

Victoria's Household Recycling Reforms

Frequently Asked Questions – Households



Q: Why are we reforming household recycling?

Following widespread disruption to global recycling markets, governments across Australia and around the world are grappling with how to waste less and recycle more.

It's a big, complicated problem and there's no easy, quick fix.

It's why the Victorian Government is transforming the state's recycling sector.

This will make our state's future recycling system more sustainable, create cutting-edge local industries and thousands of new jobs.

Most importantly, it will deliver a recycling system that Victorians can rely on.

Following feedback from communities, local councils and industry, we will introduce standardised waste and recycling services across Victoria, including the introduction of a new four-bin waste and recycling system.

Working in partnership with councils, this reform will see four colour-coded bins rolled out to homes across Victoria, separating combined food and garden organics, glass recycling, plastics, paper, cardboard and metals recycling, and residual household waste.

Separate collection of these streams will mean we can recycle more and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Q: What does this all mean for me?

The main changes for households will be in the way we collect waste and recycle across the state.

Under these changes, Victorians will be asked to separate waste at home and work, including using separate bins or services for food organics and garden organics (FOGO), and glass.

We're also introducing a container deposit scheme to help Victorians recycle their beverage containers.

The scheme will start by 2022/23 and will be designed and delivered in partnership with councils and industry.

Q: What is going to change with our household waste collection?

Under the new four-bin waste and recycling system, Victorians will be provided with an extra bin or service for glass.

Those who don't currently have food organics and garden organics (FOGO) recycling, will also receive an extra bin or service.

We will also standardise household waste services across the state with consistent bin lid colours and with a consistent approach to what goes in each bin.

Local councils will determine if drop-off points or transfer stations are a better alternative to kerbside collection in some areas. Food organics and garden organics recycling may include making use of home composting practices.

Existing commingled recycling services will continue and will include paper, cardboard, plastics and metals. You will also continue to have a bin or service for leftover waste.

Current household recycling	Future household recycling
Commingled recycling (paper, cardboard, plastics, metals, and for most councils, glass)	Commingled recycling (paper, cardboard, plastics, metals)
General waste	General waste
Garden organics for most councils, and food – or food organics and garden organics (FOGO) – for some councils	Food organics and garden organics (FOGO)
	Glass
	Container Deposit Scheme (Glass, aluminium & PET plastic beverage containers)

Q: Why is there going to be a separate bin for glass?

When glass is collected in commingled recycling bins, it can become a major contaminant as it breaks and glass fragments stick to other materials, particularly in paper and cardboard.

It is very difficult to separate glass from other materials, limiting the recyclability of both the glass and the other materials.

By collecting glass separately, we can make sure more of it is effectively recycled – with jars and bottles transformed into multiple different products, including new roads and footpaths.

Separating glass will also reduce contamination in commingled recycling bins, and make sure that paper and plastics can be recovered effectively.

Q: What is the benefit of removing food waste from landfill?

Food waste is one of the main causes of greenhouse gas emissions as well as odour from landfill sites. Removing food waste from the garbage bin means it can be used to provide valuable nutrients in compost or become a source of energy.

Q: When will these changes happen?

The Victorian Government will work with individual councils to gradually roll out the new waste collection services, including new bins and bin lids. Timing will be informed by the needs of local communities and existing council contracts.

The new separate glass service is expected to be fully in place by 2027, while the new services and consistent bin lid colours for glass, commingled recycling, food organics and garden organics (FOGO) and residual waste will be in place across Victoria by the end of 2030.

The Government understands that councils impacted by bushfires will be rightly focussed on response and recovery efforts. As such, the Government will work closely with these communities in managing an appropriate timeline for the rollout.

Q: Why are some councils getting their new bins before others?

At the moment, the waste management system is largely managed by individual councils.

With almost three million households across Victoria, living in 79 different council areas, this staged rollout is the best way to transition to an integrated waste and recycling system and to make sure the right infrastructure – such as bins, trucks and processing facilities – are appropriately in place.

Q: How will we know what to put in which bin?

An education program will be rolled out to help Victorians understand what can be put into their bins. Your local council will also help you understand the new system in your local area.

Q. Will bin collection timings change?

Councils are best placed to determine the frequency of collection in their own communities.

We do, however, expect that councils will maintain the regularity of their services – including residual waste on a weekly basis – in line with the needs of their communities.

Q: Will we have a container deposit scheme and what are the benefits?

Victoria will introduce a container deposit scheme (CDS) by 2022/23, which will work alongside the new household waste collection system.

The community and the recycling industry will be consulted about how the new container deposit scheme in Victoria will work.

A CDS will help us extract more value from plastic, aluminium and glass containers, ensuring higher and better use of recycled materials.

New CDS infrastructure will support jobs in the recycling sector. It will also mean financial benefits for material recovery facilities and local governments, reduce litter, and make producers more responsible for the end stage of their products.

A CDS is expected to halve drink container litter in Victoria by 2030.

Q: What will Victoria’s container deposit scheme (CDS) look like?

Our state’s CDS will be designed in a way that provide a convenient, reliable and accessible service to all Victorians.

Victoria will work to harmonise our CDS with schemes in other jurisdictions to help reduce confusion for industry, retailers and consumers. The Government will also implement learnings from other jurisdictions to ensure that Victoria’s CDS follows best practice and meets the specific needs of our state.

The Government is working on the design of the Victorian CDS, and more information will be available later this year. Through public consultation, Victorians will have the opportunity to have their say on how the scheme should be designed and implemented.