

Recycling Victoria General FAQ



Q: What is Recycling Victoria?

Recycling Victoria is the Victorian Government's 10-year action plan to fundamentally transform our recycling sector, reduce waste, create thousands of jobs and set Victoria up for a more sustainable future.

Recycling Victoria will drive investment, jobs and increase the waste and recycling industry's processing capacity. These reforms will be delivered alongside investment and innovation as a comprehensive package to provide reliable services and a strong industry for the future. We will make sure services meet and exceed community expectations—putting an end to unethical operators and waste stockpiling.

Q: Why are we doing this?

As Victoria's population continues to grow, we need to maximise the value we get from our resources. *Recycling Victoria*, will help recover more value from our materials. When we send waste to landfill, we lose valuable resources – ones that our production system could be using again to make new products. We also miss out on opportunities to innovate, create jobs and get more value for Victorians.

By 2046, Victoria is expected to generate 40 percent more waste than it did in 2017-18. If we don't act now this will put pressure on our waste and recycling system, miss opportunities for economic growth, and increase landfill, creating more greenhouse gas emissions.

International developments also present new challenges. China's decision to restrict the import of some low-quality mixed recyclables in early 2018 destabilised global recycling markets and led to disruptions to Victorian recycling services. This challenge is also an opportunity for Victoria to innovate and grow our domestic recycling capabilities and build local markets and new uses for recycled materials.

Q: What are the main benefits of *Recycling Victoria*?

Implementing the suite of reforms in *Recycling Victoria* will improve the way we use materials and deal with waste. A significant improvement in materials productivity and resource recovery could boost Victoria's economy by up to \$6.7 billion.

A circular economy will create more than 3,900 new jobs, establishing new skills in design, repair, efficiency and materials usage across Victoria.

Businesses will have opportunities to grow in new ways and create new technologies in Victoria. A circular economy will also increase social inclusion through local solutions that support initiatives such as repair centres, product sharing or community composting.

By recovering more resources, avoiding landfilling and supporting circular economy initiatives, *Recycling Victoria* will reduce emissions from the waste sector and contribute to our target of net zero emissions by 2050.

Through implementing a container deposit scheme, we will reduce the amount of litter in Victoria, saving councils millions in clean-up costs and protect the environment.

We will also increase the amount of materials that are recovered and establish a recycling system that Victorians can rely on.

Q: How much is the government investing in *Recycling Victoria*?

We are investing more than \$300 million over four years to support the delivery of *Recycling Victoria*. This builds on the Victorian Government's record investment of \$135 million already made to reform and improve our state's waste and recycling sector.

Q: How will we know whether the *Recycling Victoria* has been successful?

Victoria's plan means we will reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, reduce litter in the environment and increase recycling. We have set targets to ensure we remain on track and achieve our goals by 2030.

Q: How will *Recycling Victoria* impact regional Victoria?

Recycling Victoria will improve recycling and material use throughout Victoria. We believe that everyone has a role to play in a transition to a circular economy. Through the **\$14.6 million** *Support Victorian Communities and Councils* program we will provide opportunities for regional Victorian communities and councils to tailor circular economy initiatives to meet local needs and boost their economies.

The Victorian Government is investing **\$96.5 million** to help local businesses give new life to old rubbish, including \$49.5 million in recycling infrastructure – to incentivise new recycling infrastructure including regional areas and support the goals of increased recycling and access to services, such as food and organics recycling.

In addition, **\$129 million** of initiatives will support the reform of kerbside recycling, including the roll out of four colour-coded bins to homes across the state to better sort waste, recyclables and organics. This includes support for all councils to transition to the new household recycling system. This means funding to support regional councils tailor these reforms to suit local needs, including whether collection or drop-off services are most practicable in a local area.

Q: Have the Victorian public, businesses and other organisations had the opportunity to have their say on *Recycling Victoria*?

Yes. We released an issues paper, *A circular economy for Victoria: Creating more value and less waste* in July 2019 and received more than 350 submissions from the public, business and industry. We also held 15 workshops across the state with 550 participants from local government, industry, businesses, not for profit organisations and universities and TAFEs. Input from separate public consultation processes on waste to energy was also used to develop *Recycling Victoria*.

Q: How will *Recycling Victoria* impact households?

The most significant change for Victorian households will be the overhaul of household waste collections, with the addition of a bin or service for glass and a food organics and garden organics (FOGO) bin or service.

The introduction of a container deposit scheme will make it easier to recycle on the go.

Businesses will change how they design and produce products and how we repair, share, reuse and recycle materials in our local communities.

Stronger waste and recycling regulation across the sector will ensure that waste and recycling services are safe, reliable, transparent and meet community expectations.

Q: How can Victorians do their bit to support *Recycling Victoria*?

Victorians can do their bit by:

- recycling correctly, with support provided by new state-wide education and behaviour change programs
- using new services for separate glass and organics recycling once these are adopted by local councils
- buying products designed to last or that contain recycled materials
- repairing goods instead of throwing them away
- buying second hand or using sharing platforms instead of buying new products.

The Victorian Government will support communities to implement circular economy ideas and initiatives in their local area through the *Supporting Victorian Communities and Councils* grants program. Some examples of initiatives that could be supported include repair cafes and product-sharing schemes.

Q: How are we going to grow markets for recycled materials in Victoria?

Building on existing programs, *Recycling Victoria*, will help businesses identify new uses and trial new products containing recyclable materials. The government will also develop and promote standards, specifications and guidance for using recycled materials. We will also improve how materials are collected and invest in sorting infrastructure to provide cleaner material streams that are more valuable and easier to use.

Q: How are we going to encourage businesses to make items from recycled materials that will last longer and can be repaired and recycled?

We are investing \$30 million in a *Recycling Markets Acceleration* package to support collaboration between industry, universities and government for research to develop new products made from recycled materials such as glass, plastic, organics, paper, cardboard and tyres. This investment will stimulate new markets for recyclable materials by also developing product specification, improving quality standards and industry accreditation.

We are also investing \$17 million to improve business productivity and reduce waste.

This includes establishing a \$7 million Business Innovation Centre to support businesses to transition to a circular economy. The Centre will foster business innovation and collaboration across supply chains to reduce waste, increase recycling and reuse, and generate new streams of revenue for businesses.

We will also deliver a \$10 million business support grants program to help businesses improve their resource efficiency, reduce their waste to landfill, increase recycling and reduce business costs. We will provide grants for peak industry bodies and associations, and coordinated business groups, to deliver programs for waste avoidance, improving waste management and sustainable supply chain management and product stewardship.

Q: How will *Recycling Victoria* impact jobs and businesses?

The circular economy could boost Victoria's economic productivity by up to \$6.7 billion and create more than 3,900 new jobs.

Expanding Victoria's recycling infrastructure and developing new markets for waste will create opportunities for business, leading to new jobs and skills.

Recycling Victoria will help deliver market certainty, encouraging greater investment. It will also support emerging businesses by prioritising the use of recycled content in major government transport infrastructure projects.

Q: How are we going to get the community to support the circular economy?

Communities and councils can benefit from circular initiatives and are well placed to support the transition to a circular economy at a local level.

We will support Victorian communities and councils with a \$14.6 million grants program to support implementation of local actions that reduce waste, help households make different purchasing decisions and save money, reduce litter and illegal dumping, and help Victorians move to lower waste living.

We will support local community groups, social enterprises and other not-for-profit businesses working to reduce waste and improve recycling. Some examples of initiatives that could be supported includes repair cafes, product-sharing schemes and litter and illegal dumping reduction activities.

The government will also support communities to avoid and minimise waste, recycle correctly and reuse, repair and share products through the state-wide education and behaviour change programs.

Q: How will household waste collection change?

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.

Local councils will decide if drop-off points or transfer stations are a better alternative to kerbside collection in some areas. FOGO services may include composting at home.

We will continue collecting paper, cardboard, plastics and metals in one bin and have another for left over waste. We're also introducing a container deposit scheme to help Victorians recycle their beverage containers.

The scheme will start by 2023 and will be designed and delivered in partnership with councils and industry.

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

There will be the state-wide education and behaviour change programs to help Victorians understand what goes in each bin. Local councils will also provide information to help residents understand the new system.

Q: When will these changes happen?

Planning for implementation is underway. Changes to household recycling collections will begin in 2021 for many council areas and will be informed by the needs of local communities and existing council contracts. All

Victorians will have a new glass bin or service by 2027 and a new food and garden organics bin or service by 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 will the changes to household collections take so long to implement?

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.

New services are likely to commence in the second half of 2021 for many council areas, with other areas introducing new services later as they enter new contracts for waste and recycling collection.

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.

Before introducing FOGO services across Victoria, the Government will work with industries, including the waste and agricultural sectors, to ensure Victoria can process this material into the highest value products and that we have markets available to take all the product generated.

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: What are the benefits of a container deposit scheme for Victoria?

Victoria will introduce a container deposit scheme (CDS) by 2023 which will complement our new household waste collection system. It will make recycling easier outside the home. The community and the recycling industry will be consulted about how a new container deposit scheme in Victoria will work.

A CDS will help us extract more value from plastic, aluminium and glass containers. New CDS infrastructure will support regional jobs. 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 CDS look like?

Victoria's CDS will be designed in a way that is convenient, simple to use, reliable and accessible 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 in 2020. Through consultation, Victorians will have the opportunity to have their say on how the scheme should be designed and implemented.

Q: Why did Victoria wait so long to commit to a CDS?

We have consistently said we need to carefully assess the approach in other states and design a scheme that's right for Victoria. We know that 50 per cent of containers are consumed outside of the home and a CDS can play an important role in reducing litter – in fact having a CDS is expected to halve beverage container litter in Victoria within 10 years. But there are good scheme designs and some not so good that increase costs to consumers.

Consultation will commence immediately on the design and implementation of the scheme, which will commence by 2023 and is expected to create 115 new jobs once operating.

Q: Why doesn't Victoria implement a CDS sooner?

We are going to take the time to design a scheme that is right for Victoria. The three-year timeline for design and implementation is in line with recent decisions from other jurisdictions – with Tasmania and New Zealand announcing in 2019 that they would have their own CDS by 2022.

Experience in other Australian jurisdictions has shown that CDSs are complex to design and implement. We also need to allow enough time for industry and businesses to adapt and ensure that the scheme harmonises with Victoria's kerbside recycling system.

Q: How will we get businesses to sort and recycle their waste correctly?

The government will establish new laws and establish a new waste authority by 2021 to govern all aspects associated with waste and recycling services, in line with the Essential Services Commission review. As part of this we will introduce new rules to require businesses to sort commonly recyclable materials from waste. We will consult with communities, local governments and businesses about proposed reforms in 2020.

Q: How will we manage the increased volumes of recycled materials – are we investing in new recycling facilities?

We already have a strong foundation to transform the waste and recycling industry, thanks to more than \$135 million in funding over the last five years for the sector.

Through *Recycling Victoria*, the Victorian Government is investing a further \$49.5 million in an Industry and Infrastructure development package to attract private infrastructure investment. This investment will help to address infrastructure gaps to support the household recycling reform, deal with waste export bans, process materials locally and meet our 80 per cent resource recovery target by 2030.

The package includes:

- a \$28 million boost for businesses to invest in infrastructure to sort and reprocess recyclables for use in manufacturing, bringing the total funding available in the Recycling Victoria Infrastructure Fund to \$56 million
- \$11.5 million in infrastructure to better manage hazardous waste
- \$10 million in waste to energy technologies to recover energy from waste that cannot be recycled and would otherwise be sent to landfill.

Q: What are we doing to make sure the waste and recycling industry comply with health and safety regulations?

The Victorian Government takes the issue of illegal waste management and unsafe stockpiles in our community very seriously. The new waste authority will allow the Victorian Government to have oversight of the waste and recycling system - by increasing transparency, accountability and good governance.

Improving government oversight of the sector will help put an end to unethical operators and waste stockpiling and assist in creating a more resilient waste and recycling sector.

Q: Will the government invest in waste to energy?

The Victorian Government supports waste to energy projects where they create clear net benefits and complement efforts to reduce and recycle waste. Waste to energy technologies can help Victoria achieve better waste management outcomes as we shift to a circular economy. However, we must reduce, reuse and recycle waste in the first place.

Measures in *Recycling Victoria* will make sure waste is avoided and recycled before any waste is used for energy recovery. These include measures to improve household recycling systems, help Victorians understand recycling rules and require businesses to sort recyclables from waste.

The government will invest in technologies that recover energy from wastes that cannot be recycled and would otherwise be sent to landfill. This will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create new jobs.

Q: What are we doing to protect the environment and communities from high-risk and hazardous waste sites?

The Victorian Government will ensure the coordinated inter-agency management of high-risk and hazardous waste sites through improved collaboration, stronger regulation, policy and planning and is investing \$71.4 million in a high-risk and hazardous waste management program.

The program includes a new dedicated Waste Crime Prevention Inspectorate within the Environment Protection Authority Victoria to combat waste crime in Victoria. The program will improve the coordinated approach between WorkSafe Victoria, emergency service agencies, local government and other regulators to address non-compliance and illegal activities that can lead to high-risk waste sites being established. As part of this program, the government will consider the potential introduction of new levies for waste being stockpiled for long periods to encourage the safe storage of these materials and manage any associated public safety risks.

Q: What will the government do to make it easier to safely dispose of asbestos?

We will ensure adequate disposal points for asbestos across the state, through an Asbestos Disposal Management Plan.