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From: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management [REDACTED]
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To: recyclinginquiry
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I believe that the parliament in Victoria has a very good opportunity to create an entirely new and thriving industry from our waste. We know that our current co-mingled system is out of date and does not function despite repeated behaviour change strategists and marketers attempting to drive change. I believe that Victoria should take this broken system and announce a broad scale reform, transforming the recycling from local council jurisdiction (they can manage it- BUT it should be legislated on at a state level). This reform should include: compost/food waste in the green bin (please look to the Colac Otway Shire as to how this has been effectively implemented). Secondly the reform should include the separation of recyclable materials. We can look to European countries- particularly Germany and France who have a minimum of 4 different recycling bins. I believe not only would the current system and its companies (Visy etc.) benefit from the separation, but it would also create more jobs as we can invest in genuinely transforming the recycling industry to become a closed circuit system. If we recycle more, we can create more products with this recycled materials and the need for virgin materials significantly reduces. I propose that perhaps the bins should be: green waste/ food waste, landfill, glass, aluminium, plastics, cardboard. In addition- a soft plastics recycling bag should be encouraged to be included in the plastics section. Obviously officials who have research and understand this would know the specifics about each bin that would be required however, those options seem the most obvious/ productive. An alternative to the 120L recycling bins could be the repurposing of our current yellow bins. Creating dividers and jobs for individuals to install these dividers. Eg. You have 2x120L bins with a divider down the middle that can be retrofitted to existing bins. This divider then separates aluminium/ glass and cardboard/ plastic. These bins when collected can have latches on one side to ensure that the respective recycling is being collected. While not an ideal option, it is perhaps a good alternative to ensure we do not create more waste through the production of new bins.

To reiterate, the key points I believe need to occur are:

1. Re-structure of waste management state wide (local councils can collect but it should be managed at a state level)
2. The creation of a sustainable industry built off repurposing recycling products and reducing the need for virgin materials (encouraging VISY and other corporations to grow in this industry).
3. The transformation of our household recycling to include minimum 4 different recycling bins, 1 green bin and 1 landfill bin.

4. A massive state-wide publicity campaign (similar to that of the metro tunnel etc.) to inform the public that this is occurring.

In addition- we need to be legislating to create meaningful change. A container despot scheme should be introduced while the bins are being sorted out (and we are fixing our broken system). Or it should be brought in permanently. We also need to be encouraging the public to reduce their consumption of waste. People have no concept of their wastage (I see it at University daily with people and their coffee cups, takeaway containers etc). We need to create a public crisis, demand that people care about the issue. We should be transforming away from non-recyclable plastic and we should be investing in things that are sustainable such as hemp etc. the biggest thing we can do to our recycling industry is to engage in a public awareness campaign about the necessity to reduce waste and the importance of recycling correctly. Too often we go “not in my backyard” but this concept of NIMBY has meant that it is out of sight and out of mind- we need to change this.

Australia and Victoria can no longer waste time on this issue. Every day we are contributing more and more to climate change through food waste in landfill and threatening our own health through micro plastics in water. We have 12 years to fix this and I think that this is our opportunity to do something. If the parliament is going to consider this issue, let’s fix it properly- rather than creating a blanket solution. We should be front runners here in Victoria. We know what to do now let’s do it.

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File1:

File2:

File3: