

[REDACTED]

From: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 13 May 2019 12:11 PM
To: recyclinginquiry
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Miss Lauren Sandeman
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

--

Recycling and waste management is primarily considered from a terrestrial perspective, yet our failures in management have substantial impacts on our most important ecosystems – our oceans and waterways. 80% of marine debris comes from land-based sources (Eunomia, Plastics in the Marine Environment, June 2016; Sea Shepherd Marine Debris Campaign) with over 13 million tonnes entering the oceans every year (UNDP, A tidal wave of plastic). Most of this comes from our waterways and stormwater (Ocean Protect). Stormwater management and upkeep in Australia is horrendous. Something as simple as enforced policy and improved regulation partnered with already existing technology here in Victoria would provide an urgently needed step in the right direction to start tackling this problem.

Australia joined the UN Environment’s Clean Seas campaign in October last year on top of the SDGs under the UN 2030 Agenda. So far, nothing of substance has been done to live up to these pledges. Victoria has the opportunity to be a nation-leader in tackling this problem, but it simply has to put in effort and resources right now for them to be implemented and working within the needed timeline.

I would like to recommend that The Committee reaches out to Ocean Protect to consult; a company which “for almost two decades [they] have been leaders in the design, installation and maintenance of stormwater treatment assets and infrastructure” (Ocean Protect website). Additionally, it would be wise to talk to the coordinators of Sea Shepherd Australia’s Marine Debris Campaign, which is directly tackling the marine debris crisis along Victorian shores and beyond.

It is important to note that the waste and plastic that is deposited from Victorian land does not completely remain in Victorian waters, and vice versa. The ocean does not care about state borders or which council is responsible for what. This crisis needs dramatic action today as the impact of marine debris in our environment has dire consequences (The Committee should talk to Marine Specialists on this matter for more information).

Additionally, when a bathtub is overflowing, one does not reach for the mop before first turning off the tap. A state-wide ban on single use plastic is urgently required to stem the flow of plastic into the ocean, as 80% of marine debris is plastic (IUCN, Marine Plastics Brief). Victoria already has the existing technology to generate a circular economy for waste – one of the main problems is that it is still cheaper to create virgin plastic than use recycled products (Visy in the inquiry on Friday 10th May 2019). The government needs to take big initial investments into supporting the right alternatives and to stop the source of the problem.

Please see below the references for the facts I have stated above, but these are by no means the sole sources of information on the same facts and issues. I have also attached an open letter which I copied over from Independent Australia, written by Jeremy Brown – the Co-Founder of Ocean Protect. The second document is a submission by the Waterway EcoSystem Research Group on stormwater in Australia, which is also referenced below for your consideration.

We shouldn't be striving for minimum effort – we should be acting towards showing the world how it can be done. We are in a crisis and we can either rise to the challenge, or crumble under it. I know we can do the former.

Sincerely,

Lauren Sandeman

BSci (Marine Biology) July 2019 graduate at The University of Melbourne

Youth Action Hub Australia Representative

REFERENCES (in order of appearance):

Eunomia, Plastics in the Marine Environment, June 2016

Sea Shepherd Marine Debris Campaign, online, <https://www.seashepherd.org.au/marinedebris/>

UNDP, A tidal wave of plastic, online, <https://feature.undp.org/plastic-tidal-wave/>

Ocean Protect, online, <https://oceanprotect.com.au/facts/>

UN Environment, Australia joins Clean Seas and pledges to recycle or compost 70 per cent of all plastic packaging by 2025, online, <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/australia-joins-clean-seas-and-pledges-recycle-or-compost-70-cent-all>

IUCN, Issues Brief: Marine plastics, online, <https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/marine-plastics>

Independent Australia, An open letter to our politicians: Save the oceans from plastic pollution, written by Jeremy Brown, original letter online, <https://independentaustralia.net/environment/environment-display/an-open-letter-to-our-politicians-save-the-oceans-from-plastic-pollution,12641> (Attached).

Waterway Ecosystem Research Group, The University of Melbourne, Submission 17, p.2; cited in “Overview of Stormwater in Australia – Chapter 2”. (Attached).

--

File1: [5cd8d239248ae-stormwater management in aus.pdf](#)

File2: [5cd8d23925702-Open Letter from Ocean Protect co-founder .pdf](#)

File3: