

Hello, I would like to offer my concerns, perspectives and insight as a resident of Victoria, who work in the Film and TV industry and holds a strong passion for sustainability and waste management. I have summarised them into dot points below and I hope that you take the time to consider my thoughts. They are in no particular order of importance as I see the solution to the problems in this sector not being one individual act but many all done at once.

- Business's need a hand in making the choice to use recycled materials over virgin materials a sustainable and economical choice. Perhaps through supporting local recycling systems and product stewardship. Funding or incentives for manufacturers to use Recycled over Virgin materials
- The general public is, from my discussions with family, friends and colleagues are at large wholly confused about what can and can't be recycled. This comes from the relatively fast advancement in technology and manufacturing that has seen an increase in products and consumption but also the increase in types of materials that we come into possession. Not knowing what the difference between the types of plastics, paper, waxed paper, mixed materials, biodegradable, compostable are. The difference from council to council and state to state and recently a disillusionment in whether their efforts in sorting to recycle actually end up in the recycling actually getting recycled. I think Victoria should work with councils on creating a STATE WIDE STANDARD on recycling and recycling items. This would cause less confusion between councils when people move and increase success in correct recycling practices. But I also think that some of the money in the Sustainability fund should be used on COMMUNITY EDUCATION programs that to informing both young and old individuals to make waste wise choices, choose to reuse , reduce, repair, repurpose and recycle correctly.
- A focus on REDUCING WASTE created with in our state should be considered and acted upon to address waste stockpiling, waste of resources, reduce contamination of recyclable waste materials and abolish the reliance on shipping our waste offshore. By using money from the Sustainability fund to repair initiatives both in communities but also by manufacturer's so that individuals find the cheaper option to be to REPAIR over replace. This could provide skill and job growth in the industry. Support hospitals and schools to compost food waste and recycle industry specific waste. Ie. Medical products and packaging, nappies, pens ect.
- Valuable resources and energy have gone into producing items that end back in the waste and recycling stream and I think it is imperative that we work on forming a CIRCLUAR ECONOMY where these items can end up back in the system and reused or recycled over and over. Both to minimise our reliance on virgin materials and to stop mining the minerals that form these materials and in doing so destroying natural habitat and ecosystems resulting in loss of biodiversity and extinction of flora and fauna.
- Support businesses that provide sustainable packaging or bulk buy options.
- Bring in a CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME to aid higher retrieval of recyclable materials and reduce littering. This has been proven to be effective in other states such as Adelaide and very successfully more recently Queensland.

- Review of COUNCIL HARD WASTE COLLECTIONS. So many perfectly good items are put out in hard rubbish just to end up in a dump truck being crushed. Causing an influx of waste to landfill and a loss of valuable resources. These items could be collected and sold at tip shops or council recycling, reuse shops. Providing income to the council, jobs, access to reduced cost items to families and individuals on lower incomes. While some items may be retrieved by pickers, a lot doesn't and year after year I have seen perfectly good items be crunched in seconds. Some families don't have the ability to take these items somewhere to be reused, some items could have been used longer if there were sufficient and affordable repair services and some items should have ended up in recycling services that may be a bit hard to get to for those without a car, with minimal money for fuel or the lack of access or knowledge entirely. It would be great to reimagine "Hard rubbish" into "Hard Resources" or "Shared rubbish" where these items may be rubbish to one person but gold to another. This has value in keeping more items out of landfill and resources in the the system.
- My concern with the state of Australia's waste and recycling system is that instead of moving towards sustainable education and circular economy that it may end up going more towards WASTE TO ENERGY. My concerns with this is that it 1) is a waste of valuable resources and will mean that we keep destroying natural habitats to mine for virgin materials, 2) Is not a sustainable pathway with the carbon footprint meaning it isn't a sustainable energy source, 3) Just continues the idea that when you put something into the bin it goes "away" and doesn't make the community value the materials and resources that the items hold.
- MANDATE Recycling in all business's, schools, organisations and homes and penalise those who don't follow.
- COMPOST food organics need to be made accessible and the norm both in the cities, suburbs and rurally. Industrial composters that accept meat, dairy, compostable packaging could become a pathway to a great percentage of individual and council waste.
- FOOD WASTE needs to be addressed. Services that divert "Food waste" produced by growers, supermarkets, restaurants, catering and the like need support to grow and share the food with people lesser off or into streams where they can be made into other products or given to farmers as animal feed.
- RURAL WASTE MANAGEMENT: A common story for individuals in rural area is the lack of access to waste and recycling facilities. A better system that supports them to dispose of waste and recycling correctly to reduce the practices of burning and dumping of waste that pollutes our environments and air.
- BANNING OF SINGLE USE ITEMS: Humans are incredibly adaptable... but people of habit so we just need a push at times. When it comes to single use items I believe that is one area that some individuals need to be guided in to live more sustainable and waste free choices. Single use items pollute our environments and I think a ban on single use items such as food containers, drink cups, straws, cutlery, bottles, single use heat packs and balloons needs to be implemented to significantly reduce pollution and over use of valuable resources. As someone who has been conscious of my footprint and sustainability of my choices for the past 3 years I can say that it isn't really that hard!

- Ban the new thicker plastic “reusable bags”. These bags found in the likes of coles and woollies and soon to be in a greater number of shops in the lead up to the ban on “single use lightweight bags” are not the sustainable alternative. The number of times I have seen them floating across the road, in waterways and natural reserves proves to point that getting rid of the lightweight bags and replacing them with these will not solve the problem. Even worse these bags are thicker and will take longer to decompose.
- SEPERATED RECYCLING SYSTEMS: I am a believer that knowledge gives power and collective knowledge makes us stronger. Sounds fluffy but it’s the system I think that will both educate individuals and increase successful recycling systems, and I have seen this just through my own practices that I have set up in work places. By providing individual clearly labelled separate waste streams at the point of disposal this forces the individuals to stop and consider what they have in hand before they put it in the bin. It can reduce contamination between products such as liquids or food remnants contaminating paper products if their were separate waste bins on streets and at homes for paper/ metals/ plastic/ glass/organics. This model is done in some European countries , as well as some councils in Sydney having separate paper recycling bins at home for kerbside recycling.
- Product Stewardship is very important in helping solve waste issues and should be investigated to see what new initiatives could be started to solve some of our current issues.

On a final point, I would like you to note that as a household of two, we would not fill our landfill bin in a year and that we could take months before we put out recycling. However as waste conscious individuals we tend to fill up bags of rubbish that litter the streets, bring it home and sort it into our pretty much empty bins. I know that our position to be able to live this sustainably and waste-light comes from a place of privilege. We have jobs and an income that allow us to think about our waste practices and perhaps spend a bit more on products that don’t come in packaging. We have access to communities, information and education on how to live like this and the skills to find that information. We have the access to that information easily available and access to shops and farmers markets that means we can make the choice to buy locally, in bulk and learn from others. Not everyone has this, so to make sustainable choices or to find information on recycling can be hard. As a community and as leading governments and councils we need to work on being clear and accessible to give individuals and businesses the power and choice to make those sustainable changes. And that means working on strong policy, strong clear standards, strong education and spending some money, that will in the end pay as back when we don’t have masses upon masses of rubbish to deal with, or having to pump money to try and restore habitats, soil health and bring back ecosystems from the brink of extinction.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission, while I am sure none of these thoughts are new to you, I feel it is important that you are aware that not only myself but many other individuals find many of these points an issue or should be addressed.

All the best
Jennifer McAuliffe

