



Waste Feasibility Study Roadmap

CONSULTATION REPORT

PREPARED BY ACT NOWASTE

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Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the traditional Custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

I. Why we sought your views

The Study

The ACT Waste Feasibility Study was conducted over two years. It built an understanding of the complex and interconnected nature of waste management involving almost every aspect of life in Canberra.

The Study sought pathways to achieving the ambitious goals set out in the ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011-2025, including the targets of seeing 90 per cent of waste diverted from landfill by 2025 and a carbon-neutral waste sector by 2020.

With the Territory's resource recovery rate plateauing at around 70 per cent for the last decade, and the changes in waste management approaches, a re-alignment and 'step-change' of strategy was required.

The Study benefited from extensive consultation and collaboration across five reference groups from government, industry and community. It was a comprehensive program to gather knowledge and expertise, and ran from mid-2015 to mid-2017.

In addition, the study gauged industry capabilities and capacity to deliver resource recovery through a market sounding exercise in April 2017. This ensured the options put forward by the Study were practical and industry was able to deliver the recommended solutions.

The outcomes

The former Minister for Transport and City Services, Meegan Fitzharris MLA, launched the *Waste Feasibility Study – Roadmap and Recommendations* discussion paper on 8 May 2018.

The ACT Government sought views from the community and industry to inform implementation approaches of the Roadmap recommendations around four key themes:

- promoting waste avoidance through education
- diverting organics from landfill
- industry development and support
- waste-to-energy.

We will use the views gathered through this consultation to inform our Roadmap implementation approach.

2. How you contributed

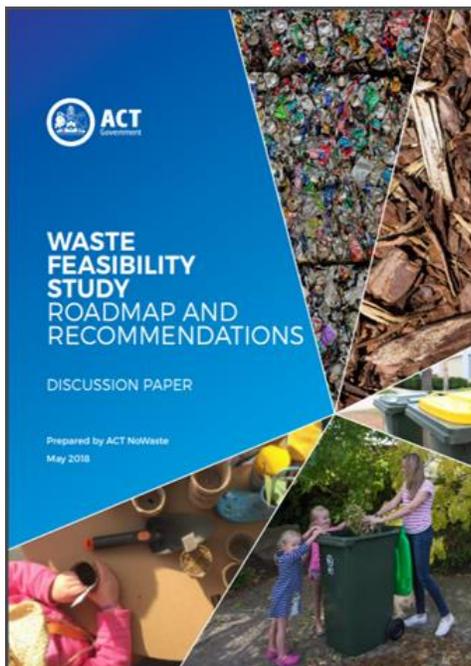
The ACT Government's 'Your Say' website was the primary vehicle for community consultation.

A 36 page discussion paper outlined recommendations, complemented by a six page overview document.

Stakeholders expressed their views via three main communication channels:

- *Written feedback via Your Say:* 64 people provided short written feedback.
- *Detailed written feedback via email submission:* 30 submissions were received from key interest groups and interested individuals.
- *In person at a community or industry information session:* Around 60 people attended community and industry workshops on 30 and 31 May 2018.

Discussion with ACT NoWaste Staff: Staff were available for phone calls with individuals, and attended meetings and presentations on request.



A 36-page discussion paper formed the basis for consultation.

3. What we heard

PROMOTING BETTER WASTE MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS

The majority of stakeholders were supportive of the Roadmap's focus on waste avoidance through education on food waste reduction and better recycling behaviours.

Ideas on how to promote behavioural change included incentivising waste reduction, for example through a user pays system. Stakeholders were interested in the level of investment in waste avoidance education.

DIVERTING ORGANICS FROM LANDFILL

The majority of stakeholders were supportive of reducing the amount of organic waste going to landfill.

While there was general support for future kerbside collection of food waste, there was criticism of the timeframe proposed for the service and diverse views on how to treat the food waste once collected. Views expressed included:

- bringing forward the timeframe for the proposed food and garden organics (FOGO) collection service
- anaerobic digestion rather than composting of FOGO materials
- government assistance to establish compost bins in home gardens
- conversion of food waste into animal feed
- considerations for building design and retrofitting a third bin
- controlling odours from a FOGO service.

“It would be great if there were food and organic kerbside collections. Not everyone has the space, time or inclination to have a compost themselves”

– *Your Say comment, 17 May.*

“The reduction of organic waste in landfill reduces greenhouse gas emissions and will aid the ACT in committing to its pledge to be a sustainable city. Many other cities around the world do this, so why can't the ACT?”

– *Your Say comment, 10 May.*

“Have you looked at what France is doing to make it illegal to throw away food? If a supermarket has leftover food they have to contact a food charity. If it's bad it has to go to a local farmer or municipal composting service. There are financial penalties for non-compliance.”

– *Attendee, community information session, 30 May.*

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

The majority of submissions were supportive of the Study's recommendations for recycling industry development.

There was also a strong focus on recovering soft plastics, with several calls for either improved local processing or collection of soft plastics beyond the service offered by the large supermarket chains. Stakeholders were supportive of the recommendations on government specification and procurement of recycled materials.

Key stakeholders from industry consistently highlighted commercial matters such as the role of price signals (e.g. waste levies) to make recycling more attractive than landfilling. Other stakeholders noted the need to ensure industry was appropriately situated, with Hume as the preferred location.

The property industry expressed its interest in providing solutions-based waste management without the need to over-regulate.

"... supermarkets should be able to facilitate people to use their own packaging. It's easy for deli products. Maybe even cleaning products and reuse your plastic bottles."

– Attendee, community information session, 30 May.

WASTE-TO-ENERGY

There were few comments on waste-to-energy, while key stakeholders held a diverse range of positions on the issue of incineration.

There was limited opposition to processed engineered fuel, and those who provided support did so on a conditional basis. Some

were concerned about the emissions associated with processed engineered fuel, and that it would encourage the burning of valuable resources.

Community council submissions were opposed to any form of incineration. An industry submission proposed anaerobic digestion for a biogas facility attached to the ACT wastewater treatment plant.

Attendees at the community information session voiced strong opposition to incineration of waste and were sceptical of the benefits of processed engineered fuel.

There was broad support for developing a waste-to-energy policy for the ACT, from both industry and community groups. In addition, key community and industry stakeholders supported the recommendation for an update to the ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011-2025.

"... anaerobic digestion is common throughout Europe and in countries addressing waste. It's also happening in enlightened states in US. We haven't built a waste-to-energy plant because it's so expensive."

– Attendee, community information session, 30 May.

"London, Paris, Copenhagen, and Tokyo have large waste to energy facilities sitting in the middle of the city. In Vienna there is one right on the Danube River and it's a tourist attraction. In the past you did have pollution; that's not the case today. The standards imposed on these facilities are very hard. However, I endorse the idea you don't want to cannibalise recycling."

– Attendee, industry information session, 31 May.

4. What we will do with your feedback

Many of the Roadmap recommendations have already commenced:

- the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Act 2016 is now being implemented
- the green bins pilot project is assessing the future volume of organics and associated elements of a FOGO service, including market identification and site selection
- the ACT Container Deposit Scheme commenced on 30 June 2018.

In addition, the Transport and City Services Directorate is conducting preliminary scoping work on education campaigns and industry development opportunities.

The waste-to-energy policy development process has commenced and consultation with community and industry is expected to occur in late 2018.

Other future Roadmap activities will be announced in the context of future Territory Budgets and outcomes of the waste-to-energy policy process.

We would like to thank those individuals and representatives of community groups and industry associations for their submissions.