



Yarra Climate Action Now  
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The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP  
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change  
Level 16, 8 Nicholson Street  
East Melbourne  
Victoria 3002

To the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP,

Yarra Climate Action Now (YCAN) is an independent community group committed to taking action to secure a safe and stable climate. We are based in the City of Yarra and represent a membership base of over 1500 people, who are concerned about climate change and sustainability.

YCAN members have been pleased to see the steps taken by your government in this term to address the climate change emergency and build a resilient, sustainable Victoria. The new *Climate Change Act*, the Victorian Renewable Energy Target and investments in renewable energy are commendable steps. However, our members hope to see new, more ambitious policies as a part of your election platform. We are writing today to urge you to guarantee stronger waste and recycling policies.

Poor waste management in Victoria is contributing to climate change, large-scale environmental destruction and the marine litter crisis. Total waste generation in Victoria is expected to almost double from 12.2 million tonnes in 2011-12 to 20.6 million tonnes in 2043-44. YCAN is especially concerned about the negative impacts of single-use plastics on the environment, methane emissions from food waste being sent to landfill, and the use of fossil fuels in the manufacturing of excessive plastic packaging.

China's refusal to receive Australia's waste is a significant policy opportunity to adopt stronger waste management policies. Your government has provided noteworthy support to councils and industry in the form of a \$13 million package and temporary relief funding arrangements. Yet, as we'd both agree, this is no long-term solution. YCAN is looking forward to hearing about the outcomes of the recycling industry taskforce, which will assist industry transition. However, we believe that the outcomes are likely to be reactionary and short-term rather than supporting the needed long-term transformation of Victoria's waste management practices.

We are calling on your government to commit to stronger policies that aim to reduce the quantity of waste produced in the first place and that promote a circular economy.

YCAN is specifically calling for:

- A stronger regulatory approach, including the banning of more single-use plastics (*for example, the UK has pledged to ban the sale of a number of single-use plastics, including straws and ear buds*).
- Shifting the responsibility onto businesses to deal with the waste they produce.
- The introduction of a container deposit scheme.

- Funding for local governments' to reduce the amount of food waste going to landfill. With extra support for urban local governments whose residents often do not have the capacity to undertake composting in their households.

YCAN members are also concerned about current discussions around waste-to-energy plants as a solution to Victoria's poor waste management practices. We call on your government to pledge to ensure that any such plants would be developed in tandem with strong policies on reducing, reusing and recycling first.

YCAN understands that millions of dollars are currently sitting and accumulating in the Sustainability Fund, which is expected to rise to \$531 million this financial year. Although we commend that you have increased spending from the Fund, we call for more money from the Fund to be dedicated to waste management and climate policies.<sup>1</sup> We believe that local government will have to play a crucial role in improving waste management and addressing climate change, so we advocate for greater funding for local councils to work on these issues.

We call on the government to lead the way on waste management policies in Australia and not just match those of the other states, but improve upon them. Such ambition will help decrease our greenhouse gas emissions, reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, reduce marine litter and help protect our precious environment.

Kind regards,

YCAN Committee

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<sup>1</sup> YCAN is aware that any decision to allocate more Sustainability Fund monies to waste management and climate change policies already aligns with the Sustainability Fund's strategy priorities, as outlined in the Sustainability Fund Guidelines (2016). Therefore, we do not perceive there to be any barrier preventing your government from committing to greater funding.