

Victorian Resource Recovery & Market Development

WORKING GROUP MEETING

8.30 - 9.30 am

Thursday 9 July 2026

Chair: Maarten de Beurs

Committee: Lisa Birch and Ben Quill

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Lisa Birch, Ben Quill, Lisa McLeod, Graeme Stewart, Jaga Kulandaivelu, Gayle Sloan, Annika Tromm, Samantha Bell, Damien Bassett, Sarah Furnell, Shannon Smyth, Kelvin Davies, Maarten de Beurs (joined 845) and Lisa Lepore.

Apologies: Anita Manohar, Tracey Pryor, Maria Cabal-Fernandes, Allard Bernhofen, Piya Nyunt, Sandra Sanchez.

This meeting was chaired by Lisa Birch

2. Previous minutes

The meeting minutes of the 11 June 2026 meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Lisa Birch *Seconded:* Graeme Stewart

3. Presentation: Sarah Furnell, Specialist Manager – Circular Economy, Salvos Stores

Sarah Furnell is pioneering work in textiles recycling with Salvation Army shared some challenges and ideas for this hard to recycle stream. Sarah presented on the [Salvos' pioneering Textile Recovery Facility](#) (TRF) in Brisbane, covering fibre identification technology, recycling pathways, and industry partnerships. Discussion highlighted that procurement awareness — not technology or cost — is the primary barrier to scaling textile recycling.

The presentation slides were shared with these minutes.

Key points raised were that:

- “Valvin” machine (Brisbane TRF, launched March 2024) performs two novel functions at scale: automated fibre identification and trim-clean (removing buttons, zips) — previously done manually in Australia.
- Feedstock pathways created from processed B-grade garments:
 - Mechanical recyclers (e.g., Apparel Textile Recyclers Group)
 - Chemical recyclers (e.g., Blocktexx, Samsara Eco) for polymer recovery from synthetics
 - Waverley Mills — wool feedstock for yarn remanufacture
 - Sealy — post-consumer feedstock for mattresses
 - Vital Chemical — pyrolysis to produce biochar for roadside applications
- Textile-to-textile manufacturing is the long-term goal but represents only 1% of the global market; offshore processing required as domestic manufacturing capacity is near-absent.
- Small-scale prototyping underway with Deakin University to test fibre integrity and demonstrate proof of concept to government and industry. Key Barriers Identified include:
 - Procurement awareness is the primary bottleneck — buyers don't know recycled-content products (insulation, polymer resin, recycled textiles) exist or are cost-competitive.
 - Scale mismatch: even 10% recycled denim content from one major retailer would exceed Brisbane TRF capacity, requiring a second facility.
 - Freight inefficiency: single national facility forces interstate logistics, undermining emissions goals; target is one TRF per state.

- Chemical recyclers prefer purer feedstock streams (bottles, packaging) over textiles due to lower yields and higher costs from mixed fibres.
- Mixed fibre complexity: most garments are not 100% pure fibre, limiting compatibility with recyclers requiring pure PET streams.

le: PAC Group looking at chemical recycling – stream of synthetic fibres needed to complement bottle to bottle which has limited cycles – textiles come with multiple synthetics. PET recycling from Samsara and Blocktexas require pure polymers. New players can mix mongrel mixes into a polymer.

4. Product Standards and industry guidance (5 minutes)

i. AS4454 (compost/mulch standard) under review;

- Consultation expected within months.
- Risk is that AS4454 adopted by local government procurement contracts but may not align with state regulatory requirements (e.g., NSW compost order) — compliance with standard does not equal regulatory compliance. The FOGO rollout has exposed this misalignment in NSW.
- Stronger procurement policy (mandated recycled content %) may be more effective than refining recycled-content standards alone.

Action arising:

VIC RRMD Committee to scope product standards and industry guidance inventory to identify gaps and inconsistencies across Australian jurisdictions.

5. Industry Developments (10 minutes)

i. CDS expansion v separate glass bin

- NT and WA now include wine and spirits bottles (live as of meeting date); SA expansion expected 2027.
- NSW CDS contract renewal tender responses due imminently; new contract starts ~2027.
- Victoria purple bin: significant council pushback (>half of councils opposing mandatory requirement); outcome likely dependent on state election result; CDS expansion seen as alternative.

ii. Circular Economy Market Report

- Circular Economy Market Report released by Recycling Victoria (now under EPA Circular Economy Division); cadence reduced from annual to biennial or triennial.
- Attendees asked to review ahead of next meeting to enable discussion.

iii. National EPR efforts

- National EPR/product stewardship legislation progress slow; state-led frameworks advancing (NSW, SA, Tasmania)
- Next Environment Minister' meeting moved to September.

6. Other Business (5 minutes)

i. Upcoming meeting agendas

- Next meeting speaker TBD;
- The following meeting (September) to feature Mornington's procurement officer on social and environmental procurement challenges.

7. Next meeting date

Thursday 6 August 2026