

Sustainability Victoria Response to Questions on Notice (10 May 2019) Parliamentary Inquiry on Waste Management and Recycling

Sustainability Victoria received the following questions on notice following its appearance to the Committee on 10 May 2019. The page references correlate to page from the Proof edition of the transcript where the question was taken.

Questions on Notice

1. By what date does Sustainability Victoria aspire to have moved the total resource recovery rate from 67 per cent to 71 per cent? (page 16)
2. Are there any PV recyclers operating now in Victoria? (page 17)
3. Please provide the sources of funding in 2017-18 and this year. How much was spent in those periods. Please also provide the MOUs or agreements that direct how funding can be spent (page 19).
4. Would a container deposit scheme, such as the model being used in Queensland, be just as successful in Victoria and why do we not have one? (page 20)
5. Can you advise of any bids that you have made on the Sustainability Fund that were not accepted or not given any funding in this current period? (page 20)
6. Please provide relevant information regarding the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) and how you interact with each other (page 19-20).

By what date does Sustainability Victoria aspire to have moved the total resource recovery rate from 67 per cent to 71 per cent?

Victoria does not currently have a state-wide resource recovery target. Sustainability Victoria, in its current strategy SV2020, has an **aspirational goal** of a 71% total resource recovery rate, both through the impact of our own programs and our influence across industry and local government. This is not a whole of government target nor one that has been committed to in regulation or policy.

The soon to be released Victorian Recycling Industry Annual Report 2017-18, shows Victoria's recycling rate has increased from 67% to 69% over the past 12 months. This reflects investment from government and from the sector, particularly in the recovery and reuse of construction and demolition waste.

The Victorian Government has committed a record \$135 million to further investment in the waste and resource recovery sector, a large proportion of this being allocated to additional recycling infrastructure.

Are there any PV recyclers operating now in Victoria?

The current national market for recycling photovoltaic panels and systems is limited with a few players recovering mostly the aluminium frames. There are no solar PV cell recyclers currently operating in Victoria.

At present, only a small number of PV panels are entering the waste stream and the low volumes are part of the reason that large scale investment in PV recycling is yet to emerge. However, the Victorian Government recognises that this waste stream is likely to grow in coming years, which is why SV is leading a national program, working closely with industry, to investigate product stewardship options for advancing solar PV recycling in Australia.

Product stewardship is an approach that looks to share the responsibility for end-of-life management across the supply chain, rather than just leaving disposal to the consumer. These types of approaches are governed by the Commonwealth Government, through the *Product Stewardship Act 2011*.

Please provide the sources of funding in 2017-18 and this year. How much was spent in those periods. Please also provide the MOUs or agreements that direct how funding can be spent.

Source	Can be spent on	FY18 (\$M)	FY19 (budget) (\$M)	FY20 (indicative budget) (\$M)
Landfill levy	Core obligations under the Act	\$19	\$22	\$18
Government grants	Tied funding for delivery of government projects	\$21	\$39	\$38
Other	Tied funding for delivery of government projects	\$3	\$74 [#]	\$3
Total		\$43	\$137	\$59

[#] Note: This funding is for the implementation of Yr 1 of the Solar Homes program, which was transitioned from SV to DELWP on 1 July 2019.

The Municipal and Industrial Landfill Levy (MILL) is collected by EPA and distributed by DELWP in accordance with the Environment Protection and Sustainability Victoria Amendment Act 2014, which allocates a portion of the levy each year to SV, EPA and the seven Waste and Resource Recovery Groups. The remaining unallocated portion of funds collected through the MILL is distributed to the Sustainability Fund. The decision on apportionment is made by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. SV's funding can be spent on delivery of core functions under the Act.

The Sustainability Fund's purpose as defined in the *Environment Protection Act 1970* is to foster best practice in waste management and innovation in relation to greenhouse gas emission reduction, and is allocated by the Premier and Minister.

As per the table above, in addition to its core funding SV may receive funding that is tied to the delivery of specific government policies. This funding is administered through contracts with the Sustainability Fund that have agreed outcomes and timeframes and the funding can only be used for the specific purposes for which it has been granted.

SV has approximately ten (10) MOUs underway at present for projects relating to resource recovery, including:

- Resource Recovery Infrastructure Fund \$26.6M (Sustainability Fund)
- E-waste Landfill Ban \$16.5M (Sustainability Fund)
- Getting Full Value \$7M (DELWP)
- Supporting Market Development \$6.1M (Sustainability Fund)
- Waste Education Program \$7.4M (Sustainability Fund)

A copy of the RRIF MOU is attached as an example.

Would a container deposit scheme, such as the model being used in Queensland, be just as successful in Victoria and why do we not have one?

Container deposit schemes can improve recycling rates and reduce litter, however there are costs for the implementation of such schemes. Therefore, any changes that impact the current model for recycling in Victoria should be considered carefully in terms of costs and benefits, ensuring that any additional costs are allocated at the right parts of the supply chain.

Can you advise of any bids that you have made on the Sustainability Fund that were not accepted or not given any funding in this current period?

SV's funding bids are coordinated and managed through the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning and as such any information on budget bids should be sought directly from the Department.

Please provide relevant information regarding the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) and how you interact with each other.

SV has a collaborative relationship with a range of stakeholders working to make Australia more sustainable, including APCO.

APCO "is a co-regulatory, not for profit organisation partnering with government and industry to reduce the environmental impact of packaging in Australian communities. APCO delivers this model of shared responsibility through the promotion of sustainable packaging activities including sustainable design, recycling initiatives, waste to landfill reduction and circular economy projects."

The Victorian Government's engagement with APCO spans across DELWP, EPA and SV given the APCO model includes elements of regulation, policy and program delivery. For example, discussions relating to the National Environment Pollution (Used Packaging Materials) Measure are the purview of DELWP whilst enforcement of the NEPM is the responsibility of EPA.

SV has worked closely with APCO for many years, including the co-delivery of packaging related projects in Victoria. In the past, this has included work in the establishment of new packaging infrastructure in Victoria, the development of specifications for the development of end products made from recycled glass and work on sustainable packaging design.

At present, the Victorian Government is supporting APCO as it redefines its role, improves the Sustainable Packaging Guidelines and associated tools (like the PREP design tool) and develops a new strategic plan. At SV, our primary work with APCO at present relates to investment in new infrastructure to support the recovery of packaging, specifically aiming at facilities that can commoditise and/or use plastics, paper, cardboard and glass in secondary manufacturing.