



# Waste Education Policy Statement





## Policy Statement

The Waste Education Policy Statement has been developed to identify the roles and expectations of Local, State and Federal Governments and the private sector regarding Waste Education for the community. Without this clarity, duplication of effort and mixed messages are likely to occur.

## Background

Waste education is an essential part of waste management, as it provides information and motivation necessary to empower the community to engage in waste avoidance, reuse and recovery and accurately use services provided.

Strong community support and positive engagement with waste programs is essential to meet State Waste Strategy targets to reduce overall waste generation, maximise recovery of resources from waste and minimise waste to landfill.

Improved sorting and disposal behaviour by the community assists in reducing contamination across all waste streams and providing higher quality material to be recovered as resources.

While all levels of government have roles to play in waste education, there are many areas where they intersect. Local Government has greater responsibility for direct waste education to the communities it services, while State and Federal Government support and enable the implementation of effective waste management systems by Local Government, through strategic planning and funding mechanisms.

## Roles and Expectations

### WALGA

Through active collaboration with Local, State and Federal Government, and the wider waste industry, WALGA facilitates the development of consistent messaging to assist Local Governments in effective waste education and engagement.

WALGA's engagement with State and Federal Government on waste policy, along with other State and Territory Associations, informs consistency in messaging across jurisdictions.

### Local Government

Local Government takes the primary role in waste education, as the first point of contact for waste queries from the community. Acting as both service provider and educator, Local Government's key commitments are to provide information on available waste services and engage with the community to encourage positive waste behaviours that contribute to State Waste Strategy targets.

Individual Local Governments, some in collaboration with Regional Councils, have varying capacities to undertake waste education and engagement activities, dependent on availability of resources. The use of consistent messaging, relevant to Local Government waste management systems, is therefore key to ensuring effective communication to all community members.

Local Government:

- Informs the community about waste, recycling, reuse and resource recovery services available and relevant to their area
- Uses consistent and data informed waste education messaging tailored to their local area

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- Takes a holistic approach to education throughout the waste 'lifecycle' through providing clear information on collection and recovery processes
  - Encourages active community participation in waste management through highlighting the individual impact of correct waste separation and contribution to overall environmental goals, including State waste Strategy targets

### Regional Councils

Regional Council refers to an entity formed by two or more Local Governments for a specific purpose under the *Local Government Act 1995*, in this context to manage waste on behalf of its members.

Regional Councils' role in waste education supports their member Local Governments through:

- Providing waste education resources, including staff support, for events and programs
- Raising awareness of collection and processing activities through facilitating site tours and providing clear and timely information for reporting and communication purposes
- Coordinating and delivering joint waste education and engagement programs and services across Local Governments to increase value while providing consistent messaging.

### State Government

State Government provides the strategic direction for waste management in Western Australia through the State Waste Strategy targets and Action Plan.

To facilitate achievement of the State Waste Strategy, State Government provides overarching communication and education strategies, implemented by Local Government, ensuring consistency of information to minimise community confusion.


In respect to Waste Education, State Government:

- Provides assistance, through funding for statewide and targeted education and communications programs
- Undertakes research to ensure programs are evidence based and fit for purpose
- Provides appropriate strategies to minimise waste impacts
- Creates Waste Education programs that can be used co-operatively between Local and State Governments
- Provides specific State and Local Government level waste data and recovery information to improve awareness of waste management activities and progress toward targets.

### Federal Government

Federal Government provides national strategic direction and legislation on waste management, however its involvement in waste activities does not extend to policy regarding kerbside waste collection or direct waste education to the community.

In respect to Waste Education, Federal Government:

- Provides assistance, through funding for national and targeted education and communications programs
  - Provides national influence on industry practices to contribute to waste avoidance
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- Sets national priority and direction for product stewardship schemes
  - Provides national waste data and recovery information to improve awareness of waste management activities and progress toward targets.

## Partnerships and Support

Local Government partnerships with community groups, not for profit organisations, the waste industry and product stewardship organisations contribute to waste education throughout the community.

### Community Groups and Organisations

Community groups and organisations, including not for profit organisations, support waste education activities by delivering consistent messaging on the importance of positive waste behaviours in their engagement with the community.

Opportunities include delivering joint waste reduction and education programs and services, using resources from all partners to increase reach and value across the community.

### Waste Industry

The role of the waste industry is to provide clear and factual information on collection and processing activities and end markets for collected materials. This is key to maintaining public awareness and confidence in waste management activities.

### Product Stewardship Organisations

Product stewardship initiatives place responsibility on producers and manufacturers of products to drive environmentally beneficial outcomes through the product lifecycle, by designing out waste, using components and materials that are easier to recover and reuse and funding recovery activities.

Organisations managing product stewardship schemes provide financial and operational support for Local Governments to recycle specific materials through collection networks, while partnering with Governments and private industry to deliver clear information to the community on correct disposal, processing activities and end markets.

A key element of success in product stewardship schemes is community engagement. Consulting Local Government throughout the development and implementation process of product stewardship schemes is essential to ensure consistency of information and approach.

