

## 4.2 RESPONSE TO INFRASTRUCTURE VICTORIA REPORT ON RECYCLING

Responsible Director: Ossie Martinz

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council endorses the attached Submission to the Infrastructure Victoria report on Recycling and Resource recovery.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the October 22, 2019, Inside Waste News Update article (Attachment 3) presented on the Preliminary Report on [Recycling and Resource Recovery Infrastructure: Evidence Base October 2019](#) by Infrastructure Victoria which was handed to the Victorian Government, providing recommendations to improve resource recovery in the state from an infrastructure perspective.

The purpose of this Council report is to gain support from council for a submission (Attachment 1) which is responding to the Preliminary report prepared by Infrastructure Victoria (Attachment 2) on recommendations to improve resource recovery.

### **BACKGROUND**

Infrastructure Victoria surveyed 1,000 Victorians to understand their attitudes and perceptions of how they sort their waste at home, and their willingness to change their behaviour. The organisation found that the majority of Victorians feel it is important to reduce landfill waste (93 per cent), and they consistently recycle when provided with a kerbside recycling bin (85 per cent). Mistrust in the system does become a barrier to people recycling, with some thinking their recycling goes to landfill anyway (25 per cent).

However, the report highlighted the fact that recycling services differ across Victoria's 79 local councils (due to varied processor standards), and many are not using the Australian Standards for Bin Colours (2006). This can cause confusion in the public and leads to contamination of material streams.

The reported stated the total waste generated by Victoria doubled between 2000 and 2018, from 7.4M tonnes to 13.4M tonnes per annum. Twenty percent is food waste and 33% business waste.

One of the most controversial recommendations highlighted in the online newsletter was the consideration of a six-bin kerbside collection system to

improve the quality of recyclables. Infrastructure Victoria is an independent advisory body. This recommendation created a lot of interest in the media.

A six-bin kerbside collection system suggested in the Inside Waste article would see households in Victoria provided with six bins to separate paper, glass, metal, plastic, organic material and “other” waste, to improve the quality of recyclables.

**Possible actions to improve resource recovery and waste avoidance in the state include:**

- Developing a clear, overarching policy framework including recycling targets and waste-to-energy;
- Supporting councils to implement more consistent approaches to sorting and collecting waste, helping to reduce contamination in household recycling collection;
- Better planning, locating and protecting waste management sites;
- Working with the Commonwealth and other states to reduce packaging and single-use plastics; and
- Increasing the use of recycled materials by eliminating barriers and updating government procurement guidelines.

Infrastructure Victoria is an independent advisory body which provides research and advice to State Government on a range of feedback on specific infrastructure matters. The Report provides its findings on how to improve the waste sector. The report is open for public comment until the 13 December 2019, and council officers have prepared a submission to provide feedback on the recommendations on behalf of council for consideration. Infrastructure Victoria will present their final report to the Victorian Government in April 2020.

### ***DISCUSSION***

Most of the recommendations in the report will benefit council and our community by encouraging more collaboration between community, businesses, processors and governments. And we commend that waste management recognised as a national and global issue.

Currently we have a three bin systems for most residents, in which are separated into recyclables, green organics and landfill. In July 2020, council will ask residents to place their food waste in their green organics bin to reduce waste to landfill.

The six bin kerbside bin system proposed may be a way to improve the collection of clean recycling streams and reduce contamination but it will be costly to manage and implement. In addition, it may also mean that the two collections a week may increase to six, effectively doubling or tripling the number of trucks in our streets and also increase Greenhouse Gas emissions from additional fuel use.

Monash generally has low contamination rates in our kerbside bins, but we still do get contamination with three bins. Six bins may make it more complex for

residents, and the additional space needed to store six bins would be challenging for many, particularly those in apartments and units.

The biggest limitation to recycling is the support for established local markets for collected materials. The new State Government Circular Economy Strategy may address this by supporting government and industry to create a local economy for recycled content products.

A letter has been prepared to respond to the Report and where relevant providing feedback on the following specific questions posed by Infrastructure Victoria;

- Have we identified the right outcomes for Victoria to aim for?
- Have we identified the most effective potential actions for government to take?
- Which, if any, of the initiatives implemented in Wales would you like to see applied in Victoria?
- What do you think of the market design opportunities proposed to improve waste sector outcomes and efficiency?
- Where do you think government should focus their efforts to increase recycling and resource recovery? (For example, through setting targets, promoting consistency or funding local councils?)
- Which materials or infrastructure types present the most opportunity in your region?
- What is a legislative barrier or enabler that you have encountered when trying to use recycled materials?

### ***POLICY IMPLICATIONS***

Many of the recommendations in the study align with the objectives and actions in Monash's Waste Management Strategy (2017-2027), the Council Plan (2017-2021) objectives of a Liveable and Sustainable City and Inviting Open and Urban Spaces; the Sustainability Strategy (2016- 2016) objective of reduced community consumption of resources and improved recycling.

### ***SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS***

If there are six separate bins, this effectively doubles or triples the number of trucks in our streets leading to additional congestion. This would also increase Greenhouse Gas emissions from additional fuel use required.

Six bins may make it more complex for residents, and the additional space needed to store six bins would be challenging for many, particularly those in apartments and units.

### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

The recent changes to the Victoria recycling industry, due to the enforcement of the China National Sword Policy, have removed Council's rebate from receivers, and introduced a price per tonne for recycling. Increasing the number of bins which put an additional significant cost burden on council both in terms of supply of bins

---

and ongoing additional collections. We would need to retender our contract which has just been signed.

In addition to increase the landfill levy pricing to deter disposal, better transparency is needed on how the landfill levy is distributed for resource recovery projects, to show that State Government is committed to better resource recovery and recycling.

***CONCLUSION***

Overall the report is supportive of Council's current waste management.

This report seeks Council's endorsement of the attached submission to the Victorian Recycling and resource Recovery Infrastructure October 2019 report.