

# ANNUAL REPORT.

**FY23/24**



WASTE CONTRACTORS &  
RECYCLERS ASSOCIATION  
OF N.S.W

**Waste Contractors and Recyclers  
Association of NSW  
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## President's Report,

### Mr Harry Wilson, Life Member



In FY23/24, WCRA continues to celebrate over 76 years of continuous industrial registration and advocacy on behalf of our members. Over the past year, we have faced new challenges that have tested our resilience, collaboration, and innovation. Despite these challenges, we have remained committed to providing our members with access to essential services, training, and support in navigating evolving regulations and operational risks.

One of the most significant issues this year has been the growing risk of fires caused by the incorrect disposal of lithium-ion batteries. These batteries, increasingly found in household waste and recycling streams, have led to numerous fires across the sector. WCRA has been actively working with industry stakeholders, regulators, and the government to raise awareness of the dangers and to

advocate for more robust disposal solutions and safety measures to mitigate these risks.

Another critical area of concern has been asbestos contamination in the Construction and Demolition (C&D) sector. As more C&D waste is processed for recycling, we have seen an increase in incidents where asbestos has been inadvertently mixed into loads. This contamination poses serious health risks and regulatory challenges. WCRA is working closely with the NSW EPA and industry partners to advocate for regulatory reforms that include clear, enforceable guidelines for the proper detection and handling of asbestos. We are pushing for the establishment of appropriate testing protocols to ensure that asbestos is identified and removed before C&D materials enter the recycling stream. These reforms are essential to ensuring the safety of workers and the public, as well as maintaining the integrity of the recycling process.

In addition to these critical matters, WCRA has been actively involved in advocating for reforms to the Local Government Amendment Act. Our efforts are focused on ensuring that the tendering process in the waste and recycling sector remains transparent, equitable, and competitive for employers, employees, and local councils. We are pushing for reforms that grant employers equal footing and fair opportunities in tendering, while also protecting employee rights and empowering local governments to implement necessary improvements for future growth.

These reforms aim to create a balanced and collaborative environment where all stakeholders—businesses, workers, and councils—can work together effectively to address the industry's evolving demands. By supporting these changes, WCRA is fostering a more sustainable and competitive marketplace, benefiting businesses, employees, local governments, and the broader community.

Additionally, we recognize that local government tendering processes have become increasingly complex and challenging to navigate, making it harder for businesses to submit conforming tenders. WCRA continues to advocate for streamlined processes that reflect the regulatory environment in which our members operate, ensuring compliance while maintaining competitiveness in the marketplace.

Despite these challenges, the waste management and recycling industry continues to provide an essential service to households and businesses across NSW. Without the tireless efforts of our members and their invaluable workers, we would face significant health, hygiene, and environmental risks.



## Annual Report 2024

The waste management & resource recovery sector continues to face a range of major challenges, including:

**Lithium-ion battery fires:** Increasing incidents of fires in waste facilities due to improper disposal of lithium-ion batteries, posing serious safety and financial risks.

**Asbestos contamination in C&D waste:** Managing the growing problem of asbestos inadvertently mixed in with Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste, requiring stricter detection and handling protocols.

**Workforce shortages:** Ongoing difficulty in attracting skilled workers, particularly in an ageing workforce, affecting operational efficiency across the sector.

**Rising insurance premiums:** Increased insurance costs, particularly driven by risks associated with battery fires, asbestos contamination, and operational hazards in waste management facilities.

**Regulatory complexity:** Navigating increasingly stringent environmental and waste-related regulations, which can slow down operations and increase compliance costs.

**Waste infrastructure shortage:** The state faces a looming infrastructure gap by 2030, requiring the construction of new facilities to manage increasing waste volumes.

**Circular economy transition:** Adapting to the shift towards a circular economy model, requiring greater focus on resource recovery and recycling, while balancing costs and innovation.

**Local Government Amendment Act reforms:** The need for regulatory reform to ensure fair and competitive tendering processes, benefiting employers, employees, and local councils.

**Planning approval delays:** Significant delays in the Development Application (DA) process for building new waste infrastructure, hindering industry progress.

**Waste export bans:** Adjusting to federal and international waste export bans, which increase pressure on local waste management systems and necessitate investment in domestic processing capabilities.

**Public education and engagement:** Continued challenges in educating the public about proper waste disposal, especially regarding hazardous materials like batteries and asbestos.

As we reflect on the challenges and opportunities facing the NSW waste and recycling industry, I would like to take a moment to personally thank our members and stakeholders, Executive members and WCRA staff past and present, for their unwavering support over the years. After over a decade of serving as the President of WCRA, the time has come for me to step down from this position, however I will remain on the executive committee. It has been an honour and a privilege to lead this association through significant industry changes, and I am incredibly proud of the progress we have made together. While I am stepping away from the role, I have no doubt that WCRA will continue to thrive and address the challenges ahead with the same dedication and passion that has defined our efforts over the years. I look forward to seeing the association continue to support and represent our industry with the strength and unity that we have built.



## Finance & Administration

WCRA exists to provide information, advice and support to its Members on a broad range of technical, regulatory, employment and industrial matters. The WCRA membership represents the majority of the waste and recycling transport and processing operators in NSW and ACT.

WCRA funds the services it provides to its Members through:

- Annual fees paid by the Members
- Charges for training services
- Profits from hosting industry events
- Government grants
- Commercial arrangements with corporate partners and sponsors

WCRA continues to be recognised as a well-managed industry association with a secure financial position.

Hany Abdel-Sayed & Co Pty Ltd provides financial auditing services to WCRA and has approved the 2023/24 financial statements. The surplus of \$17,092 reflects a reduced surplus result compared to the previous year, whilst supporting Members (compliance material, standards, research into training, online communications, etc.). Contributing factors to the result included the writing off of \$30k in historical GST variances and the associated costs related to the handover between Tony Khoury and Brett Lemin.

### Five-year historical comparison

Table 1

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Net Surplus / Deficit</b>	\$48,866	-\$32,431	\$32,833	\$49,800	\$17,092
<b>Balance Sheet Net Assets</b>	\$1,548,049	\$1,515,618	\$1,577,563	\$1,627,363	\$1,644,455

### Key Ratios

Table 2

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Current Ratio</b> (Current Assets/Current Liabilities)	2.47	2.47	2.53	2.23	2.45
<b>Total Asset Turnover</b> Revenue/Total Assets	0.32	0.25	0.32	0.35	0.40
<b>Return on Assets</b> Net Surplus/Net Assets*100	3.16	-2.14	2.08	3.06	1.04

WCRA's 2023 AGM was held on 14<sup>th</sup> November at Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club. Members were presented with an overview of the years activities by Mr Harry Wilson (President) and Mr Tony Khoury (Executive Director) which included Mr Tony Khoury going through the Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss Statement, Independent Audit Report and audit and accounting notes for the year ending 30 June 2023. Audit report was signed by Hany Abdel-Sayed & Co Pty Ltd.

On approval WCRA, President Mr Harry Wilson signed and dated the Operating Report. WCRA's Secretary Ms Michelle Ford, signed the s269 letter to the FWC (cc to the NSW IRC). The Secretary also signed the officer and related party disclosure statement (ORP 2023/253)

WCRA is the oldest waste management industry association in Australia and the oldest waste and recycling employer body in the world. Since 1948, WCRA has represented the NSW & ACT waste and recycling transporters and processing facility operators. WCRA is an independent association registered with the Industrial Relations Commission of NSW and under the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009.

# Our People

## Members, Partners & Sponsors

There was minimal change to the structure of the industry over the last twelve months. As in previous years, WCRA continues to represent the majority of waste and recycling operators across NSW and the ACT.

<b>Table 3</b>						
<b>Members</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	
>40 Revenue Earning Vehicles	11	11	9	9	9	
7-40 Revenue Earning Vehicles	40	42	45	48	47	
Up to 6 Revenue Earning Vehicles	114	112	111	112	108	
<b>Associate Members</b>	40	44	43	39	41	
<b>Total</b>	205	209	208	208	207	
Change on Prior year	6.8%	2.0%	-0.5%	0%	-0.5%	

## Staff & Support Services

WCRA's offices and services are available to Members via phone or in person Monday to Friday during business hours.

WCRA's previous agreement with Transector Pty Ltd expired on 20 December 2023. BCL Management currently provides the services of Executive Director, Brett Lemin plus the support staff needed to operate the Association.

Brett is supported by the following staff and specialist advisors:

Administration, Invoicing, Debtors, Creditors and Bookkeeping	Ann Maree Kopos
Reception, Marketing, Events & Office Management	Jamal Alameddine
Environmental Planning & Regulatory Affairs	Ross Fox (Fishburn Watson O'Brien)
Employment & Industrial Relations	Jay Clowes (Fishburn Watson O'Brien)
Projects	Scott Bayliss
Training Delivery	Brett Lemin Scott Bayliss Tony Khoury
IT and Maintenance Support	Joe Bazzano (Go Tech IT)
Exclusive Member Service Offer	Scott Bayliss & Brett Lemin



## WCRA Executive

The Members of the Executive on 30 June 2023 were:-

Harry Wilson	SMS Municipal Services	President
David Gater	Veolia	Vice President
Bijal Dixit	JR Richards & Sons	Treasurer
Michelle Ford	Brandster Services	Secretary
David Johnston	United Resource Management	Executive Member
Graham Knowles	iQRenew	Executive Member
Mark Falanga	Kollect Group	Executive Member
David Harrison	Viscount Plastics (Australia) Pty Ltd	Executive Member
Ros Dent	Bingo Industries	Executive Member
Joe Richards	JJ's Waste & Recycling	Executive Member
Damien Vella	Breen Resources	Executive Member
Stuart Baird	Cleanaway	Executive Member

There were no movements of the Executive for the 2023/2024 period:-

Executive meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, except for January. The purpose and function of the Executive is particularised in the registered rules of the association. Executive meetings are open to all Members of the Association. Members can contribute to discussion and debate and raise points of general business. Voting is restricted to Executive Members.

Executive Members are drawn from the ranks and are the nominated representatives of Members. All are practising industry professionals with many years of experience and subject to heavy demands for their time. Sponsors are also invited to speak at meetings on matters of interest.

Meetings in the reporting year were well attended with a broad range of matters discussed and actioned. The overall attendance at Executive meetings stood at 68% for the financial year ending in June 2024.

Elections for positions on the Executive Committee are conducted every four years according to the Associations rules. Nominations for committee members were last invited in October 2022 and the process supervised by the Australian Electoral Commission. All elected Executive Members have undertaken the compliance and governance training required under the Fair Work Registered Organisations regulations.



*Current Executive member David Harrison, with Ex-Executive Director Tony Khoury and Ex-President Jim Perry*

## Sponsors 2023/2024

WCRA was generously supported by key corporate associates. These organisations contributed essential funding for the Association as well as providing invaluable specialist advice, proposals and assistance to Members.

AMCS	Waste operations and management software
TWU Super	Superannuation
Ryan Tax	Suppliers of global tax services, software & technology
CJD Equipment/Volvo/SDLG	Construction and waste management plant and equipment
Velocity Truck Centres Huntingwood	Mercedes Benz, Freightliner and Fuso Heavy Vehicles
Arthur J Gallagher	Insurance broking
Green Goanna – Shell	Oil specialists
Bucher Municipal	Waste industry equipment

Our corporate Sponsors provide specialist expertise and options to our members, together with essential funding for the services offered by WCRA.

We encourage our members to reach out to our sponsors either direct or via WCRA and explore their service and product offerings your organisations can benefit from and support those that are supporting our Association.

On behalf of all Members, the Association acknowledges the support of its Sponsors and its gratitude to these organisations and their representatives.

## Life Membership

Life membership is the highest honour that can be given to a member of the waste and recycling industry who is associated with WCRA. Life membership may be awarded to a member in recognition of outstanding service given to WCRA over a prolonged period.

The Executives, in accordance with the Guidelines for life nomination for Life Membership, considers the following with regard to prospective Life Members:

- Must never have brought the Association or the industry into disrepute.
- Must have consistently put the interests of the Association and the industry ahead of their personal and business interests in the discharge of WCRA duties and responsibilities.
- Must have, through their involvement with WCRA, enhanced the operation and reputation of the Association and the industry.

The following former and present Members are Life Members of WCRA

- |                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| ➤ Ron Horswell (deceased)  | ➤ Barry Thomas     |
| ➤ Mike Creswell (deceased) | ➤ Harry Wilson     |
| ➤ Arthur Baker (deceased)  | ➤ Greg Turner      |
| ➤ Bernadette Byrnes        | ➤ Jeff Brandstater |
| ➤ Terry Dene               | ➤ Glenn Gauslaa    |
| ➤ Mike Noble               | ➤ Tony Khoury      |

WCRA stays in touch with our Life Members by inviting them to attend events such as the Annual Dinner and the Long Serving Members Lunch.



## WCRA Long Serving Members

WCRA acknowledges Long Serving Members for their service to the waste management industry and the Association.

Long Serving Members are entitled to the following:

- Invitation to an annual luncheon (previously known as the Retiree's Lunch) where they will receive an update on topical industry issues.
- Email updates on matters of interest.
- (At the discretion of the Executive Director) one Long Serving Member will be invited to attend and present at WCRA's regular Waste & Resource Recovery training sessions.
- Invitation to a lunch meeting at the WCRA offices where they will participate in the annual Youth in Waste judging process (with the winner to be announced at the WCRA Annual Dinner).



*WCRA Breakfast Briefing March 2024, Followed by long serving members lunch*

## Services

### Industrial & Employment Relations

WCRA continues to provide industrial relations support for all its members. This includes offering guidance on key issues such as pay rates and conditions, leave entitlements, injured workers, HR practices, unfair dismissals, redundancy processes, and public holidays. WCRA remains committed to representing its Members and the industry in various industrial relations discussions, negotiations, and disputes.

WCRA is a registered employer body under the Fair Work Act 2009 (Registered Organisations' Act) and the NSW Industrial Relations Act 1996. Throughout the year, WCRA has participated in negotiations with Trade Unions, government bodies such as the Fair Work Commission, and the Fair Work Ombudsman, addressing critical matters impacting the waste management industry. WCRA continues to serve as the peak employer association representing the interests of its Members across both NSW and the ACT.

In 2024, WCRA facilitated a number of training sessions and presentations utilising the expertise of industry specialists. These included sessions on recent updates in industrial relations, particularly the changes affecting casual workers and independent contractors. We also provided critical insights into the implications of the Local Government Amendment Act and its impact on tendering processes, employment conditions, and fair competition for employers in the waste sector.

Members are regularly informed about award changes, including updates to the Waste Management Award and the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay Guide. Key updates include changes to family and domestic violence leave, additional public holiday entitlements, collective bargaining provisions, and industrial action regulations.

In 2024, the Fair Work Commission announced increases to the National Minimum Wage and Modern Award Wage rates, including the Waste Management Award. Wage rates increased by 3.75%, a decision that was communicated to members along with the implications for their operations.

### Insurance and Workers Compensation

WCRA, in collaboration with our sponsor Gallagher (Specialist Insurance Brokers), has continued to provide Members with advice on a wide range of insurance matters. As has been the case in recent years, we have seen a continued increase in the number of fires resulting from lithium-ion batteries in waste and recycling streams, both in vehicles and facilities. The industry is now experiencing over 10,000 battery-related fires annually across the country, significantly impacting insurance premiums and the operational risks faced by waste management companies.

Several online information sessions and training webinars were promoted to WCRA Members in 2023/24, focusing on relevant insurance topics. Gallagher has also supported WCRA Members by providing discounted CTP rates for their vehicle fleets and offering advice to help members achieve better premium outcomes. The offer for discounted property insurance premiums continues to be available to Members.

Additionally, WCRA has been actively working with Members and iCare (the workers compensation insurer for NSW) to help resolve disputes and deliver fair outcomes for all parties involved. We are dedicated to ensuring that employers and injured workers receive appropriate support while ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements.

## Exclusive Members' Service Offer

In 2023/24, WCRA continued to offer its Exclusive Members' Service Offer, providing tailored services to meet the unique needs of its Members. The services offered by WCRA include driver assessments, general worker assessments, toolbox talks, and short-term leave cover, designed to help Members maintain safety standards, compliance, and operational efficiency. Each service is carefully negotiated with the Member on a job-by-job basis, ensuring that it meets the specific requirements of their business.

Among the most valuable services for our members are the driver assessments and Toolbox Talks on a range of topics including Overhead Wires. These assessments have been particularly valuable in helping waste companies enhance safety by ensuring that heavy vehicle drivers are fully equipped to operate specialized waste equipment. Members who have engaged WCRA for these services have expressed high satisfaction with the professionalism and thoroughness of the on-the-job assessments. These assessments provide not only comprehensive feedback on the drivers' performance but also practical scores that help managers identify areas for improvement, ensuring that operations remain both safe and efficient. The Toolbox Talks have also played a crucial role in educating employees about the dangers of overhead wires and other site-specific hazards, further reinforcing the industry's commitment to safety.

# MEMBERS SERVICE OFFERS

**>> Industry trained by Industry**



WASTE CONTRACTORS &  
RECYCLERS ASSOCIATION  
OF N.S.W.

## TRAINING PROGRAMS

**CoR - TLIF0009**

Chain of Responsibility

**Intro to Sales**

Waste Industry specific  
sales training

**Intro to Waste**

Introduction to the Waste &  
Resource Recovery Industry

**Fatigue Management**

TLIF0005 – Apply Fatigue  
Management System

**ICAM - BSBWHS515**

ICAM Lead Investigator

**Driver Assessments**

Assess Driver Competence  
and upskill



**Overhead Wires**

Apply safe operational  
practices when vehicles  
contact overhead wires.

**Policy Review**

Review internal Policies  
and Procedures

**Toolbox Talks**

Tailored Toolbox  
Sessions

**CONTACT WCRA FOR FURTHER  
INFORMATION AND BOOKINGS**

02 9604 7206 - MEMSERVICES@WCRA.COM.AU

## Training

WCRA continues to offer members a diverse range of highly focused industry training courses addressing contemporary issues that impact the waste management sector. In delivering these training services, WCRA has sustained formal partnerships with TAFE NSW Sydney Institute, Safety Wise (RTO ID 21871) for ICAM training, and Pentrans Consulting for fatigue management (RTO ID 91427), as well as collaborating with other expert trainers in the field.

Training remains an essential and widely utilized component of the Association's service offerings. Many members rely on WCRA to provide high-quality, industry-tailored training for their employees and contractors. Through these efforts, WCRA significantly contributes to maintaining high standards in safety, environmental management, and regulatory compliance across the NSW and ACT sectors.

This year, WCRA delivered nationally accredited courses covering Chain of Responsibility (CoR) regulations and obligations, Fatigue Management regulations, Work Safely Near Overhead Wires, and other critical safety and compliance topics. The content of these courses is continually updated to reflect the evolving regulatory environment and the specific needs of the waste and recycling industry.

The following table outlines WCRA's training and workshop delivery throughout the year:

Training &/or workshops in 2023/2024	Unit nos.	No. of sessions	No. of Attendees
<b>Chain of Responsibility</b>	TLIF0009	15	244
<b>Chain of Responsibility, Toolbox</b>	N/A	2	22
<b>Fatigue Management</b>	TLIF0005	2	22
<b>Work Safely Near Overhead Wires, non-accredited</b>	N/A	2	23
<b>Work Safely Near Overhead Wires, Toolbox</b>	N/A	2	32
<b>Incident Cause Analysis Method (ICAM)</b>	RIIWH301D & BSBWWHS505B	2	27
<b>Intro. to Waste &amp; Resource Recovery</b>	N/A	6	75



*Safety is a key priority for all waste transporters. CoR training proved popular throughout the year, with many training sessions conducted at the WCRA office in Wetherill Park.*



## WCRA working with Government

Over the past year, WCRA has engaged in productive meetings with key government figures and independent MPs to discuss critical issues affecting the waste and recycling industry. These meetings included discussions with **Tanya Plibersek**, Federal Environment Minister, and **Penny Sharpe**, NSW Minister for Environment, both of whom provided valuable insights into federal and state-level environmental policy directions. We also met with **Paul Scully**, Minister for Planning, to discuss streamlining the development of waste infrastructure and development approvals, and **Kellie Sloane**, Shadow Minister for Environment, to explore bipartisan approaches to improving the waste sector. Independent MPs such as **Gareth Ward**, **Rod Roberts**, and **Jon McGirr** were engaged on the unique challenges facing waste management and supporting our disallowance motion for the Local Government Amendment Act, while **Kobe Shetty** and **Amanda Cohn**, Greens MPs, provided their perspective on support for labour and the aforementioned amendment act. **Wendy Tuckerman**, Shadow Minister for Local Government, were pivotal in our discussions, support and disallowance motion on the Local Government Amendment Act. These meetings reflect WCRA's continued commitment to working collaboratively with all levels of government to ensure sustainable, effective solutions for waste management in NSW and beyond.



*Asela Atapattu – A/Executive Director – Strategy & Policy – NSW EPA*

## NSW EPA

### WCRA Collaboration with the EPA: Key Areas of Focus

WCRA has been working diligently alongside the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to address critical challenges facing the waste management and recycling sector. This collaboration aims to create safer, more sustainable waste management practices and improve regulatory frameworks for operators across the state.

Our partnership with the EPA has allowed us to address both immediate issues and long-term strategic goals, including the enhancement of infrastructure, safety regulations, and environmental sustainability efforts. Through ongoing dialogue and collaboration, WCRA has ensured that the voices of our members are represented in key decision-making processes.

In addition to engaging on specific initiatives, WCRA has established a strong working relationship with the EPA's leadership team. We meet regularly with the EPA's CEO, **Tony Chappel**, and other senior directors to address broader industry concerns, regulatory challenges, and emerging risks such as battery-related fires and asbestos contamination. These high-level discussions have helped us make significant inroads in improving our overall relationship with the regulator, fostering a more cooperative approach that benefits both the industry and the environment.

As a result of this strengthened partnership, WCRA is able to play a proactive and pivotal role in shaping future regulations and ensuring that waste management policies are practical, fair, and effective for the industry while supporting NSW's environmental goals.

Below is an overview of the key areas WCRA has focused on with the EPA over the past 12 months.

**WCRA Education Tour:** WCRA have engaged with the EPA to ensure that their staff have a better knowledge of the industry and the many operations within it, including onsite educational visits.

**EPA Board Meetings:** WCRA has actively participated in relevant EPA Board Meetings, contributing to the strategic direction of waste management regulations and policies.

**Battery Fires :** WCRA is heavily involved in discussions around the management of battery-related fires, particularly those caused by lithium-ion batteries, and is working with the EPA to develop solutions to mitigate these risks.

**Asbestos Reforms:** WCRA has been diligently working with industry and the EPA to bring about practicable and meaningful changes to the Asbestos regulations that will drive resource recovery and manage environmental and health risks.

**Organics Modelling Workshops:** These workshops, conducted in collaboration with the EPA, focus on improving organic waste recovery through data-driven modelling and scenario planning for both infrastructure, collections and processing.

**Streamlining the Application of the Waste Regulatory Framework:** WCRA is working to simplify the compliance and reporting processes for operators within the waste sector, ensuring easier adherence to regulations while maintaining high safety and environmental standards. This includes working on the ongoing streamlining of the regulatory framework around the end-of-waste pathways, ensuring more efficient recovery and reuse of materials.

**Waste Infrastructure Capacity Issues:** WCRA continues to engage with the EPA to address the capacity shortfall in waste management infrastructure, which is essential to handling increased waste volumes in the future.

**Implementing the Wilkinson Report:** WCRA is working with the EPA to ensure the effective implementation of recommendations from the Wilkinson Report, aiming to improve safety, compliance, and environmental performance in the sector.



## NSW POEO maximum Penalties Increase

In April 2024, the NSW Government introduced significant changes to environmental protection laws through the Environment Protection Legislation Amendment (Stronger Regulation and Penalties) Act 2024. This legislation marks the most extensive reform of environmental laws in over three decades, significantly increasing penalties for breaches. The amendments aim to bolster compliance and accountability, particularly targeting corporations and individuals who engage in serious pollution offenses. Notably, the Act has doubled the maximum fines for the most severe offenses, raising penalties to \$10 million for corporations and \$2 million for individuals. This reflects a more stringent approach to dealing with environmental crimes, ensuring that penalties align with the severity of the risks and harm posed to the community and the environment.

One key focus of the increased penalties is on offenses involving asbestos waste, where fines have jumped to \$4 million for corporations, highlighting the growing concern over asbestos-related pollution. The amendments also introduce more robust enforcement tools, such as new investigative powers and expanded clean-up notices, enabling quicker responses to pollution incidents. Additionally, the Act empowers the courts to block serial offenders from applying for Environmental Protection Licenses, and establishes a public "name and shame" register to hold companies accountable for poor environmental practices. These reforms underscore the government's commitment to deterring environmental breaches and reinforcing the protection of public health and the environment in NSW.



# NSW Waste Levy Review

The NSW Waste Levy review is a critical initiative aimed at evaluating the effectiveness and structure of the current waste levy system in New South Wales. The waste levy, which has been in place for several years, is a key tool used by the NSW Government to encourage waste reduction, increase recycling rates, and divert waste from landfills. It applies to waste disposed of in licensed landfills and plays a crucial role in driving the state's waste management strategies.

Currently, WCRA (Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW) is working closely with the NSW Government and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to provide industry insights and advocate for improvements in the levy system. This collaborative effort seeks to address various challenges and opportunities related to the levy, ensuring that it continues to support sustainable waste management practices while being fair and economically viable for businesses and local councils.

As part of this review, several key issues are being examined:

1. **Levy Rates and Economic Impact:** One of the main concerns is the financial impact the waste levy has on the industry and consumers. WCRA is advocating for a balanced approach that ensures the levy continues to incentivise recycling and waste diversion without placing undue financial burden on businesses and local governments.
2. **Regional Disparities:** WCRA is raising concerns about the differing impacts of the levy in regional areas compared to metropolitan areas. Regional waste management facilities often face unique challenges, and WCRA is working to ensure that these differences are accounted for in any proposed changes.
3. **Illegal Dumping and Levy Avoidance:** The review is also focusing on how the levy may contribute to illegal dumping and levy avoidance practices. WCRA is advocating for enhanced enforcement measures and better support for legal and compliant waste management operators to tackle this issue.
4. **Innovation and Infrastructure:** The review presents an opportunity to align the levy with broader goals for innovation in waste management, including investment in infrastructure for recycling and resource recovery. WCRA is pushing for the review to support these long-term goals, especially considering the growing demand for modern waste processing facilities.

WCRA's role in the review process includes providing detailed feedback on industry practices, gathering input from its members, and ensuring that the interests of waste contractors and recyclers are well-represented. The association aims to work with the NSW Government and EPA to ensure that any changes to the waste levy system foster a sustainable and resilient waste management framework for NSW.

This review marks a pivotal moment for the future of waste management in NSW, and WCRA's involvement is key to shaping a system that balances environmental goals with economic practicality for the waste and recycling sector.

## Waste levy rates 2024–25

In June 2024, The EPA announced the 2024–25 waste levy rates to apply from 1 July 2024. In line with the Waste Regulation, the rates have increased by the Consumer Price Index, and the calculated fees are:

- Metropolitan Levy Area: \$170.10 per tonne
- Regional Levy Area: \$97.90 per tonne.

### Concessional waste levy rates 2024-25

#### Virgin excavated natural material

- Metropolitan Levy Area: \$153.10 per tonne
- Regional Levy Area: \$88.10 per tonne

#### Recovered fines alternative daily cover

- Metropolitan Levy Area: \$42.50 per tonne
- Regional Levy Area: \$24.50 per tonne

The Recovered Fines Alternative Daily Cover Specifications must be met to receive the concessional levy rate.

### Prescribed shredder floc

The current concessional rate for residual waste generated directly from the shredding of scrap metal (shredder floc) has been extended until 1 September 2025.

The concessional levy rates for prescribed shredder floc for 2024 – 2025 are as follows:

- \$127.60 per tonne for the Metropolitan Levied Area effective from 1 July 2024
- \$73.40 per tonne for the Regional Levied Area effective from 1 July 2024.

The concessional levy rate only applies to shredder floc generated at facilities listed in a notice published by the EPA in the NSW Government Gazette

### Other levy rates

- The levy on trackable liquid waste for 2024–25 is \$91.10 per tonne.
- The levy rate for the Jun-Aug 2024 quarter (which extends across two financial years) is \$89.90.
- The coal washery rejects levy for 2024–25 is \$17.70 per tonne.

## Asbestos Reforms

Asbestos contamination has emerged as a significant issue within the waste and recycling sector, with serious implications for both public health and environmental safety. Addressing this challenge requires a concerted effort to ensure that the handling, disposal, and remediation of asbestos are carried out with the utmost care and compliance with stringent safety standards.

WCRA is actively collaborating with the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer to tackle asbestos contamination in the waste management sector. This partnership is focused on several key areas of concern, including safe disposal, regulatory compliance, and preventing cross-contamination in construction and demolition (C&D) waste streams.

As part of this collaborative effort, WCRA is contributing to the following initiatives:

1. **Risk Assessment and Research:** The Office of the Chief Scientist is leading critical research into the risks associated with asbestos contamination in various sectors, particularly in resource recovery and C&D waste. WCRA is working to ensure that the findings of this research are translated into actionable steps for waste management operators, aiming to mitigate the potential risks posed by asbestos in mixed waste streams.
2. **Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement:** The EPA plays a vital role in regulating asbestos disposal and enforcing compliance across the industry. WCRA is working closely with the EPA to ensure that waste facilities and contractors have clear guidelines and practical resources to safely manage asbestos contamination. WCRA also advocates for stronger enforcement mechanisms to prevent illegal dumping and improper handling of asbestos-laden materials.
3. **Asbestos Handling Protocols:** One of the primary goals of this collaboration is to establish best-practice protocols for the safe identification, removal, and disposal of asbestos. This involves improving training and education for industry stakeholders, ensuring that they are well-versed in the latest safety standards and regulatory requirements.
4. **Improved Infrastructure and Support for Safe Disposal:** WCRA is emphasizing the need for additional infrastructure to safely process and dispose of asbestos-contaminated materials. This includes lobbying for accessible disposal facilities and the necessary financial and technical support to ensure that the sector can meet growing demands.

Through its work with the EPA and the Office of the Chief Scientist, WCRA is playing a key role in ensuring that the industry meets the highest standards for asbestos management and contributes to the ongoing efforts to protect public health and the environment. This proactive approach aims to reduce the risks associated with asbestos contamination while supporting the industry in navigating the complexities of regulatory compliance.

Together, these efforts will help safeguard communities from the dangers of asbestos, ensure industry-wide adherence to safety protocols, and promote sustainable practices in managing hazardous waste materials.

## Battery Fires

Lithium-ion battery fires have become a growing concern within the waste and recycling sector, presenting significant risks to workers, facilities, and the broader community. Improper disposal and mishandling of these batteries can lead to dangerous fires, which are challenging to control and can cause extensive damage. In response to this urgent issue, WCRA is working closely with industry stakeholders, the NSW Government, and Fire Rescue NSW to develop and implement critical reforms aimed at mitigating these risks.

Key areas of focus in this collaboration include:

- 1. Raising Awareness and Education:** WCRA is at the forefront of efforts to increase industry and public awareness about the dangers of lithium-ion battery fires. This includes educating waste operators, consumers, and businesses about the safe disposal of batteries and the specific protocols to reduce fire risks. By working with Fire Rescue NSW, WCRA is helping to inform best practices on how to handle these hazardous materials and respond to fire emergencies effectively. WCRA is presenting at numerous conferences and functions across the country about the prevalence and dangers of battery fires that are scorching our industry.
- 2. Strengthening Industry Regulations:** WCRA is advocating for stronger regulations around the disposal and handling of lithium-ion batteries. This includes working with the NSW Government to introduce stricter compliance requirements and safety standards for the entire waste management supply chain. A crucial part of this advocacy is pushing for greater accountability from battery manufacturers and distributors to ensure they take responsibility for the safe collection and disposal of their products, reducing the likelihood of dangerous situations at waste facilities. Additionally, WCRA is calling for stricter enforcement and penalties for those who illegally dispose of lithium-ion batteries, as such actions often directly cause fires in waste facilities. Holding individuals and companies accountable for illegal disposal is essential to mitigating the risks and promoting responsible waste management practices.
- 3. Improving Emergency Response and Preparedness:** A significant aspect of WCRA's work with Fire Rescue NSW involves improving the industry's preparedness for lithium-ion battery fires. This partnership is aimed at ensuring that waste facilities and staff are equipped with the necessary knowledge, training, and equipment to effectively respond to such incidents. Additionally, WCRA is advocating for government funding to facilitate industry-wide adoption of fire mitigation technologies and improved facility design to reduce the impact of these fires.
- 4. Supporting Infrastructure and Innovation:** WCRA is advocating for the development of specialized infrastructure to manage the safe collection, processing, and disposal of lithium-ion batteries. This includes lobbying the government for significant investment in dedicated facilities that can safely handle hazardous materials like lithium-ion batteries. These facilities are essential to prevent these batteries from entering general waste streams, where they pose a significant fire risk.



In addition to infrastructure development, WCRA supports innovation in fire prevention technologies, such as battery detection systems, advanced recycling processes, and enhanced fire suppression systems designed to address the unique challenges of lithium-ion batteries. However, WCRA recognizes that unless these solutions become commercially viable, there will continue to be a reliance on government assistance. Government funding and incentives are crucial to bridging the gap between research and market implementation, ensuring that new technologies can be adopted on a wider scale across the industry.

WCRA also emphasizes the need for a collaborative approach across the sector to create a closed-loop system, where batteries are responsibly collected, processed, and recycled. Without the necessary infrastructure and ongoing financial support, the risk of improper disposal will persist, and with it, the danger of lithium-ion battery fires. The continued involvement of government in supporting this critical area is vital to reducing risks and ensuring a safer waste management ecosystem for the long term.

**Collaborative Industry Reforms:** WCRA's efforts extend to driving broader industry reforms aimed at minimizing the risk of lithium-ion battery fires. This includes working with various stakeholders, including producers, recyclers, communities and government agencies, to establish better collection schemes and recycling pathways. By creating a streamlined system for the safe disposal of lithium-ion batteries, WCRA seeks to reduce the amount of batteries entering trucks, facilities and landfills, ultimately preventing fires from occurring.

Through these collaborative efforts with the NSW Government, Fire Rescue NSW, and industry partners, WCRA is playing a key role in ensuring that lithium-ion battery fires are effectively managed and that the sector is equipped to handle the increasing challenges associated with these hazardous materials. These initiatives are part of a broader commitment to fostering a safer, more sustainable waste management environment across the state.





## Fire & Rescue NSW

WCRA has been working closely with Fire Rescue NSW (FRNSW) to address the rising threat of lithium-ion battery fires within the waste management sector. A key component of this collaboration is FRNSW's **SARET** (Safety of Alternative Renewable Energy Technologies) program. The SARET program is designed to respond specifically to fire incidents involving renewable energy technologies, including lithium-ion batteries, which have become a prevalent hazard in the waste and recycling industry. These fires are particularly challenging due to the volatile nature of the materials involved, requiring specialized knowledge and equipment to manage effectively.

WCRA's involvement with FRNSW and the SARET program includes advocating for industry-wide awareness and preparedness regarding the safe handling, storage, and disposal of lithium-ion batteries. Additionally, WCRA is actively lobbying for increased government support to further enhance industry safety standards and ensure that the resources needed for effective battery fire prevention and response are accessible across the sector. This partnership is a crucial step in reducing the incidence and impact of battery-related fires, which pose significant risks to both the industry and the broader community.



*Fire & Rescue NSW presenting at the WCRA breakfast briefing about the prevalence and dangers of lithium ion batteries*

## WCRA and SafeWork NSW Collaboration on Code of Practice for Solid Waste Collection

WCRA has been actively working alongside SafeWork NSW to update the Domestic Code of Practice for Waste Collection, now titled the **Code of Practice for Solid Waste Collection**. This comprehensive revision reflects the evolving nature of waste management, ensuring the latest industry standards and best practices are incorporated to enhance safety for all stakeholders involved in waste collection processes. The updated Code emphasises safety measures for workers, drivers, and the public, while addressing new challenges and technologies in the industry. WCRA is proud to contribute to a safer, more efficient waste collection environment across NSW.

## Transport for NSW / NHVR

NHVR delivered the Waste and Recycling Industry Code of Practice, 3 years in the making and the final product really showcases the amount of work that went into creating the document. The Code is a fine example of regulators and industry working together to create meaningful change and support. You can download a PDF from the NHVR website, if you would like a printed copy, reach out to [memberservices@wcra.com.au](mailto:memberservices@wcra.com.au)

At this year's Industry Conference Dinner, NHVR were not only the main sponsor of the dinner, but also sponsors of the Outstanding Driver Award. The award recognises an individual Driver that has exceptional safety standards and a proven track record of professional driving and exceptional safety. After reviewing the submission, we decided to award not 1, but 2 drivers with this award and highlight their amazing achievements. Georgia Ebsary – ResourceCo and Steve Dove – Bathurst Regional Council were the two lucky recipients of the WCRA Outstanding Driver Award 2024

The 2023 Safety Summit was heavily attended by NHVR, once again highlighting their dedication to promoting safety within this industry, but also supporting industry to ensure the best outcomes are achieved. NHVR were on hand to present at the summit and had an education display table throughout the event.

WCRA met with T4NSW on numerous occasions around issues with over height vehicles, and the importance of recycled content in large procurement projects to the circular economy and the promotion of recycled products.



*Craig Minns – NHVR – Updating Industry on the NHVR's Code of Practice*

# Waste management challenges & opportunities

For 2024, many of the key waste management challenges identified last year continue to persist, but new opportunities and evolving issues are also coming to the forefront. Here's an updated version of the **Waste Management Challenges & Opportunities for 2024** based on trends and developments in the industry:

## Challenges:

1. **Federal Restrictions on Waste Exports:** The restrictions on exporting unprocessed recyclables remain a major issue, requiring investment in domestic processing capabilities and innovation in recycling technologies.
2. **Fire Safety Risks & Compliance (Lithium-ion Batteries):** Lithium-ion battery fires are escalating, driving up insurance costs and operational risks for waste facilities. Strengthened safety standards and regulations are essential. WCRA's work with Fire Rescue NSW and the government highlights the need for stricter measures and accountability for illegal disposals, alongside viable solutions for safe disposal and recycling.
3. **Rising Costs of Insurance for the Waste Sector:** Insurance premiums are continuing to rise for operators in the waste industry due to increased fire risks and regulatory pressures, making it challenging for companies to secure coverage or remain viable.
4. **NSW Energy from Waste Regulations:** The current regulations governing Energy from Waste projects present both economic and environmental challenges, particularly regarding the viability and development of necessary infrastructure.
5. **Infrastructure Gaps:** There is still no comprehensive, implementable waste management infrastructure plan for NSW, which is essential to address the increasing volumes of waste and the need for sustainable resource recovery solutions.
6. **Disaster Waste Management:** A practical and well-thought-out disaster waste management plan is still lacking in NSW. This is particularly important in the face of natural disasters like bushfires and floods, where waste management becomes a critical component of recovery.
7. **Environmental Protection Licensing (EPL) Compliance:** Many waste and recycling businesses in NSW continue to operate without an Environmental Protection Licence (EPL). The NSW EPA's inability to consistently enforce licensing and compliance remains a key challenge in the sector.
8. **Asbestos in Construction & Demolition Waste:** Asbestos contamination in C&D waste remains challenging, impacted by zero tolerance policies, detection difficulties, and a lack of strong due diligence defences for operators. Ongoing collaboration with the Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer aims to improve safe handling and disposal practices.
9. **NSW Resource Recovery Framework:** The implementation of recommendations from the independent review of the NSW resource recovery framework by Dr. Cathy Wilkinson remains a work in progress. WCRA continues to engage with the EPA and NSW Government to ensure these recommendations translate into effective policy reforms.

## Opportunities:

1. **Circular Economy Innovation:** As the waste sector faces pressure from export restrictions and rising costs, there is an increasing opportunity to focus on circular economy solutions. This includes promoting product stewardship, enhancing domestic recycling capabilities, and driving innovation in resource recovery technologies.
2. **Government and Private Sector Collaboration:** There are significant opportunities to work closely with government bodies and the private sector to secure funding and support for developing waste management infrastructure, especially in regional areas that are underserved.
3. **Public Education & Battery Collection Schemes:** Expanding public education campaigns on proper disposal methods for hazardous materials, particularly lithium-ion batteries, presents an opportunity to reduce fire risks and illegal dumping. Government assistance in scaling these campaigns can foster safer practices.
4. **Technological Advancements:** There is growing potential for advancements in waste management technology, including AI-driven sorting systems, battery detection technologies, and improved fire suppression systems in waste facilities. Embracing these innovations will help the industry meet evolving challenges.
5. **Reforming EPL Enforcement:** Improving regulatory enforcement of EPL requirements can not only enhance environmental protections but also create a level playing field for businesses that comply with the regulations, driving higher standards across the sector.
6. **Infrastructure Investment:** The impending infrastructure cliff in NSW by 2030 highlights an urgent need to streamline planning approvals and increase investment in waste processing facilities, particularly for organic waste (FOGO) and resource recovery plants.
7. **Policy Reform and Implementation:** The successful implementation of the NSW resource recovery framework reforms, including the recommendations from the independent review, could drive significant improvements in the sector. There is an opportunity for WCRA to continue shaping these reforms by working closely with the EPA and government agencies.

## Conferences and Presentations

### Dangerous Goods Conference

Brett Lemin presented at the Australasian Dangerous Goods Conference in February 2024 on the emerging dangerous of Lithium-Ion Batteries in the Waste and Recycling Sector. The presentation took attendees on a journey through the prevalence of these items in our sector and the escalating risks that they are posing.

### Coffs Waste Conference

Brett Lemin was invited up to the Coffs Waste Conference to represent WCRA and talk about Infrastructure Hurdles, and how to overcome barriers to progress. The session was well attending including senior EPA NSW representatives.



*Brett Lemin and industry legend Ray Peterson enjoying the Conference Dinner at Coffs Harbour*

### AWRE

The Australian Waste and Recycling Expo (AWRE) was held in Darling Harbour in July 2023. A number of WCRA Members presented at the AWRE summit across the two days. WCRA & AWRE have signed a three-year partnership agreement through to August 2025.



*Brett Lemin presenting at the AWRE Summit 2023*

## Corporate relationships

### ACOR

Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR) Led by CEO Suzanne Toumbourou is the peak national industry recycling association. WCRA continues to work with ACOR on matters of joint interest, in particular the concerns relating to fires from batteries, scrap metal, export bans on recycling and resource recovery issues.

### WMRR

WCRA maintains a strong working relationship with the Waste Management & Resource Recovery Association of Australia (WMRR). WMRR, under the leadership of **Gayle Sloan**, is a prominent advocate for the industry. We collaborate closely with the C&D (Construction & Demolition) Waste Group, chaired by **Jason Sweeney**, and both associations have been working closely to overturn the local government amendment act.

### NWRIC

WCRA is the NSW and ACT Affiliate of the National Waste & Recycling Industry Council (NWRIC), which is led by CEO Rick Ralph. Membership of the Council is restricted to organisations with national operations. The current Council members are:- Cleanaway, Veolia, JJ Richards, Resource Co, Sims, Sell & Parker and Solo. State and Territory Associations represented at Council meetings as observers are: WRIQ, WRINT, WRIWA, WRISA, VWMA and WCRA. Council meetings are conducted throughout the year with venues alternating to different state capitals. WCRA's involvement in NWRIC is an opportunity to progress contentious and national issues. This involvement with NWRIC maximises the potential for better communication across all Australian jurisdictions. It should be noted that NWRIC competes with WMRR.

### AORA

Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA), WCRA collaborates with AORA led by John McKew on matters of joint interest including the NSW Resource Recovery Orders and Exemptions and the roll out of mandated FOGO.

### VWMA

Victorian Waste Management Association (VMWA), led by Executive Officer Mark Smith, and WCRA continue to enjoy a close relationship and work together on several matters including resource recovery, transport, environmental training and stockpile management training and battery fires.

### WRIQ

Waste Recycling Industry Queensland (WRIQ) led by CEO Alison Price and WCRA maintain a strong working relationship. WRIQ is still leading the national project on a code of practise for load management as it is rolled out across the country and is doing some amazing advocacy in the battery fire space.

### WRIWA

Waste Recycling Industry Western Australia is led by Mike Bobrowicz and WCRA maintain a strong working relationship. Collaborating on a range of issues including batteries and waste to energy promotion.





## WRISA/NT

Waste Recycling Industry South Australia and Northern Territory is led by Adam Gray and WCRA maintain a strong working relationship. Collaborating on a range of issues including batteries and training initiatives.

## WRAPA

Waste Recycling and Processors Association of Victoria led by Ken Dickens and WCRA continue to enjoy a close relationship and work together on several matters including resource recovery, transport, environmental training, and battery fires.

## ALOA

Australian Landfill Owners Association (ALOA) led by Chair Daniel Fyfe and WCRA collaborate on matters of mutual benefit to our Members as and when they arise.

## Other Organisations

WCRA collaborates and cooperates with a large number of organisations whose interests and expertise are relevant, including -:

- Local Government NSW
- Asbestos Diseases Foundation
- The Total Environment Centre
- Clean Up Australia
- Keep Australia Beautiful NSW
- Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation

# Groups

Within WCRA there are a number of single-sector, industry or regional sub-groups. Meetings and workshops for these groups are scheduled and facilitated by WCRA and reported in the WCRA Executive monthly meetings. Looking into the future we are looking to revive the working groups and also expand into relative topics such as FOGO as it becomes mandatory across the state.

All WCRA group members must agree to:

- ✓ *Maintain ethics and treat each other's contributions with respect.*
- ✓ *Not to share commercially sensitive information and, if received, such information to not be shared outside of the group.*
- ✓ *When sharing agreed information outside of the group (such as lessons learnt from an incident/ event) that best efforts are made to maintain the privacy / confidentiality of the people/ businesses involved.*

## Work Health and Safety Group

The WCRA WHS Group met bi-monthly throughout 2023/2024 via Zoom with the following charter.

*The WCRA WHS Group is a forum for advancing health and safety in the industry.*

Mr. Gregg Frost, State Inspector with SafeWork NSW, presented at all meetings, providing valuable updates on SafeWork NSW initiatives and resources, including a focus on bullying and harassment and access to online training tools.

Mr. Scott Knowles, Stakeholder Engagement Officer with NHVR Sydney, is a regular on our Working Group Agenda, keeping attendees informed on NHVR activities. Key topics included NHVR's regulatory advice on Local Government as a CoR party, open information days for councils, and new over-height truck brochures available in multiple languages on their website. Lithium-ion battery fire risk was discussed throughout the year. Members provided WCRA with data detailing the frequency of fires, incidents & explosions potentially caused by lithium-ion batteries. This data has been collated and populated into a spreadsheet maintained by WCRA Projects.

Driver shortages and especially experienced industry drivers, fire risks and potential fire preventative and monitoring equipment, people sleeping in Front lift bins, operational incidents plus learnings from investigations were some of the items consistently discussed and information discussed and shared at the meetings.

WCRA represented the industry working on the CoR Competency Units TLIF0009Y and TLIF0014Y with Industry Skills Australia. Review included representatives from various Transport Industry Leading organisations from both operational, safety and training segments. The review was completed during the year and endorsed by the Industry Skills Ministers in June 2024.

## WCRA ACT GROUP

ACT had many tenders issued during this period, the group was very conscious and careful of not voiding any probity issues, whilst still tackling some big issues across the territory.

- ACT waste management & transport regulatory changes, on-line transporter reporting & future training. Detailed by ACT NO Waste
- ACT circular economy considerations, purchasing policies of Government need to specify Australian Recycled content / export bans unhelpful in achieving CE objectives
- ACT MRF development. A priority tender for ACT with recycling being transported to Melbourne & Sydney, likely location will be Hume.
- FOGO update, concerns expressed about the use of EV trucks (limited collection capacity before re-charging will result in more trucks)
- CDS update, review underway by ACT Government
- Industrial relations updates
- Batteries we discuss in detailed, especially concerns with frequency of fires & need for education of residents (the dangers & proper disposal).
- Waste from Sydney being transported into Canberra, is it recycling? Or is NSW waste levy avoidance?

## Liquid & Hazardous Waste Group

The Liquid and Hazardous Waste group continued to work closely with Sydney Water to ensure that the industry and regulator worked together to tackle emerging issues. Some of the discussions and issues tackled included:

- **Washdown water excluded from pay load.** Grease trap size declared by Sydney Water doesn't account for ~10% wash down water content. Wash down is a SW requirement; it helps eliminate blockages & overflows. And wash down is part of the Code of Practice.
- **Change of grease trap waste transporter form.** The Grease trap Waste Transporter form was updated with consultation from WCRA members to help streamline the process.
- **Installation requirements for grease traps** WCRA members and Sydney Water worked together to workshop reforms to the design elements for the installation of grease traps. The group covered a range of issues such as height, lids, general WHS issues, public liability, etc.
- **Code of practice.** The current code of practice for liquid waste collection is quite old and out of date, Sydney Water at the Liquid group have started the process of getting the Code updated.

## Construction and Demolition Group

WCRA's Construction and Demolition group has been very active this year with a large focus being placed on the industry particularly around asbestos detection and management as well as rejected loads tracking.

- **Managing Asbestos Waste.** The group explored managing unexpected finds of asbestos in construction and demolition waste and the need for further upstream management of asbestos waste, and a review classification of material. The group have been working with the EPA to update the definition of asbestos waste and legislative regime across NSW.
- **Waste Classification.** The Resource Recovery Framework is currently under review, the C&D group have been advocating for changes to help drive the circular economy and implement a risk based approach to contamination and classification.
- **Rejected Loads Register**  
EPA and industry have been working closely together on the requirements and need for a rejected loads register for contaminated C&D waste to better understand and regulate what is happening to contaminated materials.
- **Regulatory.** The group have also been discussing whether the EPA has the right regulatory tools to effectively deal with rogue, non-compliant operators, there are some common themes between them including No EPL, no DA to receive waste, non-approved, non-licensed, this also extended the discussion into whether the current EPL license thresholds are set at the correct minimum level.

## Scrap Metal Group

The WCRA Scrap Metal group spent time this year on numerous matters including the following:

**Over height:** The WCRA Scrap Metal group spent time this year with Transport for NSW and NHVR exploring issues with over height vehicles and the implementation of NHVR's new Code of Practice for the Waste and Recycling industry. During these Discussions the group and regulators was hosted by Infrabuild to help provide the regulators a better understanding of the process of recovering, processing, loading and transporting various products.

**Cash for Scrap:** The group have also been very vocal in advocating for the revocation of the Cash for Scrap ban, as without proper enforcement it has been a failure, driving more material underground to operators illegally offering "Cash for Scrap" despite the bans.

**Levy exemption:** The group campaigned successfully for the NSW Government to extend the levy exemptions for the scrap metal industry for an additional 12 months. This extension aims to support recycling and waste reduction efforts by alleviating the financial burden on scrap metal processors. The exemptions can reduce levy payments by up to 25%, providing significant cost savings to businesses that comply with the regulatory requirements. This initiative not only encourages proper scrap metal recycling practices but also aligns with broader goals of promoting resource recovery and environmental sustainability in the state

## Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) GROUP

WCRA's MRF group tackles a whole range of issues, they can be subject to multiple regulators from multiple jurisdictions including federal and interstate. Some of the discussions that were had include:

- **Batteries:** WCRA's MRF Group continues to work on the battery crisis that is gripping our industry, working closely with WCRA's leadership, WCRA is at the forefront of the battery discussion with regulators not only in NSW but across the country.
- **CDS updates:** WCRA has been at the forefront of the discussion around the expansion of the CDS scheme in NSW. Whilst no decision has currently been made for the expansion in NSW, rest assured WCRA will be working closely with all stakeholders.
- **CDS GST:** WCRA and its MRF members are of the firm belief that the CDS payments made to MRF's should be GST free. WCRA and the team at Ryan Tax have been working closely with the ATO to get a resolution to whether GST does apply to these payments.
- **Export Bans:** Earlier this year the federal government proposed an export levy on recycled paper and cardboard. This \$4.00pt levy would have further impeded the industry's ability to compete on the global commodities market. WCRA teamed up with NWRIC, ACOR and the other state associations to successfully get the proposed levy scrapped.

## Industrial Relations GROUP

WCRA's IR group closely monitors and discusses pressing issues in the field of industrial relations and Human Resources. This year we have seen numerous challenges in the IR/HR space especially with the continued labour shortage across the industry. Some of the issues we tackled this year include:

- **Local government amendment act:** December 2023 saw the NSW labour government implement an amendment to the Local Government Act for waste tenders. These amendments were created and implemented without any consultation with local government nor the industry and have serious ramifications for Local Government tenders. WCRA has been working closely with LGNSW and other relative stakeholders to try and get these amendments repealed and proper consultation to take place.
- **Right to disconnect:** 23/24 saw the introduction of the "right to disconnect" laws aim to provide employees with the ability to disconnect from work outside of their designated hours without facing negative consequences. The goal is to promote mental well-being and reduce burnout by respecting employees' boundaries and downtime.
- **Award Rate increase:** The Fair Work Commission has announced a 3.75% increase to the minimum wage rates under the Waste Management Award, effective from July 1, 2024. This adjustment is part of the broader annual wage review, which aims to keep wage standards in line with living costs and inflation. The increase is intended to ensure that employees in the waste and recycling sector receive fair compensation, reflecting the rising cost of living pressures. The revised rates are expected to provide better financial support for workers while maintaining a fair minimum wage across the industry

## Standards Australia – MGBs and Mobile Bin Lifting Equipment

In mid-2020 the Technical Committee was established for a review of the Mobile Waste Container Standard along with an additional part (8) for mobile bin lifters began to take shape. In February 2021 WCRA, WMRR and Australian Industry Group representatives agreed on the 15 stakeholder organisations to be consulted.

Representatives included those experienced in the design and manufacture of both the waste containers and container Lifting Equipment. In the review of AS4123.1 to AS4123.7. Standards Australia Technical Committee PL-047 including the nominated industry representatives met on several occasions throughout 2023/2024 reviewing parts 1 to 7 and drafting part 8. The Technical Committee recommendations were scheduled to be as completed and presented for public comment in the third quarter of 2024.

## Industry Skills Australia – Review of Chain of Responsibility Units of Competency TLIF0009Y and TLIF0014Y

During 2023/24 WCRA was a member of the TLI Chain of Responsibility Regulatory Revision Project Technical Committee which was established for the review of Units of Competency TLIF0009Y Ensure the safety of transport activities (Chain of Responsibility) and TLIF0014Y Monitor the safety of transport activities (Chain of Responsibility). The Committee started its consultation review process on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec 2023. The Committee met monthly and the review process was completed in March 2024 and presented for public comment.

Documentation was finalised and submitted to the State/ Territory Skills Ministers with the expected sign off due by end of June. Endorsement by the State/Territory Skills ministers was received and updated documents scheduled for uploading on the [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au) site by 16 July 2024.

Representatives of the Technical Committee included experienced transport Operations and Safety members plus Accredited trainers of Chain of Responsibility Competency Units.



## WCRA working with NSW EPA to better understand C & I organics

In 2023/2024 WCRA again conducted a C&I Food Organics Survey on behalf of the EPA for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year of our existing agreement.

WCRA received a 94.15% response rate (161 of 171) for the survey.

Many Members were reluctant to share their data due to its commercial sensitivity. Through both professional and personal relationships, WCRA was able to use its influence on secure significant member input. Telephone interviews proved the most effective method of data collection. Being able to personally assure the Members that all data will be anonymised and aggregated was key to our success.

As in the past, a sample week was nominated by the EPA and responses obtained on that week activity only. Findings were the total number of premises provided with a C&I food waste recycling collection service during the sample week was 2,724. The total number of individual postcodes of the premises provided with a C&I food waste recycling collection service during the sample week was 236. The total number of trucks used for more than 10 hours to collect C&I food waste recycling during the sample week was 26. The total number of premises provided with a mixed putrescible C&I waste collection service which was landfilled during the sample week was 63,674.

FOGO services need to be cost effective



## Functions and Events

The latest calendar of events is available and can be viewed at [www.wcra.com.au](http://www.wcra.com.au)

### WCRA Annual Dinner and Awards night – 24 November 2023

The very popular WCRA Annual Dinner was held on 24 November 2023 at the Novotel Sydney Olympic Park, with more than 200 guests in attendance.

**The Work Health and Safety Award**, sponsored by TWU Super, was awarded to Sell & Parker. Sell & Parker installed Thermal cameras around the site to monitor their stockpiles. The cameras offer two distinct settings. Thermal A provides a real time view with hotspots identified by location and temperature reading which aids in the quick identification of potential risks before visible smoke or flames emerge. Thermal B uses greyscale to identify both hotspots and warm spots for early detection.

Sell & Parker integrated this thermal detection with a phone app which sends notifications directly to designated First Responders. These notifications include a photo with the alert and are also sent via email.

Sell & Parker also enabled remote viewing of these cameras and the ability to remotely operate water cannons.

**The President's Award**, sponsored by Gallagher, was awarded by Mark Bramley to Sutherland Shire Council. The Council developed a Truck Fire Campaign "Do your part and fires won't start".

Council developed a campaign around direct images on the consequences of truck fires which were used:

- On all social media channels and the Sutherland Leader including outdoor cinema
- High visibility bus shelters throughout the LGA
- Truck wraps
- Rates mail out and Councils website
- Education videos - animated and live footage from our trucks

**The Youth in Waste & Recycling Awards**, sponsored by Bucher Municipal, was jointly awarded to Dane McKay from Veolia and Jake Davis from Wanless. The awards were presented by Darren Gear of Bucher and inaugural award winners Hannah Partland from iQRenew & Nina Ho also from iQRenew.



*Youth in Waste Award winners proudly sponsored by Bucher at the 2023 Annual Dinner Jake Davis of Wanless and Dane McKay of Veolia*



*The President's Award winner for 2023 proudly sponsored by Gallagher was Sutherland Shire Council*

## Functions and Events (cont'd)

### Industry Update Conference – June 2024

This annual event was held at the Kirribilli Club on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024. 150 delegates attended the update sessions followed by the WCRA dinner with over 111 guests in attendance.

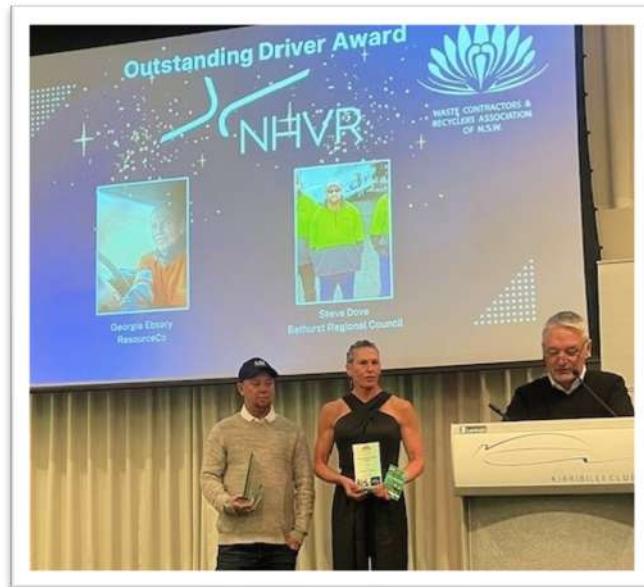
The update session presentations included:

- Suzanne Toumbouru of ACOR Battery Fires in Waste & Recycling Survey summary briefing
- Alex Townsend of Choice Energy on How to Tackle High Business Energy Prices in 2024
- Station Officer Daniel O'Dea of NSW Fire + Rescue on Battery and Waste Fires in NSW
- Mark Bramley of Gallagher spoke on Product Recall Insurance
- Samantha O'Callaghan of HIBBS spoke on Asbestos, "What are the Risks?"
- Andrew Hollier of iCare spoke about NSW Workers Insurance Scheme
- Emma Watson and Jennifer Rotili from NHVR spoke about the NHVR Investigations Unit overview and the Waste & Recycling Industry Code of Practice
- Gregg Frost of SafeWork NSW spoke about machinery safety, Lithium batteries and psychological safety
- Tony Chappel CEO, NSW EPA spoke to NSW Infrastructure Plan & the transition to a circular economy
- Sarah Larkin of NSW EPA spoke to a Review of the NSW Waste Levy
- Edward Smith CIO TWUSUPER spoke to who is TWUSUPER and their investment strategy including in the Waste Industry
- Reid Gibson from CJD Equipment video on national distribution of construction equipment and equipment
- Jay Clowes & Ross Fox of Fishburn Watson O'Brien spoke to updates in Employment Law and POEO Offences update
- James Hammond CEO 4 Pillars spoke about "Complying Development for innovative recycling"
- Mick Veitch spoke about Counsel House and importance of engagement and art of lobbying
- Tim Blackstock of Velocity Truck Centres spoke to Mercedes E – Truck launches in Australia
- Andrew Mitchell, ADE Consulting on 'Living with PFAS'
- Michael Bates, AMCS on Wastedge "Digital ways to a cleaner world"
- Phil Brooks spoke to Driving trends and Roadside Observations
- Angelo Dellis, Green Goanna spoke about their Bio Oils and reducing potential harm to the planet
- Chris Sant of Ryan Tax spoke about GST on the Waste Levy & CDS



Following the very informative presentations we had the privilege of hearing from the Shadow Minister for Environment Kellie Sloane whose talk was welcomed by all.

On the night, thanks to the sponsorship of NHVR, we were able to present an Industry Outstanding Driver Award to both Steven Dove from Bathurst Regional Council and Georgia Ebsary from ResourceCo.



It was an enjoyable night for those in the industry to mingle with others they have not seen for some time over a meal and drinks and have a few laughs with the comedian Chris Radburn who was the entertainment on the night.







WCRA Industry Update held in June 2024 at Kirribilli Club

## Breakfast Briefings

Ms Nancy Chang, Executive Director Strategy and Policy, NSW EPA addressed 118 Members, Sponsors & other Stakeholders on 14 November 2023 with a presentation on the following:

- Lithium-ion battery fires & impacts on waste & recycling infrastructure. What is the EPA doing to assist?
- Waste levy review update
- Resource recovery framework review update
- Plastics discussion paper
- The new Integrated Waste Tracking Solution for hazardous & other regulated wastes (short update)

Mr Romesh Rodrigo, Head of Vehicle Homologation, Regulatory Affairs & Future Mobility, Daimler Trucks also spoke at the 14 November 2023 session spoke on the following:

- What are some of the challenges for the waste industry with zero-emission vehicles?
- Technology on offer in the near future including hydrogen fuelled trucks.
- What do we need to support the transition of this industry?
- Key policy drivers and framework

On 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024, WCRA held another Breakfast Briefing at Dooleys Lidcombe. Presenters on the day to 83 attendees included Ms Kim Thai, Senior Research Officer & Mr Daniel O'Dea, Station Officer, Fire & Rescue NSW and Mr Jay Clowes, Fishburn Watson O'Brien Lawyers.

Mr Jay Clowes discussed the Local Government Tendering changes including what they are and the associated problems including ratchet on wages, incumbent service providers gaining a competitive advantage and that it is expected that council contracts will begin including clauses requiring contractors to provide employee information to enable the regulation to apply. What can we do? Lobby Government and politicians, legally challenge the validity of the regulation or don't agree to contract terms that require release of information.

Both Kim and Daniel spoke about Battery and Waste Fires in NSW. They discussed current Lithium-ion battery applications, projected sales of Lithium-ion batteries until 2050, Lithium Battery data and associated risks and hazards from Lithium Battery Fires.

## Functions and Events (cont'd)

### WCRA Golf Day

The Ron Horswell Memorial WCRA Golf Challenge was held for the twelfth time on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at Cabramatta Golf Course. Again, a great roll up with 95 players for one of our most popular events. Members, Sponsors and their Guests enjoyed a wonderful day and spectacular weather. The four ball Ambrose format is a popular event, with the winning team in 2023 being the JJ Richards team of Ray Peterson, Monique Bachtis, Wayne O'Connor and Brad Forbes with a nett 44.75





## Functions and Events (cont'd)

### Long Serving Members Luncheon

The annual luncheon for Long Serving Members from across the waste management industry was held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at Dooleys Lidcombe. This is a very popular and well attended get-together. It is always great to see and hear stories of past memories with our Long Serving Members.

Was also good to see a roll up of both men and women from the past that all contributed to forging the industry that we know of today.

Brett gave a run down on major challenges the industry has been facing over the past 12 months and also paid umbrage to Tony Khoury for his efforts with WCRA being 21 years and plus his time prior in the Industry. We look forward to the next years catch up.

### Harness Racing, WCRA Sponsor's Night

This annual event was held at the Penrith Harness track on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 with 85 Members, Sponsors and their Guests. The 8 races were named after Sponsors of WCRA, who receive national publicity across the media, pubs, clubs and betting outlets. The second chance prize barrel was overflowing with losing betting tickets but a great night was had by all.

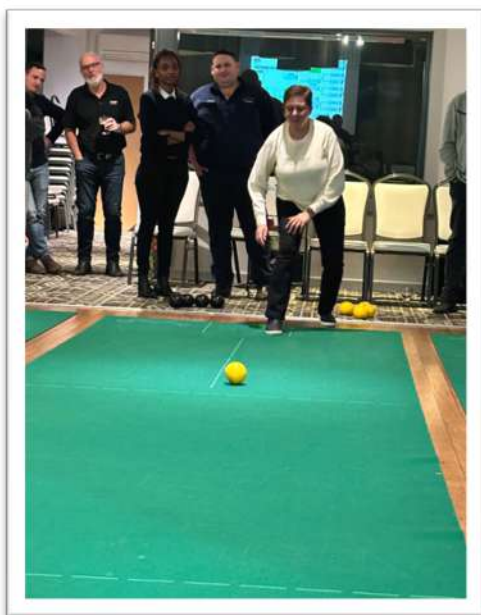


## Barefoot Bowls 1 May 2024, WCRA Sponsor's Night

It was excellent to see a good roll up of 40 players on a very very wet night at the inaugural Barefoot Bowls event that was held at the Dooleys Regent St Pavilion Lawn Bowling facility. We were in luck that the Dooleys team and their forward thinking set us up for indoor bowls on the night due to the terrible weather. The night was enjoyed by all. There was even talk amongst players that we should consider a State of Origin with other State members champions fighting off for the Kings of Oz. This event is a must for all as great networking and some friendly competition thrown in for good measure.



And then there were the two teams in the final play off. JR Richards led by Bijal, and the ORG/Express Waste team led by Jimmy McBurney



The winning form of a winner in Bijal the captain of JR Richards inaugural winners' team plus Bijal's team including the Vice Captain and always smiling Kevin Song



## Safety Summit 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Sponsored by SafeWork NSW

In 2023 WCRA held its Safety Summit at Dooleys Club, Regents Park.

We had 102 attendees on the day enjoy presentations on the following:

- WCRA on their Member Services offering, SafeWork NSW talk to
- Emerging Safety Technologies - IQ Renew & Bingo
- Stockpile Management - Circular Resources
- Australia Injury Management - Gallagher
- Emerging Drug and Alcohol Trends - Work Options
- Battery and Waste Fire updates - Fire Services NSW
- Waste Code of Practice - NHVR
- Safe Work Practices - SafeWork NSW
- Workers Compensation - iCare



## WCRA Premises

WCRA's Wetherill Park premises serve as a central hub for the organization's operations and member services. Located strategically within the industrial heart of Western Sydney, this facility provides a dynamic space that supports WCRA's ongoing commitment to the waste and recycling industry. The premises house the administrative offices and meeting rooms, enabling staff to coordinate training sessions, conduct industry briefings, and host discussions with members and stakeholders. It also serves as a venue for events and workshops that foster collaboration between waste contractors, regulators, and industry partners, focusing on safety standards, compliance, and innovative solutions for waste management challenges.

The Wetherill Park location underscores WCRA's dedication to being accessible and responsive to its members and the broader waste and recycling community in NSW.

If you are in the area, please stop by and try out the new coffee machine, fuelling the productivity!



## **Brett Lemin, Executive Director at WCRA,**

The waste management sector remains one of the most essential services in New South Wales, providing vital support to households, businesses, and the environment. The 2023/24 financial year has been a period of significant transition, marked by my appointment as Executive Director following the long and dedicated tenure of Tony Khoury. With this transition, WCRA has embraced new opportunities to lead our members through a rapidly evolving regulatory landscape and to address emerging challenges with renewed energy and commitment.

### **Key Accomplishments:**

WCRA has led the way in addressing several pressing issues facing the industry. A key focus has been the growing problem of lithium-ion battery fires, with over 10,000 incidents occurring annually across Australia. These fires pose serious risks to both facilities and vehicle fleets, and WCRA has been at the forefront of industry efforts to mitigate these risks by advocating for better disposal practices and stronger safety protocols. Through collaboration with Fire Rescue NSW, insurers and industry, we are working towards securing safer operations for our members. We have provided some updated guidance documents for hot load procedures which are available for our members on our website, and we continue to develop and provide updated guidance.

The issue of asbestos contamination in the Construction and Demolition (C&D) sector has also been a priority. In collaboration with the EPA and industry stakeholders, WCRA has pushed for the development and implementation of stricter testing protocols and clearer guidelines to ensure asbestos is handled safely and responsibly. This will protect workers and communities, while improving operational safety standards.

### **Regulatory Reforms:**

This year, WCRA has continued its advocacy for reforms to the Local Government Amendment Act, with a focus on ensuring competitive and fair tendering processes for employers, while maintaining protections for employees. These reforms will provide a stronger framework for local governments to implement necessary changes to waste management practices, driving innovation and supporting the transition towards a circular economy.

WCRA has also been instrumental in industrial relations, particularly regarding iCare disputes. We've worked closely with members and iCare to resolve compensation disputes fairly and efficiently, ensuring that both employers and employees receive the outcomes they deserve.

### **Member Support & Growth:**

Our members remain at the heart of everything we do. Throughout FY23/24, WCRA has expanded its services to provide more comprehensive support, including driver assessments, Toolbox Talks on overhead wires, and tailored safety training programs. These initiatives have been well-received by our members, who value the professionalism, expertise, and practical solutions we deliver. Looking ahead, we are committed to continuing these vital services, while exploring new ways to support our members' success.

### Looking Ahead:

As we move into FY24/25, WCRA is excited to lead the waste and recycling industry towards a future defined by sustainability, safety, and innovation. The challenges we face—whether related to battery disposal, regulatory complexity, or infrastructure needs—are opportunities for growth, improvement, and collaboration. With the continued dedication of our members and the support of industry partners and government bodies, WCRA is positioned to be the driving force behind a safer, more efficient, and more sustainable waste management industry in NSW.

Together, we will ensure that the waste and recycling sector not only meets the demands of today but leads the way in building a circular economy for the future. Thank you to our members, sponsors, and stakeholders for your continued support and engagement. Your collaboration and commitment are what allow WCRA to remain the strong and influential organization it is today.





## WCRA's valued Sponsors FY23/24

We would like to thank our generous Sponsors for their continued support of the Association. Sponsors assist us to provide better services to our Members and to the industry. When seeking a product or a service, we encourage Members to please support our Sponsors by requesting a proposal for their product or service offering. Here is a link to the Sponsor's page on the WCRA website, <http://wcra.com.au/Partnership.html>



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