Expanding Reuse Opportunities for Recycled Construction Materials in WA - RECOMMENDATIONS

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Below are recommendations for further research to address industry concerns and impediments limiting the reuse of recycled construction materials in WA development projects.

It became clear during recent work done to prepare an industry guide that there are a number of further steps that are required to boost recycling and reuse of construction materials in WA.

The recommendations were developed following extensive industry feedback provided through two major surveys and direct one-on-one consultations with key industry participants.

These reforms, if implemented, will help achieve the Waste Strategy 2030 'Recover' objective to increase material recovery and reuse to 75% by 2025.

Both of us are happy to provide additional background to these recommendations.

Regards

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

FURTHER DEVELOP SECONDARY MARKETS

1. Develop and promote nuanced fit-for-purpose standards, specifications, and fact sheets for specific applications – such as landscaping, road building, civil works, land subdivision.
    - e.g. Soil permeability specifications for construction projects and paved hardstand surfaces, covered pavements, car-parks, crossovers – where requirements can be less onerous that for general fill which has required higher permeability.
2. Support recycling through template or standard procurement clauses for local and state government projects, after consultation with recyclers.
3. Introduce mandated minimum recycling content for State Government construction procurement (in other than traditional road building and land development projects) such as hardstand, car-parks, pavements, civils for building construction projects, and landscape applications, building construction of pre-cast panels, rammed earth walls, building blocks and retaining walls.
4. Introduce a requirement to assess recycled construction material components in State Government tendering selection criteria for road building and land development.
5. Engage recyclers and key government agencies in the new requirements for procurement of recycled products and consider how the reputable recyclers can best deliver these at an affordable price and to address required standards.
6. Better promotion of recycled materials through demonstration and case study projects both within the civils building construction and landscape, and product development such as backing-blocks, precast walls, retaining walls and landscape elements. Consider grants using waste levy revenues to promote innovation in the recycling of construction materials.
7. Educate builders on recycling options. Builders are reluctant to use specified recycled content e.g. concrete mix (20%) and other materials. Many builders are also unaware if their standard materials do or don't have an eco-certification (e.g. PVC).
8. Incentivise private investment in technology that supports more effective recycling methods for construction materials.
9. Promote the recycled content included in construction materials e.g. steel fittings and pipelines, recycled content in PVC pipe, recycled content in copper pipes, recycled bricks etc.

RECYCLER ACCREDITATION / COMPLIANCE RECOGNITION

10. Better recognition of recyclers' regulatory status and past performance, based on published compliance with minimum licensing and testing standards by DWER:
    - e.g. If a recycler has achieved high level of compliance for all testing over a period of years this can be recognised by DWER as a compliant supplier.
11. Evaluate an industry led accreditation scheme for recyclers of construction materials based on the approach of the Green Building Council of Australia.

TIGHTER CONTROLS OVER POOR WASTE DISPOSAL PRACTICES

12. Stricter licencing and increased monitoring of skip-bin operators and demolition contractors (similar to the licensing of electricians, plumbers and painters in WA) to reduce mixed-loads being used as uncontrolled deep fill.
13. Review licensing for landfill practices outside metropolitan area (or waste levy 'catchment' zone). This is required to support the reputable licensed recycling industry and recycling in general, and by extension supporting achieving Waste Authority recycling targets.
14. Review land subdivision practices and their impact on recycling by engaging with industry representatives. There is little or no incentive for developers to retain existing assets or features in the land development stage of a project (e.g. tree canopy, mulch & topsoil) – so longer-term costs of materials used are not taken into account unless there is a rating tool applied.

MITIGATE REGULATORY BARRIERS TO RECYCLING

15. Stockpiling of mulch resulted in recyclers being penalised due to increased Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) fire ratings.
16. Introduce greater flexibility for licensed facilities to expand processed volumes where they are already meeting their licensing standards.
17. Review noise and dust environmental standards from onsite sand screening/recycling that has created unnecessarily stringent and costly environmental compliance costs.
18. Work with local governments to better provide for multiple onsite bins to facilitate site separation on building sites as an option for builders and owner-builders.