

From: Gregory Mier [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 10 May 2019 11:50 PM
To: recyclinginquiry
Subject: Submission - Recycling and Waste Management Enquiry

Importance: High

Dear Committee,

Please see set out hereunder a submission by Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc. to the Recycling and Waste Management Enquiry.

I would have liked to have had the time to also provide such submission on-line, but the opportunity does not exist in the period now available to me to meet the deadline of lodging before the expiry of today, 10 May.

For the same reasons of time constraint, and after discussing this matter both with Bayside City Councillors, and the President of Marine Care Ricketts Point (MCRP), I have determined that it is appropriate that I adopt and support the excellent submission lodged for and on behalf of Marine Care Ricketts Point, with (I trust) appropriate amendments in terminology.

To the Chair of the Environment and Planning Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc.(BCS), a very active and hard-working environmental group now fast approaching 70 years old, which is concerned with protecting, conserving and promoting the flora and fauna of Beaumaris (in particular) and increasingly, in Bayside as a whole. Though by no means the principal organisation in this regard, this concern and interest (as with Marine Care Ricketts Point) also extends to the health of the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary and Port Phillip Bay.

We, as with MCRP, have also recently worked successfully with Bayside City Council to eliminate single-use plastics in Council premises.

Ninety-five per cent of pollutants in Port Phillip Bay come from our creeks and rivers, such as the Yarra, or through storm water drains.

BCS is very concerned about the lack of consistent policies and programs to deal with pollutants and recycling in Victoria.

There has been widespread publicity and shocking vision of fires and contamination/poisoning of creeks from illegal stockpiling of contaminants, and Councils being forced to dump recyclable material into landfill in Victoria. This will quickly cause the public to lose faith in any waste management or recycling systems, unless the Victorian government acts quickly and decisively. It is within the personal experience of the writer that even some of our BCS members, and the public generally, have as a result given up supporting reduction and recycling efforts.

Many other countries, and Australian States and Territories, have initiated robust policies and programs to reduce waste and increase recycling.

Currently, community and business actions remain ahead of government action.

For example, Coles and Woolworths have banned single-use plastic bags; Carlton United Brewery (CUB) have banned plastic rings for their six-pack beers; and Coca-Cola Amatil (CCA) have introduced their own recycling stations as part of their World Without Waste strategy. CCA now believes container deposit schemes in the NT, ACT, Queensland and South Australia have led to higher recycling rates and better, cleaner quality supply chains for recyclable.

However, the above examples are a much more ad hoc and inefficient approach than if the Victorian Government provided an overarching policy framework under which local government and businesses can develop efficient and cost-effective systems and sustainable businesses.

We strongly urge the Victorian Government to take leadership in addressing this issue, and urgently so, before even more hard-won momentum is lost. Specifically, we would like the Victorian Government to:

- 1) Reinvest the “Landfill Levy” to assist local councils and the waste management industry build viable waste management industries in Victoria.
- 2) Ban single-use plastics, including bags, straws, cutlery, crockery, glassware and coffee cups.
Several local councils, including Bayside Council, have already introduced this requirement. However, a State-wide ban is much more effective, easier to implement, and would have a huge effect on reducing our fast-growing and difficult-to-recycle plastics waste.
- 3) Introduce a deposit return scheme for bottles and cans, based on the successful South Australian, Northern Territory, and Queensland schemes.
- 4) Introduce a requirement for Victorian Government agencies and contractors to purchase recycled items.
- 5) Adopt the UK’s 2019 policy to make packaging producers pay full recycling costs, with penalties for difficult to recycle items. (See <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/18/packaging-producers-to-pay-full-recycling-costs-under-waste-scheme>; and <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-waste/uk-plans-to-make-plastic-packaging-producers-pay-for-waste-disposal-idUKKCN1Q700J.>)
- 6) Move towards the ‘Circular Economy’ by a specified date, as the European Union and other countries are doing. (The European Commission launched its Circular Economy Package (CEP) in 2015. It came into legislative effect in July 2018. The CEP’s EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy establishes a concrete program of action, including measures covering the whole life cycle of a product—such as production, consumption and waste management. <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publications/research-papers/download/36-research-papers/13880-the-circular-economy-an-explainer.>)
- 7) Urge the Australian Government to also move towards a circular economy, and to adopt the UK’s packaging producers costs scheme.
- 8) Urge the Australian Government to manage hazardous wastes better by:
 - a) introducing more Compulsory Product Stewardship Requirements (e.g. for lithium ion batteries – one of the fastest growing hazardous wastes in Australia) along the lines of the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme; and
 - b) making current voluntary product stewardship schemes compulsory (e.g. the current tyre recycling scheme).

It is impossible to over emphasize how important this subject matter, and the need for urgent, robust, and comprehensive action by the Victorian government (indeed all levels of government in Australia) has now become.

BCS is happy to provide any further information and meet with you if required.

With kind regards,

Gregory Mier

President

Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc.



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