



The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

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Why this Churchill Fellowship?

The [Winston Churchill Memorial Trust](#) was established in 1965 to honour the memory of Sir Winston Churchill. Each year the Trust selects ~ 100 leaders from across Australia to travel to gain new knowledge and insights that will be practically applied to positively impact Australian communities and society.

Helen Millicer, Melbourne Australia travelling 20 April – 31 May 2018

Roles incl: Principal One Planet Consulting; Manager Recycling Strategies, Vinyl Council of Australia; Panel member, New Energy Jobs Fund; Board Director, Loddon Mallee Waste & Resource Recovery Group; President, Alternative Technology Assoc Australia; Advisor, UN Global Cities Program; Columnist, Business Environment Network, Judge national Banksia Sustainability Awards.

Project aim: How to shift Australia to a circular economy, with a focus on plastics?

Australia's economy is predominantly a linear one of 'Use and Dispose'. This approach is not sustainable as it places Australia at a commercial and strategic disadvantage with other countries, plus it is highly wasteful of energy, water and resources and fills our landfills. One of the best strategic shifts is to move to a more circular economy, one that is more productive, efficient and with more jobs.

For example, our plastics consumption per person is amongst the highest in the world (~ 3,000,000 tonnes is enough to fill 40% of the MCG stadium each year), however, for a decade our plastics recycling rate has been static and low, ~12-14% (329,000 tonnes) and the little we collect, most of this has been sent off shore. This study tour will look at plastics as an example of actions for a more circular, sustainable economy.

I will bring back insights, knowledge and networks on:

1. Strategies, regulations, targets, market and financial mechanisms, industry and public stewardship programs
2. Data and facts on jobs, manufacturing, end products, markets and value

Priority destinations in Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, UK and SE Asia are:

The timing is perfect; this Churchill study tour enables me to:

- attend the EU Plastics Recycling Conference and Expo
- meet winners of the EU Plastics Recycling Product and Technology Awards
- attend IFAT Expo and Conference in Munich
- engage with contributors to the European Commission's new Circular Economy Strategy for Plastics

Plus, I will engage with leaders in government agencies, manufacturers, think-tanks and peak industry and environmental groups. Including: the Netherlands Government, European Commission, Plastics Europe, Product Stewardship groups, World Wildlife Fund, Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, Cradle to Cradle EPEA, WRAP UK, Vinyl Plus, Waste Management Assoc of Malaysia and Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Assoc.

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Australia's challenges and opportunities

1. We rely upon export of plastic 'waste' to Asia for over 50% of our recycling. However, in mid-2017 China announced it will stop imports of poor quality unsorted materials from 1 Jan 2018
2. The quantity of plastics reprocessed for manufacturing in Australia has fallen in real terms over the last decade as governments and companies have taken the easy route focusing on export to Asia
3. Our recycling focus is largely packaging. Australia has no strategies and programs addressing durable plastics in Australia; virtually all our durable plastic products end up in landfill or the environment
4. Our strategies, pricing, contracts, systems and programs have prioritised efficiency and volume for collections for export over quality and value for end products in Australia
5. Waste companies are increasing pressure on governments to build plants that burn material as 'waste' for poor environmental outcomes compared to reprocessing and renewables
6. Too few private collectors and governments know of and engage with local manufacturers in Australia who could use recycled materials in product; we do not prioritise jobs and strong industries
7. Our manufacturers, jobs and industries are at a disadvantage over international competitors as they are struggling to obtain reliable recycle, and have a higher environmental footprint

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