

AEBN- NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2024

# NSW EPA Environmental Initiatives & Regulations for Businesses Operating in NSW

**Dr Asela Atapattu**

Director Strategy and Policy  
NSW Environment Protection Authority

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The NSW Environment Protection Authority acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work, honours the ancestors and the Elders both past and present and extends that respect to all Aboriginal people.

We recognise Aboriginal peoples' spiritual and cultural connection and inherent right to protect the land, waters, skies and natural resources of NSW. This connection goes deep and has since the Dreaming.

We also acknowledge our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who are an integral part of our diverse workforce, and recognise the knowledge and wisdom embedded forever in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodianship of Country and culture.





## Overview

*An overview of the changes expected in 2024 that relates to environmental compliance and initiatives for businesses with operations in NSW, new initiatives by NSW EPA and its expectation of businesses.*

# Who we are

We are more than just a regulator of NSW, but a steward of the environment.

We are responsible for caring and protecting the environment for generations today and tomorrow.

We partner with Aboriginal people, industry and the wider community to protect, restore and enhance our diverse ecosystems.

We bring scientific expertise, experience and actions to inspire innovative solutions as we transition our state to a circular economy and a sustainable future.





# NSW EPA Initiatives & Compliance Changes

- Plastics
- Reuse Repair
- Product Stewardship
- Packaging
- FOGO
- Waste Levy

Join us on our mission to **protect tomorrow together**

# Plastics

- About **88%** of plastic waste generated in NSW ends up in landfill, only **12%** recycled

## Examples of integrated packaging that will be banned from 1 January 2025



an **expanded polystyrene (EPS)** cup containing dry noodles with flavouring or soup powder sealed by a machine-automated process



a **plastic spoon** sealed within the packaging of a snack pack by a machine-automated process



a sealed **plastic straw** attached to a juice box by a machine-automated process



## Achievements

- 2022 bans on single-use plastic and design standards to reduce microbeads.
- Bans will stop almost 2.7 billion items of plastic litter entering the environment over the next 20 years
- \$38 million investments into reducing litter items by 60% by 2030.



# NSW Plastics: Next Steps

## Plastics – What's Next?

- **NSW Plastics: Next Steps** public consultation paper closed February 4.
- Feedback on problematic & unnecessary plastics that:
  - *are frequently littered,*
  - *release microplastics,*
  - *contain harmful chemicals and/or,*
  - *are regulated in other states/ territories*
- Later this year:
  - Releasing report on the results of the consultation.
  - Proposing new regulatory action to reduce problematic plastics.
  - From 2025: ban on single-use items being included in integrated in packaging.



# Reuse Repair

Partnership: Charitable Recycling Australia & its members

- Barriers:
  - Donation of non-reusable products
  - Resources needed for repair
- Benefits:
  - Purchasing second-hand clothes supports charities deliver social services
  - Donating clothes improves accessibility of products to communities in need
  - Extends life of products
  - Diverts waste from landfill





# Reuse Repair

## Potential Policy Initiatives

- Support reuse and repair sector
- Establish greater product owner participation
- Generate community awareness

## Considerations

- Role of Environment, Social & Governance standards for producers
- Assessing sustainable support options for charitable recycling sector
- Educating consumers on social & environmental benefits of reuse repair





# Product Stewardship

## Batteries & Solvents

- Commitments:
  - Improving management of problem waste streams
  - Working with other jurisdictions to strengthen extended producer responsibility schemes
- Immediate focus:
  - Lithium-ion batteries





# Product Stewardship

## Lithium-ion Batteries

- Increased reports of battery caused fires
- ISSUE: Batteries now present in more consumer products
  - Eg. Vapes: widely used, but no clear recycling pathway
- EPA Response
  - Hosted two battery roundtables to discuss issues and potential interventions

## Key Priorities

- Improving public awareness about battery recycling
- Expanding battery & e-waste collection network

## Waste Solvents

- Anecdotal reports of unlicensed facilities accepting flammable solvents from waste generators
- Lack of transparency over volumes of flammable solvents generated and disposed of in NSW
- NSW EPA is investigating & will advise





## Packaging

- 2023: State, Territory & Commonwealth jointly agreed to implement **mandatory packaging design obligations** under Commonwealth law
- Make industry responsible for the packaging they create
- Commonwealth government will regulate scheme & set recycled content requirements & contaminant bans
- NSW EPA supports reforms & involved in co-design with Commonwealth

# Food Organics & Garden Organics (FOGO)

Key Priority: Diverting organic waste from landfill & halving food waste

- To separate FOGO waste at its source
- Create a clean organics waste stream for recycling into compost
- NSW EPA proposing amending the **Protection of the Environment Operations Act** to mandate *source-separated FOGO collections*



## FOGO Mandate Dates

- **1 July 2025:** businesses/ institutions with over 3,800L of residual waste bin capacity
- **1 July 2027:** businesses/ institutions with residual waste bin capacity
- **1 July 2029:** businesses/ institutions with over 660L residual waste bin capacity
- **1 July 2030:** all households



# Waste Levy

- Primary economic tool used to drive the diversion of waste from landfill & promote resource recovery
- *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*
  - Licensed landfills within or receiving waste from defined areas must pay waste levy to NSW EPA for every tonne of waste
  - Other waste facilities must pay for any waste sent to landfill or stockpiled

## Waste Levy Review

- 2020 Auditor-General assessment into effectiveness of waste levy
- **Recommendations**
  - EPA regularly review levy
  - Transparent & objective criteria to determine when waste levy applies
- **EPA action**
  - Engaging with stakeholders on issues
  - Creating issues paper to set review terms of reference
  - Releasing paper shortly for public consultation
  - Will develop recommendations based on paper feedback and external engagement

## Summary

- NSW EPA's implementing several initiatives and changes to environmental compliance in 2024.
- Ensuring you are aware of the changes and able to give feedback is our priority.
- We are guided by our role as a steward of the environment and commitment to ensuring a sustainable future.

# Protect Tomorrow Together