

**From:** [Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management](#)  
**To:** [recyclinginquiry](#)  
**Subject:** New Submission to Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management  
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Ms Amanda Kwong  
[REDACTED]

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## **SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Dear Committee Secretariat, Environment and Planning Committee, Legislative Council, Parliament of Victoria,

Re: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

As a private citizen of Victoria with a keen interest in protecting our State's natural environment from the scourge of plastic waste, I am writing to the Parliamentary Inquiry to provide anecdotal evidence of the frustration I have had in attempting household waste reduction strategies in my own home as well as my apartment complex.

Based on my observations of recycling practices within my own apartment complex, recycling is a confusing issue, or not necessarily an issue at the forefront of people's minds as they perceive it as 'too difficult'. Too often, I notice soft plastic contamination in co-mingled recycling bins, or a disregard for sorting waste into recyclable/non-recyclable in the first instance. When I am out walking in my neighbourhood, there is litter cast aside mindlessly on the street. Within my submission, I outline issues that I see within my community and possible solutions that could be considered by the State Parliament of Victoria.

Issue: Contaminants/inappropriate items are often found in our shared apartment recycling and green waste bins

Solution: provide better education regarding sorting of recycled materials

- Provide education in different languages
- Implement a State-wide education program to encourage better recycling

Solution: make soft plastic recycling available within kerbside collections

- Upgrade sorting facilities or provide separate bins for soft plastic recycling. Currently, we provide a soft plastic bin for our apartment residents and we take it upon ourselves to drop residents' soft plastics to the local supermarkets for REDcycling

Solution: make recycling rules consistent across the State of Victoria

- Our apartment has transient residents who do not know the recycling rules of our local council. Consistency across the state about recycling rules would reduce the amount of contaminants in our bins from transient residents

Solution: create positive incentives for residents who recycle right with minimal contamination

- Fines may be one solution, though this may not be as effective as say, providing a rebate or discount on council rates for recycling right and/or reducing landfill waste
- A container deposit scheme creates the perfect financial incentive for residents to value recycling and encourage people to return bottles for cash incentives

Solution: mandate business/schools/community organisations to have a recycling service

- Implementing good recycling strategies in the workplace can be a good place to transition good recycling practices at home
- Provide accreditation for workplaces to become “green” workplaces, or workplaces which produce minimal landfill due to good recycling practices based on audits etc.

Issue: Commercial and residential food waste contributes to a large proportion of landfill which can release harmful greenhouse gases in our environment

Solution: provide kerbside collection for food waste recycling for both household and hospitality industries

- My current council (Glen Eira) offers this service. However, not all residents are aware of this, and given the fortnightly collection rotation, our bins become infested with unwanted pests and smells
- Ensure weekly collection of food scraps for all households across Victoria
- Provide incentives for hospitality industries to manage food waste in a circular economy

Solution: Provide incentives for home composting, such as the heavy discounts offered in some councils for the purchase of home composting systems

- This should be partnered with community workshops to improve the success of home composting

Issue: Purchasing consumable items free from packaging or in compostable/recyclable/non-plastic packaging is not always possible

Solution: Provide clarity and support to mainstream supermarkets or other vendors to allow customers to BYO bags and containers to purchase produce

- Despite best efforts from consumers to attempt to reduce their waste footprint by bringing their own containers to takeaways, delis, butchers, markets or other fresh produce vendors, some traders cite “food safety” concerns and refuse customers bringing their own containers to purchase meat, deli items or other small goods.

Solution: ban unnecessary packaging from fruit/vegetable item or provide an option to buy produce free from plastic packaging

- Provide compostable/recyclable/recycled paper options for purchasing food/produce
- Solution: create incentives for businesses to use recyclable, compostable, reusable packaging

- Example: a local café in Carnegie, “Beans ‘n’ cream” sells ice-cream in glass jars that can be taken back and used as a discount for your next purchase of ice-cream for a deposit of \$1

- Encourage businesses to use services like ReturnR for people to have a reusable/container deposit takeaway option

Issue: An ingrained “throwaway” culture exists within our community. While banning single-use plastics may be one solution to reducing plastic in our environment and waterways, it is important to ensure that people’s habits to over-consume and mindlessly

discard products does not create an overconsumption of natural resources to create disposable items made from non-plastic materials.

Solution: Provide education or workshops to encourage people to learn to mend and fix items before throwing items away

- Provide more support to create more repair cafes in Victoria

Solution: Provide incentives for festivals to use businesses such as “Wash Against Waste” for reducing disposable serving items at festivals

- It is important to devise solutions that reuse products rather than replacing plastic with scarce natural resources

- Clearing land to create more corn starch or clearing forests for wood to create “compostable” disposable items is not a solution

As a proud citizen of the State of Victoria, I do not support the following solutions:

- Shipping our recyclable products offshore is not a solution I support. Victoria should look at creating jobs and opportunities to innovate recycling methods within our own municipalities. In turn, Victoria should also look towards ways that recycled products can be introduced into the local market to encourage use and demand for recycled goods.

• I am strongly opposed to incinerating our rubbish/combustion/thermal waste-to-energy. No place in Victoria would accept an incinerator in their own back yard due to environmental concerns and air quality safety. With so many other positive solutions that have capacity to change people’s habits to reduce the waste we produce in the first place, incineration should not be investigated. Incineration does not address the fundamental cause of our recycling crisis or public littering and perpetuates the habits that have placed our community in the current situation that we face. We entrust our government to ensure its citizens safety and hope that it will not jeopardise the health of the community at large by approving works for rubbish incineration/combustion/thermal waste-to-energy.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the State of Victoria’s Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management.

Kind regards,

Amanda Kwong

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File1:

File2:

File3: