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From: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management [REDACTED]
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I have worked in the waste management and environmental sustainability field of manufacturing, healthcare and local government industries for nearly 20 years. In an education role it has been incredibly difficult to be able to provide consistent and reliable advice to staff for what they can and can't recycle. The contracts between local governments and organisations makes it difficult to give a single piece of advice, the industry is complex and the education needs to reflect that. But when the waste industry, Victorian EPA guidance, the policy makers and the decision makers can't align with their advice and goals for environmental protection, how can the industry and therefore all Victorians who rely on that industry, be expected to recycle right!?

Every other year the advice changes, "paper hand towels are recyclable" and now "no they are not recyclable". Then there is "compostable" and "biodegradable" green-wash causing problems, my local coffee shop has invested more money in disposable cups that are "compostable" but they, like many, fail to understand there is no adequate standard bin in our local council (or Victoria) that will mean it is composted. Those cups will end up contaminating one of the existing bin streams and no one seems to know or be doing anything about it!

This is frustrating for educators and frustrating for the individuals wanting to do the right thing.

When the "China ban" came about it was so sad to see my colleagues in the industry roll their eyes and shake their heads, it did not surprise them one bit. They were saddened and frustrated at the inaction of our government to support a local industry, one that helps us deal with our own waste, our actions and their consequences.

Wasn't this a prime example of why the Vic EPA landfill levies have been increasing? So that we could have a bucket of money to invest in local solutions? Where is that money? Why have we been told this story if it's not true?

For my children and coming generations, I want to see Victoria and Australia responsibly managing their own waste. I want to see serious incentives to AVOID waste, to encourage local and import manufacturers to have a significant percentage of recycled content in their products - to bolster that supply vs demand of recycling industry output.

With all that we collectively know about environmental science it is no longer acceptable that we rely on other nations to take our waste. We must manage it ourselves and we must do so soon.

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File1:

File2:

File3: