



## Review of the waste levy frequently asked questions

### **What is the waste levy?**

Landfill premises pay a levy according to the quantity of waste that they dispose to landfill and the circumstances in which the waste is received. The levy is payable on waste disposed to landfills in the metropolitan area, and on waste from the metropolitan area disposed to landfills outside the metropolitan area.

The waste levy increases the cost of landfill disposal, which provides a financial incentive to decrease landfill disposal. This aims to encourage alternatives to landfilling, such as recycling.

### **Why is the State Government reviewing the waste levy?**

The Government of Western Australia's Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030 (Waste Strategy 2030) includes an action to review the waste levy to ensure it achieves the objectives of the strategy, which are:

- *Avoid:* Western Australians generate less waste.
- *Recover:* Western Australians recover more value and resources from waste.
- *Protect:* Western Australians protect the environment by managing waste responsibly.

### **Will the Government be increasing the waste levy?**

The waste levy will not be increased in 2020-21. No decision has yet been made about the levy rates for 2021-22 and subsequent years. Information gathered from this consultation process will inform future work on waste levy rates.

### **Will the Government be changing the waste levy?**

The Government is already progressing a number of waste management reforms that include measures to reduce avoidance and evasion of the waste levy.

The consultation paper for the review asks for information on whether reforms to the design of the levy would make it more effective in helping to achieve the objectives of Waste Strategy 2030.

At this stage, the Government has not made any decisions about the changes that are discussed in the issues paper, and invites feedback from the community.

### **Should there be a levy on waste from outside the Perth metropolitan area?**

The consultation paper seeks information on the advantages and disadvantages of a levy on waste from outside Perth.

When a levy on landfill was first introduced in 1998, the government considered that there were limited opportunities in country areas for recycling as an alternative to landfill. Over 20 years later, significant quantities of recycling have emerged in some regional locations, which indicates that recycling opportunities do exist for specific wastes in areas outside the metropolitan region.

A levy of waste from regional areas may help achieve the targets of Waste Strategy 2030, including its targets for increased recycling in major regional centres.

### **How is the Government addressing concerns about waste levy avoidance and evasion?**

In 2018–19, the Government conducted 220 inspections of licenced premises targeting compliance with the waste levy. The Government investigates any allegations of waste levy evasion or of illegal disposal of waste made by industry or the public, and responds to intelligence reports on potential evasion action.

The Government is progressing a number of reform proposals that will help determine and ensure that waste levy is paid as intended. These are (or have been) subject to separate consultation process.

- **Recordkeeping and reporting:** [Amendments to the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008](#) (WARR Regulations) have been put in place to require record keeping and reporting of waste and recycling data from local governments, waste recyclers and licensees of major regional landfills. More accurate information on waste flows will provide a more complete picture of where waste is being legitimately and beneficially diverted from landfill.
- **Increased use of weighbridges:** [Amendments have been proposed to the WARR Levy Regulations to require the use of weighbridges](#) at Category 63, 64 and 65 landfill premises to calculate leviable waste. Without weighbridges, both leviable and exempted waste loads delivered to landfill premises must be estimated, which can be less accurate than the use of weighbridges and may lead to underpayment of the levy.
- **Clarifying beneficial uses of waste:** The [Review of thresholds for uncontaminated fill](#) further clarifies where waste can be safely used as fill material, and [Waste not, want not – valuing waste as a resource](#) consults on the development of a legislative framework to provide for beneficial re-use of waste-derived materials.

These waste reform projects seek to maximise opportunities for the beneficial re-use of waste materials, which in turn should provide more accessible responses to the waste levy, thereby reducing the incentive for stockpiling and inappropriate disposal.

- **Legislative proposals for waste reform:** [Closing the loop – Waste reforms for a circular economy](#) contains detailed legislative proposals to improve

environmental protection and waste management, including proposed new measures to minimise waste levy avoidance and illegal waste disposal.

There is an [information sheet](#) explaining the relationship between the proposals in Closing the Loop and the consultation paper for the review of the waste levy.