

[REDACTED]

From: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 10 May 2019 4:18 PM
To: recyclinginquiry
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Mr Damon Barclay
[REDACTED]

Resource Management Officer
Glenelg Shire Council
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Submission is attached.

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File1: [5cd517955ab79-GSC Letter - Submission Re Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management.docx](#)

File2:

File3:

OUR REF: Db/db

YOUR REF:

Date 10 May 10, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the inquiry into the state of recycling and waste management within Victoria. Please see below Glenelg Shire Council's response to the terms of reference for the Inquiry.

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;

Glenelg Shire Council believes there are three key areas that the State Government of Victoria needs to improve on when it comes to solid waste management within Victoria. They are:

- **Regulation;**
There needs to be more regulation around the processing of recyclables and the ability to get a better understanding of what is happening to the materials that are meant to be recycled. There needs to a scalable approach to regulation when looking at the differentials of a small rural transfer station and an global company owned city transfer station/landfill (Combustible Recycle and Waste Materials Guidelines was initially a failure of this) . Hopefully these will be addressed within the review of the Environment Protection Act. The introduction of the E-waste ban has also been ineffectively circulated. The ban is a just over 7 weeks away from being implemented and local government, residents, and waste managers don't really know what this is going to mean going forward.
- **Infrastructure;**
There needs to be more investment and planning in infrastructure. In order for the Glenelg Shire Council to have materials undergo basic composting they have to travel nearly 170km which is roughly 2.5 hours travel. This is a major burden on council resources and is limiting the ability of Council to undertake more environmentally friendly waste management options. There has been a

missed opportunity to have additional sites added to the e-waste collection network regardless of whether they meet compliance or not. During audits undertaken by SV, Glenelg Shire Council had four out of six transfer stations compliant. Of these four only one was considered a primary site and one secondary site. Further planning needs to occur to ensure all Victorian residents, taxpayers and ratepayers have access to environmentally suitable waste management options.

- **Funding.**

There needs to be more economical investment from the sustainability fund. Investors need better support from the State Government to create recycling plants and new markets for recycled product. While the funding to local government did help ensure the continuation of the recycling services within the state, more funding opportunities need to occur to expand the recycling market (through investment) rather than propping up the industry that is failing due to the lack of infrastructure. Councils also need more support to be able to have what is now considered essential services are unable to be delivered within the constraints of a normal council budget throughout the state. For instance only two thirds of Councils have an organics collection. Funding also needs to be released earlier than it is in some cases as well. Regional waste groups have only recently received (within the last 1-2 months) for the advertisement and education of the upcoming e-waste ban. This ban has been planned since 2017 with the campaign and the education campaign was released in July 2018.

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

The China ban was known about for six months prior to the country delivering it to Australia. It appears that very little was done to prepare for the implications of the ban. The recycling network within Australia has been built on the back of high export revenues for a number of years and the vulnerability of the market for these products should have been recognized. Large scale planning and investment to bolster the local markets and provide the infrastructure necessary to reduce the reliance on the exportation of recyclables should have been made a higher priority.

While important at the time, secured funding to Local Councils in the wake of the ban to support the increased costs to processing is not considered a response to the crisis, more a reactive measure. Earlier investment to strengthen the local markets could have reduced the implications of the China National Sword policy and the ongoing issues surrounding the recycling market in Victoria.

3. Identifying short and long-term solutions to the recycling and waste management system crisis

Recycling companies need to be better regulated to ensure that they are processing material in an environmentally responsible manner. There have been ongoing issues with processors such as SKM, well before the National Sword crisis and they still continue to this day. The publishing of the regulatory compliance history on the EPA

Victoria's website will help local governments select a more appropriate contractor to process their recycling. Further to this, to ensure that recyclable material is being recycled responsibly, the tracking or regulated reporting of how and where recyclable material is processed should be made readily available.

- **Container Deposit Scheme:**

Victoria and Tasmania are the only two states that have yet to commit to a container deposit scheme. The Victorian Government needs to work with local government, MAV and industry to introduce a CDS for Victoria that achieves the best outcomes for the community.

- **Product Stewardship**

Currently ratepayers bear the brunt of the costs associated with waste management regardless of their consumption choices. In principle, it is not fair to ratepayers that this occurs. Product stewardship programs can take the pressure of ratepayers and effectively self-manage wastes generated. While product stewardship is managed by the Federal Government, it is up to local government and the Victorian Government to advocate for the mandating of product stewardship.

- **Local Market Development and Support**

The use of recycled product in government processes is still a rather rare practice. There are many opportunities for government agencies at both the local and state level to purchase products made from recycled material. They range from road base material and outdoor furniture all the way to stationary. The Victorian Government needs to mandate through the procurement policies that recycled product is favoured over raw materials. This will not only allow the market to process more material but will make these resources more readily available due to a stronger market. This is also an area where local government also needs to improve their procurement practices.

Glenelg Shire recognises the work that Sustainability Victoria has done in recent months in regards to research and development around recycled content in road pavements. Through continued research and development this will also help strengthen the recycling market.

- **Community Education**

Local Government is best suited to this role. They are the closest to the community and need to continue to develop education strategies around recycling and waste avoidance. This can only occur though with ongoing support from the Victorian Government to ensure that messaging is constant, consistent and appropriate.

- **Sustainability Fund**

The sustainability fund should more readily used in three key areas.

They are:

- **Recyclables Processing:** There needs to be more funding available to recyclers to implement better source separation techniques and to be able to process more material.
- **Product Research and Development:** There needs to be continuous investment on the research and development of new products containing recycled content. By developing these products it will help bolster the market and provide end users with the confidence to purchase product.
- **Market Development/Support:** There needs to be more investment in the creation of more recycling processors to help promote a more competitive market.

4. *Strategies to reduce waste generation and better manage all waste such as soft plastics, compostable paper and pulp, and commercial waste,*

As previously mentioned, Glenelg Shire Council is supportive of proactive changes to implement government procurement policies promoting recycled content, a container deposit scheme as well as mandating product stewardship. Glenelg Shire Council would in principle, support the banning of single use plastics and microbeads, non-recyclable/compostable coffee cups. Further consideration would need to be undertaken to for other soft plastics. In the meantime further investment needs to occur to better recycle these products until they are banned.

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

- The 2018 VAGO [Managing the Municipal and Industrial Landfill Levy](#) report

Yours sincerely,

Damon Barclay
Resource Management Officer