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I live in one of the 11 council regions.

I understand this application differs from the previous application. It seeks approval for 3 years of joint planning and doesn't yet allow councils to enter binding waste supply or construction contracts.

I am concerned, though, that decisions made during these 3 years may determine what happens later.

The application defines Residual Waste as waste that cannot be technically, environmentally, economically or practically recovered.

What cannot be recycled or recovered today can and will be recyclable or recoverable in 5, 10 or 20 years as technology and markets improve. Already there are far more recycling & reuse initiatives which fall outside of regular council opportunities.

Councils also propose sharing information on the amount, composition & quality of Residual Waste while developing their regional approach.

I ask the ACCC to consider safeguards ensuring

- Residual Waste is determined using clear & transparent criteria
- Waste is not automatically treated as permanently residual simply because it currently goes to landfill
- Recycling & resource recovery businesses have a genuine opportunity to demonstrate that materials can be recovered before those materials are included in the waste volumes used to plan large regional facilities
- Emerging technologies & smaller competing providers are not excluded by decisions made during this 3 year planning period
- Future waste volumes are not treated as fixed if recycling & recovery improve
- No decisions made during this planning period unnecessarily restrict competition when the councils later seek approval for actual waste supply & infrastructure contracts

I support councils working together to produce better outcomes, however, collaboration should not unintentionally lock SEQ into today's assumptions about waste for decades to come.

The 3 year planning process should preserve future choices and competition, rather than narrow them before the future procurement process begins.