

QUEENSLAND BRANCH COMMITTEE

MEETING

9.00 am – 10.00 am

Wednesday 2 September 2026

via Zoom

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Michael O'Keefe, Evan Lockhart, Steve Cosatto, Richard Haward, Joshua Evans, Amy Batkowski, Pawan Govind, Lilli Thannhauser, Megan Wheeler, Tony Stapleton, David de Jager, Rowan Cossins, Chris Hambling, Christine Blanchard, Ashleigh Saunders, Rachel Cunningham, Jason Grandbourn, Matt Glavina, Paul Visser, Hayley Page, Henry Anning, and Lisa Lepore.

Apologies: Staffan Dittrich, Kerry Dalton, Trevor Evans, Gayle Sloan, Lauren Grimshaw, Giles Perryman and Lacey Webb.

Lilli introduced herself as the new Branch President, taking the reins from Chris Hambling. Lilli emphasised her focus on capturing member contributions.

2. Previous minutes and actions arising

i. Previous Minutes

The minutes of 2 August 2026 Branch Committee Meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Michael O'Keefe Seconded: Chris Hambling

ii. Actions arising:

- 4(i) – WMRR to write to DETSI to push state led action on batteries regulation.
Actioned and closed.
- 5(ii) Landfill Working Group to gather examples of junior DETSI staff regulating landfills without consistency or appropriate operational knowledge – Gavin Crawford at DETSI should be contacted with systemic issues to improve the quality of regulatory compliance.
Outstanding - noted for landfill group to follow up.
- 7 (ii) Branch priorities – need to be revised against the Strategy (released July 2026)
Branch to reconsider priorities against Waste Strategy.
In progress and a focus for this meeting

3. National advocacy (CEO)

Overview provided by Lisa Lepore in Gayle's absence.

Batteries stewardship

- NSW procurement for a battery Product Responsibility Organisation is underway, with four parties shortlisted. No commencement date has been confirmed.

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- South Australia is expected to shortly consider battery stewardship regulations through Cabinet and continues to progress a battery disposal ban.

Solar stewardship

- The NSW Government is progressing solar PV stewardship regulations ahead of the Environment Ministers' Meeting this month. NSW is prepared to act independently if necessary.

Packaging reform

- DCCEE has undergone some leadership changes. Gayle met with Narelle Luchetti, the new Senior Officials Group Chair, the new Circular Economy Manager.
- The Commonwealth will not introduce a new packaging scheme during the current term, citing economic and cost-of-living considerations. It will instead work with states and territories on near-term improvements to packaging regulation and policy.
- The Department is considering how the updated Packaging Design for Kerbside Recyclability Grading Framework could be applied within existing co-regulatory arrangements. No decision has been made on its implementation or use.

Carbon

- The Safeguard Mechanism review is currently open for consultation, with the National Carbon Division providing key input into WMRR's submission.

National EPA

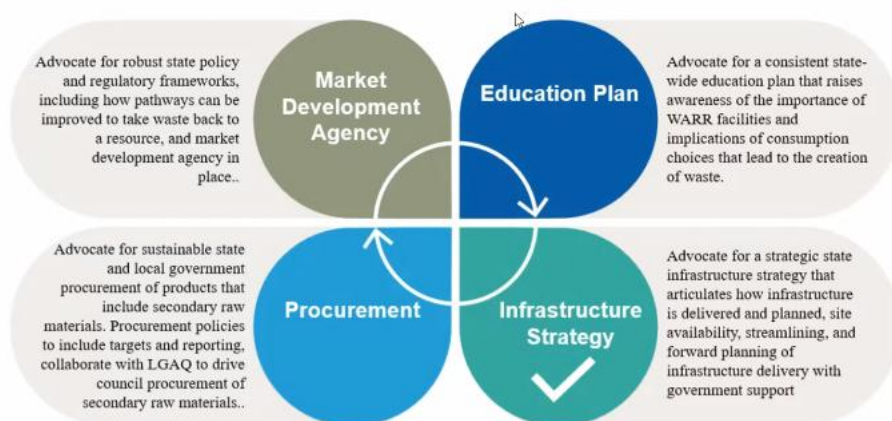
- Gayle met with John Bradley, the new Commonwealth EPA Chief Executive. The agency's full role remains unclear, but it will have responsibilities relating to waste export restrictions and the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme.

4. QLD Issues

i. **Regulatory and policy updates** (held over until next meeting)

ii. **WMRR Strategic Business Plan (2027-2030)**

- Branch committee members were asked to review the existing plan and consider how current regulatory and policy settings in Queensland should influence the review of WMRR's next Strategic Business Plan.
- The Branch President undertook a survey of members via interactive Menti including the key slide (below) identifying the existing priorities:



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- Henry emphasised how important the feedback is, noting that there has been significant changes since the last strategic business plan review, most notably a new Queensland Waste Strategy and a new government.
- The committee noted a fair bit of change since the last strategy including a new waste strategy and new government
- Steve emphasised the timeliness of setting the priorities, given the State is now setting the scope and extent of the Waste Infrastructure Roadmap
- The group discussed that SEQ and regional tiers have quite different needs to be considered.
- Chris identified the lack of long-term policy certainty as a major investment barrier, particularly for energy-from-waste infrastructure. A stable 10-year policy framework is needed to support investment cases.
- Steve reinforced that certainty only to 2030 is insufficient, with policy settings required beyond the short-term government cycle.
- Evan advised that DETSI is seeking feedback on the use of \$18.5 million in funding. Members supported a statewide education campaign focused on correct use of the yellow-lid recycling bin.

Action arising:

Lilli to circulate the Menti to the Branch and collect the branch feedback to help inform the WMRR Strategic Plan at the workshop with the other State Presidents and WMRR Board later this month.

iii. Regional Planning updates (all)

Far North Queensland (FNQ)

- The region is focusing on mattresses, solar panels and other problematic wastes. A hub-and-spoke model is being considered for mattress collection and processing, although a similar approach is more difficult for solar panels.
- Approval for a regional education coordinator remains outstanding, limiting collaboration given funding certainty extends only to early 2027.
- Regional work is underway to review remaining landfill capacity, carbon emissions and landfill-gas flaring.

Central Queensland (CQROC)

- Richard advised that the Regional Waste Coordinator Program will end on 30 June 2027, after which councils will be responsible for continuing actions independently.
- DETSI intends to release guidelines for the proposed \$11 million Regional Recycling Transport Fund by the end of the year and has acknowledged that the available funding will not meet total demand. Four other funding guidelines are also being developed.
- Work continues on a transparent waste-data dashboard and modelling framework using waste survey data at local government, regional and state levels, although progress has been slow.

North Queensland (NQROC)

- NQROC is undertaking waste audits across mainland councils and continuing the regional *Keep It Loose* campaign. Local imagery is achieving the strongest online engagement.
- Batteries remain a major focus following three (3) fires in six (6) weeks. Strong media interest is supporting immediate safety messaging, while a longer-term regional battery campaign is being developed.

- An organics market assessment has been completed, including consideration of in-house processing. A regional tender will be released on Saturday, although some councils may prefer shorter contracts rather than the proposed eight (8)-year term.
- Recycling-bin contamination remains high, ranging from 19% to 28%.
- The Local Government Association of Queensland has moved to have waste formally recognised as essential development infrastructure alongside water and wastewater.

Mackay

- David advised that the Regional Waste Management Plan and implementation plan are being finalised for endorsement. Without further funding, the alliance may need to reconsider its current operating model.

South East Queensland (SEQ)

- The South East Queensland Waste Management Plan remains with the CoMSEQ Board for endorsement.
- Issues raised by the ACCC refusal to grant authorisation for 35 year residual waste management process are being addressed, with an announcement expected within four to six weeks.

Gympie

- Regional procurement opportunities are also being explored, including mattress recycling in Gympie.
- Previous ACCC processes for recyclables procurement in Rockhampton and Townsville highlighted the need for sufficient flexibility and separable procurement components.

iv. Grants and funding opportunities / updates (Noted as *standing items*)

- [Resource Recovery Boost Funding Program](#) – Program budget extended by another \$40M. Next funding window expected end of 2026 early 2027
- [City Deals Organics](#) – Closed Wednesday 1 July 2026. Announced in September 2026
- \$12.5M Residual Waste Fund
- \$11M Regional Recycling Transport Fund
- \$18.5M RecycleWise Education Fund
- \$11.7M Waste Technology and Innovation Fund
- [GROW FOGO Program](#) Amended Guidelines (includes Home Composting Equipment Grants)

v. Submissions/consultation (noted)

Open for consultation:

- [COMSEQ ACCC Draft Determination](#) (4 September 2026)
- [Review of Safeguard Mechanism](#) (18 September 2026)
- [National Renewable Gas policy](#) (25 September 2026)

This submission relates to supporting inclusion of biomethane under the policy (relevant for helping get anaerobic digestion projects off the ground)

Recent submissions (on WMRR website)

- Draft EOW Code for IBAA (31 August 2026)
- Statutory Protections for Wastewater Treatment Plants (28 August 2026)
- [Climate Change Authority - 2026 Annual Progress Advice](#) (9 August 2026)
- [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 \(15 June 2026\)](#)
- [Proposed legislative amendments to reduce litter and boost recycling](#) (15 June 2026)

5. Working group updates

i. RRMD – Matt Glavina

- Meetings in planning with 'priority waste' as the theme for the upcoming meeting series.

ii. Landfill – (Colin Kangas)

- Upcoming meeting will focus on drafting correspondence to DETSI to address the lack of waste classification guidance.

iii. Energy from Waste – Joshua Evans

- Previous meeting held with Wildfire presenting on their pilot biofuels plant and with DETSI providing an initial draft IBAA Code briefing.

iv. Waste Educators – Evan Lockhart

- End of food Waste Australia presenting this month.
- The group has attracted some new members in recent weeks, primarily from local government.

v. Young Professionals – Amy Bartkowski

- The group is looking to undertake a visit to Save our supplies for corporate volunteering.
- The group is also planning a site tour in October to visit the Salvos Textiles Recovery Facility.

6. Events and Training

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

ii. QLD WARR Forum (Thursday 19 November 2026)

- Suggestions for topics can be sent to the WMRR National Office and be raised at the next meeting.
- The Branch would like to meet in person ahead of the Forum to review Branch priorities for the year ahead.

7. Next meeting date

Wednesday 7 October 2026

Annexure A: Branch Priorities

The following table consists of the proposed branch priorities as of January 2026

Issue	Description of issue	Future state	Strategic response (how we get there) <i>Recent advocacy in italics</i>
Strategic direction	The Queensland Government is reviewing the WMRR Strategy (released 2019) and targets. This review needs to tie into levy settings, both in metro and regional Queensland, and align with targets that are achievable and meaningful, and supported with real policy and funding. The strategic direction and ambitions of the Queensland Government are not clearly articulated. There is also growing concern about the limits of discretion enjoyed by compliance officers whose delegated authority can lead to inconsistencies when regulating. An increased level of scrutiny is needed noting that DES does not have a Board (like other state EPAs) which provides continual oversight over its regulatory arms, nor is there a compliance strategy in place to put officers under some level of accountability for their decisions. The existing regulatory strategy is too high	The review and update of the WMRR Strategy, targets and associated policy is undertaken with open and transparent collaboration across government and industry to provide meaningful, measurable and supported pathway to significantly improve recycling and resource recovery rates, and that the outcomes of the WMRR Strategy update can be incorporated into regional waste management and resource recovery plans across Queensland. Mechanisms – such as a compliance strategy or Board – should be in place to have oversight over the regulatory arm to ensure that the discretion exercised by compliance officers is appropriate and can be scrutinised.	WMRR and members to contribute to advocate for earlier consultation to influence changes. WMRR and members to provide constructive and realistic feedback on proposed changes <i>The issues related to the strategy targets and levy settings are captured in WMRR's response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025).</i> <i>It was noted in that response that many of our (and QTC and other government agency reviews of the previous strategy documents) previous recommendations and comments have remained unactioned over the last decade.</i> <i>The issue of unscrutinized levels of discretion enjoyed by regulatory compliance officers was encouraged to be raised by LG members in the consultation for the Local Government Red Tape Reduction Taskforce. The Taskforce Report is due in August 2025.</i> <i>The July 2025 review of the EP Act was utilised as an opportunity for WMRR to confirm the concerns of EPA regulatory officer discretion and the need for more</i>

	level to provide accountability in this regard. Currently it is impossible to challenge a compliance notice or regulatory officer.		<i>certainty from the regulation about the standards required.</i>
Waste levy settings	The current waste levy settings (annual advance payment for local government and levy rate) do not currently promote and de-risk long-term investment in recycling or energy recovery technologies.	The Queensland Government presents a robust long-term plan for application of the waste levy across Queensland, including schedule of increases.	WMRR to contribute to consultation and provide key information for upcoming review. <i>Initial comments have been captured in WMRR's response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025). It was noted in that response that many of our (and QTC and other government agency reviews of the previous strategy documents) previous recommendations and comments have remained unactioned over the last decade.</i>
WARR Infrastructure	Queensland does not have a clear WARR infrastructure plan that identifies the need for critical transfer, recycling and residual waste treatment facilities across the state. This results in a lack of certainty for investment, as well as lack of guiding principles for funding and government support.	Queensland has a clear WARR Infrastructure Plan that demonstrates the type of infrastructure required to meet current and future waste arisings. This plan links to regional plan implementation. This extends to developing a Regional Commingled Infrastructure Plan and supporting establishment of both Metro and Regional AWT Infrastructure Plans.	WMRR and members to contribute to development (through consultation) and review of a formal WARR infrastructure plan, as well as specific plans for regional and metro Queensland. <i>This feedback was specifically provided in WMRR's response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025).</i>
End of Waste Codes	The End of Waste Framework was reviewed in 2023 with a series of recommendations adopted by the Queensland Government. It is unclear what progress (if any) has been made. The End of Waste Framework should be facilitating the use of IBA from EfW	The End of Waste Framework is refreshed as per the review and clarity is provided on "material no longer a waste" and mechanisms for this to be applied. An EoW Code is developed for IBAA that facilitates clarity for EfW investment in Queensland.	EfW Working Group convening a sub-group in Feb 2025 to look at supporting establishment of an End of Waste Code for reuse of IBAA. The IBAA EoW Code application from Blue Phoenix as of July 2025 is understood to be progressing well and is supported by industry. <i>The group has paused as Blue Phoenix await notification as to whether their nomination for a EoW</i>

	facilities as IBAA products for use in construction.	WMRR has become aware in August 2025 of the contaminant limits for the Approved Glass Fines EoW Code are difficult to meet and causing these products to be sent to landfill.	code has been successful. The key points from that nomination were shared with the IBAA group, and no additional needs for an industry code were noted. Continued engagement / interaction with Department on EoW Codes released for consultation. The Branch discussed issuing a letter from WMRR to remind of the timelines and get a commitment to the implementation of the recommendations from the EoW Framework Review. This was addressed by WMRR in the response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025).
PFAS and other problematic / emerging issues	The current approach to managing PFAS (and derivatives) in waste and waste derived products (e.g., compost) does not facilitate long-term investment in recycling and recovery technologies required to be consistent with the Queensland Waste Strategy and Organics Strategy. This means more material will go to landfill than necessary.	The Queensland Government presents an appropriate level of risk management / environmental protection whilst permitting the safe reuse of recycled material. Particular items of note include PFAS, batteries, CCA, microplastics and nano plastics, and household chemicals amongst other hazardous materials. <u>Generator obligation</u> to designing out hazardous materials like plastics also forms part of the future state to address this issue.	Urgent action needs to be taken regarding battery fires to address and promote the safe collection, processing and end-of-life management of batteries. WMRR continues to work with other industry groups to negotiate around risk values (e.g., EnRiskS report etc) to find pragmatic solution to facilitate safe and environmentally protective deployment of waste derived products. Commentary on this issue also included in the WMRR response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025). As of July 2025, will be no new limits applied to Environmental Authorities at this time. Instead DETSI will work collaboratively with industry to co-develop guidance, initiate monitoring programs, and appoint DETSI is looking to create a guideline which

			<i>has tiers of ranges and actions on testing and reporting. WMRR is proactively working with AORA and others to influence.</i> <i>WMRR issued letter to Minister Powell on 2 October 2025 seeking urgent action on batteries and embedded battery products.</i>
Market Development of Recycled and Recovered Materials	The importance of ensuring sustainable design for the market Development of recycled and recovered products (free of hazardous materials) is a key concern for industry and crucial for achieving circular economy and Net Zero targets.	End of Waste Codes are developed for suitable materials, mandated sustainable design guidelines are enforced for producers and recycle / recovered materials are preferences through government procurement processes over virgin materials.	WMRR continues to call for sustainable design to be enforced in concert with mandatory EPR schemes and to advocate for an equal playing field in market preferences for recycled and recovered materials to be equal to virgin materials. This complements decarbonisation initiatives. <i>WMRR called for recycle targets to be developed and enforced (particularly with upcoming Olympics) in the response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025).</i> <i>RRMD Working Group is exploring procurement of recycled materials from C&D in Q3 2025.</i>
Driving Generator Obligation	Current product stewardship and EPR schemes are largely underperforming, and do not provide fair and equitable coverage across Queensland. Ideal scenario would be a broader directives framework to underpin specific regulation and policy.	Product stewardship schemes are developed and executed and available in all parts of Queensland with mandatory levels of service throughout the state, with costs of collection and processing accounted for in product price. Designing out problematic, hazardous and single use materials are necessary for circular economy goals and needs to be urgently progressed.	Advocate for mandatory design requirements and generator obligations by all levels of government. Advocate for and promote product stewardship scheme development with appropriate financial support from product manufacturers and distributors, allowing for the additional challenges of operating schemes in regional areas.

			WMRR's response to the Waste Strategy Review (26 June 2025) , included the above points.
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