




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Waste Industry, Jobs

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.03 am): Queensland's waste industry provides an absolutely essential service for business, industry and the whole community. The waste industry is more than an essential service. It is at the front line of a transition to a more environmentally friendly economy. I am excited by the steps being taken in the waste industry to modernise Queensland's economy, improve efficiency and grow new jobs—all while addressing our environmental challenges.

I am now moving to invite this industry to work with me to examine opportunities to capture more value from the waste stream, to increase economic returns and to improve environmental outcomes. An early assessment by my department has suggested that in some parts of Queensland it may be economically feasible to avoid sending sorted wastes, such as concrete, municipal green waste and tyres, direct to landfill. My department has now published that report in order to stimulate further discussion and consultation on this issue.

Queensland's waste and recycling industry manages close to 15 million tonnes of solid waste for households, business and industry as well as construction and demolition activities. This ranges from materials as diverse as household and general business to construction and regulated waste from heavy industry such as power stations, smelters, tanneries and abattoirs. More than half—some 55 per cent of that waste—currently finds its way to landfill. Only 45 per cent is being recovered and recycled. International experience provides strong evidence that we can do better, and that is also the feedback I have received from professional leaders in the waste management industry.

On Tuesday I met with executives from the waste industry who told me of their experiences in California where cities such as San Francisco have raised recovery rates to 80 per cent of all waste. Before the end of this year, I will invite local government, the business sector and community representatives to commence working with me to determine whether or not Queensland should start work to create these new markets for waste that currently go to landfill in selected parts of the state. I will be particularly interested to understand what kind of lead times the sector might require in order to make preparations for any changes. I want local government and industry to have clear, predictable lead times before any changes might come into effect so as to encourage capacity building and business readiness.

The employment opportunities associated with diverting waste from landfill have been well documented in various studies. A Deloitte Access Economics study, which identified multipliers to determine employment in the waste management and recycling sector, stated that for every 10,000 tonnes of waste recycled 9.2 jobs are created compared with 2.8 jobs if the same 10,000 tonnes were

sent to landfill. A more recent 2012 study indicates that high-value reuse and remanufacture creates between eight and 20 jobs per 1,000 tonnes of product processed while traditional recycling, where moderate value is retained, creates between five and 10 jobs per 1,000 tonnes of product processed. Additionally, a 2011 study found that for every job created in the recycling industry another 1.4 jobs are created through associated economic activity. I am optimistic about the opportunity to support the waste sector, which has become increasingly professional and is showing real interest in delivering investment, jobs growth and better environmental outcomes for Queenslanders.