WASTE AND RECYCLING IN MELBOURNE

Waste and recycling are a part of everyone’s daily life. How we manage our waste is important to ensuring the long term liveability and sustainability of our city.

The draft Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan sets out actions to improve our recycling rates, reduce waste to landfill, and plan for Melbourne’s growth and future sustainability. This fact sheet provides information about Melbourne’s current waste situation and future projections.

Our goal is to reduce waste to landfill and increase recycling. To achieve this goal, households, businesses, industry and government will need to change how they manage waste. Our draft plan outlines 10 priority actions for increasing recycling in metropolitan Melbourne. These actions include increasing food waste recycling, improving facilities, undertaking education efforts to support waste avoidance, and promoting new technologies that recover and divert waste away from landfill. Please read our other fact sheets for more information on our 10 priority actions and Melbourne’s waste and resource recovery infrastructure and landfills.

Current and recycling waste management

Melbourne currently produces and manages about 10.3 million tonnes of waste each year - almost 80% of Victoria’s waste. The three main waste sources are:

- **Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)** - waste from households and council operations
- **Construction & Demolition (C&D)** - waste from demolition work and commercial and residential construction
- **Commercial & Industrial (C&I)** - waste from offices, government agencies, manufacturers, schools, hospitals and small to medium enterprises.

Melbourne currently recycles 73% of its waste, but valuable materials are still sent to landfill. Every year, around three million tonnes of waste is disposed of into metropolitan landfills. Almost half of the total waste going into landfills is from households. Around 42% of household and commercial waste going to landfill is food and garden waste which could be recycled. There are also opportunities to increase recycling of other materials such as paper, metals and plastics that are still ending up in landfill.

Future waste projections

As our population grows, the amount of waste managed at landfills will increase unless we maximise recycling opportunities. By 2041, Melbourne’s population is projected to reach 7.8 million people and because of this we’ll generate 63% more waste (around 16.5 million tonnes per year). A significant boost in new infrastructure will be needed to manage this growth. Unless we improve our recycling, by 2041 Melbourne will need to send an additional one million tonnes of waste to landfill every year. We’ll also need to recycle at least 5 million tonnes of extra waste every year.

Our 10 priorities aim to increase recycling to reduce our reliance on landfills. Increasing recycling will require stimulating recycling markets, improving infrastructure and technology and diligent efforts by individuals and businesses.

Breakdown of household and commercial material entering landfills in 2014

Waste managed in Melbourne by sector
Planning and managing Melbourne’s waste

There are a number of government bodies involved in waste management activities in Victoria.

- **Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning** provides state wide policy development and oversight.
- **Sustainability Victoria** develops and delivers state wide strategies and programs.
- **Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Groups** (including the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group) are responsible for planning and facilitating waste services across their regions.
- **Environment Protection Authority** is responsible for regulation, compliance and enforcement of waste standards.
- **Local councils** provide services such as household bins, waste collection and manage some facilities.

How can you get involved in Melbourne’s waste and recycling future?

We’d love to know what you think about the draft plan for managing Melbourne’s waste. You can talk to us at one of our public events during November and December, send us feedback through our website (www.participate.mwrrg.vic.gov.au/draft-plan) or call us on (03) 8698 9800. The submission deadline is 18 December 2015.