

ACCELERATING REDUCTIONS IN HAZARDOUS WASTES



What are hazardous wastes and where do they come from?

We all use goods and services produced by Victorian industry on a day-to-day basis. Providing these goods and services generates wastes, including high and low-hazard wastes. Some common examples of industries that generate high-hazard wastes include car repair workshops, dry cleaning services, chemical, paint and plastics manufacturing. Low-hazard wastes include food processing, seafood and poultry wastes.

'High-hazard waste' does not have a statutory meaning¹, but is a descriptive term for waste that requires a higher level of control to protect human health and the environment. Similarly,

'low-hazard waste' is a term used for waste that poses a low hazard or only impacts on amenity, such as odorous waste.

Where we've been

Since 2000, Victorian industry, with support from EPA, has reduced the amount of high and low-hazard waste sent to landfill from 122,000 tonnes to 85,000 in 2006 – a reduction of 30 per cent.

Where we're heading

These reductions are good progress, but further significant reductions are needed. Victoria has a strategy to accelerate these reductions into the future and to remove high-hazard wastes from landfill by 2020 through

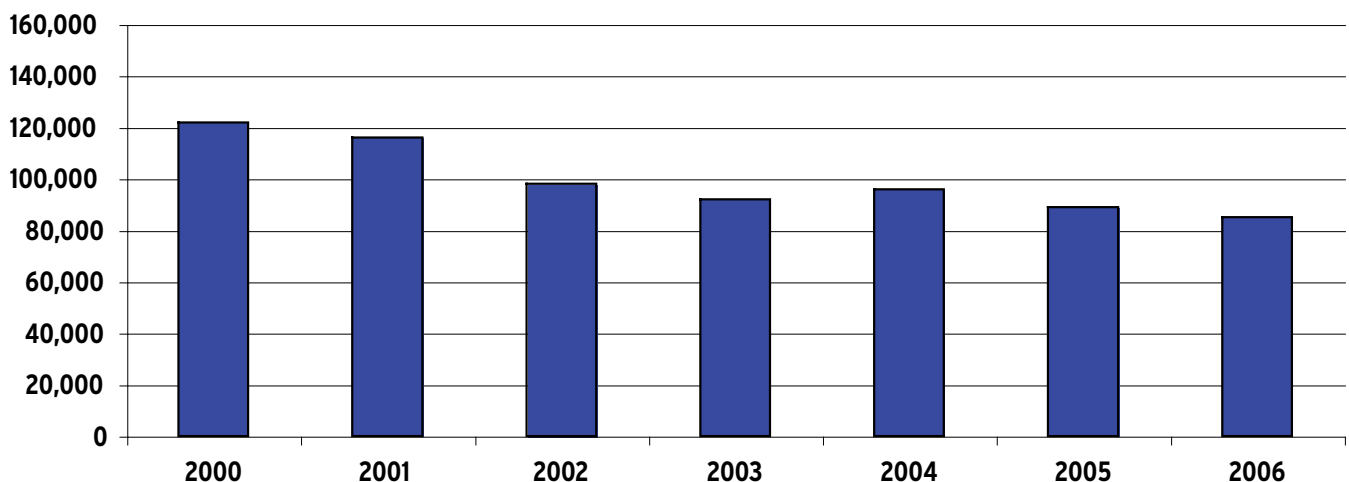
increased regulation, cost incentives, and supporting industry to invest in new technologies, processes and infrastructure to reduce waste.

Tighter controls and banning some wastes from landfill

More stringent waste acceptance standards at landfills imposed by EPA will mean that, from 1 July 2007, many more wastes will receive improved treatment before being sent to landfill. Stricter standards will drive industry to segregate more waste and find ways to avoid, treat and recycle wastes.

Landfill bans that mandate recycling of wastes, such as steel drums, plastic containers and used oil filters, will further reduce volumes sent to landfill.

High and low-hazard manufacturing wastes disposed to landfill



¹ Prescribed industrial wastes are legally defined in the Environment Protection (Prescribed Waste) Regulations 1998.

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The Government has determined not to proceed with the proposed long-term containment facility for high-hazard waste at Nowingi in north-west Victoria. With the Tullamarine landfill ceasing to accept these wastes by the end of September 2009, the Lyndhurst facility, which currently operates using best-practice engineering, will remain the main facility for receiving high-hazard wastes.

Increasing costs of sending waste to landfill

Landfill levies have contributed to the reductions achieved to date. These levies are around \$30 per tonne for both high and low-hazard wastes sent to landfill.

These levies will increase up to fourfold to \$130 per tonne for high-hazard waste from 1 July 2007, setting a higher price for industry sending these wastes to landfill.

This provides a greater incentive to industry to further avoid, treat or recycle wastes and generates funds to be reinvested in cleaner technologies and recycling options. Significantly

higher landfill costs makes investing in reuse and recycling options more attractive to industry in preference to sending wastes to landfill. A levy increase up to \$50 per tonne for low-hazard waste will also provide an incentive to find alternative uses for these wastes.

In January 2007, the Government announced further landfill levy increases, up to \$250 per tonne for high-hazard waste and \$70 per tonne for low-hazard waste, to take effect from 1 July 2008.

Reinvesting levy funds to assist industry to reduce waste

The landfill levies will support EPA industry programs, via the newly established HazWaste Fund, to assist industry to avoid waste or productively use wastes that cannot be avoided. The Fund will accelerate the work currently being undertaken by EPA with industry at specific industry sites, through key industry peak bodies and other related industry service organisations. Projects to avoid waste generation, reuse or recycle wastes will be the prime focus of the fund.

Tracking progress in waste reductions

The measures outlined above will seek to reduce high-hazard waste by at least 30 per cent, to around 60,000 tonnes per annum during 2007–08 and about 40,000 tonnes per annum within approximately two years.

EPA will report annually on the progress of the above measures in reducing the amount of high-hazard waste disposed to landfill.

For further information on waste management please refer to:

EPA's website, www.epa.vic.gov.au/waste/prescribed_waste.asp

or contact EPA's waste team at prescribedwaste@epa.vic.gov.au

or EPA's business sustainability team regarding industry support programs at business.programs@epa.vic.gov.au

or sustainability case studies at www.epa.vic.gov.au/casestudies.