



Response to 'Queensland's Waste Strategy 2010-2020' – Waste Avoidance and Recycling Consultation Draft – Actions

**Attention Tamara O'Shea
Director of Waste Policy
Department of Environment and Resources Management
400 George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000**

Prepared by Queensland Youth Environment Council members:

**Matthew Brown
Daniel Busch
Calum Kippin
Laura Leighton
James Mulligan
Sophie Pascoe
Abbee Warskitt**

Please contact us through our website: www.qyec.org.au or via the QYEC Secretariat to ali.vandergraaf@derm.qld.gov.au

Strategic Action: Establishment of a Stakeholder Advisory Committee:

- The QYEC agrees with the purpose and function of a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), however would like to see clarification of its objectives. Collaboration between stakeholders and the government in policy implementation is crucial given that stakeholders are those who will be on the front line making the actual undertakings that are only theoretically outlined in policy documents. Their contributions as a working group will provide insight, a useful resource and a firm grounding as to the practicality of proposed waste management policies. This also means, however, that opinions must be balanced and minority groups must be represented to ensure that each and every party has an appropriate voice at this state level. It is for this reason that we would like to see youth and Aboriginal representatives given positions on this committee, and the inclusion of non-industry organisations, such as environmental groups.
- While the target date for this project is 'ongoing', we would like to see a timeline in place for objectives. In addition, we would like to propose the creation of a set of guidelines or protocol as well as a strategic plan to outline its aims and how they are to be achieved.
- Finally, we would like to see the release of an outline of the long-term goals of the SAC once these programs have been implemented. We believe that the SAC should not be dissolved having fulfilled the purpose outlined in the WARCD, but simply cut back so as to maintain feedback from industry and community as to waste management and any other potential programs.

Action 1: Towards a Resource Efficient Government:

- Sustainability, efficiency, and other environmental considerations are costly, which is at odds with industry objectives, so we feel that it is important for government to lead the way in this area to encourage industry to follow and support the government's intention to do so. This can also increase public awareness of the severity of resource issues and the importance of increasing resource efficiency. Given the government's environmental targets and other various commitments relating to renewable energy and waste management, it would be difficult if not impossible to achieve these without optimising government use of resources. Resource efficiency must reach down to the grassroots level of the individual worker in order to change negative or unhelpful attitudes towards resource efficiency (such as a belief that resource efficiency is too difficult to implement on a day to day basis).
- We believe that the government may also pave the way for new technologies which may not yet be industrially viable or which can be trialled in an environment where cost-output ratios are not paramount, permitting envisioning of new and innovative waste strategies. Optimally, we would like to see government development strive for near 80%-90% resource efficiency.
- Given that governments often state a set of environmental objectives that are not acted upon in an effective or timely manner, we feel it is important for the Queensland government to set targets and ensure they are met. It is important that the government acts, at least partially, as a self-regulating body. For this reason, we support the requirement of each individual government department to be required to prepare and implement strategic waste management plans, however communications between relevant departments and the state government must be maintained at all times to ensure consistency and to provide a means of quantifying improvements that are made.

Action 2: State-wide Litter Prevention Strategy

- We believe that a state-wide litter prevention strategy is critical in reducing waste on a number of levels, particularly that of the individual consumer, which is highly significant given that almost all industrial production and some of the most energy intensive processes go to feeding our consumerist society. The quantity of litter, particularly that which is not recycled, is a considerable problem in Queensland and around the world. It is for this reason that a litter prevention strategy needs to be put in place to minimise litter production and incorrect disposal. While the ideas set forth in the Waste Avoidance and Recycling Consultation Draft (WARCD) may seem attractive, some may not be practical and the list is not comprehensive. For instance, working with industry to popularise biodegradable bags would be one means of reducing damaging litter. Even obvious strategies such as ensuring that there are bins in public places and increasing the sense of responsibility for litter should be examined.
- QYEC believes that many strategies have failed as a result of the fact that the public do not like to be lectured to. Rather, they seek to be educated and assisted. We suggest that they need to experience the concrete consequences of their actions with regard to waste, whether through the banning of packaging or fines to understand an issue which is all too often sidelined by individuals under more important or personally relevant issues such as finances.
- QYEC addresses each of the suggested initiatives as follows:
 - A public reporting system for littering from vehicles could be a simple and cost effective means to discourage littering on the road, however it would be difficult to clarify legitimate reports from false ones, and could result in boycotts as a result of its 'dob-your-mate' concept that is generally opposed by Australians.
 - While a ban on lighter-than-air balloons at government events would set an example and raise awareness about their negative effects, they are a popular novelty for outdoor functions and a ban could lead to the perception that the government stifles creativity and imagination.
 - QYEC strongly supports measures to reduce the use of plastic shopping bags and promote alternative options to consumers and retailers, however it is important that the government treat this issue delicately, as they are an engrained part of consumerism and contemporary culture.
 - Community support and funding for programs such as Adopt-A-Road and the Clean Beach Challenge can be difficult to obtain, so government provision of this would provide the necessary impetus to get beneficial projects such as these off the ground, and provides a good opportunity for regional community involvement.
 - QYEC supports actions to stem the flow of junk mail, one of the biggest sources of avoidable waste, into residential areas and feels like government action on this issue is long overdue.

Action 3: Expand the "Do the right thing, use the right bin" Public Place Recycling Program:

- While QYEC believes that the idea of a campaign relating to public place recycling is an important initiative, we are unsure as to whether this approach is optimal. There are a number of problems that are inherent in changing public behaviour and the deployment of recycling bins. While the ranges of instances that are to be targeted in this campaign are broad and numerous, we believe that bus stops and local parks should also be considered for inclusion. The success of past initiatives has been reasonable, with the majority of people using recycling bins correctly, however there still remains a

considerable amount of rubbish that is not correctly recycled. We believe that this is due to ignorance about this new waste feature and a lack of effort on the part of those concerned.

- QYEC would like to see improved labelling of these bins to help those who are not familiar with the details of recycling. While the core concept of recycling is assumed knowledge, the nature of which items are recyclable can differ from one source to another and it can be difficult to understand what goes where, even for individuals willing to make the effort to recycle. We recommend that bins have large stickers featuring a contemporary design that provide simple, intuitive classifications. Making recycling seem easy and environmentally beneficial can be enormously rewarding and we are confident that the deployment of Public Place Recycling program has the potential to be successful with this.

Strategic Action: Local Government Reference Group:

- QYEC supports the idea of a local government reference group as a means of addressing regional differences and contractual obligations on the council level. As previously discussed, such a group must represent all opinions and present a balanced and objective viewpoint on waste issues. We would like to see minority groups, such as youth and aboriginal groups, be given a voice on the council. We propose a system of tenders such that each party has an equal opportunity and can apply to have their say, with minority groups being consulted. The working group should consider regional differences in terms of individual waste difficulties and the focus should be more on the individual ratepayer than industry. Contractual obligations must be considered and their significance recognised within the context of waste management.
- As previously mentioned, the development of a timeline, protocol, and meeting guidelines needs to be put in place. Given that this group, along with councils, would be working directly with residents in an area, reports should be drafted and information must be distributed to inform all concerned about developments in waste strategy and to help people be involved in the decision making process. People must feel empowered and able to influence the development of strategy or else may be unlikely to follow any recommendations made by such a working group if they involve voluntary participation, such as in recycling. This has the added benefit of ensuring that council stays in touch with the realities of modern life. Furthermore, the people represent a pool of resources from which considerable expertise may be drawn which could be essential in the work of such a local government reference group. That said, community bias must also be considered as a possible perversion of waste management objectives since individual residents may, after all, have ulterior motives behind their advocacy.
- Such a local government reference group would have to maintain communication between different areas and with the state government to give regular progress reports on its successes and those of the various councils that they have been working with. This ensures that efforts are paying off in terms of tangible benefits that can, to some degree, be quantitatively measured. The issues of differences and similarities between local councils and their various contractual obligations is one of the issues which must be addressed if the local government reference group is to be successful, given that addressing the needs of every area individually is likely to be an unachievable workload for the local reference group. Local expertise, in the form of scientific knowledge, must be combined with the work of policy makers in order to find optimum niches to broadly describe how waste management must be approached.

Action 4: Strategic Waste Management Planning:

- QYEC supports any effort to improve waste management, and believes that regional waste management planning should be encouraged even when it may not have applications in the near future due to fiscal considerations. It is crucial that the state government provide monetary assistance given the limited funding of council bodies, as well as data and expertise. This strategic waste management plan for each local government should work closely in conjunction with the local government reference group and stakeholder advisory committee. All councils should come up with some indications of how it could improve its waste management. While recognising resource limitations, QYEC would like to see the strategic waste management plan used in as many regional areas as possible.
- The strategic waste management plan of the state government will outline a set of goals and targets that the state government wishes to achieve within a set timeframe. In order to do so, it must work on the fundamental level of action, which is that of the consumer/rate-payer. We would like to see the community engaged, either through direct contact with the council or through mass media. We would also like to see volunteers incorporated into the plan – as Margaret Thatcher once said, ‘never doubt that a small group of committed people can make a difference in the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.’
- We believe that strategic waste management plans should consist of a framework detailing state government objectives, means of achieving those objectives, a timetable for their undertaking, and some sort of guideline as to whose direct responsibility this will be.

Action 5: Improvement and Performance Payments:

- QYEC supports the concept of improvement and performance payments for regional governments who have shown excellence in performance outcomes. One of the greatest problems with instigating change at a local level is providing motivation, and we believe that these payments can fill this gap. As mentioned in the WARCD, the establishment of an advisory group will be crucial to this strategy by furnishing the whole system with an objective arbitrator who can develop guidelines, priority targets, and the standards and benchmarks that will be important for the success of such a scheme.
- One issue with improvement and performance payments is that measuring outcomes simply on how well a certain set of boxes have been ticked may lead to a dissociation from the real purpose of the scheme of encouraging waste management and consideration for the environment. This could provide incentives to some individuals within regional government to rout the system, as can occur with any taxpayer funded cash based handout. Moreover, the consideration that the cost of such an incentive scheme might cause it to become untenable casts doubt on the scheme as a whole. In spite of its many weaknesses the scheme is strong in principle based on fundamental economic drivers.
- With regard to the advisory group created to oversee this scheme, we would expect them to incorporate science (and empiricism more generally), and for the membership of this group to include minority groups such as youth and aboriginals. Not only will monetary rewards encourage green investment, they will also encourage a culture of innovation and excellence in dealing with our environment.

Action 6: Local Government Assessment and Mitigation Program - Support

- Many Qld communities / towns are without adequate recycling facilities or 'greener' waste management options. QYEC believes that the funding of necessary infrastructure, ensuring that waste disposal sites were at lower risk levels of contaminating the surrounding environment or other associated problems, can only be seen as a positive.
- Funding that could potentially be available to cover infrastructure costs may encourage local councils to invest their own dollars into infrastructure, or move them in the right direction to invest in improvements of their management options.

Action 7: Alternative Waste Treatment Technology

- QYEC expects that assessment guidelines will be a positive for local governments, as they will provide a standard for each council that uses the guidelines. They also will provide the option of being able to compare the councils that used the guidelines to see where their alternative waste technologies are excelling, are standard, or are falling behind.
- By reducing the time taken for local council's 'decision making process' this will in turn hopefully lead to improvements (if necessary) to be implemented sooner.

Action 8: Orphan and Historical Waste Removal

- QYEC believes that if local government employees (Stock Route Supervisors, Road works crews, etc.) and members of the community are involved, sites of historic waste will be easy to identify.
- This action has the potential to engage citizens, through surveys/ newspaper polling to identify illegal dump sites in their communities and then those community members see action occur in the area/s identified.
- Clean up and waste removal activities could potentially be partnered with already existing events, such as 'Clean Up Australia Day'.

Action 9: Enhanced Litter and Illegal Dumping Requirements - Support

- As with action 8, areas are easily identified and there is potential for community consultation and action as part of the process.
- Dumping squads could be made up of key people within each community who are most likely to be able to identify and document hot spots.
- This could be the next step, by having the squads in place to better 'police' hot spot areas and impose some sort of deterrents to those offenders who are illegally littering and dumping waste.

Action 10 – Indigenous council area waste removal and litter program

- QYEC supports the addressing of waste issues in indigenous communities as an important step in reducing Queensland's waste levels. We would particularly like to see the Government use an education campaign promoting recycling and waste management targeting indigenous youth.
- Indigenous waste education campaigns should aim to connect recycling and waste reduction with Aboriginal culture, particularly in relation to the environment and community minded attitudes, so as to not just encourage improved waste practices, but create a more personal understanding of their importance and connection with them.

Action 11: Market development for recycled organic products

- QYEC believes that products made from recycled organic product, such as compost, can have a reasonable commercial value, and support moves to take advantage of this to reduce organic waste. We would also like to see the QLD government encourage and invest in greater ingenuity in the disposal of the non-useful parts of crops. Examples of this include the production of paper from waste from banana farming (such as the stems and leaves of the trees, which have a very short productive lifespan), as well as the production of ethanol for biofuel.
- We would like the Queensland government to consider the following initiatives in order to achieve this:
 - Supplying an additional dumpster to supermarkets and other businesses dealing with large quantities of organic waste, to dispose of unwanted fruit, vegetables, and other organic waste for recycling.
 - If introducing a household bin for organic waste (as recommended in Action 15), recycling the waste obtained from these bins for use as compost in public gardens, as occurs in parts of Sydney, or sold.
 - Establishing a compost heap at major landfill sites. Organic waste brought to the landfill or collected from the proposed organic waste dumpsters/bins, can be composted in this.
 - Considering making the aforementioned actions mandatory for local government.
 - Encouraging community discussion (particularly in farming regions) about available technologies for re-use of farming waste, and examining the most feasible options for farmers and how this could become a source of profit to create incentive for its uptake.

Action 12 – Regional Resource Recovery Support Programs

- QYEC supports both the undertaking of projects in regional Queensland to ensure that waste policy is actively targeting waste reduction across the state, and the focus on expanding 'green' employment; however, we would like to see more information on the nature of the planned projects, and to ensure that the details of this is made known to all Queenslanders.

Action 13: Community recycling champions

- QYEC sees this as an innovative idea, however we feel it is important to expand the program beyond five recycling champions, to provide sufficient exposure, with most Queenslanders likely to be unaware of the program or those recognized by it.
- We also feel that the following must be considered in implementing this initiative:
 - Expanding the program to one recycling champion for each regional and city council. This person should be a locally known and active community participant to ensure the program is respected in local communities and gains sufficient exposure.
 - Ensuring maximum exposure for the recycling champions and why they've been chosen, including publicity and engagement with local schools and at community events so that their message and ideas can reach more people.
 - Considering having youth recycling champions, or having the recycling champions mentor youth and other ways that they could be used to get schools behind waste reduction initiatives.
 - Consider competitions or challenges on the back of this program (possibly facilitated by the recycling champions) for schools to reduce their waste and increase their recycling.

- Using an alternate term to 'recycling champion', which may not be taken seriously by the wider community; QYEC recommends a more down-to-earth title be used for the program.

Action 14 – Collection Program for Priority Products

- QYEC supports the expansion of infrastructure for priority product collection. We would like to see future infrastructure positioned in locations that are easily accessible and convenient where possible, rather than drop-off points being mainly adjacent to landfill sites.
- We also recommend that the government consider the use of an annual or biannual kerbside "refuse pickup" for large recyclable items, such as electronic waste, as is sometimes used to collect large waste items following major cyclones. This would ease the recycling of certain priority products that are too large to fit in the provided recycling bin, and could raise awareness of the recycling of larger items that households may not be aware are recyclable.

Action 15 – Household green and organic waste collection

- QYEC strongly supports the introduction of an additional kerbside bin to collect green and organic waste across regional, rural, and urban Queensland and feels that this step is imperative to improving Queensland's waste management.
- We feel that the alternative option of using the yellow-lidded bin for this purpose in the week that recycling is not collected is an inferior policy, as it would make recycling more of an effort for households.

Action 16: Household waste avoidance strategy

- QYEC believes that the packaging involved with many consumer products is unnecessary in its quantity and extremely wasteful, and supports any Government action to address this problem. We believe that initiatives such as an accreditation on products to make consumers aware of the use of biodegradable, recycled, or resource-efficient packaging would allow consumers to make waste-conscious purchasing decisions, providing an incentive for industries to accommodate this. We also support other measures to educate consumers on issues associated with wasteful consumption.

Action 17 – Target 150

- QYEC supports the creation of this ambitious target for decreasing household waste and increasing recycling. Given that other waste related targets in Australia and around the world have often failed to be met, we recommend that the government publish annual data detailing progress made in working towards the goal, to show that the government is taking the necessary steps to reach this goal.
- QYEC is also supportive of the three broad initiatives outlined. With greater recycling education crucial to improve recycling rates, we recommend that the RecycleSmart initiative addresses the following issues:
 - Improving awareness of the recycling process – the more households understand about the process and outcomes, the more likely they are to recognise that it is a worthwhile undertaking. The Youth and Environment Survey, conducted by QYEC

and its partners UQ and DERM in December 2008, found that just 32% of 12-17 year olds and 24% of 18-24 year olds claimed to know quite a bit or a lot about what happens to waste and recycling¹.

- Understanding of what items can be recycled, both in kerbside recycling bins and through other avenues – while better understanding of what can be disposed of in kerbside recycling bins is important, many households are also unaware of the other recycling options available for items such as used motor oil and electronic waste.
 - Recycling awareness in indigenous communities.
 - Recycling in schools – further education for schools on possible recycling and compost programs can decrease their waste disposal and increase recycling understanding and awareness through the active involvement of students.
 - Increasing use of recycled goods – increased awareness of the quality and environmental benefit of using recycled products would encourage consumers to consider environmentally friendly options when purchasing products.
 - Increasing awareness of the option of giving large products to re-use centres.
 - Educating businesses on the recycling options available to them.
 - Educating households on how they can take their own recycling measures and the merits of these, such as starting a compost heap or a worm farm.
- QYEC also supports examining the options for increasing household's recycling capacity. We feel that the following considerations should be made when establishing how to achieve this:
 - Weekly emptying of kerbside bins during busy periods, such as Christmas.
 - Giving businesses that use a dumpster a recycling "dumpster" that is collected weekly.
 - Introducing a garden/organic kerbside waste bin.
 - Giving households a kitchen bin for food scraps.
 - If choosing to reduce the size of the waste bin to encourage recycling, consider introducing a third, smaller kerbside bin for waste, with the current green-top bin becoming an organic/garden waste bin.
 - Alternatively, if all bins are to remain the same size, reduce waste collection to fortnightly, which would also mitigate the costs associated with introducing the third bin.
 - Introducing an annual or biannual kerbside collection of e-waste and large recyclable items.
 - Providing renters with free vouchers for landfill access, which could be given when registering their rental bond – this is particularly relevant to young people, many of whom rent rather than own their residence and therefore do not get waste vouchers, which are currently provided only to ratepayers
 - While QYEC believes that incentive programs for recycling are a promising suggestion, the exact nature of these needs to be outlined. While financial incentives are likely to be successful, we feel that if the cost, time, and effort involved with household recycling is reduced, the prospect of environmental gains for relatively little effort will provide sufficient incentive for most households at a small cost to the government.

Action 18--Plastic bag management program

- QYEC supports Government initiatives aimed at reducing the environmental impact of plastic shopping bags, however we believe that this important issue should be addressed

¹ Fielding. (2009). *Youth and the Environment Survey*. Retrieved July 19, 2010, from <http://www.qyec.org.au/downloads/qyecsurveyreport.pdf>.

The "Youth and the Environment Survey" was a joint project of the Queensland Youth Environment Council, DERM, DET and the University of Queensland in 2008.

before the 2012 date outlined in the WARCD. We would also like to see a more detailed explanation of different strategies that the government is proposing to address this.

- QYEC proposes the following initiatives to reduce plastic bag use:
 - The implementation of a price on plastic bags to encourage consumers to switch to green shopping bags and to provide an incentive for retailers to offer alternatives. A similar tax on plastic bags in Ireland has seen a 90% reduction in the use of plastic bags in 6 months, with money made from the tax used to fund environmental initiatives².
 - Development of community projects to encourage the recycling of HDPE (high-density plastic bags), perhaps with an incentive to do so. More convenient recycling points for plastic bags are also needed within communities along with encouragement for consumers to reuse plastic bags.
 - Ban on LDPE (light density plastic bags). South Africa has passed legislation that allows only thicker, more durable plastic bags to be produced. This is hoped to increase the reuse of such bags and the increased cost to produce and supply thicker bags should discourage retailers from handing them out, making their use a more expensive option for consumers³.
 - Encouragement of businesses to use biodegradable plastic bag options.

Action 19—Community gardens project - 2012

- QYEC supports the initiative for the State government to assist local governments in establishing a coordinated network of community gardens throughout Queensland. This can help communities reduce waste as well as strengthen environmental networks, promote collaborative action, and bring a sense of ownership to food production. Recycled building and household material can be used around the farm to build planter beds, create growing structures and protect the plants. Organic household waste can be collected by households and collected at these permaculture sites to be composted and used as organic fertiliser. Through creating and maintaining the garden a greater sense of community will be achieved.
- QYEC believes that the youth of today are becoming increasingly removed from the environment as a result of becoming dependant on an electronic community that is not geographically specific. This has reduced the connection between actions and their environmental consequences. Place-based initiatives like community gardens would help young people to be actively involved in reducing waste and emissions, which would likely result in them taking more personal action in other facets of their life. Additionally, by showing the production process of food, it could result in individuals reconsidering the amount of food waste they produce and taking steps to reduce this.
- Further to this, we suggest that “Youth Community Gardens” with appropriate knowledge, experience and support networks be set up throughout Queensland to help young people become “green leaders” in their community. These gardens for under 25 year olds would help develop local youth networks.

Action 20: Online resource exchange register

- QYEC strongly supports the establishment of an online database and resource exchange register. We suggest that this register be developed into two sections: and ‘Available’ section for businesses with items they didn’t need, and a ‘Wanted’ section for those in need of items. An effective search function and category listing system is also important.

² ABC. (n.d.). *The Lab*. Retrieved July 20, 2010 from ABC:
<http://www.abc.net.au/science/features/bags/default.htm>

³ *ibid.*

- In addition, a framework is needed for arranging the shipping and delivery of the goods. Even if a business was willing to give away used materials for free, shipping, handling and possibly insurance could be hurdles in such a plan.
- We would also like to see a similar website made available to the public.

Action 21--Business waste avoidance and resource recovery program

- QYEC would like to see more information on this strategy, such as how businesses are to be chosen (for example through self-registration or random sample) and what types of infrastructure and equipment will be used.
- QYEC recommends that the government consider key points of the NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 20074, which focus on developing an understanding of the links between waste and other environmental issues, building partnerships among industry groups and encouraging industry leaders to make positive changes down the supply chain, improving business planning and financial modelling tools to help councils expand their recycling services, introducing an audit to measure the composition of commercial and industrial waste, and improving electronic reporting systems for agencies to enable the calculation of waste contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, energy, and water savings.

Action 22--Regulated waste program

- QYEC supports any measures to research methods of waste avoidance and alternative end uses for waste.

Action 23- Resource recovery and awareness

- QYEC supports the development of waste avoidance and resource recovery awareness programs targeted at the construction and demolition sector and believes that any program to minimise waste generation and optimise resource recovery needs to be state-wide, including urban, regional, and rural initiatives. Additionally, any waste avoidance and resource recovery awareness program should be continually improved and expanded with monitoring tools to measure its effectiveness.
- A resource recovery and awareness strategy should be developed and implemented as soon as possible; QYEC supports the immediate commencement date of 2011 outlined.
- Part of this program should consider the creation of guidelines and standards for construction and demolition businesses to undertake full waste cycle analyses and to set reportable reduction targets by creating and implementing an auditing system.
- The Queensland Government should encourage industrial waste minimisation and recycling by showcasing businesses that have successfully participated in the resource recovery and awareness program by establishing an additional Ecobiz category: "Industrial Ecology Award".
- QYEC believes that young people should be specifically targeted by waste avoidance and resource recovery awareness initiatives. Students undertaking building trades with Vocational Education and Training (VET) should be a key focus group.
- Modules within relevant VET courses could include:
 - Sustainable design and construction of buildings
 - Minimal waste production during construction
 - Maximum recycling of demolition materials
 - New buildings are constructed with maximum recyclable content

⁴ Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW. (2007). *NSW Waste Avoidance Resource Recovery Strategy 2007*. Government of NSW. Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW.

- QYEC believes councils should also be included in the proposed program and be encouraged to improve their construction and demolition recycling rates.
 - Construction and demolition waste represents 23.3% of the waste received by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council; 90% of C&D wastes are being recycled⁵.
- Resource recovery and awareness should include education for builders to segregate their wastes on site to make recycling more cost effective and efficient.
- A waste minimisation and recycling awareness program for the construction and demolition industry needs to consider illegal dumping of building materials and provide effective solution to overcome this issue.
- 90% of builders are aware of how to access information on issues such as waste⁶; this figure should be increased to 100%.

Action 24— Working with developers to achieve waste avoidance and resource recovery – 2010

- QYEC supports this strategy, given the large amount of waste generated by the building and construction industry, and we feel that the 75% waste reduction target appropriately ambitious.
- Given the importance of this strategy we believe the government needs to elaborate on their plans. We also believe the scope should be broadened to explicitly include waste from demolition and to approach building construction waste from a “whole-of-lifecycle” approach. The construction and design process for a new building will have impacts on waste generation for the 80+ years of the building’s operation and thus it is critically important that this long-term view of waste avoidance and recycling be taken. We need to look at how people are living now and into the future with reflection on the past. What type of dwelling will ultimately produce the least waste through its construction and use: low-density suburban development on the fringe or inner city high-density apartment development?
- Simply looking at the waste from construction and not the processes that lead to this waste generation in the first place will be inadequate. We need to realise we are part of a system of urban metabolism. Future generations will have to deal with the problems of inadequate action now. Greater inclusiveness in this strategy needs to include all members of the community who have a stake in the construction industry, including planners, environmental managers, other development professionals, local community members, environmentalists, and, importantly, consumers. Overall, we feel that this strategy does not have enough emphasis on actions to help communities and consumers reduce and avoid their waste generation from their dwellings.
- While the goal of reducing per capita waste generation is a start, this strategy will not achieve a net decrease in waste generation in an environment of substantial population growth in Queensland. While we are not advocating the restriction of new people into Queensland to avoid waste, the government should be aware of each new residents “waste footprint” when promoting population growth and recognise the consequences of this. We calculated this footprint at 204 tonnes per person over a lifetime for each current and future resident of Queensland (2.4 tonnes pp/yr for 85years based on current waste household generation rates). This figure does not include the massive amounts of industrial waste produced to allow for these residents to have a modern lifestyle, nor does it include the amount of waste generated from building houses for

⁵ Sunshine Coast Council, 2010, *Construction and Demolition Waste Options*, viewed 18 July 2010, <http://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/addfiles/documents/waste/construction_and_demolition_waste_options.pdf>

⁶ *ibid.*

our growing population. Therefore, it is critically important to consider waste generation from the construction industry, especially when considering the massive population increase expected over the coming decades. The 75% target for recycling construction materials by 2020 should be extended to 95% by 2030.

- Waste from the construction industry should be avoided through design and planning controls that limit wasteful resources and practices. Where possible, the State government should promote the adaptive re-use and renovation of older building stock to prevent unnecessary development. The Sustainable Planning Act, State Planning Policies, and Regional Plans should be utilised to help the DERM achieve waste avoidance and recycling. Incentives need to be given to promote the use of recycled materials and targets need to be set for new buildings to contain a designated proportion of recycled materials. Furthermore, when considering building materials, only low embodied energy materials should be permitted for use, with a high levy penalty if this is not the case. As recycled products normally have a lower embodied energy (including lower raw material inputs and carbon footprint) than producing new materials, the use of recycled building materials would be promoted through market mechanisms. Building by-products are a good example of where waste is actually a valuable resource and can be easily recycled or re-used for new applications. Additionally, the government should aid local building material recycling co-ops being set up throughout Queensland, similar to groups such as “soilswap.com.au” and “Recycled Garbage”. Importantly, these swap facilities should be expanded throughout the state to reduce “waste miles”. Additionally, we should be recycling self-sufficient and not rely on international recycling schemes where we send our waste to other countries for processing. Not only does this increase our carbon footprint but also removes our responsibility from the inefficient waste we generate. Overall we need better integration between strategic state initiatives, local council waste programs, private industry practices and consumer demand.
- Levy municipal waste with the user pays principle (like that of water restrictions) - you could fit garbage trucks with weight sensors so individual houses are levied with their waste output, cost is the biggest incentive for average people to reduce waste. You could penalise high waste generating households
- QYEC believes the government should create a green waste target – especially for use in organic energy producing initiatives.
- QYEC also believes that a target of up to 90% reduction in littering and illegal dumping is possible, and points to the success of the government of Singapore in this area as an example.
- QYEC would like to see an ultimate landfill diversion target of 70% introduced.
- The government should mandate longer warranties to reduce the number of appliances which have “planned failure” incorporated into their design
- The government should also set up a call/email centre to help consumers find repairers and parts for broken items (goods are so complicated these days it is hard to find information and parts)
- QYEC would like to see the government investigate ways to reduce the cost of repair of goods below the cost of replacement

Action 25- Timber and wood waste product stewardship

- QYEC supports any action that improves timber and wood waste recycling, reduces waste and promotes sustainability in the timber industry

- Community and consumer awareness should be included in a timber stewardship program; recycled wood products should be promoted and advertised in way that attracts and educates young people, in particular
- Raising awareness and educating stakeholders about these issues is important, but other action is also needed to curb resource inefficiency and wastage and increase waste avoidance and recycling
- Incentives should be considered to increase waste avoidance and recycling in the timber industry, possibly through the Queensland Timber Industry Awards
- A commencement date of 2011 is wholly supported by QYEC
- In QYEC's 2009 Youth and the environment survey, 28.5% of 12-17 year olds and 37.7% of 18-24 year olds considered land clearing the most important environmental issue facing Queensland and Australia⁷
 - Deforestation is a concerning issue for young people, so they support attempts to make the timber industry more sustainable and increase wood recycling to prevent land clearing
- From 2006 to 2007, 82,760 tonnes of waste timber was recovered in Queensland; this figure has the potential to be significantly increased⁸
- The Queensland Government should support a dedicated wood recycling industry and work with peak bodies in urban, regional and rural areas to make this industry sustainable
 - The Wood Recyclers' Association in the United Kingdom and the British Government's Waste and Resources Action Programme could provide a model for the development of this industry⁹
- Standards and specifications for recycled wood should be considered by the Queensland Government

Action 26- Measuring community behaviour and attitudes

The Queensland Government will undertake biennial community surveys to measure people's attitudes on waste management, recycling, litter and their response to actions taken to improve practices.

- QYEC supports a two-year cycle to measure attitudes on waste management, recycling, litter and actions taken to improve practices
- QYEC recommends that the community surveys are available to all Queenslanders including residents in urban, regional and rural areas
- Reforming the legislative framework to improve existing data collection and reporting methodologies is an important consideration
- The Queensland Government should work with other organisations and bodies to make the measuring of community behaviour and attitudes easier and more widespread, for example, surveys conducted by QYEC could provide relevant data
- Young people's behaviour and attitudes to waste management, recycling and litter issues should be particularly considered

⁷ Fielding. (2009). *Youth and the Environment Survey*. Retrieved July 19, 2010, from <http://www.qyec.org.au/downloads/qyecsurveyreport.pdf>.

⁸ National Timber Product Stewardship Group, 2008, Post-consumer Timber Recovery data 2006-07, viewed 18 July 2010, <http://www.timberstewardship.org.au/images/pdf_documents/2006_07_wood_recovery_data.pdf>

⁹ Wood Recyclers Association, 2009, Wood Recycling, viewed 18 July 2010, <<http://www.woodrecyclers.org/recycling.php#>>