



THE HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER
MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 1 February 2023

EXPERT GROUP GUIDING AUSTRALIA TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

A new ministerial advisory group has been appointed and will meet for the first time in February to discuss Australia's transition to a circular economy by 2030.

The Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group was established to advise government on the opportunities and challenges in making this transition.

Minister for the Environment and Water Tanya Plibersek has announced new appointments to the group, which is led by its inaugural Chair Professor John Thwaites AM.

Tackling waste, particularly plastics, and moving to a circular economy quickly and efficiently is a priority for the Government.

At the recent Environment Ministers' Meeting late last year, all Australian Environment Ministers committed to working with the private sector and industry to design out waste and pollution, keep materials in use, and foster markets to achieve a circular economy by 2030.

There has been progress towards these goals, but more action is needed to prevent waste, improve product design, and build more efficient production processes.

Quotes attributable to Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP:

"Australians want to do their bit to reduce their waste, recycle household products and lighten their impact on the planet. Reducing waste – particularly plastic waste – is a priority for the Government.

“However, a circular economy is more than just better recycling systems. It’s about designing out waste from the start. Making sure that new products are designed to last longer, to be reused and repaired, and able to have all parts recyclable at the end of the product’s life.

“More than seventy percent of environmental impacts are locked in at the design stage, before a consumer ever purchases a product, and well before we even consider its disposal or reuse.

“I’m excited about the economic opportunities of a circular economy. Australia can be a global leader in technology, innovation, design, materials and processes. By taking the lead, we can create good local jobs using extraordinary Australian creativity.

“Keeping waste out of landfill supports jobs at three times the rate of dumping it.

“It’s these types of issues – and the actions we can take – that the expert Circular Economy Advisory Group will be so important for.

“The group has an impressive range of skills and knowledge, and their outstanding expertise reflect the whole-of supply-chain focus of the circular economy.

“We have a big task ahead of us, however with the Circular Economy Advisory Group, the work of state and territory Environment Ministers, and strong industry leadership – we will get there.”

Quotes attributable to the Inaugural Chair of the Advisory Group, John Thwaites:

“There are good things happening in waste and recycling but much more needs to be done to strengthen our circular economy.

“By developing our circular economy, we reduce waste and pollution, we get more value out of materials in our economy, and we put our economy on a more sustainable footing for growth over the long-term.

“We’ve brought together some of the best and brightest minds from industry, academia and the scientific community to advise on the best path forward.

“We’ll be looking at the most impactful policies and actions that government and industry can pursue to advance our circular economy.

“I look forward to working with the Advisory Group and the Minister to ensure we provide impactful advice to government.”

ENDS

Environment Minister’s office:

Tamsin Lloyd – 0448 006 391

Background - Full membership

Chair - Professor John Thwaites AM, Monash Sustainable Development Institute

- Professor Thwaites is a Professorial Fellow, Monash University, Chair of the Monash Sustainable Development Institute, Chair Climateworks Centre and Chair of The McKinnon Institute for political leadership. He has previously been Chair of the Australian Building Codes Board, President of the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) and a director of the Australian Green Building Council. John was Minister for the Environment in Victoria, the state's first ever Climate Minister, and the Deputy Premier of Victoria for 8 years.

Dr Cathy Foley AO PSM, Australia's Chief Scientist

- Dr Cathy Foley AO PSM became Australia's ninth Chief Scientist in January 2021. Dr Foley's scientific excellence and influential leadership have been recognised with numerous awards and fellowships, including election to the Australian Academy of Science in 2020, and an Order of Australia for service to research science and to the advancement of women in physics.

John Gertsakis, Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence

- Mr Gertsakis is an Adjunct Professor at the Institute of Sustainable Futures, and a Director of the Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence.

Dr Dominique Hes, City of Melbourne

- Dr. Dominique Hes is an award-winning author, consultant, collaborator, researcher and academic working in the areas of regenerative development, placemaking, biophilia, urban greenery, and sustainable development. She was a founding Board member of the Living Future Institute of Australia (LFIA) serving from 2012 until 2015, she served as trustee at Trust for Nature board, and is now the Chair of the Board of Greenfleet.

Michael Jackson, Australian Council of Recycling

- Mr Jackson is general manager for Strategic Development for Road Services at Downer, a leading provider of integrated services in Australia and New Zealand. He is also President of the Australian Council of Recycling.

Paul Klymenko, Planet Ark

- Mr Klymenko has worked in fostering sustainability in Australia for over 35 years. In 1987 he co-founded Australian Ethical, Australia's first socially responsible investment manager with now over \$8b under management. He co-founded Planet Ark and is the key instigator of the new Australian Circular Economy Hub.

Claire Kneller, WRAP Asia Pacific

- Ms Kneller is the Managing Director of WRAP Asia Pacific, a not for profit focussed on the transition to a circular economy, especially for our food, clothing and plastic packaging. She also works with Fight Food Waste, the organisation leading the delivery of Australia's halving food waste target.

Vaughan Levitzke PSM, Circular 360

- Mr Levitzke is the former Chief Executive of Zero Waste SA and Green Industries SA for over 17 years and is Chair of Circular360 based in Adelaide. He introduced the first assessment of the benefits of a circular economy to South Australia in 2017 and has developed and implemented four 5-year waste strategies.

Romilly Madew AO, Engineers Australia

- Romilly Madew is CEO of Engineers Australia. She was previously CEO of Infrastructure Australia (IA) and the Green Building Council of Australia for 13 years. In acknowledgment of her contribution to Australia's sustainable building movement, she was awarded an Order of Australia in 2019.

Dr Larry Marshall, CSIRO

- Dr Larry Marshall is Chief Executive of CSIRO, Australia's national science agency. Larry is a scientist, technology innovator and business leader with a wealth of experience in creating new value and impact with science.

Lisa McLean, Circular Australia

- Lisa McLean is Managing Director and CEO of Circular Australia, an independent circular economy peak body leading the transition to a zero carbon circular economy in Australia. Lisa has been successfully working to catalyse new markets and policy frameworks to enable the circular zero-carbon economy for the past 25 years in Australia and abroad.

Professor Robynne Quiggin, University of Technology Sydney

- Professor Quiggin is a member of the Wiradyuri nation, and has practised as a solicitor, advisor and academic on legal, compliance and policy areas of relevance to Indigenous Australians.

Mark Rawson, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia

- Mr Rawson is a leading specialist in waste, recycling and resource management. Mark has been National Vice President and Board Member of the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia since 2020, and was previously the Regional Manager for Cleanaway for SA/NT.

Samantha Read, Chemistry Australia

- Ms Read is CEO of Chemistry Australia. Her career spans more than 30 years across the chemicals, plastics, renewable fuels, automotive and steel industries. Previously, Samantha was CEO of the Biofuels Association of Australia and an Executive Director of GM Holden Ltd.

Professor John Spoehr, Flinders University

- Professor Spoehr is the Pro Vice Chancellor – Research Impact at Flinders University, and Director of the Australian Industrial Transformation Institute. He is also founding Director of the Factory of the Future at Tonsley Innovation District.