

South West Sustainability Waste Alliance (SWA)

Communique to SWA stakeholders

The Commonwealth National Waste Action Plan 2019 outlines the incremental export ban of paper, glass, plastic, and tyres starting from July 2020. The changing landscape of waste disposal is mapped out through a corresponding series of waste avoidance, diversion, and recovery targets to be implemented over the next decade. WA's policy framework aligns with the Federal targets through the State's Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030 (WARRS) and the accompanying WARRS Action Plan 2030.

Waste, water and other environmental asset protection strategies need to be included in a coherent approach to future-proofing the region. The local consequence of failing to co-ordinate waste avoidance, recovery, recycling, and wastewater initiatives will see more than \$100m needed for future environmental protection initiatives.

The precipitous decline in economic activity due to COVID-19 has now led to accelerated government investment in infrastructure and policy interventions, which can be implemented quickly and will deliver sustained jobs and growth. The \$852m Bunbury Outer Ring Road (BORR) project has been fast-tracked to contribute to the economic recovery process being launched by Federal, State and Local Governments.

The SWA Initiative requires effective collaboration, which will ensure that BORR will:

- Optimise the use of recycled materials;
- Report on the types and volumes of recycled products used;
- Give thought to sustainable water resourcing; and
- Provide streamlined governance and strong leadership between the SWA and the BORR project.

The SWA Initiative Investment Business Case and associated requirements will be delivered as a co-investment of Government, industry, and the community. It will set out optimal value for money options for investing in waste recycling initiatives in the Greater Bunbury Region and the broader South West.

Stakeholder Dialogue Update

A Value Management forum held at the Quality Hotel Lighthouse, Bunbury on 26 June was well-attended by a broad cross-section of stakeholders. Attendees were taken through a facilitated process to prioritise community, industry and BORR values as well as a range of scenarios, from business as usual to full investment. Development streams were provided for the Innovation Hub, landfill, food and garden organics (FOGO), construction and demolition (C&D), rubber, glass, plastic, wastewater, secondary processing, and waste-to-energy. The forum demonstrated broad support for the BORR to catalyse a larger and enduring program to establish circular waste economy infrastructure in the South West and grow environmental and economic opportunities for the BORR project, as well as local waste industry businesses.

The forum confirmed the following findings from the 5 June Stakeholder Forum:

- The establishment of a SWA Innovation Hub at Bunbury Harvey Regional Council (BHRC), to fast-track market-testing and new specifications for products incorporating recycled waste streams into roads on BORR timelines remains a top priority. Its capacity to fast-track development of the South West and broader WA waste market is seen as the most prospective means of harnessing BORR project waste diversion targets to catalyse ongoing waste diversion and reprocessing outcomes for the transport sector and local government. A Regional Economic Development (RED) Grant will be submitted on 7 July to support Phase 1 of the SWA Innovation Hub
- Landfilling costs for industry and local government are substantial going forward, and the opportunity to capitalise on the value of reprocessed waste offers an economically valuable solution. Maximising FOGO and C&D volumes available to the BORR project remain high priorities for landfill diversion.
- The priority ascribed to rubber has increased.
- Stimulating capital investments in circular waste economy infrastructure in any of the above initiatives by government and industry were reinforced as priorities
- There is support for determining the potential to utilise non-potable wastewater on the BORR project to avoid drawing potable water from the Yarragadee aquifer and thereby preserving Noongar water (kep) values.

A South West Regional Waste Group CEO Forum will follow on 10 July, to workshop scenarios to confirm how South West local governments would like to contribute and be involved. A Meeting with the Mobs is being scheduled for the coming weeks to confirm Wardandi, Binjareb and broader Noongar support for the direction being taken by SWA. A final value management forum will follow on 23 July to determine options for short-listing in the Business Case.

The BORR proponents continue to attend the forums and provide advice with respect to major project delivery priorities and procurement mechanisms. Regional Development WA – South West, Main Roads, the South West Development Commission, the Noongar Chamber of Commerce (NCCI) and Industry and BHRC continue to provide guidance and support as members of the SWA Leadership Group.

The NCCI also discussed their Kep Alliance concept at a SWA Stakeholders Workshop on 6 July to prepare a proposal for the use of wastewater as part of the SWA's business case proposal to the BORR project. To this end, job creation will be a top priority at the next Value Management forum, with a focus on specialist water engineers and the capabilities of local Noongar professionals to fast track this proposal by 14 August, prior to the finalisation of tendering for the construction of BORR.

Main Roads' procurement and communications protocols are being clarified to facilitate engagement with Infrastructure WA, which has indicated interest in the SWA's Program of Works. The SWA Chair and other stakeholders attended a South West-based IWA Strategy event on 3 July to discuss waste recycling opportunities through strategic investments over the next two decades.

Attendees at the Value Management forum confirmed that a business case interrogating the benefits and costs of prioritised re-processing and re-cycling facilities, particularly recycled road products for application through the Innovation Hub, offers a practical means of providing input to the BORR project construction tendering process. The subsequent benefits include contributing useful stimulus to the COVID-19 economic recovery effort.

Utilisation of ISCA's Infrastructure Sustainability Rating Tool

Delivery of the BORR project will include application of the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia's (ISCA) Infrastructure Sustainability (IS) rating tool for the design and construction of the project. The IS rating scheme evaluates sustainability initiatives and potential environmental, social, and economic impacts and opportunities associated with infrastructure projects and assets. BORR was subject to an IS rating during development and was the first major project in Australia to apply the IS Planning rating.

The successful proponent for the BORR Project will strive to perform at least at a good practice level (Level 1) in all the Credits in the Scheme; strive for best practice (Level 2) in the more project-specific Credits, and truly aspire to World best practice (Level 3) in those Credits related to Resource Efficiency. To assist in this process, high level performance will be assumed and provided as input to the Business Case, and SWA expects that the Value Management Workshops will help in validating this approach.

As the process for developing a SWA waste precinct develops, it is becoming clear that the application of the IS Rating Tool on the BORR Project may well determine the success or otherwise of the SWA Project. Additionally, there is also an emerging view that BHRC, as the owners of the SWA Waste Precinct, may benefit from considering the utilisation of the IS Rating Tool for the Planning, Delivery and Operations of the Waste Precinct.

Matters for Noting

- The continuing rapid progress and challenging timeframes on this major waste recovery and recycling initiative
- That the SWA Leadership and Working Groups have been buoyed by the extensive and enthusiastic participation and valuable input by a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in the SWA Project
- The key issues of achieving the required levels of funding, and agreement from stakeholders at the next Value Management forum on the Options to be included in the Business Case
- Further business cases, beyond the BORR project, are likely to be submitted in future to appropriate organisations as more opportunities arise.

Prepared by

The South West Sustainability Waste Alliance (SWA)

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