

Recycling Industry Strategic Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the Victorian Government doing to support recycling?

The Victorian Government has invested record funding of more than \$100 million over the last four years to address waste and resource recovery issues.

Following China's decision to stop importing low-quality recyclable materials, in February 2018 the Victorian Government announced a \$13 million support package to help councils and industry in the short term.

The government released the *Recycling Industry Strategic Plan* in July 2018 as a long term response to challenges facing industry, communities and businesses, alongside an additional \$23.6 million to deliver the plan. This brings the government's total investment in the plan to \$37 million.

We all have an important role to play, and it's never been more important for Victorians to sort their recycling properly. If you're not sure what you can and can't recycle, please check with [Sustainability Victoria](#) or your local council.

Q. What is the Recycling Industry Strategic Plan?

The plan is a \$37 million blueprint for a safe, resilient and efficient recycling system in Victoria.

The plan includes funding for key initiatives:

- An additional \$8.3 million to boost the Resource Recovery Infrastructure Fund to more than \$21 million. This will improve the quality of up to 100,000 tonnes of recycled material, including through better sorting and processing.
- A further \$2 million to establish and expand markets for recycled materials – boosting Victoria's market development program to \$4.5 million.
- \$3.3 million for an education program to help the community recycle effectively – which in turn makes the overall system more efficient.

The plan includes the \$13 million support package announced in February to help councils and industry in the short term.

Please visit environment.vic.gov.au/sustainability/victorians-urged-to-keep-recycling to view the strategic plan.

The plan has four goals designed to deal with current challenges. The goals are:

- stabilising the recycling sector
- increasing the quality of recycled materials
- improving the diversity and productivity of the recycling sector
- developing markets for recycled materials.

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Q. When will the plan be implemented?

The actions in the plan will be delivered over a three year period from 2018-2021.

Q. Who will implement the plan?

The plan will be delivered by consumers and waste producers, the resource recovery industry and manufacturers, and all levels of government.

State government departments and agencies that will lead implementation include:

- the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Local Government Victoria
- Sustainability Victoria
- Waste and Resource and Recovery Groups
- the Department of Treasury and Finance

In each case, leads will work in partnership across government, industry, agencies and the community.

Q. What is the Resource Recovery Infrastructure Fund?

The \$21 million Resource Recovery Infrastructure Fund supports the development of infrastructure to improve the collection and processing of recycled materials. As of July 2018, 27 projects have been funded. These projects will divert at least 500,000 tonnes of material from landfill every year.

Q. What type of projects does the Resource Recovery Infrastructure Fund support?

In June 2018, Integrated Recycling was awarded a \$130,000 grant from the fund to upgrade its Mildura plastics reprocessing facility. This funding will help increase production of Duratrack, a timber replacement product that is made from almost 100% recycled materials, including plastics and polystyrene.

Every kilometre of Duratrack sleepers contains about 54 tonnes of recycled plastic and 10 tonnes of recycled polystyrene.

Q. What is the Resource Recovery Market Development Fund?

The \$4.5 million Resource Recovery Market Development Fund is designed to help create new markets for Victoria's recyclable materials.

Q. What type of projects does the Resource Recovery Market Development Fund support?

The fund was launched in May 2018, with the allocation of a \$67,000 grant to help trial the use of asphalt made with recycled plastic bags, printer cartridges and glass in road surfacing.

Every kilometre of road surfaced with modified asphalt will use the equivalent of:

- 530,000 plastic bags
- 170,000 glass bottles
- Toner from 12,500 printer cartridges
- 130 tonnes of re-used asphalt.

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Q. What does the plan mean for households?

The plan will help minimise costs to Victorian households in the long term, and ensure the ongoing viability of kerbside recycling collection services.

The government will also deliver an education program to help the community understand what can and can't be recycled, to help reduce the contamination of kerbside recycling.

Better recycling habits could reduce the amount of contaminated recycling going to landfill by about 40,000 tonnes every year.

Q. Will waste charges or rates go up to cover the increased costs of kerbside collection?

Local councils are responsible for rates and charges to cover the costs of recycling. Most councils have waste charges separate to their rates, and these charges are not subject to a rates cap. Many councils have increased waste charges in the short term, largely due to the increased costs associated with providing collection and processing services. How much charges increase is a matter for individual councils.

The plan includes actions to help minimise recycling costs for Victorian households over time. The aim is to improve how councils procure and contract recycling services, driving greater productivity and cost efficiencies in the sector.

The plan also includes actions to help improve the value of recycled materials and to develop markets for end products. Each of these will ultimately contribute to a more financially sustainable, resilient sector that can minimise costs to households.

Q. Will kerbside collection of recycling continue?

Kerbside services are the responsibility of councils and their contractors, but maintaining kerbside collections is a key objective of the plan. The actions in the plan will ensure that industry is supported to continue delivery of recycling services.

Q. How much of Victoria's recyclable materials is sent overseas?

We process about 86% of our recyclable materials here in Australia. The other 14% is processed overseas, including in China. The proportion that is exported varies across materials and waste sources.

Q. Why is the recycling sector important to Victoria?

The waste and resource recovery sector stimulates the Victorian economy, creates employment and helps the environment. The sector has an annual turnover of \$4 billion and provides 12,000 full time equivalent jobs across more than 590 businesses.

The sector also plays an important role in protecting our environment by substantially reducing the amount of waste going to landfill and reducing the use of new materials in manufacturing.

Of the 12.7 million tonnes of waste generated in Victoria in 2015/16, the recycling industry helped us to recover 8.5 million tonnes.

Research has shown recycling just one plastic bottle saves enough energy to power a computer for 25 minutes, and recycling one tonne of paper saves three cubic metres of landfill space.



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Q. What else is the government doing?

Over the past four years, the Victorian Government has provided a record amount of funding to address waste and resource recovery issues, now totalling more than \$100 million with the release of this plan.

The government is working toward broader waste management goals in a whole-of-government circular economy policy and action plan to be released in 2020.

Q. What was the consultation process for the strategic plan?

The plan was developed through targeted engagement with the recycling industry, manufacturers, local government, environment groups and research organisations. It was informed by the views of the community and stakeholders who have taken part in ongoing engagement on waste and recycling matters.

The Victorian Recycling Markets Government Taskforce - which is made up of relevant Victorian Government departments and agencies, as well as the Municipal Association of Victoria - has provided advice to government on the content of the Strategic Plan.