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From: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 10 May 2019 9:43 AM
To: recyclinginquiry
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Mr Mario Milici
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Director
UpShop Industries

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I have attached a file (Gov Vic waste review response) to this submission. Please let me know ASAP if it is not received.

In brief the questions I raise here are an extract of my response:

1. Why is the Waste Industry managing recycling of materials?
2. How is it the Waste Hierarchy is ignored?
3. How many times can GST be collected on one product or material?
4. Why has education within the industry not advanced?

I look forward to the many more discussions of this now tragic situation.

Regards
Mario Milici
Director

UpShop Industries

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File1: [5cd4bb04c22aa-Gov Vic Waste review response .pdf](#)

File2:

File3:

“If it can’t be reduced, reused, repaired, rebuilt, refurbished, refinished, resold, recycled or composted, then it should be restricted, redesigned or removed from production.”

— **Pete Seeger**

The following is my response to the issues raised within the State Government of Victoria Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management terms of reference.

1. *The responsibility of the Victorian government to establish and maintain a coherent, efficient and environmentally responsible approach to solid waste management across the state, including assistance to local councils:*

While I would like to see a National response to waste management, the establishment of a successful State-run model would be invaluable in setting the grounds for a national model. Some suggestions for supporting a State model lie at a local and community level:

- Support councils to operate more transfer stations, redirect waste from landfill and provide positive support for ‘Tip Shop’ styled initiatives.
- Provide financial and tax incentives to businesses of upcycled and recycled material production. This would increase competitiveness within the open market.
- Remove GST on ALL reuse materials, items, objects and activities. The GST has already been collected once. This would assist to reduce the price on refinished / repaired / restored and resold items.
- Councils to adjust bylaws allowing ‘street pickers’ and collectors to practice their duties without fear or apprehension regarding ‘illegal activity’. This inexpensive measure could have the potential to redirect thousands of tons of hard waste back into society at no cost to government, community or the greater public.
- Support a Victorian leadership directive of reuse and repair over recycle.
- <https://www.hardrubbishmelbourne.com.au/>
WM Hard Waste is Melbourne’s primary collection company. On their website they have zero data or evidence of what quantities are recycled. I have video evidence of collections being loaded into the rear of a standard compactor waste transporter - lounge suites, TVs and so forth. This material has the potential for reuse, repair or recycling and minimizing the need for landfill.

2. *Whether the China National Sword policy was anticipated and responded to properly:*

NO! As an Upcycler and active within the industry for many years I was aware, as were some recycling industry contacts, some years prior to China officially announcing they would stop collecting waste-grade recyclable materials.

In April 2011, China adopted regulations aiming to reduce contamination in imported material; In February 2013, the Chinese government decided to aggressively enforce Article 12 to improve the quality of the imported recyclables through 'Operation Green Fence'; In February 2017, 'National Sword 2017', a 1-year campaign similar to Green Fence, was launched. On 18 July 2017, China announced the ban of 24 import materials to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). On 27 July 2017 China announced its intention to "phase out imports of solid waste (recyclables) that can be substituted by domestic resources" by the end of 2019.

The Chinese Government and Chinese waste collection agencies informed the Australian Waste Industry officials years in advance via appropriate WTO processes. That means for many years the Australian waste industry officials and Governments knew and nothing was done.

During that time several things could have been implemented to prepare and possibly avoid our current crisis situation:

- An education campaign could have been introduced to step up the quality of OUR waste product and increase a targeted percentage to meet international grading standards of high-grade recyclable materials suitable for production.
- Labeling and packaging modifications could also have been introduced to improve quality and reduce labour, achieving higher standards economically with increased efficiency.
- Redesign of packaging and single-use plastics and fibre could have been implemented to enable efficient reuse.
- Reuse promotion and education via mainstream media to empower the public and remove the need for recycling wherever possible.

These are just a few plausible initiatives that could have avoided this current recycling crisis.

3. *Identifying short and long-term solutions to the recycling and waste management system crisis, taking into account:*

a. The need to avoid dangerous stockpiling and ensure recyclable waste is actually being recycled:

Incentivize recyclers to manufacture and produce locally. Work with design teams to problem-solve issues and create functional and fundamental items for a number of industries, including and not limited to building, construction and mining.

b. *The cleaning and sorting capabilities and the processing capabilities in Victoria and the potential to expand the local recycling industry:*

Clever product design and advanced public education campaigns is key here. The majority of cleaning and sorting tasks could be done in the average home. The main focus should be at the design stage where it should be considered how products could be reused or recycled prior to production. Additionally, implementing LCA and ISO14001 for general use items. Non-compliant samples should be removed from sale.

c. *How to better enable the use of recycled materials in local manufacturing:*

Designing single-use items to have an additional low-modification function has many great advantages and redirects waste from landfill and reduces need for recycling. One daily example is the 'Moccona Coffee jar'. Simply remove the label and you have a resealable storage vessel for a multitude of uses. This is not by accident and it keeps the material in use and in circulation for many years, long after its initial purchased function.

Additionally, using recycled materials to develop products that don't need high-end engineering eg. packing cartons, cool rooms.

I have many design ideas to use large bulk quantities of recycled plastic and other materials...you should get in touch.

Additionally here is an article of an EV produced from what would otherwise be labelled garbage:

<https://returntonow.net/2017/10/21/electric-car-made-garbage-longer-driving-range-tesla-model-s-fraction-cost/?fbclid=IwAR2DpwtwWyGIzj9AGf3xfBii7Nwe5FstqwvxufWMulP4fRp5jO8HbEvkFUs>

d. *The existing business model and economic challenges facing the existing industry:*

Due to the lack of mandatory education and advancement within the industry this is what you get. Governments historically have had total disregard for waste and waste-management by allowing recycling to be managed by the waste industry. The 'Existing Industry' is 'in part' the problem; it specialises in waste, not recovery, and definitely not recycling. Education is the key to massively overhaul the 'business as usual' attitude. Relying on trading rates is no way to develop a sustainable long term approach to the industry...and as you are now all aware WASTE IS NOT GOING AWAY. Calculate this please with your proposed population expansion.

e. *The quantifiable benefits, including job creation and greenhouse gas emissions reduction, of pursuing elements of a circular economy in Victoria:*

THE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (GGE) are not going to be reduced by recycling. The GGEs are caused at the primary production phase. The measured energy required to produce any item is 'embodied energy' (EE) which is not accounted for in development of an initial product. However, it is considered in the production of a recycled product. Why is it the energy required to clean pre-made items becomes a deterrent, when the energy required to extract, convert, process and send for production virgin polymer is not? Consider a national labeling EE star system on all packaged goods. This would assist at the purchase point and allow the consumer to make an informed choice.

The reuse of any item requires no or minimal additional energy, therefore reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. A circular economy is reliant on the object/item to carry an extended life/additional use prior to recycling. Please refer to the waste management hierarchy graph.

To truly seek a circular economy means plastics, glass or other materials should not be used as BLEND or FILLER in road surfacing and other alternative uses. This only extends the life by one. Hence not circular. Circular would require the plastic to remain as plastic and glass as glass, allowing the materials to remain in circulation over and over and over again.

JOB CREATION would require the industry to be incentivized by government with tax exemptions and zero GST on reuse and recycled items. Minimizing tax would bring down costs and make the industry and material more affordable and competitive within the retail and commercial sectors.

Education and advancement within the waste industry would also change the way work practices are performed and also lead to a greater retention of staff. New start-up enterprises would emerge and also create new jobs within new industries. Businesses we have not even thought of would be created.

f. *The existing Sustainability Fund and how it can be used to fund solutions to the waste crisis:*

The 'Sustainability Fund' should not be included as means to finance the misuse of waste material. This is not an issue about sustainability, but about ignorance and a petty attitude towards behavior, convenience and complacency.

The Sustainability Fund should be used to encourage and support design initiatives to make product more sustainable, and for future

building initiatives that can seek new and progressive ways of dealing with the materials on hand and in whatever form.

These funds should not be considered for use as a means of dealing with bad packaging, bad practice and corruption within the industry both locally and internationally.

4. Strategies to reduce waste generation and better manage all waste such as soft plastics, compostable paper and pulp, and commercial waste, including, but not limited to:

a. Product stewardship:

This is almost farcical to consider retrospectively. Car tires, used furniture? And as for evolving future technical problems including batteries and solar panels, nothing has been implemented. Considering our governments have been rolling out these systems for near on two decades with no LCA in place and no 'product stewardship' programs implemented is just another clear example of how 'CLEVER DESIGN' will assist every aspect of a successful product beyond the use-by-date. While the Renewables Energy industry is still young, many quantifiable measures need to be considered other than just affordability. Where is the product manufactured? Designed? If we are to consider a local manufacturing resurgence product stewardship in all areas is very achievable. To consider this from international suppliers who cannot even provide you with a 'certification of origin' would mean we could only deal with ISO14001 compliant industries. Very limited.

<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/federal/waste-crisis-looms-as-thousands-of-solar-panels-reach-end-of-life-20190112-p50qzd.html?fbclid=IwAR0ciRcrlKXWBvGkXwbYtoDOo47-qkJ1LHZefkrs0YxefQ48JBtBgVDwHec>

The Waste Management hierarchy highlights reuse and repair over recycling and all sectors of building and engineering are currently non compliant with this. Laws and regulations need to be modified to accommodate wherever possible the use of 'still good', 'current' and used fittings and fixtures wherever possible.

b. Container deposit schemes:

Proven success. Behavioural patterns shift and the materials are incentivised by payback. Waste is no longer an issue with the correct support networks. The rewards are threefold and the SA program is proof.

c. Banning single-use plastics:

Let's firstly clarify the context of this term. If I could highlight some single use plastics: drink bottles, milk containers, motor-oil containers, all soft plastic bags, wrappings, packaging...virtually all plastic containers are single use. Is an ice-cream container 'single use'? Once used, what

then? This goes for all packaged items. Banning will achieve nothing. Ban the use of virgin plastic...now that's achievable. Considering mandatory design principles for reuse, now there's another achievable outcome. More specifics are required to clarify the context of this term.

Don't BAN, improve.

d. Government procurement policies:

Yes. LCA (Life Cycle Assessment) including EE (Embodied Energy) should become mandatory in all Government procurement. Reaching out and extending to achieve an ISO14001 QA Standard on all future Assets and Infrastructure projects would be quite an achievement and gain my full support. At a realistic quantifiable standard and not just an accountability measure. It is the future and leaders of industry have already been incorporating these standards for more than a decade.

<https://www.c2ccertified.org/?fbclid=IwAR1CP0fWppbncglp8m5N2gmS2JQuOL9W3FRroWGBgNM-09Jw0AVi2V4kR3c>

5. *Relevant reviews, inquiries and reports into the waste and recycling industry in other Australian jurisdictions and internationally:*

The majority of statistical information I find is produced by private industry and favorable towards shareholders interests. Research, inquiries and reports of all of the waste industry should be totally transparent - plain and simple. This would require a standard compliance format in addressing the 'CRISIS" Nationally. This would avoid any confusing situations similar to those in NSW and Queensland. A standard waste cost and legislation with increased penalties for non-compliance.

Some links of the current situation nationally and globally since China Sword 2017:

http://www.mraconsulting.com.au/PDFs/MRA_China_National_Sword.pdf

https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news18_e/envir_30nov18_e.htm

“The EU strategy rests on four pillars, which are improving the economics and quality of plastics recycling, curbing plastic waste and littering, driving investments and innovation towards circular solutions, and harnessing global action, the delegate said. It includes a list of 39 EU actions, such as developing standards for recycled plastics and new guidelines for sorting waste.”

https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news18_e/envir_30nov18_e.htm

6. Any other related matters:

Always refer to the 'Waste Management Hierarchy' to establish a complete and conclusive circular economy.

My business, UpShop Industries, is into Upcycling. Upcycling is the practice of redirecting materials and resources away from landfill and providing waste minimisation strategies via alternative use, redesign and procurement initiatives. Reuse before recycle.

The goal of my business is to become a central hub, a leader in Upcycling of pre-used materials and assets. The aim is to build a community of knowledge and skills, and to re-educate the community and greater society on the value-adding principles of what is currently referred to as 'Waste'.

Planting a seed today for others to enjoy the shade.

In the three years since officially commencing as a business, UpShop Industries has built, and is building, a large network of individuals and organisations committed to better world practice.

As my business grows so does my vision, and now is the time to address it. I know of a State Government under-valued asset prime for the expansion and growth of UpShop Industries.

Its current dilapidated state would be easily transformed to become a positive influence on the local community and the State.

It would develop and evolve to make a reputable transferable model nationally, a 'modern transfer station' to bring together valuable pre-used materials including industry clean waste, and follow that with repair and restoration workshops, studios filled with artists, designers, makers and start-ups, all with access to resources otherwise headed for landfill.

Combine this with newly developed AQTF accredited training packages qualifying waste industry workers with new innovative knowledge. Showcasing out to a retail and gallery centre of excellence, the facility would encourage new enterprise and also house start-ups within a focused sustainable re-use creative environment.

Gardening, landscape and green waste options could also become present, enhancing the grounds and providing locals with connection to the facility. Opportunities and outcomes await.

The site has been vacant for near on a decade with only one proposal from the Victorian Government: TO SELL. It has a history of training and supporting local community and businesses and we would endeavour to rebuild that. Our innovation and success would develop a rich asset for the whole area. The diamond in the rough.

Current local and international examples of simpler concepts include:

https://www.tappaper.com/2464/?fbclid=IwAR3KjImIn_aAFEGJ2w6_X2UtRdwAmktX4Cn21rzuo-wmHqgm00v8sX78eL8

<https://brooklynnavyyard.org/>

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-17/using-ewaste-to-build-3d-printers-and-electric-bikes-brisbane/9449604?fbclid=IwAR15gcGLyHw460eWyx1npOVKckwjOekXzM6ATLQOf8xxQpZLz6kbt2h_RzE

I look forward to meeting with your representatives at some point and taking the vision further and look forward to you contacting me at your next most opportune time.

Kind Regards

Mario Milici
Director

UpShop Industries
www.upshop.com.au

<https://www.facebook.com/upshopindustries/>

UpShop Industries motto is "Use Less Be More' modelling itself from the very top of the hierarchical waste materials platform.