing services by end of March
 - RV-EPA amalgamation changes effective 1 July 2026 with no clarity yet on operational structure;
- *Ministerial office instability*

- Victorian WARR forum has been unable to be scheduled due to departmental flux.
- Upcoming elections – 28 November 2026.

ii. Submissions/consultation (National and Vic)

Currently open and WMRR National Office welcomes comments:

- Victorian [Industrial heat decarbonisation](#) (28-April 2026)
 - DEECA is proposing to expand the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program to include industrial heat decarbonisation activities, such as electric thermal energy storage, gas efficiency and biogas. The changes aim to simplify participation, reduce administrative burden and improve access to incentives, particularly for gas-reliant businesses.
- [Federal Exposure Draft of Guarantee of Origin Legislation Amendment \(Biogas, Biomethane, Iron Ore pathways and Cost Recovery\)](#) (27 April 2026)
 - The Guarantee of Origin (GO) Scheme is a voluntary framework for tracking product emissions and certifying renewable electricity, currently covering renewable electricity and hydrogen, with plans to expand. A consultation is underway to gather feedback on extending certification to additional production pathways, including biogas, biomethane and iron ore.

Recently closed (for noting):

- [Inquiry into the development and expansion of waste-to-energy \(WtE\) infrastructure in Victoria.](#) (3 April 2026) *(this will be on WMRR website was published by parliamentary committee)*
- [Inquiry into Solar PV reuse and recycling](#) (27 March 2026)
- [Inquiry into microplastics](#) (6 March 2026)
- [Inquiry into productivity in Australia](#) (27 March)
- [Inquiry into the current state of the Australian tyre industry \(23 January 2026\)](#) – public hearings have concluded.

[WMRR submissions page](#)

5. Working group updates

i. Landfill - Kathy Mac Innes

- BPWM will transition to a statutory compliance code under the Act, strengthening regulatory status but potentially reducing design flexibility. Feedback supported modernising the Landfill BPWM to include:
 - [developing a compliance code focused on key landfill risks, including design and construction](#)
 - [refining permission conditions for the highest-risk activities](#)
 - [retaining a 'state of knowledge' approach for all other matters, updated to reflect current legislation, technology and work practices.](#)

EPA is now working on the new guidance, compliance codes and conditions. Comprehensive engagement with industry and other stakeholder will follow.

The working group will discuss compliance code implications at next meeting.

ii. EfW – (Anthony Douglas)

- Next meeting pushed back to May, noting WtE inquiry hearings coming up in early May.
- Group seeking an update on the End of Waste code application from Blue Phoenix for IBAA and APCr progress.

iii. RRMD – (Maarten de Beurs)

- The group continues to meet regularly with the March meeting featuring a workshop discussion around the disconnection between policies and practical needs.

- Noted as pertinent given the implications of the fuel crisis discussed at Item 3.

iv. Waste Educators – Gayle Seddon

- Seamless presentation at the March 2026 meeting - a recording and shareable is available.
- Circular textiles is the current theme for the Working Group, with the April meeting including a presentation from “A Fitting Connection”.

v. YPs –(Ray Trevorah)

- No update this meeting.

Review of Branch Priorities – Standing Item

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

Events

i. ‘WARR Foundations’ (working title for Face to Face Training)

- This new training offering from WMRR will pilot in Melbourne in May 2026 (TBC)
- Full-day course covering data, legislation, policy, carbon, and circularity;
- Blue Environment contracted to develop; pilot capped at 30 people in Victoria (May 20th)
- Registrations expected to open in coming weeks.

ii. [Landfill online training](#):

- Module 1: Introduction to Landfill Waste Disposal - Wednesday 15 April 2026
- Module 2: Leachate Generation & Management - Wednesday 29 April 2026
- Module 3: Landfill Gas Generation & Management - Wednesday 13 May 2026

iii. WMRR AGM

- 22 June 2026 at Adelaide Convention Centre ahead of ENVIRO Conference – Adelaide)
- WMRR Board Elections commence this week and close 1 May 2026 for an Elected Director.

iv. VIC SAVE THE DATES:

- VIC Women of WARR Leadership Breakfast (2 September 2026 - TBC)
- VIC End of Year Drinks (Thursday 3 December 2026)

v. Conferences for 2026

- [ENVIRO Conference](#) – 23 & 24 June 2026 (Adelaide)
- **Australian Landfill and Transfer Stations Conference** - 21 & 22 October 2026 (QLD TBC)

6. Other business

No other business.

7. Next meeting date

Wednesday 13 May 2026

Annexure A: WMRR Branch Priorities as discussed October 2025

Issue	Progress / Comments
Regulatory Challenges within and across departments	(e.g.: EfW cap licence v DAs, Regulatory documents as guidance v compliance documents, Community v Technical (when assessing proposals)) Group comments: • Parliamentary Inquiry into EfW is a prime opportunity for advocacy on these challenges • Challenges with guidance approach of regulators may lend itself to 'train the trainer' workshops facilitated by WMRR (once stabilised workforces within DEECA.) ○ Noted that there has been positive experience from the Branch dealing with the science division who have expressed desire to acquire knowledge from industry ○ 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. ○ 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. ○ It was noted that RV have demonstrated a good understanding of the WARR industry and its challenges. ○ 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...)
Position on the rollout of the Service standards and the glass bin	• 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.
Action on Batteries	• WMRR nationally has pushed for alignment with NSW Framework. • VIC Waste educators have focused on achieving behaviour change for managing batteries and other hazardous item. • Notes: ○ Mornington will look to present kerbside figures on batteries in bins. ○ WMRR to share recent Queensland data. ○ WMRR to follow up on the presentation from DEECA on the next steps for the batteries regulations.
Technical specification requirements handicapping	• WMRR nationally working on agreed frameworks for IBAA and APCr and encouraging federal and state agencies equivalent to Ecologi. • WMRR has been active in advocating for recycled content thresholds at national and state level.

Issue	Progress / Comments
procurement of recycled materials	VIC RRMD group has been looking at successful models affecting increased procurement of recyclable materials.
Definitions of Waste	Feedback provided by WMRR to the EPA in September on guidance material – awaiting response.
Waste Levy	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