



Yarra Climate Action Now

42 Spensley St, Clifton Hill 3068

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10th May 2019

Re: YCAN Submission to Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Waste and Recycling

To whom it may concern,

Yarra Climate Action Now (YCAN) is a growing, dynamic and award-winning community group, based in the City of Yarra, who want stronger action on climate change. Our members are ordinary people with families, work and study, but who are also passionate about ensuring a safe climate and sustainable future. YCAN is our way to take action into our own hands; we think globally but act locally.

YCAN is particularly interested in promoting a safe climate, and we believe improving our collective performance on management of waste and recycling is a critical enabler of a sustainable climate future. All new products carry embodied carbon emissions from the energy used to produce them (and many consume finite raw materials), so encouraging recycled products is better. But all recycled products carry embodied emissions from the energy used to collect, transport and reprocess them, so reusing, repairing and avoiding are better again. If products make it through the system and end up in landfill, their embodied emissions are truly 'wasted' and certain products (organics) contribute further to global warming as they release methane when allowed to decay in an anaerobic environment.

The priority actions that YCAN would like to see implemented are:

- A container deposit scheme;
- Banning of unnecessary single-use plastics; and
- A renewed focus on extended producer responsibility.

Container Deposit Scheme

The Victorian Government should respond to overwhelming public support and implement a Container Deposit Scheme for Victoria (or otherwise advocate for a national scheme). The scheme's design should be based on experience and best practice both nationally and internationally. It should also clearly demonstrate a positive impact on litter rates and resource recovery rates, and return value to the community.

Banning problematic single-use plastics

Plastic is by far the most damaging of consumer materials because it is produced using non-renewable fossil resources and persists in the environment to cause unquantifiable damage to

natural ecosystems. The government is to be praised for introducing a ban on single-use plastic bags (to come into effect later this year) and on developing a plastic pollution action plan. However, YCAN also wants to see bans on other unnecessary single-use plastics, including take-away containers, cutlery, plates and cups, cotton buds straws and balloons. Other jurisdictions (including the EU) have successfully legislated to implement such bans and Victoria should follow these examples.

Extended producer responsibility

In general, too much of the recycling system burden falls on individuals, governments and the recycling industry. Manufacturers should be made accountable for making products that last, that are designed to consider their end-of-life management, and that minimise the consumption of finite resources (e.g. through efficiencies in production processes or utilising recycled content). Where investment in more advanced sorting and re-processing facilities and required, this cost should be internalised in products by making manufacturers responsible (for example, through product stewardship schemes). Where investment is required to manage a litter externality generated by the product, again this cost should be borne by manufacturers (for example, cigarette butts).

Please don't hesitate to get in touch should you want to discuss these matters in more detail

Kind regards,

Kerry Echberg

Convenor

Yarra Climate Action Now

