

Motion for Submission to ALGA 2023

Motion: Move to a circular economy

1. That the Australian Local Government Association call on the Federal Government to:
 - (a) Support the development of a circular economy and take real action to reduce waste by committing to a national ban on food waste to landfill and agreeing to implement stricter national sustainable packaging standards.
 - (b) Invest in infrastructure to support the development of robust end markets to truly transition to a circular economy. This includes providing increased funding to industry and local government for local repair and processing solutions, sector innovation and market development.
2. That the Australian Local Government Association call on the Federal Government and Australian Food and Grocery Council to:
 - (a) Mandate and improve producer pays product stewardship scheme for difficult materials and designing problematic and unnecessary materials out of the system.
 - (b) Ensure that the governance of a mandated stewardship scheme is structured as a true partnership between local, state and federal government and does not shift the cost and risk to councils.

National Objective

Why is this a national issue and why should this be debated at the NGA?
(Maximum 100 words)

A national leadership approach is needed to drive the standardised change and compliance. The Federal Government is already driving the evolution to a circular economy through the National Waste Policy Action Plan and the Recycling Modernisation Fund.

These schemes are beginning to modernise Australia's recycling infrastructure increasing our circular economy capabilities by finding innovative solutions for onshore recycling and supporting remanufacturing of products with recycled content. This will ensure we can achieve commitments under the National Plastics Plan and support Australians to buy locally recycled products. These motions can be supported through the leadership of the Federal Government by leveraging their existing programs.

Summary of Key Arguments

Background information and supporting arguments
(Maximum 300 words)

A circular economy model employs not only waste management, but designing products for reuse, repair, recycling and responsible manufacturing, supporting the development of new industries and jobs, reducing emissions and increasing efficient use of natural resources (including energy, water and materials).

A more sustainable system is required, one that works with manufacturers to rethink how products are made and reduce the waste that's created during production, reducing

excess consumption, reusing items wherever possible and supporting our local recycling industry,

Mandatory product stewardship schemes can shift the end-of-life costs of products to those who benefit from them, including manufacturers, retailers and ultimately consumers. In addition to easing the burden of waste management on the general community, that approach would create a clear price incentive for waste reduction.

By maximising resource utility and incorporating the concept of circularity during production and consumption (i.e. not just focused on waste management), the circular economy boosts entire economies. For Australia, where currently the value of its natural resources lies only in the raw, unprocessed state, a circular economy is critical in ensuring future prosperity and economic security.

These strategies require local, state, federal and international work to ensure a more sustainable system. A national leadership approach is needed to drive the standardised change and compliance.