

## **Recycling is the right thing to do, and should be continued regardless of the temporary interruption to Victoria's waste and recycling network.**

**The Victorian waste management system is an essential service for all Victorians. The sector comprises over 1200 Victorian business and supports the employment of 23,000 people – who collectively deliver an efficient and effective waste collection to all Victorians including:**

- **kerbside collection to homes, apartments, workplaces and other businesses**
- **1000s of other collections that service hospitals, schools, TAFEs, cafes, restaurants, venues and food manufacturers**

The sector also supports the delivery of the Nation's biggest infrastructure build underway in Victoria right now, which requires the movement of demolition material and contaminated soils / materials, and management of hazardous waste and toxic materials generated from Victorian industries or clinical wastes.

The current approach to waste management and recycling has evolved over decades and has served the state sufficiently. Current procurement practices have encouraged a concentration of processing capabilities across large operators and sites focused on volume processing, which has traditionally been a lower cost option.

A series of events over the last 18-20 months has demonstrated the inherent risks of the state's waste and recycling network when we drive low cost options.

Over the next procurement period the VWMA strongly recommends government procurement and tendering address the ongoing issues and challenges Victoria faces.

For Victoria and Australia to successfully manage our future waste needs, we must invest appropriately in the people, system, processes and education and engagement to drive sustainable change and the private sector is a partner for local and state government.

Waste manage is everyone's responsibility and so is recycling. As the system transitions, we will see materials traditionally destined for recycling ending up in landfill. This is a temporary situation. Recycling is the right thing to do, and should be continued regardless of the temporary interruption to Victoria's waste and recycling network.

### **Comments attributable to VWMA Executive Officer Mark Smith:**

"Everyone generates waste, and waste management is everyone's responsibility and so is recycling. Temporary interruptions which impact some Victorians shouldn't discourage people doing the right thing and disposing of their waste in the right bin."

"The average Australian is generating something like 2.7 tonnes of waste a year – equivalent to the weight of a Toyota HiAce. By global standards that's high and is not sustainable. People can support the current challenges we are having by reviewing their own habits and behaviours including buying things made locally from recycling material."

"We may need to accept that this temporary interruption that could last a few weeks as our waste and recycling system adjusts and adapts to this most recent challenge."

"The private sector supports 23,000 Victorian jobs and invests over \$800M into waste and recycling services and infrastructure annually. We have the potential to create sustainable solutions out of this current crisis. I hope we capitalise on it"

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**About the Victorian Waste Management Association**

The Victorian Waste Management Association (VWMA) is one of Australia's oldest waste and recycling associations representing Australia's largest membership of waste and resource recovery businesses including collection and transporters, processors, recycling facilities and landfills. <http://www.vwma.com.au/>

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