



Waste Management in Residential Construction

Policy Background

- Reducing waste to landfill is a priority activity for all tiers of government and industry in Australia.
- The challenge for the building and construction industry is to achieve a sensible balance between the need to construct and renovate homes at an affordable cost and in an efficient manner and whilst minimising the impact on the environment.

Policy Issues

- Australians are raising their awareness of environmental issues. Recycling at home has become second nature.
- Waste avoidance and recycling will need to be further implemented in the industry. Re-educating the workforce will take some time and require a commitment to operational change
- Waste is a significant visual environmental and health and safety issue for the housing industry both on-site and post construction.
- Whilst landfill space is at capacity in several major metropolitan areas, sending waste to landfill is currently inexpensive, so that there is not a large economic incentive to change current practices.
- No single waste management approach guarantees significant waste reduction and cost savings in the housing industry.
- Life-cycle analysis of products is in its infancy but supporting the industry in leading the way in new innovations and technologies for product recycling and reuse is essential.
- HIA's GreenSmart initiative assists members to develop innovative and appropriate responses to minimising the impact of the industry on the environment.

HIA's Policy Position on Waste Management in Residential Construction

- HIA encourages recycling opportunities and reuse of material in the housing industry.
- HIA recognises the limitation of regional operations away from major centres or where the volume of waste does not permit the economic recycling of waste. Support from Government is required to encourage opportunities in this area.
- In an effort to reduce the amount of waste to landfill, HIA will continue to work with state and local governments and waste management bodies to pursue opportunities for minimizing waste created through housing industry activity.

- Further, in all new residential development and renovations HIA supports:
 - plans to avoid or minimise waste on housing construction sites;
 - improvements to avoid generating waste such as accurate estimating and ordering of materials;
 - minimisation of waste during building operations;
 - the reuse or recycling of waste where practical; and,
 - efficient and appropriate disposal of unavoidable and excessive waste.
- Industry and Governments should promote voluntary and self-regulatory methods to produce a higher level of activity and outcomes beyond what is achievable with a minimum regulatory standard.
- Governments could also:
 - facilitate accurate collation and recording of data at landfill and recovery facilities;
 - Introduce incentives to companies prepared to conduct life cycle analysis of a material to assist with the creation of better waste data sets;
 - Encourage recycling and reuse of materials on site; and,
 - Establish a national materials inventory as a way of identifying the greatest areas of gain in relation to waste management.