

Kingfisher Centre
Aspley Special School's Recycling Station
 The world's most comprehensive school recycling project!

Harry Johnson

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REDUCE

REUSE

Recycle

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Inquiry into Energy Efficiency
 Productivity Commission.

4 5 05.

Dear Dr.Byron and Prof.Woods,

Thank you for your draft report on the Inquiry into Energy Efficiency and the opportunity to comment on the draft report.

I can only hope that before the challenges of addressing Peak Oil, water supply and global. climate change become too great for future generations, two aspects of improving energy efficiency will be given serious consideration in Australia.

I refer to the use of the readily available volunteer labour of those who wish to be useful and productive citizens, be they retirees or those with disabilities. And since we are all temporarily able-bodied,it would appear prudent to start to consider how each of us would like to live our final years.

Consideration must also be given to the energy efficiency of being able to purchase a far greater range of products that are reusable, reliable, repairable and durable- in Australia.

To ensure that this occurs in Australia, sooner rather than later I recommend that far greater promotion is given to the practice of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)which places the cost of packaging on both the Producer of_a packaging item and the Consumer who purchases that packaged item.

According to a discussion paper by Dave West and Murray Hogarth for the Boomerang Alliance (March 2005), half of all products packaged is consumed away from home. This means it is consumed away from recycling services and is likely to be littered.(Attachment 1) and information on the Boomerang Alliance (Attachment 2).

EPR places a cost on the Producer and Consumer of a packaged item rather than the general rate payer.

According to the Boomerang Alliance, all the world's best recyclers have one thing in common-container deposits.

Container Deposit Legislation(CDL) is one method that leads to a far greater production of Containers Designed to last, that is packaging that is reusable, refillable, reliable and durable.

The uptake of reusable packaging items in preference to single-use disposables, results in massive energy savings in the manufacturing process as well as huge on-going savings in the energy that would be otherwise expended in the collection and processing of littered packaging items.

Today in Australia we only recycle 20.1% of our packaging waste via kerbside recycling and 85% of litter picked up on Clean Up Australia Day was packaging.

Global climate change and water shortages, if they don't spoil our days, they will certainly cause havoc to our grandchildren's futures. The energy efficiencies of maximising the use of readily available and plentiful, underutilised human resources and minimising material resource use by a far greater uptake of reusables are two vital measures that should be put in place despite the shortterm, blinkered interests of multi-national packaging and waste management industries in Australia; for the energy efficiencies that result from waste minimisation will make it more likely that future generations will enjoy a sustainable future.

I wish you well with your final report and all the best in the future you choose.

Yours sincerely,


Harry Johnson.

Waste Minimisation Coordinator, Kingfisher Centre, Aspley Special School.

Attachment 1

Packaging and Waste facts

- Australia produces over 3.36 million tonnes of packaging per year.
- We recycle only 20.1 % of our packaging waste via kerbside recycling.
- 116,830 tonnes of the resources collected by kerbside recycling are lost through contamination.
- 48% of the population is confused about what can be recycled.
- Kerbside recycling costs local government and ratepayers \$294 million every year, while product producers and consumers avoid responsibility for their waste.
- Half of all product packaging is consumed away from home. This means it is consumed away from recycling services and is likely to be littered.
85% of litter picked up on Clean Up Australia Day 2004 was packaging.
- Victoria alone spends over \$50 million per year on collecting and disposing of litter.
- 8,000 Australian children are treated in hospital each year (and more in private practice) for injuries caused by stepping on littered glass.
- Field research shows that up to 60% of platypuses become entangled in litter. Billions of plastic fragments are consumed by sea birds and other marine creatures.

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Please note: the opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies of individual Boomerang Alliance members.

Attachment 2

Introducing the Boomerang Alliance

The groups that form the Boomerang Alliance adopt very different public profiles and work on a diverse range of issues. We celebrate our diversity and welcome the appeal of environmental protection by the wide audience we represent.

Alliance members include the Australian Conservation Foundation, Arid Lands Environment Centre, Clean Up Australia, Environment Victoria, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace Australia Pacific, NSW Local Government and Shires Association, NSW Nature Conservation Council, Queensland Conservation Council, Total Environment Centre, Conservation Council of Western Australia, Tasmanian Conservation Trust and Zero Waste Action Group.

Together, the Boomerang Alliance represents over 283 environment groups across the nation with millions of members, supporters, donors and volunteers who are overwhelmingly sick of packaging rubbish.

We unite in our strong and unwavering commitment to reform in the areas of energy, resource recovery, waste management and water conservation.

The Alliance believes it is important to recognise that packaging, newspapers and plastic bags are the core fuel for a resource recovery-led shift towards zero waste, both in the community's willingness to embrace issues of social ecology and as a driver of reform from waste management towards resource recovery.

www.boomerangalliance.org