



Department of
Environment

STATEMENT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SEPTEMBER 2004

vision & priorities



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WASTE MANAGEMENT IN
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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acknowledgments

A number of people have contributed to the development of this document.

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Department of Environment: Diane Dowdell, Michael Kerr, Robert Atkins, Emily Murray

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foreword

THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

With the release of the *Strategic Direction for Waste Management in Western Australia* discussion paper in late 2003, a review of past strategies and their implementation was undertaken. This was guided by the positive and constructive response received in the public consultation process.



In Western Australia, we have recognised that new approaches and systems are needed, both to reflect changing community attitudes, and to successfully manage the complexity within the range of different wastes that are now being generated within our society.

To effectively bring about positive change in the way we view and manage waste, a new strategic approach has been developed.

Through our new Strategic Direction, we will put a greater emphasis on reducing the generation of waste, while also making sure we encourage and support continued improvement in resource recovery and recycling, as well as the environmentally safe disposal of residual waste. We will do this by looking at the entire waste landscape.

This *Statement of Strategic Direction for Waste in Western Australia: Vision and Priorities* outlines this new approach. It uses the insights gained from in previous management strategies and builds from them as we move *Towards Zero Waste*.

This Statement of Strategic Direction marks the next step towards a wider picture of sustainability in waste management. In the actions required to take this step, we will all have an important contributing role.

Through this Strategic Direction the Government seeks to encourage and support your involvement. Whether you are in business and industry, government, or the wider community, you have the opportunity to take an active role in creating measurable progress in the present, with a clear focus on the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Judy Edwards, MLA
Minister for the Environment

preface

CHAIR OF THE WASTE MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Waste Management Board has a key advisory role in maintaining an overview on the changing perspective of the Western Australian community in relation to waste and its management. The Board is supported in this role by the Department of Environment.



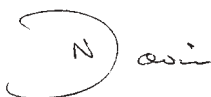
During the public consultation process on the new Strategic Direction, the Board and the Department received important submissions from local government, industry, the waste management sector, community groups, educators, specialists and many individuals on key issues. The issues which comments addressed included foundation principles, key measures, strategic priorities, waste categories and the roles of industry and the community in waste management.

This feedback provided the Board with important guidance and resulted in the Board significantly revising its strategic approach to make it more compatible with a business planning model. The approach finally adopted provides a suite of tools to assist the Board and the Department in establishing priorities for action and communicating these priorities to key stakeholders in the community.

This *Statement of Strategic Direction for Waste in Western Australia: Vision and Priorities* outlines the broad strategic framework and the fundamental principles that guide the Board's perspective on the new Strategic Direction for waste management in Western Australia. It affirms the *Towards Zero Waste* vision and our fundamental principle around waste avoidance at every stage of each product's lifecycle.

There will be extensive discussion with stakeholders on the Statement following its release and the Board envisages that the Statement will be reviewed on a regular basis to reflect the changing landscape of community attitudes, government policy and the availability of new technologies and information.

The Board is charged with leading and guiding a transition – from the current situation where the focus is on the 'management' of waste to a waste free society where the focus is on 'avoiding the creation of waste' and using resources sustainably. This transition will require a very significant change in community attitudes and behaviour and will only occur over a number of years. The Board believes that this Statement of Strategic Direction is the first step in achieving the necessary attitudinal and behaviour changes.

A handwritten signature in dark ink. The first part is a large, stylized letter 'N' enclosed in a circle. To the right of the circle, the name 'Noel' is written in a cursive script.

Mr Noel Davies
Chair of the Waste Management Board

contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
FOREWORD.....	iii
PREFACE	iv
CONTENTS.....	v
STATEMENT OF INTENT	vi
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 CONSULTATION PROCESS.....	2
3 VISION.....	2
4 GOAL.....	3
5 FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES.....	4
6 THE WAY FORWARD	5
7 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK	6
7.1 Strategic Approach	6
7.2 Measuring Success.....	6
7.3 Focus Areas	7
7.4 Project Priorities	7
7.5 Reporting and Consultation.....	8
8 PROGRAM PRIORITIES 2004-2007	9
8.1 Our Program Areas.....	9
8.1.1 Government	9
8.1.2 Business & Industry	10
8.1.3 Community.....	11
8.1.4 Strategy and Policy	11
8.1.5 Communications	12
9 REFERENCES.....	12
GLOSSARY	13



statement of intent

OUR VISION

TOWARDS ZERO WASTE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

OUR GOAL

THAT ALL WESTERN AUSTRALIANS LIVE IN

A WASTE FREE SOCIETY

OUR PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1: PREVENTION - TO AVOID THE
CREATION OF WASTE

PRINCIPLE 2: RECOVERY - TO EFFICIENTLY
RE-COVER, RE-TREAT AND RE-USE ALL WASTES

PRINCIPLE 3: DISPOSAL - TO RESPONSIBLY
MANAGE WASTE INTO THE ENVIRONMENT

1 introduction

Substantial quantities of waste are generated in our society every day. Over the past 50 years, the volumes of waste we produce have also increased considerably. Generally, these wastes are generated by activities that relate to our way of life.

Changes in community understanding and interest in our impact on the environment and the health of our community have changed the way we view the generation and management of waste.

In Western Australia, we have recognised that new approaches and systems are needed to reflect, not only community change, but also the complexity in the range of different wastes that are now being generated within our society.

In order to effectively bring about positive change in the way in which we view and manage waste, a new strategic approach has been developed. This new approach builds on strategic documents such as the *State Recycling Blueprint* and *Waste 2020 Report and Recommendations*. The consultation document *Strategic Direction for Waste Management in Western Australia* reassessed the focus of these two documents and provided an opportunity for the community to contribute to setting the direction.

This *Statement of Strategic Direction for Waste Management in Western Australia: Vision and Priorities* outlines the new approach, which draws on these three previous documents and sets out the framework and priorities for waste management in Western Australia for the next three years within the context of the broad vision and goal for the 15 years.

These earlier strategies set the foundation to enable us to make significant inroads into areas of waste that are of concern to our community. The Strategic Direction consultation document in particular will continue to be a base reference underpinning both this Statement and, more generally, strategic decision-making by the Waste Management Board, the Department of Environment and State Government.

2 consultation process

This strategic approach to reducing waste was developed after a comprehensive consultation process. The process included a number of information workshops held throughout the State and a call for public submissions. The document *Strategic Direction for Waste Management in Western Australia* was issued for public comment in September 2003.

The guidance provided by the Western Australian community has influenced both the setting of strategic direction and changes in the strategic approach to dealing with waste. The strategic direction and priorities outlined in this document have been developed with reference to the submissions received and the community response to the Strategic Direction consultation document.

The full details on the outcomes of the public consultation can be obtained from the Waste Management Board website (www.wastewa.com).

3 vision

The Vision of the Waste Management Board is that we move as a community:

TOWARDS ZERO WASTE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

This vision reflects the importance of striving for a result that will benefit all Western Australians. It also recognises the importance of ensuring that future generations are considered in the decisions that we make today.

This vision was outlined in the Strategic Direction consultation document. It is consistent with the State Sustainability Strategy and is aligned with the broad vision of the Department of Environment for "a healthy environment and sustainable use of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations".

4 goal

Our commitment to the Vision is translated in the primary goal that all Western Australians will live in a waste-free society. In order to achieve this goal, the approach of managing waste, which has predominated in past strategies, needs to change.

If we continue to simply manage wastes, we will never be able to achieve our goal of living in a waste free society and our vision of moving towards zero waste.

By preventing the creation of waste in the first place, we can reduce our reliance on managing the disposal of that waste. The prevention of waste must be our main focus.

Waste prevention is the active decision to anticipate where the generation of waste begins and to stop this from occurring.

Everyone in the community has a role in preventing waste. This includes being more efficient and effective in the use of resources and in the management of waste.

5 foundation principles

Currently, we do not live in a waste free society. We must also manage the wastes that are being created through recovery and responsible disposal.

Figure 1 shows the three areas in which we need to maintain a focus and these form our foundation waste management principles:

- prevention;
- recovery; and
- disposal.

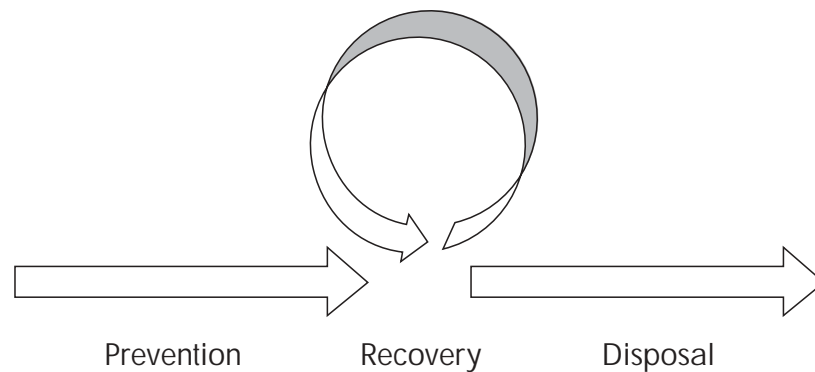


Figure 1: Waste Flow Diagram

Prevention is the avoidance of the creation of waste. Recovery is the treatment and management of waste for re-use through recycling and re-processing. Disposal is the responsible management of waste into the environment.

If we focus only on disposal it will become more difficult to protect the environment, and our quality of life, as waste creation increases. If we focus only on recovery, the resources needed to manage waste will continue to increase.

If we focus only on prevention, we will not effectively manage those wastes already being created. A focus on all three areas is required.

The application of these principles enables the management of wastes on a whole of lifecycle basis, while respecting the changing needs of society as a whole.

6 the way forward

Figure 2 illustrates our changing approach to waste as we move towards zero waste, through the application of our foundation principles and through our strategic initiatives. The diagram is a continuum that reflects the transition in waste management thinking as it applies to different types of wastes, all wastes in their entirety and our thinking as a whole community about waste.

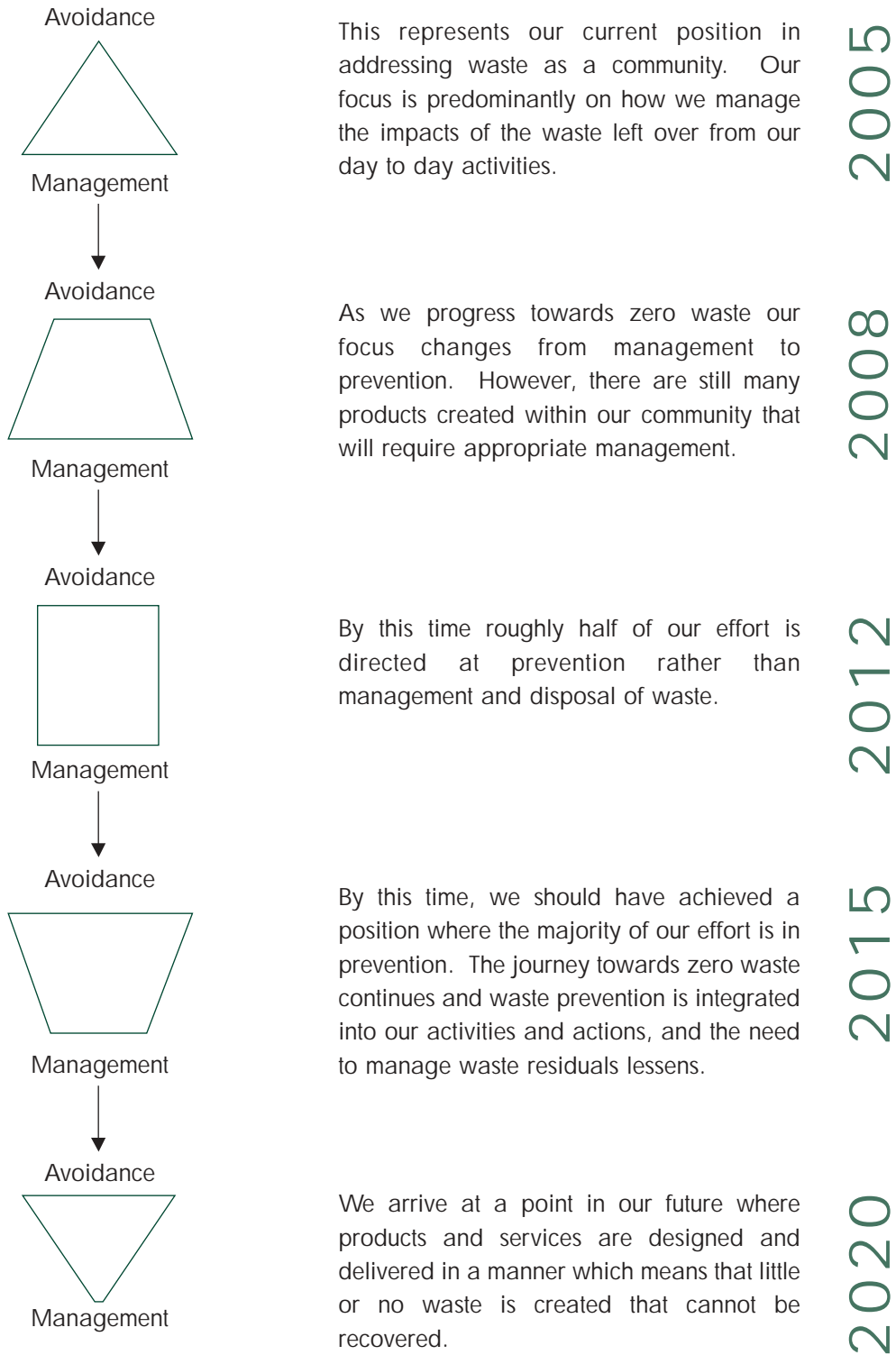


Figure 2: The path of transition towards zero waste and a waste-free society

7 strategic framework

The Waste Management Board has developed a framework to implement the strategic direction for waste management in Western Australia.

The strategic framework operates by looking at the entire waste landscape and then managing simultaneously at a number of levels, to provide a coherent and strategic approach. The framework operates at the following five levels:

- Strategic Approach;
- Measuring Success;
- Focus Areas;
- Project Priorities; and
- Reporting and Consultation.

7.1 Strategic Approach

The strategic approach adopted by the Government is to promote a shift away from solely focusing on reducing the amount of waste disposed to landfill towards the management of the whole lifecycle of every product and its wastes, from creation to disposal.

This approach is embodied in principles such as product stewardship, industrial ecology, environmental justice and product lifecycle management outlined in the Strategic Direction consultation document.

This is the only approach that will drive the transition from the management of waste to creating a waste free society.

7.2 Measuring Success

Consistent with the foundation principles of prevention, recovery and disposal, success is to be measured in each of these areas. The initial stage in measuring progress is to collect baseline data.

Success in prevention is measured by the increase in the proportion of a product that does not become a waste product.

Success in recovery is measured by the increase in the proportion of a waste product that is able to be reused/recycled.

Success in disposal is measured by the increase in the proportion of a waste product that on final disposal will not be harmful to the environment.

The avoidance of consumption or the reduction of the volume of products produced will be monitored, but not used as key measures. The focus instead will be on the prevention and management of wastes that are generated from those products.

7.3 Focus Areas

Using measures as indicators, the focus areas for strategic waste management are determined by looking at the lifecycles of all products and their wastes in our society as a whole.

A Matrix has been developed that looks at the entire landscape of products at each of the important stages in their lifecycle.

The Matrix helps to identify focus areas by answering two questions: "What is it?" – identifying the relevant 'product' and "Where is it?" – identifying the relevant 'holder' of the product in its lifecycle. For the purpose of identifying focus areas, a broad classification of wastes is used, based on the products and their lifecycles.

A focus area is one where there is a waste product accumulating which is not being prevented, which has few options for recovery and which is potentially harmful to the environment on disposal.

As we acquire more relevant data across the waste landscape, we will develop a greater ability to clearly define focus areas.

7.4 Project Priorities

Projects are created to eliminate waste in the focus areas by intervening at the appropriate point of the product lifecycle. The appropriate intervention point is the point at which it is considered the best result can be achieved to address a particular focus area and will often address the product or its waste at a different place from where the waste mostly is accumulating.

To be effective in doing this, projects may have an emphasis on actions that prevent waste and actions to increase waste recovery. In the interim at least, actions that enhance the responsible disposal of waste will also still be necessary. All options may be considered as important and the appropriate action is then selected from these options.

Project priority is determined based on the most efficient use of resources in the strategic lifecycle management of each product or its waste at a particular point in time.

7.5 Reporting and Consultation

An annual strategic planning cycle will determine the focus areas and project priorities for the coming year.

The Waste Management Board will approve the specific projects that will take the necessary action, aimed at the strategic intervention points, for the identified focus areas. Part of this annual process will also be the reporting of measures of success and the results of projects undertaken.

The involvement of the community and other stakeholders will be sought to provide both input into the process and to undertake strategic projects.

Further information on the strategic direction for waste in Western Australia is available at www.wastewa.com

Comments on this document or enquiries can be addressed to:

Waste Management Board

PO Box 6740

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EAST PERTH WA 6892

info@wastewa.com

8 program priorities

2004-07

Our shift in direction over the next three years will put a greater emphasis on projects that reduce the generation of waste (Prevention) while also making sure we encourage and support continued improvement in waste reuse, recycling reprocessing (Recovery) as well as environmentally safe disposal of residual waste (Disposal).

We want to ensure long-term sustainability is an integral focus in our approach, in line with the State Sustainability Strategy. Our new approach, therefore, will encourage and support changes to the design, production, consumption, recovery and disposal of products.

In particular, projects will tackle focus areas identified on an annual basis in the Matrix.

The following information provides an outline of our strategic focus for the next three years.

8.1 Our Program Areas

Our project priorities for the waste focus areas identified each year will be spread across broad program areas of Government, business and industry, and community. We all have an important part to play in reducing waste in our society and effective relationships and partnerships are critical for success in tackling waste accumulation across Western Australia. We will also have program areas of strategy and performance, and communications that will support and reinforce our activity in other program areas.

8.1.1 Government

Local Government in Western Australia has taken significant steps towards efficient and effective resource recovery through its kerbside recovery of recyclables and through development of secondary processing facilities. The State Government has provided substantial support for the recovery of resources in the municipal waste stream – the Resource Recovery Rebate Scheme has delivered over \$10M to Local Government since its inception in 1998. As well as providing support and encouragement, the State Government needs to lead by example, by reducing generation of waste and maximising recovery and recycling and buying recycled in its own areas of activity.

Through our efforts over the next three years, we will encourage and support continuous improvement in:

- encourage and support improvements to markets for recyclables, continual improvement in kerbside recycling and secondary resource processing;
- look to extend kerbside recycling from domestic to commercial precincts, where possible; and
- encourage and support resource efficiency in Government, for example, through EcoOffice and procurement initiatives, and improvements in recovery and recycling of the valuable resources in waste.



Program priorities will include:

- Strategic Waste Initiatives Scheme including infrastructure and other support for reducing the accumulation of priority waste products.
- Kerbside recycling including the Resource Recovery Rebate Scheme.
- Household chemical waste recovery.
- Government procurement, EcoOffice and other waste internally focused waste initiatives.
- National waste initiatives developed through the national Waste Working Group.

8.1.2 Business & Industry

We recognise that greater efforts in waste reduction are needed, especially in small to medium enterprises. We also recognise that greater efforts are needed to encourage and support waste reduction in business and industry. The Waste Management Board will interact with Western Australia's business community, with projects and assistance aimed at a variety of business groups.

Through our efforts over the next three years, we will:

- particularly tackle waste generation at the front end of a product's life – product design and production processes – to significantly reduce and, where possible, eliminate waste;
- explore opportunities for extended producer responsibility and product stewardship initiatives, and associated mechanisms;
- encourage and support improvements in recovery of resources in waste and improvements to markets for recyclables;
- encourage and support extension of EcoOffice and green procurement initiatives in businesses; and
- develop financial and non-financial partnerships with business and industry to strengthen our joint efforts to reduce waste.

Program priorities will include:

- Strategic Waste Initiatives Scheme including infrastructure and other support for reducing the accumulation of priority waste products.
- Development of a coherent and achievable strategy for business and industry waste reduction including reviewing existing arrangements for and efforts in waste reduction;
- National waste initiatives developed through the national Waste Working Group.

8.1.3 Community

We recognise the substantial efforts being made by the community in recycling. However, we also recognise that our lifestyle generates very large quantities of waste brought about by excessive consumption. We also recognise that litter is a significant community waste issue.

Through our efforts over the next three years, we will encourage and support continuous improvement in:

- waste prevention and resource recovery in schools and the wider community; and
- litter prevention and management.

Program priorities will include:

- Strategic Waste Initiatives Scheme and Community Grants Scheme including infrastructure and other support for reducing the accumulation of priority waste products.
- Litter prevention and management.

8.1.4 Strategy and Policy

Our new approach relies substantially on developing well-considered, comprehensive strategies underpinned by coherent and sensible policy, and accurate, relevant and useful data.

Through our efforts over the next three years, we will:

- develop an appropriate measurement framework;
- plan for and implement collection of relevant data and information;
- analyse data and information and use it to determine our focus areas policies and strategies;
- develop policies for waste issues related to focus areas;
- develop our strategies based on those policies;
- develop and have introduced into parliament new waste legislation to assist in achieving the vision and goal;
- measure our success for performance reporting; and
- support and encourage improved markets for recyclables.

Program priorities will include:

- Strategic Direction – annual review and development.
- Policy and strategy development particularly focusing on reducing the accumulation of priority waste products.
- Data and information management.

8.1.5 Communications

Our new approach relies substantially on providing broad community access to useful information about waste reduction and encouraging behavioural change for significantly greater efforts in waste reduction, with a particular focus on individual responsibility.

Through our efforts over the next three years, we will:

- develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy;
- keep priority waste issues high on the public agenda;
- engage the broad community through a range of means to actively participate in waste reduction; and
- support and encourage sustainable consumption behaviour.

Program priorities will include:

- Waste Website enhancement and management.
- Knowledge management and exchange.
- Communication campaigns.
- Performance reporting.

9 references

Department of Commerce and Trade/Western Australian Municipal Association (1993) *State Recycling Blueprint*. Government of Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia.

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glossary

Term	Meaning
Environmental Justice	All people regardless of race, culture and income level, have a right to a clean and healthy environment.
Extended Producer Responsibility	Producers being physically and/ or financially responsible for the environmental impacts of their products throughout their lifecycle.
Focus Areas	Where there is a resulting waste product accumulation, which is not being prevented, which has few options for recovery, which is potentially harmful to the environment on disposal. Identified as a cell in the waste Matrix.
Industrial Ecology	Is an approach based on systems engineering and ecological principles, that integrates the production and consumption aspects of the design, production, use and termination (decommissioning) of products and services in a manner that minimises the environmental impact while optimising utilisation of resources, energy and capital.
Lifecycle Analysis	A tool of Product Lifecycle Management which determines the cradle-to-grave environmental impacts of products, processes or services, through production, usage and disposal.
Matrix	The 'map' of the entire waste landscape defined by products (columns) and the holders of those products (rows).
Product Lifecycle Management	A policy approach to design for re-use, dismantling, recyclability, hazards reduction. It considers the source of materials and the impact of the products' production and use.
Product Stewardship	A concept of shared responsibility by all sectors involved in the manufacture, distribution, use and disposal of products.
Strategic Intervention Point	The point at which it is considered the best result can be achieved to address accumulation of a priority waste product. Identified as a product holder grid point in the waste Matrix.
Sustainability	Meeting the needs of current and future generations through simultaneous environmental, social and economic improvement.

Waste	Waste is all material not wanted by the person or persons' whose activities produce it.
Waste Disposal	Disposal is the responsible management of waste into the environment.
Waste Management Board	The Waste Management Board of Western Australia is responsible for leading advancement of waste management and for providing strategic advice to the Western Australian Government on waste management issues.
Waste Prevention	Prevention is the avoidance of the creation of waste.
Waste Recovery	Recovery is the treatment and management of waste for re-use through recycling and re-processing. The recovery of waste by converting it into a valuable resource.
Waste Recycling	A term that may be used to cover a wide range of activities, including collection, sorting, reprocessing and manufacture into new products.
Waste Reprocessing	Changing the physical structure and properties of a waste material that would otherwise have been sent to landfill.
Waste Re-use	Recovering value from a discarded resource without reprocessing or remanufacture.
Waste Stream	A classification used to describe waste materials that are either particular types or produced by particular sectors.
Whole of Lifecycle	The entirety of a product's lifecycle, from resource extraction to post-consumer waste disposal.



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