



Ms Jo Evans PSM
Deputy Secretary
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
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Email: EnergyandElectricitySectorPlan@dcceew.gov.au

26 April 2024

Dear Ms Evans

Re: Electricity and Energy Sector Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Electricity and Energy Sector Plan* discussion paper for net zero plans. The Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia (WMRR) is the national peak body representing Australia's \$17 billion waste and resource recovery (WARR) industry. With more than 2,200 members from over 400 entities nationwide, we represent the breadth and depth of the sector, including representation from business organisations, the three (3) tiers of government, universities, and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), including research bodies.

The WARR industry is intertwined throughout the Australian economy, and we have a vast opportunity to assist all industries and the entire supply chain in reducing the carbon footprint by decoupling reliance on virgin materials, providing recycled materials as inputs into remanufacturing in Australia and providing genuine low carbon fuel and energy alternatives. This is in addition to mitigating our end-of-pipe emissions through landfill diversion, organics processing, and methane recovery.

WMRR supports the proposed sector plan, recognizing that decarbonisation of the Australian economy through electrification will be key to achieving net zero by 2050, however we do believe that there exists a number of opportunities as a result of the activities of the waste and resource recovery (WARR) industry that have not been recognised in this sector plan, that should be incorporated. A number of which clearly support the stated considerations in particular mobilising investment, growing alternative low carbon fuels and maximising outcomes for people and businesses.

At present there are several proposals across Australia to further enhance and develop energy from waste (EfW). These facilities can produce power either to return to the grid or power adjacent large scale manufacturing facilities with materials that were destined for landfills, contributing to reduced emissions through avoided carbon and methane emissions at landfills and through energy production. We currently see this approach Visy Paper Facility in Coolaroo, where the colocation of energy and manufacturing has a positive impact on business energy and waste costs. The paper at present does not take into consideration the opportunities that are created from diverting materials that would be

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landfilled towards electrification, it also does not appear to consider technologies or approaches like EfW and the avoided emissions that occur as a result from utilising discarded materials already in circulation. EfW comes in a number of formats including Anaerobic Digestion (AD) which we are increasingly seeing as a power source for the agriculture sector (for example at abattoirs and supermarkets).

Another example of utilising waste materials to assist with power is the production of refuse-derived fuel (RDF) which is a lower carbon option than coal. This is increasingly being used in cement kilns globally instead of coal. Recovering energy from materials is preferred to disposing and have a real ability to create both low carbon dual and power with the correct investment and regulatory support nationally.

While the plan recognises some WARR activities the higher order benefits from the transition to a circular economy are not clearly articulated. Building a circular economy for Australia requires a shift in focus from linear thinking (recycling) to circular (designing out waste and pollution). Although six (6) plans are being prepared we caution against the WARR industry being viewed simply as being part of only one sector plan and not recognising the impact that it has across all plans.

Please contact the undersigned if you wish to further discuss WMRR's submission.

Yours sincerely

Gayle Sloan

Chief Executive Officer

Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia