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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

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Australians for Refunds on Cans and Bottles
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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File3:

Submission by AFROCAB (Australians for Refunds on Cans and bottles) and Emerald Community Recycling

AFROCAB is an advocacy group. Members are mainly litter clean up volunteers. ECR works with local businesses to help them increase recycling of packaging materials.

Introduction

To the layperson, Victoria does not have a complete recycling system. This is to say, it has a competent kerbside recycling collection system but only a limited ability to recycle that material into new products.

Insufficient demand for products made with recycled content is a failure of our recycling system that needs to be rectified. Neither exporting surplus recycling overseas or stockpiling is a solution.

The recommendations below are all 'short term actions' which collectively could lead to a long term solution where the the production, consumption and demand for recycled products both by the public and industry is much higher than it is today. Perhaps in time Victoria could become known as the 'recycling state'

General Principles

- Need to think outside the square
- Not keep doing things the same old way and expect a different outcome.
- Priority given to finding an end use for recycled materials within Australia
- Link fixing the recycling and waste crisis with taking action on climate change
- Making reducing greenhouse gas emission a priority when assessing new waste and recycling proposals
- Solutions should not add to greenhouse gas emissions eg shipping recycling thousands of kilometers to other countries
- Government policy to encourage products made with over 50%, post consumer, recycled materials
- The design of new recycling measures should recognise the link between litter reform and better recycling outcomes.
- Avoid an eggs 'all in one basket' approach

Short term actions by government

- As part of their Climate Change Policy the state government should encourage products which use less energy and water in their manufacture compared with equivalent products made from virgin materials.
- Government procurement policies to stipulate Australian made products with over 50% recycled content
- Establish a Victorian equivalent to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation called something like the Waste and Recycling Innovation Corporation which business can go to to help fund innovative waste and recycling solutions.
- Reducing and where possible eliminating contamination as a feature of our recycling system.
- Victoria should have recycling targets for individual materials like the VRET . The

- results should be published annually so that progress can be measured.
- Contamination has been a salient feature of our recycling system. A best practice Container Deposit System or CDS would largely eliminate contamination of plastic bottles, aluminium cans and glass bottles where they are presently co-mingled with other recyclables in the kerbside recycling system.
 - Government if necessary tighten the definition of 'recycled' to avoid misuse of the term, to exclude pre consumer and be above a certain percentage of recycled content.
 - Participation and involvement of community groups should be encouraged and facilitated especially in rural and regional areas.

Short term actions to involve the community

- Develop an advertising campaign which links the purchase of products made with over 50% recycled content as 'climate change friendly' where less energy and water is used in their manufacture compared with products made from virgin materials.
- Develop a 'social media' campaign which has at its centre a motto or slogan for the new Victorian approach to recycling. Something like '**Once is not enough**'.
- Develop a star system (similar to that for electrical products) for products made with more than 50% post consumer recycled content.
- Link the advertising and star system above with an 'Australian made' criteria so that Australian waste and recycling solutions are explicitly encouraged.
- Run a state wide '100 big ideas' campaign to identify the best recycling ideas from within the Victorian community
- Show case any existing 'best practice recycling' already happening in Victoria
- Investigate the possible modification of the 'reverse auction' approach used with renewable energy to lower the cost of mass consumption products made with over 50 % recycled content

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