

<http://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/project/advice-on-waste-infrastructure-in-victoria/#April>

Note: I found it extremely hard to get any clear understanding of the proposals under consideration from the report, such as the six-bin system widely cited in the media and the other 'Wales' initiatives. This makes it very difficult to respond to your question, "Which of the initiatives implemented in Wales do you support?"

Support these proposals

- Standardised recycling rules across municipal boundaries to overcome confusion
- Container deposit scheme for glass and plastic beverage packaging, bringing Victoria into line with other states.
- Packaging Crackdown - need to do something about excess packing - not just supermarket vegetables, but particularly the imported household goods (such as electronics, craft materials, toys)
- Increased segregation of materials via self-sorting into multiple containers. However, not convinced on the idea of having six collection containers for each house that is manually collected and deposited into a truck by a person. This seems very labour intensive and likely to cost too much. Local deposit centres may be more feasible. A container deposit scheme will take some of the bulk out of this system making the manual handling easier. For apartments - whole of apartment sorted containers would be more feasible than individual crates.

Electronics

- A current barrier to recycling is that the new electronic recycling laws (introduced in 2019) ban disposal via the rubbish system, but in our council (Horsham) we are only able to recycle them via the landfill which is out of town. This means there is no way for people without their own vehicle to recycle electronics.
- Increase the number of collection points for electronic waste. We have collection for mobile phones and batteries at a limited number of stores. Make it mandatory for all retailers that sell electrical items to provide recycling bins for small electronics, including Australia Post and discount retailers like 'Cheap as Chips'.
- Large items should be accepted and recycled by all large item retailers. This means that if Aldi want to sell a refrigerator or computer they need to have a recycling program to accept these in all stores.
- In Germany, product producers need to register with the Federal Environmental Agency (FEA) in order to be allowed to sell electronic products and to pay for transportation from electronic collection centres and oversee disposal/recycling.

Idea: Australia leading the way in electronic recycling by combining technology with legislation

- Fight cheap electronic crap by rewarding good stewardship.
- Add a mandatory Electronic Recycling Deposit (ERD) to all electronic products from washing machines to Fitbits to cheap toys. This is implemented at the point of sale (both wholesale and retail, like GST). This prototype could become an international scheme.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (the core principle of the European Union's Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) Directive) is the basis of this scheme.
- Producers who pay for recycling are entitled to embed an RFID chip in the product which entitles the purchaser to an ERD refund at any electronics retailer at the product end of life.

All electronics incur an ERD at point of sale, but only those with the RFID chip will be able to claim the refund. Products that contain an RFID will be clearly labelled in store and this will be confirmed at the checkout and on the receipt.

- This creates a financial disincentive for customers to buy products without Extended Producer Responsibility.
- Retail stores get to claim a fee (from government) for each deposit refunded. Many people buy online so stores need to be encouraged to refund deposits to consumers who bought the products elsewhere.
- The real challenge here will be managing the scheme for cheap crap bought online or in local supermarkets and discount stores - e.g. very cheap homewares, electronic toys, headphones and USB accessories that are often purchased for less than \$20.
- An extended part of this program would be to fight against planned obsolescence. The refund system and RFID chips will allow a 'durability' assessment to be collated and publicly shared, providing better transparency on product quality.
- To be part of the program electronics also need to demonstrate that products meet energy rating targets, improving energy efficiency.

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