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TAKING ACTION ON WASTE & RECYCLING

Commonwealth, state and territory environment ministers have agreed to cut Australia's supply of waste, increase our recycling capability and increase the demand for recyclable products in response to China's new restrictions on recyclable waste.

Australia is one of over 100 countries affected by China's new restrictions, affecting around 1.3 million tonnes of our recyclable waste. This accounts for four per cent of Australia's recyclable waste, but 35 per cent of recyclable plastics and 30 per cent of recyclable paper and cardboard.

Solving for the 1.3 million tonnes of recyclable waste is an urgent and important issue which requires a coordinated approach from supply right through to demand. It is also an opportunity for Australia to develop its capabilities and capacity in recycling through effective cooperation and collaboration among the three levels of government.

Ministers agreed to the ambitious target that 100 per cent of Australian packaging be recyclable, compostable or reusable by 2025 or earlier to cut down on the amount of waste we produce. The 100 per cent target will be delivered by the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation, working with its 950 member companies.

The Commonwealth will work with states and territory governments to examine opportunities to further develop our recycling industry to process the four per cent of recyclable waste that would have previously gone to China.

To increase demand for recyclable waste, Ministers agreed to advocate, where appropriate, to increase the recyclable materials in goods purchased by governments, such as paper, road base and construction materials.

Following the success of television, computer, tyre and oil product stewardship schemes, Ministers also agreed to fast-track the development of new product stewardship schemes for photovoltaic solar panels and batteries.

Ministers have brought forward the review of Australia's National Waste Policy to be completed within a year. This will ensure that governments are taking the most appropriate and timely actions to support a sustainable recycling industry.

In addition, the Turnbull Government has asked the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and Australian Renewable Energy Agency to prioritise 'waste-to-energy' projects, building on the around \$200 million already invested in this area. Generating energy from waste that is unable to be recycled is common in other countries, particularly in Europe.

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