

BEYOND WASTE

Western Australia's recycling industry is in crisis and plastic pollution is choking our oceans. The community wants action and it's time big corporations and the government listened. The Greens plan to reboot recycling will improve the quality of our recycling in WA, reduce waste and incentivise manufacturers to make recyclable products.

The Greens' plan will

1. **Reboot recycling by investing \$50m over 5 years in resource recovery initiatives in WA, including \$1m for community grants;**
2. **Ban Federal funding for waste incineration projects;**
3. **Phase out single-use plastics by 2023, starting with single-use plastic bags and microbeads;**
4. **Introduce mandatory product stewardship schemes to incentivise manufacturers to make recyclable products**

ONE: REBOOT RECYCLING

Recycling in WA is getting worse, not better. A system of kerbside recycling that has been in place for decades is collapsing because we have too much waste, with limited processing facilities. The glass recycling facility in WA was shut down, meanwhile mineral sand mines keep getting approved. Although China stopped importing Australian waste, shamefully WA still sends a lot of plastic to other developing south-east Asian countries like Indonesia. We're essentially shipping most of our waste to poorer, heavily polluted countries so we don't have to worry about it. These cheaper costs are also part of the reason why there are limited processing facilities in WA. The Greens will invest \$50m over 5 years in resource recovery initiatives in WA. Administered by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC), these funds will finance infrastructure and programs that improve and expand separation and sorting recovery facilities. In addition, \$1m in grants will be made available specifically to community groups and social enterprises to run high quality reuse and recycling centres. The Greens also call for the WA Labor Government to reinstate the percentage of landfill levy revenue being put back into resource recovery initiatives from 25% to its original 100%. This combination of increased federal and state funding would transform WA's recycling sector, and create jobs along the way.¹

TWO: BAN FEDERAL FUNDING FOR WASTE INCINERATION PROJECTS

Supporting waste-to-energy incineration projects as a means to deal with the recycling crisis is policy surrender. Not only will it dramatically undermine public support and cooperation with domestic household recycling but it will result in governments here in WA, and nationally, giving up on seeking solutions and instead developing new corporate models to profit off of our waste crisis! Incineration will result in increased air pollution as it is a carbon-intensive and non-renewable energy source; instead of burning useful, recyclable material for a one-off energy output we have an opportunity to see those materials put to use again and again in a circular economy. The Greens will move to amend the ARENA and CEFC Acts with a Private Member's Bill to prevent them providing funding for waste-to-energy incineration projects. This only applies for the incineration projects, not other waste-to-energy opportunities such as pyrolysis and methane capture from landfill.

¹ Environment Victoria, *Victoria - the Green Jobs State: Seizing the opportunities*, 2009.

THREE: PHASE OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS BY 2023

Improving recycling is important, but it's not enough. Our consumption of plastics is the big problem. 180 million plastics bags are entering the ocean each year and studies have shown that microplastics have been found in a majority of drinking water supplies all around the world.² The impact of plastic pollution on the marine environment is horrendous. Dolphins, seals, turtles and other large marine animals are killed and maimed when they become entangled in waste plastic. Birds die after ingesting chunks of plastic. The Greens call for a phase out of single-use plastics starting with plastic bags and microbeads. This year the WA Labor Government watered down the historic ban on single-use plastic bags to only cover lightweight bag, resulting in increased use of thicker plastic bags which take longer to break down and are arguably worse for the environment. This is not good enough. The Greens are the only party with a clear plan to phase out single-use plastics and lay down the pathway to wean ourselves off plastic.

FOUR: INTRODUCE MANDATORY PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP SCHEMES

For many types of problematic waste - such as tyres, mattresses and e-waste such as televisions, computers, mobile phones, fluorescent lights and batteries - there is no solution other than landfill, because the companies that produce these items are not required to then deal with the waste when they no longer become useful. The Greens will introduce mandatory product stewardship schemes, similar to the container deposit scheme so successful in SA and proposed for WA (but delayed by the Labor Government until 2020), for problematic waste streams. Creating local collection hubs for these 'awkward' materials provides incentives for people to recycle and obligates manufacturers to make recyclable products. Taking these important first steps towards creating a circular economy, where recyclable materials are reused again and again therefore reducing the production of new or 'virgin' materials, is essential if we want to tackle our waste crisis head on.

² *The Guardian, Plastic fibres found in tap water around the world, study reveals, 6 September 2017.*