



## MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Parliament House  
State Square  
Darwin NT 0800  
minister.higgins@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 3146  
Darwin NT 0801  
Telephone: 08 8999 7540  
Facsimile: 08 8928 6613

Dr William Freeland  
Chair  
Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority  
GPO Box 3675  
DARWIN NT 0801

Dear Dr Freeland

In July 2013, this Government sought advice from the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) regarding opportunities for improving waste management practices in the Northern Territory. The NT EPA advised in May 2014 that it would develop a waste management strategy.

On 31 August 2015, I received the NT EPA's 'Waste Management Strategy for the Northern Territory 2015-2022' (the Strategy), which was prepared as advice under section 25 of the *Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act* (NT EPA Act). Consistent with my responsibilities under section 27 of the NT EPA Act, I provide this response to the Strategy.

As Minister for the Environment, I am pleased to endorse the Strategy as providing a sound basis for the NT EPA to lead operational improvements to waste management practices across the Territory.

I note that the Strategy is intended to be supported by implementation plans that will identify timeframes for delivery of the key management actions. I assure the NT EPA that Northern Territory Government agencies will participate and contribute to the development of the implementation plans, and delivery of the management actions, as appropriate and within agency capacity.

In particular, many Government agencies have highlighted the need for improved waste disposal infrastructure in regional and remote communities, particularly in relation to asbestos and mercury containing wastes. Government looks forward to working with the NT EPA and other stakeholders, to address these ongoing issues of environmental and social concern.

I am pleased to be able to advise of the activities that Government agencies are already undertaking in order to facilitate appropriate waste management and support recycling. Actions include recycling of office paper and cardboard, printer cartridges, toners, batteries and mobile phones, and participation in the container deposit scheme by a number of social committees.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory's adoption of the 'Leave no trace' principle within Territory managed parks combines community education with the removal of rubbish bins from a number of Territory parks. This program, which has been running since 2013, has resulted in demonstrated improvements in waste management outcomes on parks.

Other ongoing programs to reduce the Government's impact on the environment include the application of fuel efficiency standards for Government vehicles, and the installation of energy efficient lighting and air-conditioning and other electrical appliances in Government buildings.

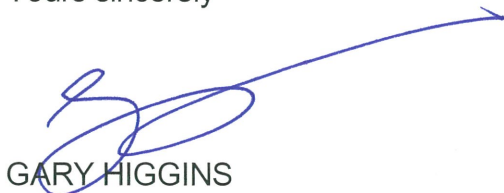
To further support the actions contained in the Strategy, this Government will continue to consider reforms to the legislative and policy environment to address existing gaps and create an appropriate, flexible, regulatory environment, which can be leveraged by the NT EPA in delivering against the Strategy.

I am also pleased to advise that the Waste Recycling Industry Association NT Inc has developed five industry plans as a roadmap for building a resilient and robust waste management and resource recovery industry. The plans, *Pathways for Change*, are designed to support and interface with the NT EPA's Strategy.

I am confident that by working together, this Government, the NT EPA and industry can improve waste management outcomes across the Northern Territory.

I congratulate the NT EPA on completing the Strategy.

Yours sincerely



GARY HIGGINS

8 JUN 2016