Local Government Association Tasmania

Our Ref: BM | LO'L

10 July 2026

Hon. Pam Allen
Chair
Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Board
Via email: Waste.Initiatives@nre.tas.gov.au;

Dear Pam

Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2026-2031

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the consultation draft of the Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2026-2031 (the Strategy). This submission has been prepared by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) on behalf of Tasmanian local government in collaboration with our member councils.

LGAT is incorporated under the *Local Government Act 1993* and is the representative body and advocate for local government in Tasmania. Where a council has made a direct submission to this process, any omission of specific comments made by that council in this submission should not be viewed as lack of support of that comment by LGAT.

We welcome the release of the consultation draft of the Strategy to continue our state's transformation, where all materials are valued for a more sustainable future. Tasmanian councils have been working together and with the State Government for a number of years to advance this agenda.

We are encouraged by the way the Waste and Resource Recovery Board has engaged with councils and with regional waste bodies. But much more remains to be done.

Please contact Ben Morris, Policy Director if you have any questions or would like further information, at ben.morris@lgat.tas.gov.au or 6146 3743.

Yours sincerely,

Dion Lester
Chief Executive Officer

LGAT Submission: Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2026-2031

Our response to the Strategy is informed by our sector's call to move beyond 'waste' and 'resource recovery' to a circular economy. At the 20 November 2026 LGAT General Meeting our member councils resolved:

That the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT):

1. *Recognises the circular economy as a key opportunity for Tasmania to reduce waste, strengthen regional economies, lower emissions, and increase community resilience through smarter use and reuse of materials and resources.*
2. *Advocates to the Tasmanian Government for the development and implementation of a Statewide Circular Economy Strategy, developed in consultation with local government, regional waste groups, industry, the community sector, and education and research institutions.*
3. *Encourages continued collaboration among Tasmanian councils and regional waste groups to:*
    - *Share best practices and resources for circular initiatives (e.g. reuse markets, repair hubs, community composting);*
    - *Identify and pursue joint procurement and regional partnerships that support circular outcomes;*
    - *Align local policies (e.g. waste, procurement, planning) with circular economy principles.*
4. *Calls on the Tasmanian Government to:*
    - *Provide continued funding, policy support, and incentives for local governments and regional waste groups to pilot and scale circular economy projects;*
    - *Ensure state infrastructure investment (e.g. waste and resource recovery facilities) supports circularity;*
    - *Support skills development and community education focused on repair, reuse, sustainable design, and local circular enterprise.*
5. *Requests LGAT to:*
    - *Request the Tasmanian Government compile and provide a publicly available material flow analysis for the State and each region to provide clear data to support public and private infrastructure investment in locations to maximise diversion and reuse in the Tasmanian economy.*

As the resolution highlights, a more circular economy would benefit our state by capturing materials that would boost regional economies, reduce emissions, and increase community resilience through better use and reuse of materials and resources.

There is much already happening in Tasmania around the circular economy, but because there is no central or coordinated action, much of the work is happening in isolation.

To progress our transition to a circular economy requires greater consideration of materials and their flows, resources, and consideration of regional economies.

The critical questions for Tasmania are:

1. Which sectors and value chains within local areas are ripe and relevant to strengthen our transition towards a circular economy; and
2. How do we connect our existing activities?

Currently, the Strategy does not provide the immediate actions towards answering these questions.

Specific Comments

Achievements, challenges and opportunities

In our engagement councils identified the following challenges in addition to those highlighted in the Strategy.

Materials

Councils identified that a better understanding of material availability, flows and opportunities are central to shifting to a circular economy. It is how we think about resource sustainability: do we think of waste as something to get rid of or things to be recycled, or do we think of the materials we need in our economy and arrange our systems around them?

Limited investment

The limited amount of funds available in Tasmania is a challenge and is likely to remain so. Councils further identified that it is difficult to attract private-sector investment in solutions, particularly when there is a poor understanding of material availability and flows, and lower dispersed volumes

Community engagement

It was noted that many in the community are not invested in resource recovery and sustainability. This makes separating materials for effective recovery much harder and mutes the market 'pull' for key materials, such as compost.

Councils also identified a number of regional opportunities, including:

- Expansion of the community education activities of ReThink Waste to industry engagement and support.
- Infrastructure planning and delivery to match regional or state demands for materials in the forms and locations that are most useful. This will help address the challenge of our small state in processing materials that are needed on island.
- Coordination of projects within regions and between regions so that councils and other partners can maximise the outcomes from investment.

Other opportunities that were identified:

- Targeted investment and incentives for priority water streams and materials, rather than spreading our limited resources across too many areas.
- Leveraging the land-use planning and building systems to ensure that resource-smart thinking is embedded in construction projects to minimise waste and maximise recovery.
- Continue to build on the data improvements that are fundamental to better understanding our material flows and opportunities.
- Support for government procurement of on-island-processed materials and other recycled products to provide market 'pull'.

Pillars and actions

The pillars were broadly supported and acknowledged as addressing the key areas. However, councils noted the following additions.

Pillar 1 – ensuring integrated planning and action

This is supported, noting the identification of local government and regional waste groups. Materials, their flows and markets, require considerable focus in the Strategy. This is a key action under the action plan and needs to be given high priority. While we support improved product stewardship, the Federal Government must lead in this area, given our limited jurisdiction. This is a complex area with high resource needs.

Pillar 2 – investing strategically

Councils identified attention to market development (supported by Action 1.2 material flows), strategic investment planning, and organics as critical activities. Investment must be targeted at priority materials and streams. For example, reuse and repair are important parts of sustainability. However, they are likely to contribute less to our overall material flow than the construction and demolition sector.

Pillar 3 – strengthening engagement through leadership

The role of regional waste groups needs to be formally recognised as part of this leadership and as key to delivering on the Strategy's objectives. It is also important that, as part of this pillar, roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated to reduce the risk of duplication or limited effectiveness.

To support Tasmania's transition to a more circular economy the Board has important leadership role to play. This should not be limited to waste and resource recovery, but across broader government and industry. For example, engaging with the Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy (draft). This strategy has the vision of "A thriving and dynamic Tasmanian economy that creates opportunity for every region and every generation". How we use and re-use materials in our economy is critical to achieving this vision.

Priority waste streams, materials and products

The listed waste streams, materials and products is broad and complex. Councils support a reduced scope with deeper, more focused activities. Some of the higher priority areas include:

- Organic materials offer high impacts and substantial opportunities, especially for an economy heavily reliant on agriculture.
- Construction and demolition waste – a large stream that is highly recoverable.
- Commercial and industrial – also a large and to date untapped waste stream.

Other areas are important, but require different levels and types of work:

- Plastics are a much smaller part of the waste stream than those above and require careful consideration of material flows within and outside Tasmania, given the challenge posed by the variety of polymers.
- Textiles are similar to plastics in being a small part of the waste stream and require an understanding material flows. This material has seen a shift to ultra-fast fashion where the garments are not fit to be reused, nor to be downcycled to rags.
- Batteries and e-waste are important; both have product stewardship schemes in place, with the focus on providing information to the Federal Government and scheme administrators.

In closing, LGAT supports the intent of the Strategy and encourages the Board to strengthen its focus on coordinated action, clear roles, robust material-flow data and targeted investment in priority streams. With continued collaboration between the State Government, the Board, regional waste groups, councils and industry, Tasmania can move beyond waste management towards a practical circular economy that delivers lasting environmental, economic and community benefits.