

Environment and Communications Legislation
Answers to questions on notice
Agriculture, Water and the Environment Portfolio

Committee: Environment and Communications Legislation
Inquiry: Inquiry into the Recycling and Waste Bills 2020
Question No: 1
Hearing Date: 18 September 2020
Division/Agency: Environment Protection Division (EPD)
Topic: Banning of manufacturing and distribution of certain products through the product stewardship scheme
Question Date: 18 September 2020
Question Type: Written

Senator Green asked:

1. Does the Commonwealth have the power to ban the manufacturing and distribution of certain products through the mechanism of a mandatory product stewardship scheme?

Answer:

The Recycling and Waste Reduction Bill 2020 (the Bill) does provide for the Minister to make rules in relation to mandatory product stewardship schemes. This could include regulating the manufacture or distribution of a product or material, where this furthered the objects of the Bill and meets the product stewardship criteria.

In addition, the Constitutional basis for making mandatory product stewardship rules will need to be satisfied, taking into account the type of product or material and who is proposed to be regulated.

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Committee: Environment and Communications Legislation
Inquiry: Inquiry into the Recycling and Waste Bills 2020
Question No: 2
Hearing Date: 18 September 2020
Division/Agency: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Topic: Expenditure for waste related commitments
Question Date: 18 September 2020
Question Type: Written

Senator Green asked:

2. During the 2019 Federal Election the Prime Minister announced a series of waste related commitments. Can you please advise this Committee on the how much money has been expended for the following commitments.

- a. \$20 million for a Product Stewardship Investment Fund
- b. \$20 million for CRC grants for innovation in recycling
- c. \$5.8 for initiatives through Clean Up Australia, Keep Australia Beautiful, the Australian Council of Recycling, Planet Ark, the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation and OzHarvest.
- d. \$5m for Conservation Volunteers Australia to coordinate community campaigns to clean up plastic waste.

Answer:

- a. On 9 July 2020 a competitive grants round of up to \$14 million was opened, with over 120 applications received, seeking over \$90 million in grant funding. Also, on 9 July a call to identify a partner to receive a \$1 million ad hoc grant for a product stewardship centre of excellence was opened. It is expected these processes will be finalised before the end of the year. Funding for successful projects will be expended in line with contractual agreements for each project.
- b. On 9 February 2020 Ministers Andrews and Ley announced nine CRC Projects would receive \$19,176,546 (GST exclusive) in grant funding to address plastic waste reduction and boosting plastic recycling. As of 21 September 2020, \$3,955,857 (GST exclusive) has been expended on the projects. CRC Projects operate for a period of up to three years.
- c. Under the Environment Restoration Fund all of the \$5.8 million for initiatives through Clean Up Australia, Keep Australia Beautiful, the Australian Council of Recycling, Planet Ark, the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation and OzHarvest have been contracted. As of 21 September \$1,190,000 (GST exclusive) has been expended on these projects. The majority of these projects are due to finish in 2023.
- d. Under the Environment Restoration Fund all of the \$5 million for Conservation Volunteers Australia to coordinate community campaigns to clean up plastic waste has been contracted. As of 21 September \$1,000,000 (GST exclusive) has been expended on these projects. This project is due to finish in 2023.

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Committee: Environment and Communications Legislation
Inquiry: Inquiry into the Recycling and Waste Bills 2020
Question No: 3
Hearing Date: 18 September 2020
Division/Agency: Environment Protection Division (EPD)
Topic: Update on funding/projects under the \$100m Australian Recycling Investment Fund
Hansard Page: 28
Question Date: 21 September 2020
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Green asked:

Senator GREEN: Sure, but this is quite closely connected to the legislation in the sense that you can't really do one without the other. Do you know how much of the \$100 million of that Australian Recycling Investment Fund has been spent so far?

Ms Tilley: My observation would be that that was a funding commitment that came from the 2019 election and was announced and established well in advance of COAG determining to ban the export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres and in advance of this legislation being drafted. While, of course, the funding and industry uptake and capacity to do more domestic recycling of waste materials is useful in terms of the outcomes and the objectives of this legislation, it's really the \$190 million Recycling Modernisation Fund that was designed specifically to support the waste export ban. For what it's worth, my recollection—and I'm happy to get more up to date detail on the \$100 million recycling investment fund to you on notice—recently from what I heard from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation was that they're in active discussions with four or five parties about the funding available through that fund.

Answer:

The \$100 million Australian Recycling Investment Fund is administered by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC).

The Fund was established upon the signing of an Investment Mandate direction on 17 December 2019.

The CEFC has advised that it continues to assess and screen expressions of interest that have been received since the Fund was established and are being held as commercial in confidence. There have been over 30 enquiries.

To date, no projects have received final approval from the CEFC Board and no investment commitments have been made. There are now two transactions in the CEFC's forward investment pipeline.

The timing of any commercial transaction depends on a number of factors, from both project proponents and the CEFC. As with all CEFC investments, projects seeking finance through the Australian Recycling Investment Fund must be commercial, reflecting the CEFC's requirement to deliver a positive return for taxpayers across the portfolio.