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VICTORIA HEADING TO BE WORST RECYCLER IN AUSTRALIA

Forty eight environment groups today called on the Victorian government to guarantee that no drink containers or organics or other recyclable material would be used in waste to energy plants. Victoria risks becoming the worst performer in Australia on recycling, they warned.

"Waste to energy is not recycling and there are better uses for the material proposed for the Maryvale, Laverton and Ballarat plants, which will create more diverse economic activity and jobs. For instance the container deposit scheme in NSW has massively increased the recycling of drink bottles and cans, but if these had been contractually locked up for an incineration plant, the ongoing and significant economic, social and environmental benefits would have been lost," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre and Boomerang Alliance.

"It is spurious for the proponents to claim that they will only use material that is not recycled, as this locks in the current low recycling rate for Victoria, now ebbing away with China's rejection of dirty material from the red and yellow kerbside bins. Waste to energy is a one-off extraction of energy, only a little above the low bar of landfilling."

"This is no small matter, as the Maryvale plant is estimated to gobble up to 55% of household rubbish a year – including lots of recyclable material."

"The Victorian government should get serious about recycling and implement genuine comprehensive policies like a container deposit scheme, organics recycling and high value reprocessing - across the state. Waste to energy is fast losing favour in Europe, where they now recognise it is contrary to saving resources and the environment; and there are better ways to reduce greenhouse gases," Mr Angel said.

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