

Submission cover sheet

Consultation Draft Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan 2015

Thank you for your interest in providing comments on the consultation draft Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan 2015 (Implementation Plan).

Please fill in and attach this cover sheet to your submission

- Written submissions should ideally be kept to no more than 10 pages using this template. Please indicate the section and page numbers your feedback relates to
- Where possible, your comments should include supporting information, evidence and/or data. This will help develop an Implementation Plan that is informed by a strong evidence base, reflecting the experience of government, industry and the metropolitan Melbourne community.
- If you would like your contribution to be made public, type 'yes' here: **yes**
- All submissions will be kept confidential unless you tick the "make public" box below. Please note, Freedom of Information access requirements will apply to all submissions, even those treated as confidential. For information about the MWRRG Privacy Policy you can go to <http://www.mwrrg.vic.gov.au/privacy>

Submissions are due by: 5pm, Friday 18 December 2015

- Submissions provided prior to this date are welcomed. Submissions provided after the due date below may not be considered.
- Please provide your submission (preferably in Word doc format) by email to participate.metro@mwrrg.vic.gov.au
- To request a hard copy of the draft plan or for more information please contact participate.metro@mwrrg.vic.gov.au or call MWRRG on 03 8698 9800.

Contact details

Your contact details will be kept confidential. By providing them, we can keep you informed of the next steps and how the Implementation Plan develops.

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I am comfortable to have my submission be made public: YES

PLEASE NOTE: Publication of submissions will be at the discretion of MWRRG.

18/12/15

Re: draft Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan (W&RRIP).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the W&RRIP. Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc is a not-for-profit environment organisation which has been operating in St Kilda for the past 16 years. Our organisation has a commitment to action research and adopting practical solutions to environmental issues. We currently enjoy strong partnerships with Traditional Owners, state and local government, community groups, schools, businesses and philanthropic organisations in our region.

For the past 5 years Port Phillip EcoCentre has been a leading organisation in the field of marine plastics research in Port Phillip Bay and its catchments. Over that time the EcoCentre and affiliate groups have compiled substantial data demonstrating significant levels of plastic pollution, primarily post-consumer single-use plastic items. On that basis we are compelled to draw attention to the absence of waste avoidance education and infrastructure to eliminate plastic pollution of waterways.

The Australian government has recognised marine debris as a key threatening process, because of the potential harm it poses to wildlife. In 2003, 'injury and fatality to vertebrate marine life caused by ingestion of, or entanglement in, harmful marine debris' was listed as a key threatening process under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). Despite compelling evidence of significant volumes of plastic waste entering our waterways to the detriment of ecosystems (toxic and physical hazards to aquatic life) **there is no market-based mechanism to address this issue**. As a consequence of the Market Assessment Guide having been derived from the waste management industry there is no mention of waste avoidance and reduction.

As consumption and disposal patterns change, so too will the waste streams that require management. CSIRO scientists have calculated that global production of plastics will exponentially increase over the next 10 years (the timeframe of the Waste Plan). Without significant infrastructure and education to minimise plastic litter, this exponential production/consumption a proportionate increase in plastic pollution of waterways can be expected. As the W&RRIP is required by legislation to articulate how the waste and resource recovery needs of the region will be met over at least a 10-year period development of innovative strategies to eliminate plastic pollution of waterways should be included as priority component of Victorian waste management. CSIRO research indicates the "need to address the [litter] issue at sources rather than where it accumulates" and that "investment in programs led to a larger reduction and more predictable [marine debris] reduction than investment in facilities."¹

Leadership to address systemic issues is a fundamental expectation of the role of government. The omission of plastic pollution reduction initiatives in the W&RRIP is also sadly reflected in the submissions to the current Federal Government Enquiry into Marine Plastic Pollution in Australia. Of the 190 submissions received, just one (from Parks Victoria) was submitted by a Victorian state or local government agency.

Given the current levels of plastic pollution recorded in our waterways and the predicted exponential increase in plastics consumption, failure to address plastic pollution in waterways is a serious omission which defies and denies any attempt to nurture a culture of sustainable waste management. Increased resources are required for further research into plastic pollution in rivers and stormwater systems, to identify land-based sources of plastic pollution, to inform effective local litter reduction strategies. Further innovation to improve litter trapping technologies is required.

Please contact me on 9534 0670 should you require further information or clarification on any aspect of this submission.

Yours sincerely



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¹ TJ Lawson, BD Hardesty, C Wilcox and C Maureaud, 2015