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Sent: Friday, 10 May 2019 12:24 PM
To: recyclinginquiry
Cc: Michaela Skett
Subject: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management - submission from Moreland City Council
Attachments: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management - submission from Moreland City Council.DOCX

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached submission from Moreland City Council to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management.

Warm regards

Michaela Skett

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Victorian Parliament - Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Submission by Moreland City Council

The Secretary
Legislative Council, Environment and Planning Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

By email recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au

- Submission prepared by Tammy Sherar, Waste Projects Officer, 8311 4366
- On behalf of Moreland City Council, Locked Bag 10, Coburg VIC 3058
- Authorised by Dr Nerina Di Lorenzo, Moreland CEO on 10 May 2019

Introduction

Moreland Council welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management in Victoria. The subject matter of the inquiry is of critical importance to waste management as part of the urgent transition to a circular economy.

Moreland City Council context

Moreland is a municipality in the inner north of Melbourne. Moreland City Council recently adopted the Waste and Litter Strategy 2018 – 2022 which sets an ambitious goal of achieving zero waste to landfill by 2030. It includes a range of initiatives that also help us progress towards our goal of zero carbon Moreland by 2040, including the introduction of a universal kerbside food and garden waste collection. Other areas of concern addressed in the strategy are recycling bin contamination, the elimination of single use plastics at Council events and facilities and advocating for the state-wide introduction of a container deposit scheme. The vision outlined in the strategy is to move from the current linear economy towards a circular and regenerative economy which, along with our zero waste and zero carbon targets is a key pillar of our Zero Carbon Moreland 2040 Framework.

Inquiry feedback

Recent events affecting the recycling industry in Victoria have demonstrated several of the many weaknesses in the state's current waste management system. Over reliance on overseas markets, dangerous levels of stock piling, lack of leadership, investment and policy direction and regulation from state and federal government along with product stewardship for packaging are some of the key issues that need to be addressed.

The closure of SKM by the EPA has left many in the community believing that it is no longer worthwhile separating their recycling from their garbage, as it all ends up in landfill anyway. State government is in the best position to restore community confidence in the recycling system through sector reform and leading delivery of state wide communications on why recycling is important and the environmental benefits of keeping materials out of landfill.

Moreland City Council endorses the submission to this inquiry by the VLGA. Council also supports the MAV 'Rescue our Recycling' campaign and would urge the Victorian Government to consider the following actions to establish and maintain a coherent, efficient and environmentally responsible approach to solid waste management across the State:

1: Invest in recycling infrastructure

Commit greater quantities of Sustainability Fund money to bolster sorting and processing capability in Victoria. Increase capacity at materials recovery facilities to remove contaminants and increase the cleanliness and quality of material streams so that they can better compete with virgin materials for manufacturing. Ensure that investment enables operation at acceptable minimum standards, while incentivising facilities to innovate for improved outcomes.

2: Fund and support market development

Commit greater quantities of Sustainability Fund money to drive demand for recycled content. Support research and development to increase uptake of new uses for recycled materials. Set mandatory procurement targets for Australian recycled material by government departments and agencies. Incentivise procurement of Australian recycled content by others. Support the MAV to develop procurement options for councils. Support a "Made with Australian Recycled Content" label to incentivise manufacturers and brand owners to include recycled content in their packaging and products and provide a clear option for consumers when purchasing products.

3: Introduce a container deposit scheme

Commit to introducing container deposit legislation into parliament this year and work with MAV and councils to ensure it achieves the best outcomes for the community. Victoria and Tasmania are the only Australian states yet to commit to a scheme. CDS has multiple benefits, it shifts the cost to manage beverage container waste back to the producers; it provides an incentive to consumers to recycle beverage containers thereby reducing litter and increasing recovery of this material; and it ensures a clean, source separated waste stream with higher value to manufacturers.

4: Bolster community education

Commit greater quantities of Sustainability Fund money to develop and deliver consistent state-wide community education campaigns focussed on:

- Restoring community confidence in recycling
- Making waste wise decisions
- Putting pressure on producers to reduce waste
- Clarifying what can and can't go in the recycling bin and the costs of getting it wrong

The education campaign should not rely on roll out through local government but use high profile (high cost) media channels available at a state and regional level to reach the entire Victorian community with messages applicable to all residents. Local councils can support and leverage the state-wide campaign, not be expected to lead, given limited capacity and funding to access mass media channels. The campaign should apply learnings from other successful government campaigns and build on learnings gained through other waste focussed campaigns such as Get it Right on Bin Night and Love Food Hate Waste.

5: Strengthen industry oversight / regulation

Recycling is considered an essential service by most, yet the few large operators we have in Victoria operate under a veil of secrecy. Reform is desperately needed. The State must improve transparency and accountability within the industry. Access to robust and credible data on market conditions, and costs and revenue within the recycling sector is essential to achieve best value for the community. More transparency on destinations for material streams, reprocessing and recyclability of products and reasons for non-acceptance of certain items is necessary for credible communication from local government to residents.

Inconsistency in what is accepted in the recycling bin due to variations in council contracts causes much confusion within the community. Bin lid colours and materials accepted need to be streamlined so that baseline messages are consistent across council boundaries. Funding support so that all councils can adopt the Australian standard bin lid colours on an accelerated timeline is requested.

The recycling industry is too highly dependent on market forces and often councils are left in a position where materials that were accepted at the beginning of a contract are retracted, leaving council to explain to residents why an item which has previously been accepted can no longer be placed in the recycling bin. Changing the rules of recycling across council boundaries, mid contract or even between contracts is confusing for residents. It causes uncertainty and reduces confidence in the system which results in increased recycling contamination and resource loss.

6: Advocacy to Federal Government on product and packaging stewardship

State Government must advocate to Federal Government for mandatory product stewardship for all products that generate waste. Clear and binding targets need to be included within the *Product Stewardship Act* to drive action by industry. This action would align with the polluter pays principle, incentivising designers and producers to take responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products.

In partnership with the Federal Minister and other State and Territory Ministers the *National Environment Protection (used packaging materials) Measure 2011* must be updated to impose mandatory participation and binding obligations across the consumer packaging chain. As an interim measure the obligations on industry must be clarified so that it is easier to hold them to account.

State Government must advocate to Federal Government to regulate or ban the production and importation of hard-to-recycle materials and products. Also to mandate adoption of the Australasian Recycling Label for all consumer packaging sold in Australia and adopt a certification system for recycled content in line with the US or European models.

In partnership with the Federal Minister and other State and Territory Ministers an action plan must be adopted for the National Waste Policy that includes firm and ambitious targets and timelines that fast track our transition to a circular economy. This would include steps to introduce tariffs on the importation of virgin materials for manufacturing to incentivise use of locally produced recycled feedstock in manufacturing.

Other related matters: Feedback regarding Waste to Energy

In line with the objectives of the waste hierarchy and principles of a circular economy, Council will support the regional development of non-thermal advanced waste processing technologies such as anaerobic digestion and in-vessel composting where the outputs produced can be captured and used. Council does not currently support the development of thermal 'waste to energy' technologies such as incineration, gasification, combustion, pyrolysis and plasma arc for the disposal and treatment of waste. Thermal technologies can produce a host of negative environmental impacts including release of toxins into the atmosphere. Such an approach does not align with the goal of creating a regenerative and sustainable system for resource use. Council will instead support the development of technologies that do not create further environmental harm or undermine efforts to recover and recycle materials.