

Council information sheet

Household recycling reforms

February 2020



The Victorian Government is reforming our household waste and recycling system.

We're making it easier to separate household waste correctly, so that we can recover and recycle more materials. This will reduce waste sent to landfill, cut greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs, and deliver a reliable recycling system for all Victorians.

What are the household recycling reforms?

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 why the Victorian Government is transforming the state's recycling sector. These reforms will deliver a new, reliable system that will maximise household recycling outcomes and create jobs and investment across Victoria.

The government will work with bushfire-affected communities to support the implementation of household recycling reforms and will work with these communities in managing an appropriate timeline for the rollout.

What does this mean for you?

Councils will receive support to provide residents with access to the following services:



(a) Glass recycling service

All councils will be required to provide a glass recycling service by 2027. This could be provided through a kerbside bin (with a purple lid), drop-off facilities or a combination of both.



(b) Commingled recycling service (paper, cardboard, plastics and metals)

Commingled recycling services will continue. Where a council provides kerbside collection, the bins will need to have yellow lids – these can be progressively fitted to existing bins as new contracts commence. Once a glass service is introduced, glass will no longer be accepted as part of the commingled service.



(c) Combined food organics and garden organics (FOGO) service

All Victorians must have access to food and garden recycling services by 2030. Where a council will provide kerbside collection, the bins will need to have light green lids.



(d) Residual waste (garbage) service

Where a council provides kerbside collection of residual waste, the bins will need to have red lids – these can be progressively fitted to existing bins as new contracts commence.

What support will be provided by the Victorian Government?

The Victorian Government will work with councils to transition to the new service arrangements. Funding will be provided to help councils plan for and implement the new services, including contributions to bin infrastructure, drop-off facilities, upgrading transfer stations, and local education and behaviour change. To further support the reform, the Victorian Government will also work with councils and industry to establish a standardised list of bin contents for each service.

The Victorian Government will host information sessions in early 2020 for relevant council staff, to outline the new waste and recycling system.

Your questions answered

Why is Victoria moving to a four-bin system?

We've listened to the community, councils and industry and will introduce standardised waste and recycling services across Victoria. What goes in each bin and bin lid colours will be consistent across the state.

These changes will substantially improve the quality and value of material collected and increase diversion from landfill. Glass creates problems when mixed with other recyclables because it breaks and becomes embedded in plastics and paper, making them harder to recycle and of lower value. Food waste is one of the main causes of greenhouse gas emissions as well as odour from landfill. Removing food waste from the garbage bin means it can be used to provide valuable nutrients in compost or become a source of energy.

What funding will the Victorian Government provide?

The government will invest \$129 million to transform recycling. We will support councils to gradually phase in the new system. Funding will be provided to:

- 1. Help each council plan their transition to new services.**
- 2. Implement their plan:** additional funding will be available to each council—based on the information provided in the transition plan—to assist with the costs of new bin infrastructure (including changeover of bin lids where applicable), creating new drop-off facilities and upgrading transfer stations.

Councils will be required to provide evidence that funding has been used for the purposes provided and report to government on the expenditure.

In addition, the government will roll out statewide education and behaviour change programs to help Victorian households avoid waste, recycle better and use the new household recycling system. This will include support for councils to help educate households on how to use the new system through local delivery of the statewide programs that can be tailored to their services.

What's different about food organics and garden organics (FOGO)?

Food organics and garden organics (FOGO) services will be rolled out over a longer period to ensure necessary infrastructure and markets are in place before volumes of organic waste increase. There is already 1.1 million tonnes of food and garden organic waste processed in Victoria each year. This waste is turned into products like compost and mulch. Before expanding FOGO across the state, we 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 of the product generated.

What if councils have already implemented changes?

The government acknowledges the efforts and leadership by councils and will ensure that councils are not disadvantaged if they have already implemented changes. These councils will still be able to apply for funding, showing evidence of their transition, including audit results and any learnings.