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To: [recyclinginquiry](#)
Subject: Inquiry into recycling and waste management
Date: Thursday, 30 May 2019 11:45:17 PM

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Considering the withdrawal of China and Malaysia from taking our waste for processing I believe the waste management industry in Victoria needs a massive revamp. I would hope to see it transform in a way that follows the principles of sustainable development. Currently as a Nation we are failing our international obligations to act on pressing environmental issues. For example, the SDG Index and Dashboards Report (2018) ranks Australia as having “Major challenges remaining” in achieving the 12th sustainable development goal, responsible consumption and production. This is the lowest ranking of the four categorical rankings given.

Furthermore, and considering the 12 Sustainable Development Goals, as a nation Australia is performing very poorly in climate action and responsible consumption and production. In fact, Australia is one of the most resource/carbon-intensive countries in the OECD. Considering that we have a proportionally large impact on hugely important global environmental issues I believe that Australia as a nation needs to drastically work on its performance in this area. This is crucial to ensuring fundamentally important ecosystem function, which provides humanity with irreplaceable ecosystem services, but also for the protection of human rights, integrity and health.

Regarding waste management, I think solving issues around plastic production and consumption is one of the more obvious changes that could be made. Given that there are an estimated 150 million tonnes of plastic waste currently in the ocean (statistic provided from the World Economic Forum) and that there is not nearly enough action on cleaning it (take for example, the great pacific garbage patch), I do not think we can continue to contribute to the pollution of our waters as the situation is bad enough as it is.

The 2016-17 Australian plastics recycling survey – national report (2017) found that the national plastic recycling rate was 11.8% and that Australians used 5.66 billion single-use plastic bags. I think this highlights two main changes that could be made to our waste management system.

For one, I don't think most Victorians are aware that some plastics are recyclable and which ones those are. I think a solution to this could be an education program on what is and isn't recyclable. A more straightforward system of labelling would also be appreciated, although I do not know if this is the scope of this inquiry. I also believe we could improve the amount of processing necessary at recycling facilities by calling for most of the recycling to be sorted at home – for example with the use of a few different recycling bins. A similar system is in use in Japan and is very effective. To make sure this change is fair I believe it would be useful to have assistance service provided, or exemption, for people who are not able-bodied and may find this task difficult.

A piece of legislation that I believe has the potential to impact change in this area is the National Environment Protection (Used Packaging Materials) Measure of 2011. Under this instrument businesses that produce packaging or packaged products and that have a turnover of \$5 million must follow a series of regulations as listed under clause 9 of the Measure. However, Clause 10, which is concerned with the enforcement of these obligations, states that “brand owners will not

be penalise for failure to discharge their obligations” unless they have been specifically notified to comply with them. I believe that stricter obligations put on businesses could see some improvement in this area.

Second, the banning of most single-use plastics. In particular; plastic bottles and lids, straws, drink stirrers, plastic bags and party balloons. Cigarettes also contain small bits of plastics that act as filters so I would be in support of a tax on cigarettes for the plastic component, an education campaign on the fact cigarettes contain plastics and the effects of littering them, as well as an increased number of bins for cigarettes. I also am in support of the idea of water taps being more common in public spaces – especially further out in rural Victoria and in places such as shopping strips, parks and public spaces, to accompany the banning of plastic water bottles, as well as allowing businesses to stockpile plastic straws specifically for the use of customers with disabilities.

In relation to the first point; while recycling plastics (as well as other materials) is useful, shifting re-useable packaging where possible would be a greater improvement as it reduces the need for recycling facilities. In particular areas like food courts in shopping centres much change could be brought about in how food is served to customers; for example, imposing some form of legislation that requires food courts (perhaps with the exception of drive throughs) to serve their food not in their own packaging, but in ceramic plates and bowls. This could provide more work for the cleaning staff of shopping centres so may require more staff or facilities to manage this change effectively.

It would also be useful to have standardised drink sizes (for example, specifically for take-away coffees, juice or bubble tea) across stores so that when people bring their own re-useable cups to stores it minimises the need for staff to measure the amount of drink using a plastic or foam cup first.

These are my main thoughts on the matter. To reiterate, they are:

- 1) Sorting recyclables at home into different recycling bins, and an accompanying education program on how to sort and recycle them. Particular emphasis on the need to recycle plastics and how to identify which plastics are and aren't recyclable.
- 2) A change to the National Environment Protection (Used Packaging Materials) Measure of 2011, which does not impose any consequences for failure to meet the regulations.
- 3) Banning single-use plastics such as bottles, straws, stirrers, balloons and plastic bags, as well as an education campaign on the plastics in cigarettes to encourage their appropriate disposal.
- 4) A shift to re-useable food packaging such as in food courts, by serving food not in the companies packaging but requiring the use of re-useable crockery, and a standardised measure for drinks

I hope that all my points were made clearly and all the information here is correct (being a person not particularly trained in the law or a bit unsure about what the State Government exactly has the power to do, I cannot be sure all my comments are entirely relevant). I really hope that some large systematic change occurs in the waste management industry, and I believe that majority of Victorian's have a great about of concern and frustration towards our current system and would back some form of change to make our waste management more efficient and sustainable.

I have no issue with my submission being made public.