

Regional Recycling Action Plan

Prepared for Barwon South West Waste and
Resource Recovery Group by Nation Partners



Barwon South West
Waste & Resource
Recovery Group

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The Barwon South West Waste and Resource Recovery Group is excited to present to you the following Regional Recycling Action Plan. With the support of a broad range of stakeholders, we have developed the RRAP to provide a regional response to the current recycling issues being experienced across the Region, and outline solutions that will help build the resilience of the Region's kerbside recycling industry. Our hope is for this plan to unite regional stakeholders against the pressures currently being faced by the industry, by providing a strong, clear voice for the Region, and defining actions that can be taken by local stakeholders. We look forward to working together to deliver on the actions identified and achieve the objectives we are all aligned on. We hope this RRAP is a useful and practical resource that will help you make informed decisions around future activities in the waste and resource recovery space.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Barwon South West Waste and Resource Recovery Group (BSWWRRG) has developed this Regional Recycling Action Plan (“RRAP”) to provide a regional response to the current recycling issues that helps to build resilience for the future of kerbside recycling in the Barwon South West Region (the Region¹). It is focused on actions that can be taken by local stakeholders, and on materials processed through the comingled recycling bin (i.e. paper and cardboard, glass, metal and plastic packaging). The success of this RRAP requires regional stakeholders to work together and deliver on the actions identified, to support long-term improvements to the region’s recycling industry. The plan was developed in accordance with the waste hierarchy, with waste prevention and reduction deemed the first priority during the action development process.

The RRAP is centred around four key themes:

- Avoid and minimise waste
- Reduce contamination in comingled recycling bins
- Improve sorting and processing to produce a higher quality end product
- Increase market demand for products made out of recycled materials

This plan is linked to the actions outlined in the Barwon South West Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan 2017-2026² (Barwon South West Implementation Plan), which was developed to shape the way waste and resource recovery is delivered and managed in the Region over at least the next six years. The RRAP is different to the Barwon South West Implementation Plan, as it focuses specifically on comingled recycling and how the Region can respond to current issues in the short-to-medium term.

1.2 Key Drivers

Recycling has been a valued and well-utilised service in the Region, with households recycling 52% of waste received through kerbside collections in 2018. However, population growth, increasing waste generation per capita and an economy traditionally based largely on a linear system (‘take, make, and dispose’) has posed challenges for sustainable waste management, across the Region, State and Australia-wide.

These impacts have been compounded by changes to the global waste trade, including China's National Sword policy which disrupted exports of recycled materials in 2017, and the collapse of markets for some recyclable goods. Consequently, the recycling sector has been facing enormous pressures in recent years and is currently in crisis. The Region has not been immune to these pressures, with the SKM Recycling (SKM) collapse in 2019 bringing these issues to the forefront of the public agenda.

Contributing to these issues is the lack of consistency in recycling systems in the Region. There are a variety of different waste collection service types in place, including two and three-bin systems plus a number of councils recently implementing, or resolving to introduce, a fourth bin for glass only. These different systems make it difficult to drive consistency across the Region.

Whilst there is work underway at a federal, state and territory government level, and locally, to address broader waste management and minimisation issues across the country, BSWWRRG identified that there are benefits that can be gained from a coordinated regional approach to kerbside recycling. These include:

- Addressing the region’s unique needs and gaps in infrastructure/markets
- Strength in scale, such as advocacy with a regional voice or pooling opportunities to attract investment
- Proactive collaboration and shared knowledge (versus duplication or missed opportunities).

¹ The Region is described in detail on page 7

² Barwon South West Waste Resource and Recovery Group (2017), *Barwon South West Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan*

This RRAP was developed to explore these benefits further, and take a proactive approach by providing solutions, within the control of regional stakeholders, to build the resilience of the comingled recycling industry in the Region.

1.3 Developing the RRAP

This RRAP was developed in collaboration with a wide range of regional stakeholders, over six key stages (Figure 1). A list of the different stakeholder groups engaged is outlined in Appendix A.

Figure 1 RRAP development process



At the first round of workshops, held in Warrnambool and Geelong in October 2019, stakeholders were invited to learn more about the RRAP and explore the challenges and opportunities for better kerbside recycling in the Region. A diverse range of stakeholders were in attendance, including local government officers and elected officials, state government department and agency staff and representatives from educational institutions, community groups and the waste management industry. The outputs of this workshop informed a Discussion Paper and draft list of actions for the RRAP.

The Discussion Paper was developed in November 2019 to present the current and emerging legislative and policy frameworks for kerbside recycling in Australia, provide an overview of the kerbside recycling system, and examine the challenges and opportunities for developing a sustainable and resilient kerbside recycling program in the Region. The aim of the Discussion Paper was to encourage further dialogue with BSWWRRG and key stakeholders within the Region on challenges, opportunities, and prioritised actions and/or activities for improvements to kerbside recycling and how these might be applied in the Region.

In December 2019, a second round of workshops were held in the same locations and with the same range of stakeholders in attendance. These workshops focused on further refining, prioritising and assigning the draft list of actions for the RRAP, with the outputs informing the Action Plan found in Section 4.

A draft RRAP was prepared in January 2020 and shared with workshop attendees and other key regional stakeholders for comment, and their feedback was incorporated into the final RRAP. Whilst this consultation process was underway, the Victorian Government issued its circular economy policy *Recycling Victoria: A new economy*. The major impacts of this policy have also been included in the final RRAP.

1.4 Using the RRAP

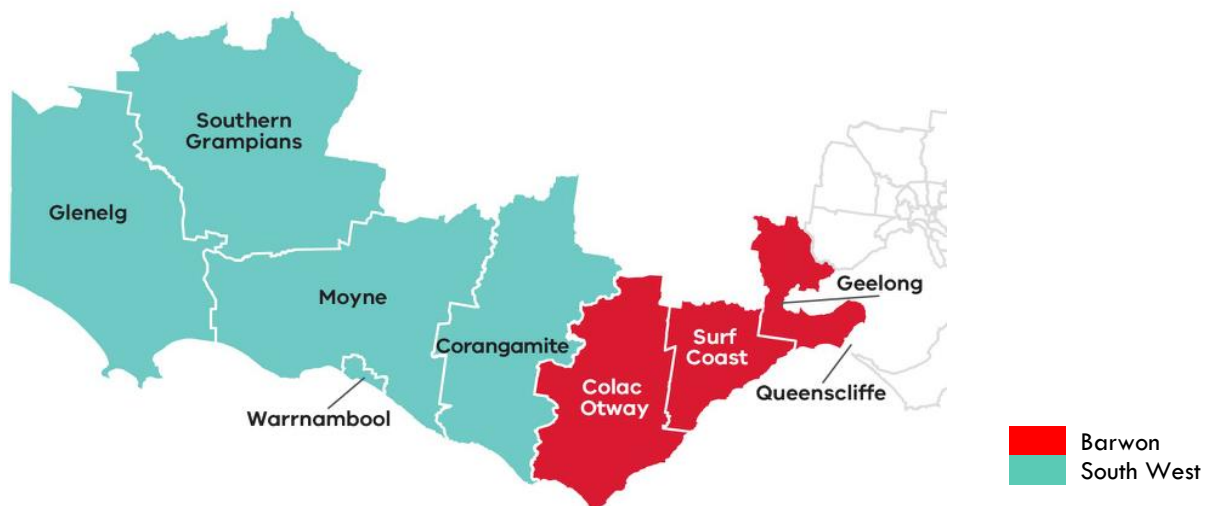
The RRAP is intended to be the definitive resource for a coordinated response to kerbside recycling challenges across the Region, to be used by local and state government and the waste industry as well as BSWWRRG. It should be read in conjunction with the Barwon South West Implementation Plan and relevant federal and state government legislation and policy.

This plan provides a prioritised list of actions that have been developed in collaboration with regional stakeholders. The actions in this plan have been assigned to particular stakeholder groups, including BSWWRRG, local councils, industry representatives and state government departments and agencies. These groups should use this plan to identify the actions that they can undertake in the short-term, whilst also using it to help guide their decision making and planning in the waste and resource recovery space over the long-term. Using the plan, and its outcomes, as a reference will ensure a strong clear voice for the Region, and will also help agencies work together to achieve common objectives for the Region.

2. The Barwon South West Region

Barwon South West Region is located in south-western Victoria, between 50 and 360 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD. The Region extends from the tip of the Queenscliff Heads to the border of South Australia. It includes Victoria's largest regional city, Geelong, and has access to deep-water ports at Portland and Geelong, an established rail network with interstate connections and several commercial airports. A map of the 9 local government areas comprising the region is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Map of local government areas comprising the Barwon South West Region³



The region's permanent population is around 397,000,⁴ and is expected to increase to 561,000 by 2036⁵. Known for its iconic tourism destinations, the region experiences seasonal population increases, which are generally observed in coastal towns during the summer and fishing locations in the winter.

The geography and demographics of the region are unique in the sense that there is high population density in Geelong, and the Surf Coast areas, whereas population in the South West is low and sparse. BSWWRRG categorises the region into three main areas:

- inland and rural, largely based on livestock and timber industries
- coastal, driven by tourism and amenity lifestyles
- Geelong City with a diverse economic and social base around an urban core⁶.

Feedback from regional stakeholders indicate that despite Barwon South West being classified as one region, there are notable differences between Barwon (Geelong and surrounds) and the South West, which is reflected by the distinctive geographies and diverse industries.

³ Regional Development Victoria, <https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/victorias-regions/barwon-south-west>

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), Census data by local government area

⁵ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2019), *Victoria in the Future – Population Projections 2016 to 2056*

⁶ Barwon South West Waste Resource and Recovery Group (2017), *Barwon South West Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan*

3. Recycling Crisis Overview

There are multiple factors that have contributed to the current recycling crisis in the Region which present both challenges and opportunities. These include, but are not limited to:

- Traditional high volume, low value commodity streams which has led to business models that are exposed to changes in market conditions, particularly with a reliance on export markets.
- Import restrictions on recyclables imposed by China and other countries. This has led to a significant drop in commodity prices for mixed plastic and mixed paper, impacts on Council costs, and local stockpiling of material.
- The over reliance on one processor, SKM. Its collapse resulted in the temporary closure of the one operational Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in the Region that is able to process multiple materials. This has reopened (as a transfer station only) but the reliance on one site continues.
- A general lack of sufficient infrastructure in Australia to sort and process mixed plastic and paper/cardboard. Investment requires long term supply of sufficient material which can be a challenge in regional areas.
- Not enough market demand for the recyclables following collection and reprocessing, with a need to build consumer trust regarding the quality of some type of products made from recyclable material.
- Comingled recycling bins causing plastics to be contaminated with paper, and paper and cardboard to be contaminated with broken glass.
- Confusion amongst the community as to what can be recycled due to potentially inconsistent services, messaging and labelling.

Following the announcement of the Victorian Government's circular economy policy, it's clear that the legislative policy framework for waste and recycling in Victoria will be subject to considerable review and refinement over the next few years. Where practical, regional action plans, such as this one, should endeavour to align with these legislation, policies, and recommendations to avoid duplication of effort and ensure a consistent and clear approach is adopted.

As noted in the Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan⁷, many areas like the Region are predominantly reliant on reprocessing facilities in Melbourne under a 'hub-and-spokes' waste network. This involves transporting materials regularly, sometimes over long distances, with subsequent impacts on energy resources (mostly using non-renewable fossil fuels), road networks and health and safety and environment risks. While there has been a general trend around the closure of a number of regional MRF operators in Victoria as the larger players in Melbourne are able to compete on price, this has not always been the case, with a number of regional organisations, including those offering employment to disadvantaged and long term unemployed, operating successfully.

The Region, like others in Victoria, has some areas which are remote from the high population and industry hubs of Melbourne and Geelong; transport of waste to sorters and processors is a significant cost for councils in these areas and a contributor to carbon emissions.

There is a need for increased options for sorting and processing in the Region, where feasible, as local solutions can mitigate the risk of system failure, reduce the environmental footprint of waste management and recycling and add value to the economy and job opportunities in the Region. Currently there are two reprocessing facilities in the region, however one is acting as a transfer station and the other processes paper and cardboard only. By exploring options for local sorting and processing facilities, there is an opportunity for Barwon South West to be a regional leader in the development of a circular economy and build resilience for the future of recycling.

Reducing contamination and diverting recyclable material from the waste bin to the recycling bin has the potential to increase the quantity and quality of recyclable material being collected. The stakeholder workshops confirmed that this is within a Regional context of a generally highly engaged community with a strong interest in the environment and sustainability.

⁷ Sustainability Victoria (2018), *Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan*

The Region is characterised by, among other things, stakeholders and groups who are willing and experienced at working together. There are a number of examples, such as the G21 Geelong Region and Great South Coast Region Alliances, where public and private organisations are collaborating to drive positive outcomes. This assists potential initiatives such as consideration of local government collaborative procurement opportunities and potential improvements to contracts, and regional education and behaviour change programs (including waste reduction and contamination reduction, as well as promoting new initiatives).

4. Crisis Response

The recycling crisis has prompted responses from all levels of government, with some of the notable plans, reports and actions outlined below.

4.1 Australian Government response

National Waste Policy Action Plan

In 2019 the Australian Government released the National Waste Policy Action Plan,⁸ which presents targets and actions to implement the 2018 National Waste Policy. The national targets outlined in this plan are:

1. Ban the export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres, commencing in the second half of 2020.
2. Reduce total waste generated in Australia by 10% per person by 2030.
3. 80% average resource recovery rate from all waste streams following the waste hierarchy by 2030.
4. Significantly increase the use of recycled content by governments and industry.
5. Phase out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025.
6. Halve the amount of organic waste sent to landfill by 2030.
7. Make comprehensive, economy-wide and timely data publicly available to support better consumer, investment and policy decisions.

To support these targets, a number of key action areas are also included in the plan. These action areas will drive change in the waste industry, businesses, governments and the community, and make Australia more responsible for its own waste. These areas are:

- Ban the export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres.
- Phase out problematic and unnecessary plastics.
- Governments use their purchasing power to increase recycling.
- Improve waste data collection and information sharing.

4.2 Victorian Government response

Recycling Industry Strategic Plan 2018

The Recycling Industry Strategic Plan (RISP)⁹ was developed in response to recent disruptions in global recycling markets, which have most significantly impacted Victoria's kerbside recycling system resulting in increased council waste management charges. In acknowledgement of this, the Strategic Plan specifically focuses on kerbside recycling and sets out the following goals:

- stabilise the recycling sector
- increase the quality of recycled materials
- improve the diversity and productivity of the recycling sector
- develop markets for recycled materials.

Audit of recovery and reprocessing resources – Victorian Auditor General Office

In response to the many challenges faced by the Victorian waste sector, in particular the closure of export markets for recyclables, the Victorian Auditor General examined whether responsible agencies are maximising the recovery and reprocessing of resources in Victoria's waste streams. The final report¹⁰ released in June 2019 concluded that across the Victorian Government there has been a lack of action to minimise waste, to invest in infrastructure, and closely regulate the sector. More specifically:

- Victorian agencies responsible for managing the waste sector are not responding strategically to waste and resource recovery issues.

⁸ Australian Government (2019), *National Waste Policy Action Plan*

⁹ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2018), *Recycling Industry Strategic Plan*

¹⁰ Victorian Auditor-General Office (2019), *Recovering and Reprocessing Resources from Waste*

- The lack of an overarching state-wide policy deprives responsible government agencies and their stakeholders of a clear and definitive direction for waste management, which means that government agencies' responses to waste issues have been ad hoc and reactive.
- In the absence of an overarching waste policy, relevant agencies have also not been able to effectively plan for sufficient infrastructure and markets to manage the state's waste.
- EPA has not effectively monitored and addressed the growth of inappropriately managed stockpiles across the state, which pose health and fire risks to the community and the environment.

Infrastructure Victoria recycling and resource recovery infrastructure advice

Following a request from the Special Minister of State to provide advice on the infrastructure required to improve the performance of Victoria's recycling and resource recovery sector, in October 2019, Infrastructure Victoria (IV) released a report¹¹ looking at the industry through an infrastructure lens. Some of the key themes raised in this report, of relevance to the Region, include:

- high transportation costs – more economical to use landfill instead of using recycling or reuse processes
- lack of local MRFs and processing capacity
- local government procurement of services
- end-market development, research and development and the connection between concept and commercialisation.

In April 2020, IV will deliver advice to the Victorian Government on the infrastructure required to improve the performance of the state's waste sector.

Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

In March 2019, the Parliament of Victoria began an inquiry into Victoria's recycling and waste management system. The inquiry explored a number of different issues, including, but not limited to:

- The responsibility of the Victorian Government to establish and maintain a coherent, efficient and environmentally responsible approach to solid waste management across the state, including assistance to local councils.
- Whether the China National Sword policy was anticipated and responded to properly.
- Identifying short and long-term solutions to the recycling and waste management system crisis.
- Strategies to reduce waste generation and better manage all waste such as soft plastics, compostable paper and pulp, and commercial waste.

The final report¹² was issued on 27 November 2019 with 46 recommendations to the Victorian Government, which will be considered when the statewide plan is updated in due course. The key recommendations of most relevance to this RRAP are listed in Appendix B.

Provision of industry funding

In response to current challenges, the Victorian Government has provided the recycling industry with funding to encourage investment in improved waste management systems and research and development. This funding includes:

- A \$10 million loan to the receivers of SKM, KordaMentha, which was to facilitate the return to processing recyclable material and to clear waste stockpiles at disclaimed sites, as well as fund essential maintenance work to assist plants in returning to processing waste.
- A further \$1 million was provided to the recycling industry to 'fast-track infrastructure upgrades to materials recovery facilities to improve the quality of recycled paper, cardboard and plastic'.
- \$2.1 million has been allocated in grants to five companies through the Recycling Industry Transition Support program, run by Sustainability Victoria.

¹¹ Infrastructure Victoria (2019), *Recycling and resource recovery infrastructure, evidence based report*

¹² Victorian Government (2019), *Inquiry into recycling and waste management, final report*

- \$4.8 million has been allocated for industry and local government to develop infrastructure for the collection, sorting and processing of recyclable materials as part of round three of the Resource Recovery Infrastructure Fund.
- \$1.9 million was awarded in 2018 to 13 projects through the Research, Development and Demonstration grants program, of which \$472,100 was funded via the Recycling Industry Strategic Plan.

It should be noted that not all of this funding has been directed to the Region, however, one example of regional investment was the \$102,500 Sustainability Victoria grant awarded to Fulton Hogan for upgrades to its Warrnambool plant to crush 5,000 tonnes of glass and plastics into sand for use in roads and footpaths.

Recycling Victoria - Victoria's Circular Economy Policy and Action Plan

Released in late February 2020, *Recycling Victoria: A new economy*¹³ is the Victorian Government's circular economy policy and 10-year action plan. Investment of more than \$300 million over four years has been announced, with the aims of fundamentally transforming the state's recycling sector, reducing waste, creating jobs and setting Victoria up for a more sustainable future.

Major elements of the policy are as follows:

- Kerbside reform, to improve the quality of materials collected from households. This will include a move towards standardisation of bin systems and recycling services across the state, ensuring access to separate glass and FOGO bins or services for all Victorians.
- Introduction of a Container Deposit Scheme.
- New funding made available for recycling infrastructure, including for priority materials affected by the upcoming export ban, hazardous waste and appropriate waste to energy projects.
- Stronger oversight of waste and recycling through a new act, the introduction of a new Waste Authority, better data collection and stronger regulation of hazardous waste.
- A planned review of the Victorian Recycling Infrastructure Plan.*
- Policies to encourage waste reduction, such as rules to improve waste sorting, increases to the landfill levy, and help for businesses and the community to achieve behaviour change
- Support for regional councils and communities to move towards the circular economy.

The design and delivery of the wide-ranging commitments are scheduled to take place over the coming years, with work commencing in 2020.

The actions listed in section 4 of the RRAP have been arrived at in the context of the new policy details, which have been released at the date of the RRAP issue. BSWWRRG and regional stakeholders will adopt a flexible approach to responding to changes both in policy implementation and other factors, such as market developments, as the RRAP is implemented. In particular, it is unclear at the stage of finalising this RRAP what impact the introduction of a new Waste Authority (due by mid 2021) will have on the role and activities of the WRRGs. The RRAP includes actions that can be undertaken by BSWWRRG in the intervening period and will be adapted as necessary going forward.

* formerly known as the Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan.

4.3 Local Government response

In addition to the action undertaken by the federal and state government, the issues experienced by the recycling industry have also driven councils across the Region to develop their own response plans, including:

- making alternative arrangements during the SKM shutdown period, including use of alternative MRFs, diversion to landfill, arranging recycling hubs at transfer stations;
- deciding to introduce or investigate source separation at the kerbside; and
- looking into local market use of recyclables e.g. using plastic in roads.

¹³ Victorian Government (2020), *Recycling Victoria: A new economy*

Some specific examples of local government action that was undertaken are outlined below:

- Moyne Shire Council, Surf Coast Shire Council and Warrnambool City Council have recently implemented, or resolved to introduce, a fourth bin for glass only.
- Geelong City Council established a number of community drop-off points, where residents could take their waste to ensure it could be recycled.

Due to the immediacy of the issues, these responses did not necessarily allow for coordination or consistency at a regional level, which is one of the key objectives of this RRAP.

4.4 BSWWRRG response

As outlined in section 1, BSWWRRG devised this RRAP in response to the pressures faced by the Region's recycling sector in recent years. BSWWRRG identified that there are benefits that can be gained from a coordinated regional approach, and intend for this RRAP to provide direction for the Region's recycling sector, to respond to the current issues and reduce the chances, and mitigate the impacts, of future recycling industry challenges.

In addition to leading the development of this RRAP, BSWWRRG has also:

- supported councils to respond to the SKM closure through information sharing with local and state government agencies, providing councils with advice and consistent communications messaging, and investigating and modelling alternative MRF options for affected councils
- provided consistent messaging to the community on waste reduction and recycling through social media channels
- contributed to the Circular Economy Policy development by participating in a range of workshops, forums and the Circular Economy Working Group
- advocated for regional and rural recycling support in relevant forums and workshops
- launched the Barwon South West Can Do Communities program, including small grants, to support community-led initiatives on waste reduction and recycling.

4.5 Industry response





Businesses working in the waste and resource recovery sector across the Region have also been responding to the changes in the sector in various ways, including:

- communicating with the community about what can and cannot be recycled, to assist in reducing contamination at households
- finding different options for sorting and processing, given the market failure and upcoming export bans
- investing in new processing facilities for plastic and glass
- investigating the potential for alternative waste treatment technologies.

5. Action Plan

The following actions were developed in collaboration with regional stakeholders during a series of workshops held in late 2019. The RRAP is a regional plan, with a focus on actions that can be owned and delivered by regional agencies, yet also recognises, and aligns with, the work being undertaken by the different levels of government outlined in section 4.

Each action in this plan relates to one or more of the four key RRAP themes:

-  Avoid and minimise waste
-  Reduce contamination in comingled recycling bins
-  Improve sorting and processing to produce a higher quality end product
-  Increase market demand for products made out of recycled materials






Regional stakeholders also played a key role in prioritising and assigning the actions to the appropriate lead and support agencies. Actions that were deemed a higher priority were generally those which are likely to be most impactful towards the four themes, support greater consistency and coordination across the region and in some cases are relatively straightforward to implement. Actions that were considered not to be as high priority were those which were less impactful on a regional scale, could potentially duplicate efforts happening elsewhere, as well as those deemed too difficult to implement at the current time.

A number of agencies were identified as those that may be best-placed to lead and support the actions outlined in this plan, including BSWWRRG, local government entities, recycling industry players, state government departments and agencies, and relevant community groups and peak bodies.












Table 1 presents the complete list of RRAP actions, the designated lead and support agencies, notional timing of implementation and relevant RRAP themes. The timing for each action is in accordance with the calendar year. Further implementation planning for each action will be undertaken by the lead agency, as required, which will consider appropriate resourcing, outputs and implementation steps.

Table 1 Regional Recycling Action Plan

No.	Action	Lead agency	Support agencies	Timing	RRAP theme
1A	Explore the optimum waste management infrastructure model for the region. This will consider type of facility/ies, materials, consistency, ownership, vertical integration and control opportunities, location/s, interaction with the kerbside bin system/ service and the Container Deposit Scheme, and current market demand for recycled materials.	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all) Industry players State government (DELWP)	Q2-Q4 2020	Blue
1B	Support, in an appropriate manner, the implementation of the optimum MRF and transfer station model, including advice on accessing available grants (e.g. Recycling Victoria Infrastructure Fund).	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all) Industry players State government	Q1 2021 onwards	Blue
2	Following the Victorian Government pledge (expected mid-2020), develop a local government commitment for the procurement of recycled and recyclable materials and products, with a focus on those locally produced, with consideration of a 'pledge' model for specified procurement targets, regular self-imposed audits and reporting to monitor effectiveness and standard clauses including targets incorporated into the local government procurement policies.	Local government (via forum)	BSWWRRG	Q2-Q4 2020	Blue Orange
3	Develop a region-wide commitment for reducing the use of single-use plastics, taking into account state and federal government policies and actions.	Local government (via forum)	BSWWRRG State government (SV) Industry players	Q2-Q4 2020	Green
4	Develop risk-based, consistent, region-wide public event guidance, incorporating a focus on waste avoidance and minimisation, including a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to reward good practice.	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all) State government (SV) Relevant community groups	Q2-Q4 2020	Green Red Red

5	Deliver a region-wide community information campaign and behaviour change program about waste avoidance and reduction, reducing contamination and recycling, utilising state resources where available.	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all) State government (SV) Relevant community groups	Q2 2020 onwards	
6	Collect data from industry players (e.g. MRFs) in order to understand contamination levels, baseline conditions, end markets and desired material quality, to inform a regional information campaign.	BSWWRRG	Local government (all) Industry players	Q2 2020 onwards	
7	Develop a regional industry engagement strategy to share case studies and best practice examples, that contributes to better processing and to inform a regional information campaign.	BSWWRRG	Industry players Peak bodies	Q2 2020 onwards	
8A	Using State government guidance, and bearing in mind the new state government policy announcements, provide regional coordination to help identify optimum kerbside bin system for each council in the region, noting they may not be the same but considering the need for consistency where possible (bin lid colours, contents of comingled bins, collection frequency), reducing overall environmental / carbon footprint impact and minimising service costs.	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all) State government (DELWP)	Q2 2020 onwards	
8B	Support the implementation of the optimum kerbside system or service for each council.	Local government (relevant business unit)	BSWWRRG State government (funding)	Will vary by council	

9	Provide standard waste contract clauses where available, to enable improvement and consistency, in particular in the transition to kerbside reforms.	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all) Industry players MWRRG	Q2 2020 onwards (as required)	
10	Investigate service delivery efficiencies and improved transparency through a shared procurement approach for collection, transportation and processing contracts across the region's LGAs, and facilitate service level agreements for service delivery partners, where appropriate, including consideration of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to support continual improvement.	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all) Industry players	Q2 2020 onwards	
11	Identify new markets for recovered resources and waste currently going to landfill, and support and grow existing ones, that adhere to circular economy principles. This may be via specifications for procurement and projects, or contractual terms that demand particular use.	Local government (all)	BSWWRRG State government (SV/RDV)	Q2 2020 onwards	
12	Promote and share examples of where recycled products have been used in public places across the region via platforms including websites, social media and local forums.	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all) Industry players	Q2 2020 onwards	
13	Support community led initiatives that reduce waste and increase recycling, including delivery of BSWWRRG's Can Do Communities Program (subject to new or replacement programs being announced).	BSWWRRG	Local government (all) State government (SV) Community groups	Q2 2020 onwards	
14	Develop a model for a region-wide, best-practice kerbside bin inspection program, to monitor and evaluate performance of households, including incentives/deterrents for corresponding waste habits, and share with councils for implementation.	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all) State government (SV)	Q2 2020 onwards	
15	Undertake a kerbside bin-weighing trial to monitor the amount of waste going into the kerbside recycling bin, which can inform targeted education resources for households, within one of the region's LGAs and share findings.	Local government (One LGA to lead - TBC)	BSWWRRG	2021	

16	Investigate 'user pays' commercial models for kerbside collection and share findings with councils. <i>Subject to funding.</i>	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all)	2021	
17	Develop a region-wide strategy for public place recycling bins, including cost-benefit analysis and optimum number, locations and design. <i>Subject to funding.</i>	BSWWRRG	Local government (representative from some/all)	2021	 
18	Maintain and promote the BSWWRRG website as a region-wide waste and resource recovery guide, including information on where to find bulk/unpackaged groceries (including commercial options), refillable product options, recycled and recyclable products, recycling locations for materials such as soft plastics, chemicals, e-waste etc., repair cafes, tip shops, sharing libraries (books, toys, tools etc.), second-hand markets and swap markets.	BSWWRRG	Local government Industry players	Ongoing	  
19	Pursue greater uptake of the ResourceSmart Schools Program across the region (subject to new or replacement programs being announced).	State government (contracted party)	BSWWRRG Local government (all)	Ongoing	 
20	Report back to the community on what has happened to their recycling, to regain trust.	Local government (all)	BSWWRRG	Will vary by council	 
21	Promote information, such as the Sustainability Victoria database, about what recycled products exist, what they can be used for, their effectiveness, case studies on innovative use, and how they be procured.	Local government (all)	BSWWRRG State government (SV)	When available	

As outlined in this RRAP, there is already an extensive amount of work underway at a local, state and federal government level to respond to the kerbside recycling issues that these regional actions are seeking to address. This work includes, but is not limited to, the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry recommendations, the design and implementation of the newly announced Victorian circular economy policy and IV advice on infrastructure to improve the waste management sector, as well as the key targets committed to in the National Waste Policy Action Plan.

There are many meaningful actions in the waste management space that should, and must, be implemented at the state and federal government level in order to be successful. As part of the development of this plan, stakeholders brainstormed some of the federal and state level initiatives that they felt would be most effective in achieving the key RRAP themes. As these actions are not in the control or influence of regional stakeholders, they have not been included in this RRAP. A full list of these initiatives is presented in Appendix C.

BSWWRRG fully supports and advocates for the implementation of these initiatives, along with the broader work being undertaken by the state and federal government.

6. Conclusion

The intention of this RRAP is to provide a regional response to the current recycling challenges being experienced across the Region, and take a proactive approach by providing solutions, within the control of regional stakeholders, to help build the resilience of the Region's kerbside recycling industry. It is hoped that this plan will be a useful and practical resource that will help guide the decision making and planning activities of regional stakeholders in the waste and resource recovery space.

This RRAP is intended as having a short to medium term lifespan, and will act as a stepping stone to the upcoming review of the Victorian Recycling Infrastructure Plan and inform the process to design the new Waste Authority.

BSWWRRG will own and drive the implementation of the RRAP, and will be responsible for tracking progress against actions. However the success of the plan will depend on commitment and participation from all stakeholders.

To support the monitoring and evaluation of the RRAP, and ensure it remains relevant, an annual assessment will be made to allow for the continual adaptation of this plan over time, and facilitate opportunities for ongoing improvements. This will be reported back to the local community.

7. References

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Appendices

Appendix A – Regional stakeholders involved in the RRAP development

Representatives from the following agencies, businesses and groups were involved in the development of this RRAP in late 2019 and early 2020.

WRRGs
BSWWRRG (team and board)
MWWRG
GCWRRG
Local councils
Colac Otway Shire Council
Corangamite Shire Council
City of Greater Geelong Council
Glenelg Shire Council
Golden Plains Shire Council
Moyne Shire Council
Southern Grampians Shire Council
Surf Coast Shire Council
Warrnambool City Council
State government
Regional Development Victoria
Sustainability Victoria
DELWP
EPA
Industry, business and research
Alex Fraser
Deakin University
WestVic Waste and Recycling
CSRIO
ReGroup
Corio Waste Management
Community groups
Geelong Sustainability

Appendix B - Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry Recommendations of Particular Relevance to the RRAP

#	Recommendation
11	That the Victorian Government provide funding and support for all Victorian councils statewide to introduce a separate bin for municipal glass recycling. The Victorian Government should also conduct a study of the costs and benefits associated with the introduction of a separate municipal glass recycling bin, and these should be disclosed.
14	That the Victorian Government provide additional funding to its statewide recycling education campaign to achieve additional public take up of municipal recycling and ensure correct recycling practice.
15	That the Victorian Government ensure the statewide recycling education campaign is ongoing. Such a campaign should be similar to continuing public education campaigns such as those by the Transport Accident Commission and WorkSafe, which have achieved widespread public acceptance and influenced behavioural change.
16	That any statewide municipal recycling education campaign emphasises the importance of waste avoidance.
17	That the Victorian Government introduce a minimum statewide standard of municipal recycling capability across Victoria's local government areas to facilitate a statewide recycling education program that includes information about correct recycling practices.
18	That the Victorian Government provide funding to ensure all local councils are compliant with the Standards Australia policy on bin lid colours within 12 months.
19	That the Victorian Government implement a requirement for a third party auditor for Victorian waste and resource companies to ensure verification of resource recovery rates.
21	That the Victorian Government consider the introduction of a container deposit scheme to supplement improved municipal kerbside recycling services, including conducting a cost-benefit analysis and consideration of impacts on consumers and the environment.
23	That further work be undertaken by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to improve the capacity for multi-unit developments to collect, sort and recycle household waste, including, but not limited to, improvements in the planning process to facilitate this.
24	That the Victorian Government require major supermarkets to reduce their use of single use plastics as a strategy for extending the shelf life of fresh fruit and vegetables, and to publicly report on these measures. Such arrangements may include, but not be limited to, consumers bringing their own containers to stores to purchase deli products and/or the reintroduction of washable and reusable milk bottles.
25	That the Victorian Government advocate to the Commonwealth Government for an enhanced national product stewardship scheme incorporating additional material streams, and establish defined pathways for durable goods.
27	That the Victorian Government works with the Commonwealth Government to make the Australian Packaging Covenant a mandatory product stewardship scheme.
28	That the Victorian Government works with the Commonwealth Government to introduce import requirements for products to contain packaging that is recyclable and/or contains recycled materials.
29	That the Victorian Government work with industry to ensure manufacturers can meet their responsibilities in relation to the National Packaging Targets, including the reduction of virgin plastics.
30	That the Victorian Government play a key role in clarifying packaging claims to ensure they are not misleading through its statewide education initiatives.
31	That the Victorian Government support widespread adoption of the Australasian Recycling Label in Victoria, including provision of assistance to smaller manufacturers to help them adjust.
32	That the Victorian Government provide further support to develop more regional waste and resource recovery businesses, a reduction of transport costs and local processing of recyclable materials to support regional employment.
33	That the state's waste and resource recovery groups should include more detailed information in their required infrastructure schedules and should provide a more detailed analysis of their infrastructure needs.

41	That the Victorian Government work to improve data capture, monitoring and integrity in relation to recycling rates, markets for recyclables and the impacts of market development initiatives.
42	That the Victorian Government set targets for the expansion of the recycling market.
43	That the Victorian Government provides significant investment into research and development of new uses for key recycled materials.
45	That the Victorian Government introduce recycled content requirements for state and local government procurement and an obligation for agencies to publicly report on compliance with these requirements.
46	That the Victorian Government introduce minimum recycled content requirements for new packaging produced in Victoria.

Appendix C – Federal and state level initiatives

Listed below are current or potential future priorities of state and federal government, which link to the RRAP themes and are supported by regional stakeholders.

Action	RRAP Themes			
	Avoid and minimise waste	Reduce contamination in comingled recycling bins	Improve sorting and processing of material	Increase market demand for products made out of recycled materials
Advocate for the minimisation, regulation and standardisation of packaging.	✓	✓		✓
Advocate for the establishment of mandatory targets for recycled packaging based on APCO's targets for packaging.				✓
Advocate for the investigation and implementation of product and packaging stewardship programs.	✓			
Advocate for the Australasian Recycling Label to be mandatory.		✓		
Advocate for the introduction of incentives to encourage use of recycled products.				✓
Advocate to make recycled and recyclable products easier to identify through labelling schemes, and consider including detail on proportion of recycled material in content.				✓
Monitor work being undertaken by IV and undertake assessment of advice, when released, to determine whether it links to any action that can be taken at a regional level.			✓	✓
Advocate for a research project to be undertaken that explores how virgin material can be diluted to a level that does not impact the effectiveness of the product.				✓
Advocate for the development of whole-of-life product design guidance, including advice on disassembly and use of recyclable materials.		✓		