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14/9/19

## **Product Stewardship Amendment (Packaging and Plastics) Bill 2019**

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am seriously concerned that Australia has lost the initiative when it comes to recycling, especially plastics.

Decades ago, we used to be world recycling leaders until somehow we found it cheaper to export our recyclable waste, which then saw the bottom fall out of our recycling industry.

We Australians are proud of our Tidy Town merits and have led the world with river, harbour and marine clean-ups and the reduction of toxic chemicals into our waterways and introducing a refund for certain containers. But this will all be for nought if we do not provide financial incentive/assistance to the businesses that have been cleaning up after us.

Unlike metal or paper pollution, plastic waste is the most insidious because it takes hundreds of years to finally break down. Meanwhile marine life is dying of starvation from eating this rubbish:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-5070397/Video-shows-Caribbean-sea-choked-death-human-waste.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HBtl4sHTqU>

We know there are better ways of treating plastic: Building materials, road surfacing, public furniture and the list could be endless if the government supported all initiatives that redirected waste plastics away from landfill.

The ultimate question of whether it's profitable is weighed by the argument, that we cannot afford to continue allowing plastics to be discarded as waste into our oceans; when if only 10% of all plastic waste ends up in the oceans right now, imagine what would happen if it were 50%?

Apart from more recycling of plastics, I would like to see a push towards more organic materials being used for packaging: Nestlé's™ has just introduced a paper based Kit-Kat (Origami) wrapper which is apparently entirely bio-degradable with no particulate residue (like plastic

beads with plastic): There are plenty of other naturally degrading fibres like hemp, linseed, flax, even seaweed which can easily be converted to any material that petroleum based plastics can. It is only the emmense power of Oil Lobby groups who are resisting this transformation.

I have travelled extensively and found poorer countries to be the most resourceful when it comes to basic recycling but due to poor municipal support, also the most wasteful and polluting.

Australia is not a poor country and we used to be highly inventive and socially responsible but currently, reactionary cost-cutting drives combined with scientific denial and environmental ignorance are revealing this country to be lazy, greedy and apathetic. It takes leadership to circumvent this downward spiral and I request your committee start taking its apex position much more seriously.

Sincerely,