

WA BRANCH COMMITTEE

MEETING

11.30 am - 12.30 pm (WST)

Thursday 17 September 2026

via zoom

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Rachel Irvine-Marshall, Kelly Howlett, Emily Tomsett, Gayle Sloan, Libby Eustance, Jill Lethlean, Julie Brockman, Emma Baker, Kelly Levisohn, Janelle Oseinton, Conor Macgill, Adam Johnson, Julie Baughan and Lisa Lepore.

Apologies: Jason Pugh, Scott Reynolds, Giles Perryman, Chris Stannard.

- Rachel introduced herself as the incoming Branch President, taking the reins from Jason Pugh. She described herself as a chemist by training, with a background in WHS and Risk Management who has been in the industry since 1999.
- Kelly introduced herself as incoming vice President, taking over from Libby Eustance, Kelly is Operations Manager for Refund operations in Port Hedland and also operates her own consultancy.

2. Previous minutes and actions arising

i. Previous Minutes

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

Moved: Rachel Irvine- Marshall *Seconded:* Gayle Sloan

ii. Actions arising from previous meeting

- 2(i) Amend the 14 May 2026 minutes to correct Teresa's name and revise the wording about the funding context for Threadup's relocation.
Action completed
- 2(ii) Finalise and issue the letter to the Minister on Resource Recovery and Recovery Account funding, landfill levy inadequacy and infrastructure funding gaps following the release of the Waste Strategy
Action on hold and outstanding - awaiting WA Strategy release before progressing.
- 7(i) Review and, if necessary, revise the WA Branch priorities following release of the WA Waste Strategy
In progress – action for this meeting to review priorities.

3. National advocacy (CEO)

The Environment Ministers Meeting (EMM)

- The EMM will be held tomorrow, with batteries and solar panels on the agenda.
- NSW has tabled an intergovernmental agreement framework intended to support consistent adoption of model battery legislation across all jurisdictions.
- NSW has also prepared a regulatory impact statement for solar panel stewardship.
- Packaging discussions will focus on strengthening the Used Packaging Materials NEPM and packaging design rules rather than establishing a new stewardship scheme.
 - RPA Adelaide's South Australian plastics facility which has gone into administration - will continue trading until the end of the month.

Waste Exports

- Advocacy is continuing to improve National EPA turnaround times for exemption applications and waste export approvals.
- Improvements to Recycling Modernisation Fund processes and export approval arrangements are also being advocated.

Carbon

- The Safeguard Mechanism consultation is underway.
- WMRR will be lodging a submission shaped by discussions within the National Carbon Division.
- WMRR is seeking to resolve issues affecting Alternative Waste Treatment facilities under the Safeguard Mechanism and will also raise these matters in discussions with the Clean Energy Regulator.

4. WA Issues

i. Regulatory Matters

a. *Waste strategy, levy and investment*

- There is disappointment that the strategy was not released at the recent WRR conference, particularly as the Waste Authority's business plan was released in February 2025.
- Significant concern was raised that the Waste Authority, as a publicly accountable body, has not published its current business plan.
 - Janelle raised that requiring local governments to prepare compliant waste management plans by 1 October without an overarching strategy was considered unreasonable.
 - The lack of strategic direction is delaying planning, reporting and investment across local government and industry.
 - Local Government are unable to record existing actions as superseded as the strategy has not been updated, so actions cannot be recorded as completed through the reporting portal.
 - The Branch noted that the Premier should be made aware of the operational impacts on councils, including the potential loss of a full reporting year.
- Separate concerns were raised about Recycling Modernisation Fund arrangements, facility failures and the resulting uncertainty for investment in local processing under *Made in WA* and *Remade in WA*.
 - Industry facility providers are also lobbying government about market and investment risks.
- It was noted that the waste levy review has remained unresolved for seven years and continues to constrain investment.
- WALGA may also be advocating on these issues related to there being no progress announced on the organics regulatory impact statement, waste strategy or levy review.

Actions arising:

- *WMRR to prepare a letter to the Premier seeking urgent progress on the waste strategy, organics reforms and levy review, highlighting the impacts on councils and industry.*
- *WMRR to consider a separate letter on Recycling Modernisation Fund arrangements and investment certainty, and whether broader correspondence to all Members of Parliament is warranted.*

b. *Fire-safety conditions in approvals and licences*

- Jill raised concern about DWER incorporating provisions from the non-statutory DFES GN04 guideline into works approvals and environmental licences. The DFES guidance was developed primarily for material recovery facilities but is being applied more broadly across waste facilities. However, existing fire-safety requirements are already addressed through the National Construction Code, building regulations and local approval processes.

- Branch members discussed that costly and potentially unnecessary provisions are being imposed without adequate consultation, technical context or scope for negotiation.
 - Requirements appear to vary between officers, with some applying the highest level of protection regardless of facility risk.
 - Adam mentioned that Re.Group has a relevant example that may demonstrate the planning, cost and operational implications.
- The branch discussed the idea of engaging with DWER and DFES to establish a clearer process for reviewing conditions and developing contemporary, WA-specific guidance.
- NSW and Victoria were discussed as comparative examples, noting that their waste-facility fire guidance operates differently.

Action arising:

Branch will maintain a watching brief on this matter.

c. Organics

- An updated list of acceptable FOGO materials has been published, with discussion continuing about enforcement.
- Most local governments already comply with the updated guidance; however, some are awaiting advice from their service providers.
- From 1 October, Bunbury will transport organics to Perth under a two-year arrangement, while neighbouring Dardanup is expected to landfill organics – the branch expressed concern that organics are not consistently being managed higher up the waste hierarchy.

d. Energy from waste

- East Rockingham Energy from Waste facility is operating, with significant issues reported regarding bottom ash, which is now stockpiled.
- Progress on the resource recovery framework has stalled – however the sector clearly needs a lawful resource recovery framework.
- Nitrous oxide canisters (Nangs) are causing fires and explosions in collection vehicles and energy-from-waste facilities, creating a growing national safety issue.
 - Although nitrous oxide canisters are restricted in WA, councils continue to manage increasing quantities as a hazardous waste stream.
 - Nine councils are reportedly tendering for disposal services for nitrous oxide canisters.
 - Branch generally agreed that End-of-life solutions are needed for both nitrous oxide canisters and vapes.

ii. WARR Conference debrief

- WRR Conference Attendees reported that revised conference format worked well and created a positive atmosphere for networking.
- The FOGO debate was well received.
- Feedback received that it would be helpful offer workshops and introductory training for newer industry participants alongside the conference.
 - Feedback should be sought on the WMRR Foundations of WARR training and provided at the next meeting.

- Site tours remain valuable, particularly for interstate and regional attendees, and should be considered again for next year.
- The three-night format felt extended, and holding the dinner on the final night affected the conference flow for some attendees.
- The dinner was considered overly focused on the awards.
- It was noted that the upcoming Circularity Conference at Murdoch University may provide opportunities for more detailed workshops and tours.

iii. Branch priorities

- WMRR will revise its Strategic Plan for 2027–2030 over the coming weeks.
- Members agreed that the branch priorities at Annexure A, last revised in April 2026, remain relevant and do not currently require amendment.
- The priorities will be reviewed again at following meetings.

iv. Submissions and consultations

Open consultations

- 2026–27 Safeguard Mechanism Review — closing 18 September 2026.
- National Renewable Gas Policy — closing 25 September 2026.
- National EPA Stakeholder Sentiment Survey — closing 30 September 2026.

Recent submissions made by WMRR

- Draft End of Waste Code for Incinerator Bottom Ash Aggregate.
- Climate Change Authority 2026 Annual Progress Advice.
- Expansion of Australia's Right to Repair Framework.
- Inquiry into the *Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme for Packaging (No Time to Waste) Bill 2026*.
- *Carbon Credits and Other Legislation Amendment (Integrity and Transparency) Bill* consultation.
- Guideline for the safe management of end-of-life lithium-ion batteries.
- 2026 NGER Scheme updates.

5. Next meeting date

Thursday 8 October 2026 (back to regular cadence)

- The time for the meeting lapsed before Events and Working Groups could be addressed.
 - These outstanding items have been carried forward to the 8 October meeting, for which 90 minutes will be allocated.

Meeting closed 12.33pm

Branch Priorities (Working Document) – April 2026

Western Australia Initiatives		Progress	2025 Comments	Feb 2026 comments
1	Advocate for a comprehensive review of waste levy to ensure it is utilised as the economic lever to place a price on material and divert it from landfill to return to the productive economy and create green jobs. A levy must reflect the real opportunity cost of building and operating infrastructure to resource recover, as well as mitigate carbon, in a more resource effective net zero economy. As part of the review industry requires greater certainty and transparent hypothecation of at least 50% to industry, to ensure a viable WARR sector in WA.	The levy increased by \$15 in 2024-25 (the first increase since 2018) and now moves with CPI, hitting \$88 in 2025-26. WMRR continues to advocate for a greater increase.	- Targets and waste strategy not moving – needs higher levy, move waste out of landfill, create infrastructure to process. - There is a need for an increase in landfill levy and improved regulation and enforcement of it including incorporating portability and addressing zones; - Opportunity for revenue - although there is a lot of pressure for no levy. - Ideal is to give us (industry) more back and raise less government revenue – WMRR will put at least 50% back to industry. - Extending the regulated area should be encouraged.	PRIORITY REMAINS Infrastructure investment, clarification levy zones and levy hypothecation will be the key to driving industry success in achieving targets.
2	Accelerate Regulation to create markets for circular products. <i>(This was updated in the March 2025 branch meeting with a view to merge regulation and procurement thresholds driving circular markets into one goal or look to legislate for a framework)</i>	Advocate for the progression and finalisation of a consistent and certain resource recovery framework to ensure policy and regulatory pathways enable the circulation of secondary raw materials. DWER shared a draft recovered materials framework with WMRR in	- The development of sustainable end markets for products and materials made from recycled materials needs to be prioritised; particularly recovered materials and end markets for FOGO. - Controlling contamination front end needs to be prioritised. The branch discussed burdening organic streams with packaging waste,	PRIORITY REMAINS AND SHOULD BE UPDATED TO INCLUDE THE WORD “ACCELERATE” Suggested priority rewording: “Accelerate regulation to create markets for circular products” Regulation to create markets for circular products needs to be accelerated. Absence of clear standards and specifications is undermining quality. Development of the RRF is crucial and needs to be a mandatory (not voluntary) framework.

Western Australia Initiatives		Progress	2025 Comments	Feb 2026 comments
		late July 2023 who have advised they wish to work with industry to finalise and implement. This will be a voluntary framework. Advocate for the procurement of secondary raw materials content at all levels of government and market development. Activate discussions with DWER and encouraged connection with EcologiQ. ○ Install recycled content targets. <i>(This could be assigned to the CE Working Group)</i> ○ Noted that we need a risk-based framework (i.e. IBAA) rather than prescriptive standards like <i>Roads to Rehab</i> ● Risk of recycled material being taken on by the government needs to be considered - i.e. can they be warranted to last 50-80 years?	noting it will limit markets for FOGO derived products. ▪ Move away from wish-cycling and understand impact of policies throughout the entire system – i.e.: SUP bans impact on FOGO inputs. ● Clarity is needed on whether the Resource Recovery Framework will be voluntary or mandatory. ● Strong and informed, evidence-led policy development is needed, including real EPR (not simply collection schemes and bans); ▪ BAU approach to achieving goals is not working. ▪ Minister's office does not seem keen to take responsibility for compostables contaminating the FOGO stream (i.e.: they did not explicitly tell people to put them in the compostable bin) ▪ Opportunities to leverage advocacy through the Consistent Communications Collective and FOGO Reference Group Meetings with WALGA and DWER.	○ Currently, WA not looking at bulk (general) orders and exemptions, with these mostly applied to road and infrastructure building projects. ○ There is a missed opportunity for organics. ○ Developing markets is crucial ○ Looking for beneficial reuse that is safe and widely accepted to get the level of recovery needed to meet targets. ● Shifting focus to developing markets for circular products (rather than trying to find uses for end products) is integral.

Western Australia Initiatives		Progress	2025 Comments	Feb 2026 comments
			- Mandatory sustainable circular procurement at all levels of government is needed. - WMRR understands that DWER may be supportive of a national approach to consistency for PFAS in organics. WA was hoping to push for national consistency on testing at HEPA (but did not yet progress) – Minister is still being onboarded so may stall progress.	
3	Accelerate Strategic investment on WARR infrastructure by government, focusing on priority materials;	Systems approach – all aspects matter to get a quality product. Needed in the WA market, particularly around FOGO processing. What can we be doing to advocate for this – using the data to show why we're not hitting the targets? Noting the contamination management for FOGO particularly an issue – quality is the make or break with FOGO. Eg: Current issue that 7% FOGO contamination - half of which is packaging. Noted that WA Government has brought the FOGO reference group back	- Need for LGs to tender for long-term contracts to warrant investment. No one will tender to build and invest for a short-term contract. Creating additional capacity requires long contract terms. - Grants can sometimes distort the market rather than accelerate the market by preferencing specific facilities/operators with large. There is not enough due diligence done on viability and end markets) – the state's Infrastructure Strategy should address this. - Waste tracking and investment in the supporting infrastructure is needed (including IT and weighbridges). - Approval processes are lengthy – health check on development applications/approvals. Greater emphasis on priority inputs – especially for FOGO (letter issued to Minister Swinbourn in June 2025)	PRIORITY REMAINS BUT MAY NEED REVISION POST STRATEGY RELEASE Priority materials may not be in the revised strategy and this priority should clearly articulate that infrastructure investment extends to weighbridges which are needed to manage and track material flows, This priority is closely tied to Priority #1 which calls for clarified levy hypothecation. Organics are still top of with FOGO, along with: - Batteries and solar panels - Emerging contaminants - Tracking C&I <i>*Noted that in other states, the Retailers Association is looking at standardizing collection at supermarkets to get standardised communications in bin rooms etc. to promote clean streams.</i>

Western Australia Initiatives		Progress	2025 Comments	Feb 2026 comments
		Importance of linking data over weighbridge by stream before taking next steps: ○ What does best Practice look like – what examples do you have in Australia – do we want to? ○ May be worth considering WMRR's submission on infrastructure plan – link waste flows etc may assist in shaping this priority. ○ Consider <i>Circular Cities</i> waste flow analysis (Emily Tomsett can connect) ○ Waste infrastructure plan – data should be shared as an appendix to any government correspondence.		

