

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for transitioning Australia to a circular economy – This strategy should address commercial and industrial waste, construction and demolition waste, as well as municipal waste

6. Any other related matters

ZWV also recommends the Victorian Government:

- Support local governments to have a Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) collection to recycle food and garden waste into compost for farmers, keeping it out of landfill, which will result in a reduction of Greenhouse gas emissions
- Mandate that plastic carry bags cannot be given out for free; there must be an emphasis on reusable bags. A levy for the sale of all plastic bags should be set by the government. All proceeds from the levies from these bags, to be allocated to an Environment fund. This could, over time, extend to all plastic bags and not be limited to carry bags. This is the approach the [UK government](#) has taken, which not only reduces plastic bag consumption, but funds environmental initiatives which can alleviate some of the environmental damage that these bags cause
- This Environment Fund could support a range of initiatives including
 - Subsidising start-up packaging reuse initiatives
 - Community groups cleaning up litter and improving the environment
 - Enabling environmental groups to document pollution from litter cleans and identify sources of pollution.
 - Waste-wise and recycling education programs for businesses, schools and the community to enable better waste disposal and recycling practises
 - Research & development to develop products or components supporting improved environmental outcomes such as refillable bottles and reusable packaging schemes.
 - Innovations aimed at better managing resource recovery and applications for product development from reclaimed materials.
- Advocate to the Federal Government for
 - Mandatory product stewardship for all products that generate waste
 - A ban on the importation and manufacture of hard to recycle materials, when there are more sustainable options available
 - A mandatory ban on the import, manufacture and supply of products containing microbeads, effective immediately
 - Phasing out all single-use (disposable) items containing plastic or polystyrene and advocating reusables where practical
 - Levying the importation and sale of synthetic material and clothing
 - Giving consumers stronger legal foundations for taking action under the Australian Consumer Law when products break or are designed so they are unable to be repaired
 - Requiring the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) to set a minimum recycling target of 100% for all packaging by 2020 and mandate improved enforcement of APCO
 - Taking preventive action when there is uncertainty
 - Shifting the burden of proof to the proponents of the activity
- Increasing public participation in decision making

Waste to Energy –

This is an important topic which needs to be addressed in its own right. Recovery of Energy processes refer to a range of technologies and are often referred to as Waste to Energy (WtE). The range of terminology around these technologies can be confusing, and a part of the problem is that this terminology refers to technologies which are very different.

Non-thermal technologies such as Anaerobic Digestion of waste and capturing methane from landfill to generate electricity have significant environmental benefits. However the term ‘Waste to Energy’ is also used as a marketing line by incinerator companies to make their technologies appear more environmentally sound than they actually are. Thermal WtE processes are also known as gasification, pyrolysis, plasma arc and combustion. The challenge is that Anaerobic Digestion compared to Thermal technologies are significantly different processes, yet are commonly grouped as ‘Waste to Energy’ or “Energy Recovery”

Issue of concern with Thermal WtE technologies are:

- There are claims that burning waste is a form of renewable energy, but that is marketing hype from the waste incineration industry.
- Incinerating waste does not support or circular economy, in fact it undermines efforts to avoid, reduce, reuse, compost and recycle waste. These operations might appear to provide an ‘easy way out’ for councils today, but they require a large amount of waste on a continual basis to be viable. If an incinerator type plant is established today, the waste it burns for the next 25 years cannot be accurately predicted and neither can the nature of the emissions.
- There should be no subsidies, funds, benefits or incentives for thermal W2E projects incineration.
- The EPA has recently approved a WtE plant to be constructed by Australian Paper in the Latrobe Valley without a source-separating facility, which can’t guarantee that recyclables won’t be destroyed. Preliminary investigations have been funded by the state government.
- Ballarat is considering a plasma gasification operation, but would it be more appropriate to focus on recycling facilities in the region?
- New York has passed legislation to prohibit incineration facilities and our Victorian parliament should take this into account.
- There should be a moratorium on construction of WtE facilities in Victoria that use thermal technologies, while waste avoidance, reuse and recycling programs are expanded to their full potential