



Hon Andrew Powell MP
Minister for the Environment and Tourism
and Minister for Science and Innovation
GPO Box 2454
Brisbane QLD 4001
Via email: environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au

19 August 2026

Dear Minister

Re: Urgent timetable for mandatory battery stewardship in Queensland

The Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia (WMRR) is the national peak body representing Australia's \$20 billion waste and resource recovery (WARR) sector. With more than 2,350 members from around 400 entities nationwide, WMRR represents the breadth and depth of this essential industry, including businesses, all three tiers of government, universities, NGOs and research bodies. The WARR sector is essential to the Queensland and national economies, employing more than 11,800 people in Queensland and contributing \$1.5 billion to the state economy. In Queensland, WMRR represents more than 380 individual members from over 50 entities across the value chain.

We are again seeking your urgent support for mandatory stewardship of batteries and battery-embedded products in Queensland. Fires caused by batteries placed in household waste and recycling streams continue to expose workers, facilities and communities to unacceptable and foreseeable risks. Major facility fires in Cairns and Brisbane have caused millions of dollars in damage, disrupted essential services and imposed substantial flow-on costs through lost capacity, capital replacement and rising insurance premiums—where coverage remains available at all.

2025 audits of 1,251 waste collection trucks across 21 Queensland local government areas found that 95 per cent contained batteries or battery-powered products: 50 per cent contained loose batteries and 45 per cent contained battery-embedded products. Only four (4) per cent of audited trucks were free of batteries. Nationally, the sector records more than 12,000 battery-related fires each year. While the sector has fortunately not yet experienced a fatality at a WARR facility, government should not wait for one before acting.

WMRR acknowledges the Queensland Government's three-point plan, including \$2 million in local government grants, industry innovation support and community education. These measures are welcome, but they cannot provide full coverage of the state nor appropriately allocate responsibility or recover the costs of safe collection and management from the businesses that place batteries and battery-powered products on the market. Those costs already exist and are currently being carried by councils, facility operators, workers and communities. Consistent with the polluter-pays principle, they should be fairly allocated to producers and importers through a mandatory stewardship scheme.

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

WMRR.ASN.AU

The intergovernmental pathway for action has already been identified. At the Environment Ministers Meeting (EMM) on 10 December 2024, Ministers noted the need for urgent reform of battery product stewardship to address escalating fire risks and expressly discussed progressing aligned, state-led reforms for mandatory battery stewardship, with NSW to lead the legislative process. The clear intent was that jurisdictions should be able to adopt aligned state-based schemes rather than wait indefinitely for a single Commonwealth scheme.

NSW has now acted on that pathway. It enacted the *Product Lifecycle Responsibility Act 2025* and has prepared and finalised the *Product Lifecycle Responsibility Regulation 2026* for mandatory battery stewardship. The NSW framework places enforceable obligations on brand owners and product stewardship organisations and establishes requirements for the safe collection, processing and recycling of regulated batteries. This provides Queensland with a developed regulatory model that can be adopted or aligned with, reducing implementation time and avoiding unnecessary duplication.

Queensland's own *Less Landfill, More Recycling 2035: Queensland Waste Strategy* reinforces the case for immediate action. Initiative 4.0.1 commits Queensland to advocate for national leadership on product stewardship, particularly for batteries, while Initiative 4.0.2 commits the State to investigate state-based schemes if national schemes are not supported. Most directly, Initiative 4.3.5 commits Queensland to advocate for a national battery stewardship scheme. With no national mandatory scheme scheduled and an aligned NSW framework now available, the condition contemplated by Initiative 4.0.2 has been met.

It is WMRR's view that Queensland therefore does not need to wait for further national policy development before protecting its workers and essential waste infrastructure. Delay leaves frontline workers managing risks created by products over whose design, sale and end-of-life arrangements they have no control.

WMRR asks the Queensland Government to:

- publicly commit to implementing a mandatory battery stewardship scheme in Queensland aligned with the NSW framework;
- publish, by 31 October 2026, a clear implementation timetable covering consultation, drafting, introduction and commencement of the necessary legislation and regulation;
- establish a target commencement date no later than 1 October 2027, with earlier transitional safety measures where practicable;
- ensure producers and importers bear the costs of safe collection, transport, recovery and management across the full product lifecycle; and
- work with industry, councils and other jurisdictions to maintain national consistency while avoiding further delay.

In particular, given that EMM is scheduled for September 2026, can you please commit to a timetable for implementing mandatory battery stewardship in Queensland? A dated pathway would give workers, councils and facility operators confidence that the State intends to convert its strategic commitments into their enforceable protection.

The time for reliance on voluntary measures has passed. Environment Ministers nationally agreed in 2024 to prioritise state based mandatory stewardship, given the genuine necessity to allocate existing end-of-life costs fairly, reduce battery fires and protect the people who deliver Queensland's essential waste and resource recovery services every day.



WMRR would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the NSW framework and how industry can support rapid, nationally aligned implementation in Queensland.

Yours sincerely

Gayle Sloan
Chief Executive Officer
Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia