BALT

Designing a future without waste

A response to the
Draft Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022 - 2025

BALT

Business Action Learning Tasmania
Supporting self-reliant industry development, with diverse companies cooperating to improve their profitability, develop their people and grow the Tasmanian economy.

Tasmania is in a unique position to learn from the experience of others and design bespoke solutions, specific to our location, our industries, our natural environment, and our communities.

Business Action Learning Tasmania (BALT) congratulates the Waste and Resource Recovery Board on the formation of the Draft Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022-2025 (the Strategy).

The proposed approach for implementing the Strategy aligns with BALT's vision of self-reliant industry development, with diverse companies cooperating to improve their profitability, develop their people and grow the Tasmanian economy. The objectives and priority actions in the Strategy address many of the recommendations previously put forward by BALT in response to the Tasmanian Draft Waste Action Plan.

As a leader in promoting and implementing sustainable design and circular thinking in Tasmanian businesses, BALT is committed to supporting the WRR Board in achieving the objectives and targets set for the three-year period of the Strategy. BALT acknowledges that the urgent need for administrative and infrastructure support to achieve these targets must be prioritised. This response reinforces a pathway to sustainable and regenerative systems that could be diverted by overcapitalisation in recycling facilities as an immediate solution.

There are five recommendations put forward in this response that are intended to optimise the opportunities for circularity in the long-term, while delivering the short-term objectives and targets of the Strategy:

1. [Decentralisation and co-design of planning and action](#)

2. [Strategic investment in low-risk, fast iteration experimentation](#)

3. [Prioritise processing materials at the source](#)

4. [Build sustainable design capability into the Tasmanian workforce](#)

5. [Endorse the ongoing delivery of BREP](#)

Background

Business Action Learning Tasmania (BALT) is best known as a facilitator of Lean projects, however, its core business is action learning. Action learning is primarily about collaborative problem solving, through collective learning from action and reflection. BALT is a relationship broker with over a decade of experience in bringing companies together, scoping suitable projects and managing collaborative learning activities. These activities are underpinned by a framework that meets international standards for collaborative business relationships and includes critical elements of learning organisations and successful cluster initiatives; the creation of trust and the concepts of reciprocity and cooperation.

In 2018, BALT launched the Business Resource Efficiency Program (BREP), in partnership with the Tasmanian government, through Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (ReCFIT, formerly the Tasmanian Climate Change Office). BREP is a collaborative action learning program assisting small to medium-sized businesses to reduce their consumption of resources and minimise waste streams.

Since 2010, BALT has facilitated over 40 successful business improvement projects in a range of industry sectors in Tasmania. In addition to BREP, the award-winning Lean Action Learning program has delivered significant business and sustainability outcomes for participating businesses, using a collaborative approach to eliminate waste from operations[1].

BALT has undertaken independent research over the past decade to inform the development of strategies for regional, economic and workforce development in Tasmania[2]. Lean Action Learning and BREP have attracted international attention, and BALT is the only known example of businesses collaborating to solve wicked problems through action learning.

This response to the Draft Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022 - 2025 is based on this research and builds upon a previous response to the Tasmanian draft Waste Action Plan.

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[1] Bell Bay Aluminium, 2013 Sustainable Development Report, page 12
[2] Publications – Business Action Learning Tasmania

Recommendation 1:

Decentralisation and co-design of planning and action

Integrated and coordinated resource recovery planning across the state and regions is critical to ensuring that processes are efficient and fully exploit planned infrastructure and processes already in place.

BALT recommends that the alignment of state, regional and local planning is driven from the ground up. Local government areas are assisted to develop their strategic plans in consultation with the local community, businesses, and resident industries. Based on the collective deep knowledge of the activities consuming and/or generating resources in their area and the inherent skills and capabilities of the region, opportunities for synergistic partnerships and open innovation can be clearly defined and fed back to regional development groups and the state government.

Starting at a local level ensures inclusive and equitable participation in the planning and decision-making process, while also promoting sustainable and regenerative economic growth. Through open innovation and place-based network development, stakeholders can co-create solutions that address local challenges and support the long-term viability of the community. Developing capabilities in existing businesses, or building new businesses, around local solutions should be prioritised.

A decentralised, co-design approach to planning and action will:

- Promote innovation and new business development,
- Encourage regional ownership and engagement in implementation,
- Highlight diversity and homogeneity in the opportunities defined across the state,
- Prevent monopolisation by centralised waste management providers, and
- Ensure that state planning is inclusive and fit for purpose.

Recommendation 2:

Strategic investment in low-risk, fast iteration experimentation

BALT recommends that small seed funding grants are awarded to local startups and small businesses developing circular economy (CE) innovations that align with opportunities defined by the planning process.

Seed funding can be used to facilitate new business development and overcome initial barriers to entry, such as lack of access to capital and expertise for developing prototypes and conducting market research. The grant process will showcase potential design solutions and connect entrepreneurs with industry partners for iterative product development and ultimate commercialisation.

A partnership with Tasmanian startup incubator, Enterprize, through the Born Global accelerator program could provide a pipeline of CE innovations and encourage entrepreneurs to focus on other opportunities in CE.

Image: Jinglers Creek Vineyard developed swarm technology to replicate defensive bird behaviour with drones, deterring birds from approaching the vines and eliminating the need for nylon netting.
https://businessactionlearningtas.com.au/case-studies/jinglers-creek-vineyard/

Recommendation 3:

Prioritise processing materials at the source

BALT recommends that investment in alternative solutions to large, centralised infrastructure for processing material waste is considered. Small composters, crushers, shredders and perforators can be purchased off-the-shelf for $3,000 to $30,000 and offer small to medium-sized businesses an opportunity to process waste streams into higher value materials, reduce volumes for transport, or develop new products to eliminate or repurpose waste.

In NSW, local governments have established fleets of equipment for lease to local businesses at very low cost, which can be easily offset by reduced waste disposal costs.

Mobile or 'pop up' services could be developed for remote and rural areas, particularly those with seasonal or annual events, such as summer/midwinter festivals and the lavender flowering season.

Image: Bridestowe Lavender Estate purchased a desktop cardboard perforator to process supplier packaging for use as a substitute for plastic bubble wrap in their own packaging, effectively eliminating two problem wastes.

https://businessactionlearningtas.com.au/case-studies/bridestowe-lavender-estate/

Recommendation 4:

Build sustainable design capability into the Tasmanian workforce

BALT recommends an urgent response to the lack of relevant learning pathways for sustainable design in Tasmania. Local expertise in product lifecycle assessment, design for disassembly, and other tools and principles of sustainable design is essential to increase the value of materials in use. Re-use, repair, and manufacture of secondary products requires specialised design capabilities.

Current offerings from the University of Tasmania and TasTAFE do not provide adequate specialisation in sustainable design. Establishing learning pathways and building workforce capability requires a long lead time and action should be taken early to ensure that the transition to a CE is supported by a skilled workforce. Tertiary institutions must be challenged to provide targeted courses that address these specific skills needs, or expertise must be imported from outside Tasmania.

Image: Kempe Engineering and Bell Bay Aluminium developed a cost effective recycling process for used collector bar tails and used Lifecycle Assessment to demonstrate improved sustainability performance.
https://businessactionlearningtas.com.au/case-studies-lal/bell-bay-aluminiumkempe-engineering/

Recommendation 5:

Endorse the ongoing delivery of BREP

BALT recommends BREP as a vehicle for continuing education and application of CE and sustainable design principles in small to medium-sized businesses in Tasmania. Moreover, the program should be extended to broker relationships between large stakeholders and promote open innovation for CE.

BALT has established a relationship with the Ellen Macarthur Foundation (EMF), a global leader in Circular Economy thinking. EMF promote action learning as a tool for developing the circular economy and regard BREP as a leading model for SME businesses.

A second BREP was launched in 2022 and is underway at time of writing. Programs are funded on an ad-hoc basis at the discretion of the Minister. Endorsement of the program and support for ongoing funding will provide early adopters of CE and entrepreneurs with a platform for low-risk collaboration and experimentation.

Image: BREP participants from Botanical Resources Australia and Penguin Composites at Nichols Poultry to observe single use plastics in use and investigate alternative solutions through collaborative action learning. https://businessactionlearningtas.com.au/case-studies/nichols-poultry/