



SITA Australia Pty Ltd
ABN 70 002 902 650

Corporate Office

Level 3, 3 Rider Boulevard
Rhodes, Sydney
NSW 2138
Australia

PO Box 3500, Rhodes Waterside
Sydney
NSW 2138
Australia

Phone: +61 2 8754 0000

Fax: +61 2 8754 0199

Email: Australia@sita.com.au

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ENERGY EFFICIENT BUSINESSES NEED TO BE REWARDED IN ETS - WASTE COMPANY TELLS SENATE INQUIRY

One of the country's largest waste management companies told a Senate Inquiry today that an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) would fall short if it did not reward businesses by recognising energy efficiency in - or in parallel to - the scheme.

Speaking before the Senate Inquiry into the Management of Australia's Waste Streams, SITA Environmental Solutions' Mike Ritchie said that leaving energy efficiency out of an Emissions Trading Scheme would be neglecting one of the key drivers that will make the scheme work.

"A manufacturer or retailer that recycles aluminium will sell that aluminium to a smelter. The smelter gets the benefits of the reduced emissions and reduced permits but the business gets no direct recognition for its recycling effort", said Mr Ritchie, SITA's National General Manager, Marketing and Communications and also NSW President of the Waste Management Association of Australia.

On the eve of the release of the draft Garnaut Review report Mr Ritchie said: "ETS needs to directly recognise and encourage that effort through some form of energy efficiency 'credit'".

"You can multiply this situation thousands of times throughout the economy.

"I can see that the Government wants to avoid double counting but the emissions trading scheme cannot ignore the vital contribution that energy efficiency through recycling will make to its success", he said.

Mr Ritchie also called on the Federal Government to revive a national waste strategy.

"We haven't had a national waste strategy for 18 years and we badly need one", he said.

Mr Ritchie said that a coherent waste policy needed to link the issues of climate change, waste targets, Extended Producer Responsibility and planning and infrastructure.

"No State in the country is in line to meet five-year waste diversion targets over all their waste streams. Most States will miss most targets by a long way", Mr Ritchie said.

The focus needed to be the 15 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions that the waste sector contributes to Australia's emissions profile and on organic waste - the biggest contributor as organic waste to landfill.

The solutions lay in:

- Improved landfill gas capture on existing landfills
- Reducing organic waste disposal to landfill
- Significant improvements in Australia's recycling rates.

Mr Ritchie said that a national approach would help the industry make savings of up to 35 million tonnes of CO2 emissions a year - around 7 percent of Australia's total carbon emissions equally to taking all cars off Australian roads.

This would require an investment of around \$4 billion in new technology - mainly Alternative Waste Treatment Facilities - which the waste management industry is ready to make, with the right regulatory framework in place.

Media contact: Mike Ritchie 87540199/0401980391

Mike is also Chairman of the National Carbon Committee of Waste Management Association of Australia

Michael Meagher 0410482367