

Terminate Tulla Toxic Dump Action Group Inc

Submission to

Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management
recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au

Contacts:

Kaylene Wilson
President TTTDAG

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Graeme Hodgson
Deputy President TTTDAG

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Terminate Tulla Toxic Dump Action Group Inc

We welcome this inquiry into the management of recycling waste.

Over the 13 years since we formed we have made numerous submissions to government on:

- Waste,
- Inadequate management of recycling,
- The need for a container deposit scheme,
- Failure to create facilities for the destruction of hazardous waste
- Failure to trail waste to energy options
- **EPA's obvious inability to effectively manage, monitor and enforce the licenses at hazardous facilities and landfills**

We met with the advisors to the Minister for Environment, Gavin Jennings to discuss the urgent need to up grade-recycling facilities and to trial a waste to energy plant. We suggested that creating these long overdue facilities could be subsidized in part from the landfill levy. That levy still sits idly in Treasury.

We also made a submission into the last inquiry into waste policy and saw our recommendations for ACTION ignored. Our most serious, ignored recommendations related to the need to reduce waste and make producers of waste responsible for the destruction of that waste at their own facility or at near by facilities. To limit the amount of hazardous material being transported. We have always supported the locating those facilities away from residential areas.

Every policy consultation since the 2001 Zero Waste policy has espoused

- Reduction in waste generation,
- Promoted recycling and reuse,
- Proclaimed landfills as the last resort.
- The need for cradle to grave stewardship

Yet it has only been lip service and only small changes have resulted.

Even though the government was warned by China two years prior to their ban on importing waste, the government failed to act in a speedy manner to prepare for that change. As having effective sorting and cleaning of recycling materials is not rocket science and has been done in South Australia for decades and is also standard practice in many European countries, we suggest the government fast track the establishment of such facilities.

To prevent a large volume of recycling material currently going to landfill we suggest the rapid introduction of a container deposit scheme and a ban on single use plastic items

Our community has been exposed to toxic smoke from numerous fires both at home and at work through:

- The illegal "wood" fire at Somerton in September and October 2014 and the large fire in 2015. For 18 months prior to that fire, Kaylene Wilson President of TTTDAG had been alerting both EPA and Hume Council of the illegal stockpiling as it was occurring. We were all concerned at the potential fire risk!
- SKM at Coolaroo has had numerous fires in our local area before the large one in July 2017 one.

Terminate Tulla Toxic Dump Action Group Inc

- Chemical storage facility fire on 30 August 2018 exposed the residents at West Footscray to toxic fumes similar to what we have been exposed from the Tullamarine Toxic Waste Landfill.
- Bradbury Industrial Services in Campbellfield 5 April 2019 once again exposed us to toxic fumes.

Even though we are now apparently in the hands of rogue operators, who are aware of EPA's limited ability to supervise this industry and obviously dangerously incompetent handlers of toxic chemicals and stockpiled recycling materials, this **inquiry has not included the issue of toxic liquid waste management!** The rapid introduction of electronic labeling of chemical containers, hopefully with GPS monitoring, is a very welcome improvement. It does not, however, address the issue of why so many hazardous chemicals are being used in production. Also, why is the use of such hazardous chemicals allowed in so many production processes?

The Andrews government gave a commitment to implementing the recommendations of the inquiry into the EPA Act. Yet years later we still have inadequate staffing and stricter regulations are not due until July 2020 and legacy issues that we have repeatedly alerted the government to, go unchecked. If the government wishes to continue with that implementation date then they should immediately impose interim mandatory conditions and penalties in relation to handling and stockpiling of liquid chemical waste

We recommend:

1. That the planning laws be changed, initially through an interim order, to prohibit toxic waste facilities being located near residential areas, transport hubs and schools.
2. Such industrial complexes must have emergency storage facilities for capturing fire runoff to prevent it contaminating waterways e.g. such as the 40K litre storage tanks being installed in the current up grading of the West Gate Freeway.
3. All existing facilities must be directed as a matter of urgency to:
 - a. Adequately bund their facilities
 - b. Install emergency retention systems to handle spills and fire runoff from entering waterways
 - c. Directed to upgrade their fire plans to ensure they have effective sprinkler coverage
4. All such facilities must have frequent, unannounced inspections by EPA.
5. Worksafe should review its current rating of facilities and extend its tight supervision to many facilities it currently rates as tier 2 facilities requiring less supervision. The recent fires have all happened at tier 2 facilities!

Finally the government must show the Victorian community that it does care about our safety, our air quality and our waterways by fast tracking the resolution of the long neglected problem.