

## Inside Waste Media Article August 17

### Industry groups continue criticism of QLD waste proposal

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**Queensland's draft waste strategy has again come under fire from industry as the submission period on the 10-year plan closed yesterday. The Queensland Department of Environment, which is managing the renewed waste strategy, said it is not sure whether details of submissions to the strategy will be made publicly available, drawing the fire of the waste industry.**

The department said it will produce a report, possibly by November, summarising the key themes coming out of the 100 or so submissions it expects to receive on the draft [strategy](#). Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of Queensland (WCRA) chief Rick Ralph said not releasing details of submissions would be a bad decision in relation to a "bad policy".

"We call for the public release of all submissions, why should we get the department's sanitised version? I'm not aware of any respondent except local government that is in favour of these kinds of exclusions." He said with MSW and self-haul waste not subject to levies under the draft strategy, it's difficult to envisage how the industry is going to comply, particularly given the timeframe.

"It's rushed policy because we don't have the systems nor the understanding of how we're going to deliver this. "It's now August and we still haven't had the first working group but we're supposed to have draft legislation in place for the regulatory assessment process in four months," said Ralph. While it has generally been seen as a positive step forward with the potential to drive recycling and resource recovery in Queensland, the draft waste strategy has raised questions about how a levy would be applied.

Industry proponents say it is impractical for landfill owners to differentiate "industrial" waste to which it would be required to apply a \$35/tonne levy and, more than 80 per cent of the State's landfills don't currently have a weighbridge installed. Max Spedding, spokesman for the Australian Landfill Owners Association (ALOA), said "there are enormous hurdles to overcome in meeting the government's proposal.

"The industry needs to go to the government with a package that might be a reasonable compromise...the July 1 deadline can't be done across Queensland, if you they continue with full range of exemptions it can't be done by July next year even in south east Queensland." It's rumoured that a number of key industry bodies are collaborating on an alternate strategy they plan to put to the Queensland Government.

"It is becoming evident that local government will not be ready for the July 1 implementation program," said Ralph, "if the government is hell bent on meeting that deadline we have to work through issues such as helping it get there." He said there are a range of issues related to how local government will collect the levy proposed for commercial and industrial waste, and pass that onto the State Government.

One company that is represented on the strategy's working group, Veolia Environmental Services (VES), has also criticised the government's approach to the waste levy as "inconsistent and illogical". In its submission, VES said any arrangement that requires "waste recipients to warrant the contents of waste would fail to reflect commercial or operational reality". "If clarity cannot be achieved on this important issue, VES' corporate governance and ethical standards would require VES to consider not accepting materials if VES is at direct risk of prosecution or related regulatory action in the event of an error in the allocation of waste as leviable or non-leviable."

The company also believes the strategy will have the effect of subsidising local government competitors of private sector operators, which "is likely to undermine the private sector's confidence in resource recovery infrastructure investment," said Veolia in its submission, "and thereby perpetuate the current undersupply in C&I infrastructure."