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Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Submission from General Public Member Frances Lennard

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Full name: Frances Lennard

Contact details: [REDACTED]
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Submission to Recycling and Waste Management Inquiry

Hi,

I am a 22 year-old university student and I am writing this submission as I would like to have a say, as a member of the general public, in our management of Victoria's waste. I am deeply concerned about the current state of our waste management system. Every day I feel disappointed in our community and government about the state of it. I see rubbish littered everywhere I go, covering what would be beautiful land if it weren't for non-biodegradable plastics laying on the ground, from fast-food packaging/containers to single-use water bottles. It is really saddening that we are not caring for our land properly. We need to do something about this! This is where you can help us, as the general public, to set up strategies and policies for us to follow and hopefully we can turn this crisis around.

Some short- and long-term solutions I have in mind include:

- A Victorian Container Deposit Scheme. Other states, most notably South Australia who have had it for 20 years, have such a system in place and it seems like a fantastic idea. It gives the containers some worth, where people can be encouraged to return containers properly and have the financial incentive too. I think this scheme would especially be great for younger school kids as an activity.
- Using the green garden waste bins as food waste bins that can be commercially composted! Food waste is such a massive contributor to landfill and has a terrible impact on the environment. I have learned about this in my tertiary-level education, and some of the more prominent statistics that stand out to me are that:
 - 40% of food is wasted in Australia
 - If food waste was a country, it would be the 3rd largest contributor to greenhouse emissions (behind USA and China)

Such a simple thing can have a big difference. People would be more inclined to save their food scraps and make sure they go in the green bin for composting. It's also a great solution for people like me who live in apartments and do not have the luxury of a garden that we can use the compost for

- Community education is key! Help us as consumers make wise decisions about what can be recycled and what can be composted etc. Going a further step would be to let consumers know about the benefits of actually re-using and repairing products. We have become such a 'throw-away' society, using so many single-use disposable products, yet there is no 'away', this throwing 'away' is a fantasy, everything has to end up somewhere, whether it's on land or in our ocean. There are these fantastic initiatives called repair workshops where people can get together who have specialised skills (e.g. woodwork or sewing) and can help each other mend broken products. Another initiative is called a Sharing Shed, where the public

can come and hire out tools that they would only use once or twice, and everyone can share what they have so people are not just purchasing products that they don't necessarily need

- Using waste to energy is NOT the solution, this is NOT acceptable. Incinerating our waste creates even more problems for us, especially seeing as this process leads to many air pollutants being released into the community
- Give incentives to companies to use re-usable packaging or re-fillable packaging! For example, milk is something that used to come in re-useable and infinitely recyclable packaging, glass! Nowadays our only option is often plastic packaging, which can only be recycled either once or twice.
- Mandatory recycling services for all businesses, schools, organisations, hospitals etc. – with your money from the sustainability fund you should be able to educate and implement such infrastructures in these organisations
- And lastly, BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTICS!!! They aren't doing anyone any good, it's time to make it stop

Thank you,

Frances