



Business Centre:
111 Brown Street
Hamilton 3300
Telephone: (03) 5573 0444
Facsimile: (03) 5572 2910
TTY: (03) 5573 0458

Address all correspondence to:
Chief Executive Officer
Locked Bag 685
Hamilton 3300
council@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au
www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au

D/19/39588

6 May 2019

Environment and Planning Committee
E: recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Victorian State Parliament Environment and Planning Committee's inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

I thank the Victorian State Government for the opportunity to provide a submission, in regards to inquiry into the recycling and waste management. Southern Grampians Shire Council (Council) has had concerned for some time in regards to the recycling and waste industry.

Council understands that the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has provided a submission and Council is broadly supportive of their submission, in particular the action plan that sets out actions for all tiers of governments to work together to provide a better recycling and waste system.

Our Council and many others are at the forefront of waste diversion and have worked tirelessly over the previous decades to educate the public and divert waste streams from landfill. Our Council currently diverts approximately 40% of its waste to recycling through composting, metal reclamation, tyre collection and comingled recycling to name a few. But, without viable markets and recent Chinese National Sward Policy confidence in the system has been eroded.

The key to waste management is to eliminate as much as possible waste being generated in the first instance. Product stewardship needs to be a key component of the future of waste management.

Source producers of products need to ensure that the products they produce have minimal waste generated after use. Single use packaging is a large problem and until product stewardship is in place this will continue to be a significant issue.

The removal of the plastic bags at supermarkets has been the single biggest successful example of both product stewardship and community attitudes towards waste generation in the last 2 years.

Council is in agreement with MAV that the core waste-related responsibilities of the State should include:

- Environmental regulation;
- Community education;
- Infrastructure planning and investment;
- Market development;
- Advocacy to the federal government; and
- Industry / essential service regulation.

China's National Sword Policy has impacted every Australian. The lack of anticipation and poor response to the policy has impacted the industry in two ways:

1. Significantly increase the cost of the service, and
2. Eroded confidence in the recycling industry.

It is Council's view that both the Federal and State governments see waste management as a Local Government issue. This led to the lack of foresight and therefore response to the policy by both these levels of government. The assistance provided by the State Government was greatly appreciated by our Council to assist in mitigating the cost impact to our community in order for Council to factor in the increase in costs.

To restore the confidence in the recycling industry, a state lead annual education program needs to be funded and implemented to educate the community on how and what they can recycle along with benefits of recycling.

There are several actions that can be taken to assist in the future of the recycling and waste services. These are:

1. Introduce product stewardship
2. Investment in regional recycling infrastructure
3. Introduce a container deposit scheme
4. Fund an annual state wide community education program

The investment in regional recycling facilities will enable separation of recycling streams as close to the sources as possible. This will generate jobs in regional areas and increase awareness of recycling systems. For example Council currently has an agreement with Western District Employment Agency (WDEA) to provide a recycling service known as the "Green Shed". WDEA employ long term unemployed people to work at the site, selling products and stripping others (E waste) for their useful components. This service not only provides employment but diverts waste that would have otherwise been disposed of at a landfill.

Other key components of the waste system is waste to energy. Council has undertaken two studies showing the benefits of bio and waste to energy

systems. These micro systems can assist in local energy generation while reducing waste disposal. Investment in systems like these need to be considered in the whole of waste management approach.

The State Government collects levies from all waste going to landfill. Council understands that as of the 30 June 2018 this this levy has accumulated to \$511M. These accumulated levy funds should be used to fund all initiatives required to readjust the recycling and waste management system.

As demonstrated by the “War on Waste” efforts over the past 18 months there is significant community support in regards to waste minimization and elimination.

If there are any clarifications required from Council, please feel free to communicate with our Infrastructure Director, David Moloney - [REDACTED] or via telephone on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

MICHAEL TUDBALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER