

FAQ: Waste as an essential service



Q: Why do we need to make waste an essential service?

Making waste an essential service ensures that Victorians are getting the same basic and reliable standard of service – wherever they live.

Ensuring waste and recycling is an essential service will also strengthen accountability of waste service providers and the stability of the Victorian system in the long-term.

The Essential Services Commission is determining the best form of regulation required to ensure we achieve the waste and recycling outcomes that the community expect.

Q: What are essential services?

In Victoria, essential services include things like essential utility services supplied by the Victorian electricity, gas, water, ports and rail freight industries. They are regulated by the Essential Services Commission.

In 2019, the Government tasked the Essential Services Commission with determining whether waste and recycling services should be also be made an essential service to improve effectiveness and the standard of service for Victorians.

Q: Why is waste not already regulated an essential service?

Following widespread disruption to global recycling markets, the Victorian Government is taking action to ensure better regulation of the waste and recycling sector – limiting future disruptions and giving Victorians greater confidence in our recycling system.

These reforms will be delivered alongside investment and innovation as a comprehensive package to provide reliable services and a strong industry for the future.

Q: How will waste become an essential service?

We will establish a new waste and recycling Act to ensure the Government has the appropriate powers and tools to ensure Victorians have a reliable recycling system – wherever they live.

Water, electricity and gas are some existing examples of essential services in Victoria. The Essential Services Commission will undertake further analysis on what these new laws should look like.

Q: When will waste become an essential service?

The new Act will be introduced following consultation with communities, local governments and businesses in 2020.

Q: Will there be increased costs to the industry when waste becomes an essential service?

The Government will consult closely with industry on the design of the new system to ensure it is cost effective and sustainable.

In ensuring we are meeting the needs of both communities and the industry, the Essential Services Commission will also undertake further analysis to assess the different options to increase the performance standards and transparency of our waste and recycling systems.

Q: What will the new Act do?

This new Act will make sure waste and recycling services are reliable, consistent and meet community expectations. It will also improve data collection from waste and recycling organisations to provide transparency and accountability for what happens to our waste. We will consult closely with industry, local councils and other key stakeholders in the establishment of the Act.

Q: What will Victoria's waste authority do?

We will establish a new waste authority to better govern our waste and recycling systems.

The new authority will oversee the sector to ensure that waste and recycling services are safe, reliable, transparent and meet community expectations.

This authority will also allow the Government to hold waste service providers to account and limit future recycling disruptions.

The Essential Services Commission will undertake further analysis to inform the development of the new Act and waste authority.

As part of the public consultation on the proposed reforms, the Government will also consult on the purpose, functions and powers of the new waste authority.

Q: Why does Victoria need a waste authority?

The waste authority will allow the Victorian Government to have increased oversight of the waste and recycling system – increasing transparency, accountability and good governance.

Improving government oversight of the sector will also help put an end to unethical, dodgy operators and dangerous waste stockpiling.