

Priority 1*: Better outcomes for regional and Aboriginal communities

The draft waste strategy (the strategy) sets out the goals, targets and priorities for achieving a sustainable, low-waste future powered by a circular economy where our communities, economies and environment can thrive.

A circular economy keeps products and materials circulating in the economy for longer, at their highest value, and brings multiple economic, social and environmental benefits.

The strategy identifies five priorities, all of equal importance, that will inform development of a roadmap which sets out key initiatives and actions to be implemented over the next five years with the aim of achieving the strategy's goals and targets.

Ensuring adequate and appropriate waste infrastructure and services to meet the needs of regional communities and Aboriginal communities.

Background

Western Australia is geographically diverse with a dispersed population. The state therefore requires a customised approach to waste management and recycling that is driven and supported by the community, and economically viable. In many regional and communities, it is important that landfill is managed in a way that protects human health and the environment. More recycling is needed across WA to achieve waste strategy targets.

Relevant targets

About 12,000 people live in more than 270 Aboriginal communities across WA. Most of these communities have fewer than 200 residents and 25 per cent are seasonal communities with no permanent population.

Aboriginal communities face significant waste challenges. These include lack of funding to manage waste, inappropriately sited landfill, and inadequate resources for maintaining landfill. Another huge issue is the illegal dumping of cars, white goods, asbestos, construction and demolition (C&D) waste, and industrial waste at informal dump sites. Aboriginal communities also face significant barriers to recycling (see next section).

Regional communities outside Perth and Peel

Of WA's 139 local government areas, 106 are outside of the Perth and Peel regions. These communities experience unique challenges in relation to waste management and recycling due to vast distances and poor road condition between towns and waste facilities, high costs of establishing recycling infrastructure, and limited access to markets for recyclables.

The role of landfill in the regions

Landfill is currently the only viable waste management option for many regional areas and Aboriginal communities. Landfill must be well located, designed and operated so that human health and the environment are protected. The strategy supports the consolidation of smaller landfill sites into larger scale licensed landfill sites, where these better protect human health and the environment, and meet the needs of the relevant communities.

The following table sets out the **current activities** being implemented and proposes **additional 'draft'** actions that could be implemented to support the achievement of this priority and the relevant waste strategy targets. The actions have been included here to help stimulate discussion and brainstorming around actions to include in the roadmap that will make meaningful contribution towards achieving the targets.

*The draft revised strategy's priorities are equally important. The priority numbering is for reference only.

Our current activities	Actions and ideas to build on in the waste strategy roadmap		
<p>Education and behaviour change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the programs that contribute to the ‘recover’ and ‘protect’ goals in all regions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Containers for Change Keep Australia Beautiful programs and funding, including Tidy Towns, Keep Australia Beautiful Week, Adopt-a-Spot and Community Litter Grants Statewide WasteSorted initiatives including WasteSorted Toolkit, GREAT Sorts campaign, WasteSorted Community Education grants, WasteSorted Schools <p>Leadership, advocacy, policy, programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the <i>Litter Prevention Strategy For Western Australia 2020–2025</i>, and development of the 2025–30 litter prevention strategy 	Key initiatives – what we want to achieve	Proposed State Government-led actions	Proposed collaborative actions
	<p>1.1 Identifying priority service and infrastructure needs for Aboriginal communities and other regional communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate across government to assess and improve data on waste generation, services and infrastructure needs in Aboriginal and other regional communities. Investigate a rural landfill risk assessment of unlicensed landfills and Remote Essential Municipal Services landfills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Aboriginal communities to identify priorities for policy and program development. Support Aboriginal communities to implement community-led improvements to waste services.
	<p>1.2 Improving infrastructure planning for regional Western Australia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with DPLH to better incorporate waste management considerations into regional planning strategies. Investigate opportunities for the consolidation and regionalisation of landfills and recycling infrastructure. Build on the findings of the <i>State waste infrastructure plan</i> (DWER 2024) to identify opportunities to support local regional employment/entrepreneurship and technology such as small-scale, modular or mobile plant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify priority regions and develop regional waste and recycling infrastructure plans with regional development commissions and key stakeholders.
	<p>1.3 Improving the efficiency of transport of recyclables from regional areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities to consolidate different waste streams within regions to facilitate more effective transportation or local use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for cost-effective transportation of recyclables from regional Western Australia through aggregation and backloading.
<p>1.4 Improving regional recycling and markets for recycled products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support, where possible, the use of recycled content in regional road and civil works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate local opportunities for recycling and the use of recycled materials in regions outside Perth and Peel, with a focus on C&D waste and organics from MSW and C&I sources. 	



Discussion questions

- How well do these draft actions support our priority to see better outcomes for regional and Aboriginal communities?
- Are there other actions that will support this priority?