

Waste sector emissions reduction pledge 2026–30



VICTORIA
Australia

Minister's foreword

Victoria's transition to a circular economy is helping to protect our environment and reduce emissions, while providing significant opportunities for new investment and jobs.

The 2026–30 waste sector pledge builds on circular economy reforms and includes new actions to reduce waste sector emissions. These actions will achieve emissions reduction in 2030 and beyond, accelerating our shift to a cleaner and more circular economy.

Through the pledge, we're working towards our commitment to ensure every Victorian household has access to food and garden organic (FOGO) recycling services by 2030–31. This includes a new initiative designed to overcome barriers to FOGO access for residents in privately-serviced multi-unit dwellings, together with new actions to reduce the amount of methane released from landfills into the atmosphere.

We're putting jobs and workers first in the net zero transition. Our investment of \$538 million in circular economy transition is creating thousands of jobs in recycling and manufacturing and has the potential to boost our state's economy by \$6.7 billion. A circular economy and climate action go hand in hand – to benefit all Victorian communities.



Hon. Steve Dimopoulos

Minister for Environment
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Outdoor Recreation

Overview of waste sector emissions

Victoria's waste sector includes the management of household, construction and business waste and recycling, and the treatment of wastewater. These are important services to Victorian communities.

The waste sector accounted for 4% (3.3 Mt CO₂-e) of Victoria's total emissions in 2023. Sources of emissions in the waste sector included:

- the decomposition of solid waste in landfills ('landfill emissions') which was 72% of waste sector emissions (2.4 Mt CO₂-e) in 2023
- the treatment and discharge of wastewater which was 0.8 Mt CO₂-e in 2023.¹

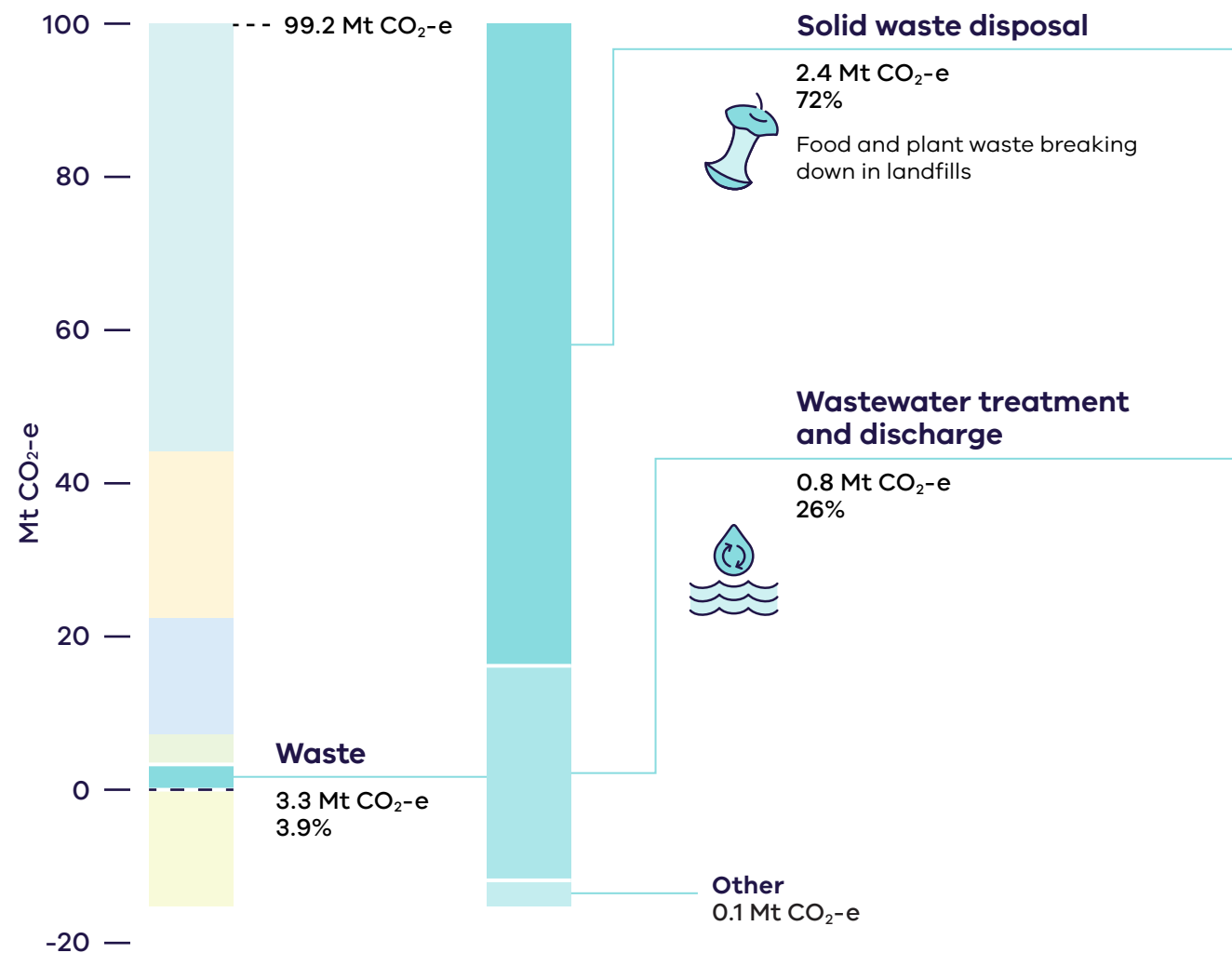
Despite strong population growth, Victoria reduced its waste sector emissions by 21% between 2005 and 2023. This emissions reduction was a result of improvements in Victoria's waste management system including higher diversion rates of organic waste from landfill, improvements in landfill management practices, increased capture of methane from both landfill and wastewater treatment, and efficiencies in wastewater treatment processes.

Landfill emissions are the largest contributor of waste sector emissions. Landfill emissions are caused by the decomposition of organic materials which produces methane, a greenhouse gas. Capturing methane and burning it converts it to carbon dioxide – which has a lower greenhouse gas warming potential and therefore reduces carbon dioxide equivalent emissions. The captured methane may also be used to generate electricity or renewable gas.

Organic materials that generate methane emissions in landfills include food, paper and cardboard, garden and green waste, wood, textiles, sludge, nappies, rubber and leather.

¹ Emissions from wastewater processed by water corporations are addressed in the Whole of Victorian Government emissions reduction pledge.

Waste sector emissions in Victoria in 2023



Figures represent latest emissions data from 2023. Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Achievements

The Victorian Government is reducing emissions in the waste sector by building a sustainable and thriving circular economy.



**\$538
million+**

record investment by the Victorian Government since 2016 to reform waste and recycling in Victoria. Our investment has already resulted in 1,862,668 tonnes of additional waste and resource recovery capacity as of March 2025.



**75%
of Victoria's
councils**

now offer separate FOGO services, and 39 councils offer a separate glass service. By 2027, all councils will have introduced food organics and garden organics recycling services, diverting even more organic waste from landfill, and meeting our target for all Victorians to have access to FOGO services by 2030.



**5.5
million
tonnes+**

of recycled material has been used in Victoria's Big Build of transport infrastructure through our Recycled First policy. We are creating strong end markets for recycled materials in Victoria and planning to expand the policy to other kinds of infrastructure.



**70%
of all waste
generated**

was recovered in Victoria as of 2023–24. This is among the strongest rate in the nation and we are on our way to our target to divert 80% of waste from landfill by 2030.



**2.3
mega tonnes**

of FOGO materials collected since 2020 through kerbside services and diverted from landfill, where their decomposition would have otherwise produced landfill emissions.



**\$76.9
million**

invested in our Industry and Infrastructure Development Package delivering additional recycling capacity and directly creating more than 200 jobs for Victorians.



**21%
reduction
in emissions**

from the waste sector between 2005 and 2023 despite Victoria's strong population growth.



**2.2
billion
containers**

recycled through the Container Deposit Scheme since 2021, diverting from landfill and reducing greenhouse emissions.

Emissions reduction pledge 2026–30

The 2026–30 waste sector pledge will continue to deliver on the Victorian recycling reforms and establish new actions to achieve emissions reduction in 2030 and beyond.

The focus of the 2026–30 sector pledge is to reduce landfill emissions by:

- Increasing the diversion of organic materials from disposal at landfill. This includes actions to improve the separation and recovery of organic materials across the Victorian economy. Re-processing of organics into useful products, like compost and fertilisers, produces less emissions than the decomposition of organic materials in landfill.
- Reducing the risk of harm from methane released into the atmosphere from landfills. This includes actions to improve the capture of methane at landfill sites. Once captured, methane can be used to generate electricity or converted into less harmful greenhouse gases by flaring. It's important for landfill operators to consistently invest in and improve gas capture practices in the next five years to achieve measurable emissions reduction.

Delivering this pledge will provide other important benefits to Victoria, including:

- making it easier for more Victorians to recycle their food and organic waste by improving access to organic recycling and composting
- increasing the supply of recovered organics by diversion, which will support industries that process and make products from these materials, for example compost and bio-fertilisers
- helping to ease pressure on landfill space by increasing the diversion of organics
- reducing a source of odour at landfills and its associated amenity and potential health impacts on nearby residents.

The emissions impact of diverting waste from landfill is spread out over time. This is because waste sent to landfill decays over decades, emitting methane slowly until it has fully decomposed. A regulatory focus on improving landfill capture also takes time to have an effect. The actions from this pledge should reduce Victoria's emissions by 0.1 Mt CO₂-e in 2030, and their impact will grow over time. Actions in this pledge will stop more than 0.4 Mt of CO₂-e from being released from landfills over future decades.



Emissions reduction actions 2026–30

To reduce landfill emissions, the 2026–30 waste sector pledge will deliver actions to:

- increase the diversion of organic materials from disposal at landfills
- reduce methane released into the atmosphere from landfills.

Actions to increase the diversion of organic materials from disposal at landfill

Finalise the 4-stream household waste and recycling system

Victoria is standardising household waste and recycling services for households that receive services from local councils.

We'll continue to support councils to roll out the 4-stream waste and recycling system across Victoria. The new system, which is legislated under the *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*, includes a FOGO service for households which has improved the diversion of organics from landfill.

All households that receive a council-operated waste service will have access to a FOGO service by 1 July 2027. Once completed, these reforms will further increase the diversion of organics from households. Giving Victorian households access to a FOGO service can divert up to 650,000 tonnes of organic waste from landfill each year.

Support and facilitate FOGO services in privately-serviced multi-unit dwellings

Multi-unit dwellings that use private waste collection services aren't currently covered by the obligations on councils to provide the 4-stream waste and recycling system for households.

We'll develop resources to support privately-serviced multi-unit dwellings and identify opportunities to separate and recycle organic waste.

Increasing FOGO services in privately-serviced multi-unit dwellings will mean more organic waste will be diverted from landfill and will help ensure that every Victorian household has access to a FOGO service or local composting by 2030.

Support businesses and institutions to improve organics recovery

We'll work with businesses and institutions to adopt organics recovery and will consult with businesses and institutions on ways to avoid, reduce, separate and recycle more organic materials. We'll develop guidance on best practice organics waste management to support businesses and institutions.

In addition, we'll consult with businesses and institutions to explore ways in which organics recovery can be further improved across the Victorian economy in the future.

Expand the Recycled First policy

We're using our purchasing power to drive demand for recycled materials through the **Recycled First policy**. The policy was implemented in March 2020 and requires bidders on Big Build projects in Victoria to demonstrate how they'll optimise their use of recycled and reused materials in major transport projects.

In December 2024, as part of our **Economic Growth Statement**, the Premier announced that the Recycled First policy will be expanded to major government projects in non-transport sectors. This expansion to all major construction projects valued at \$20 million or more, which includes hospitals, social housing and renewable energy infrastructure is a significant step forward in our commitment to advancing circular economy practices.

The policy is administered by the Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority through the ecologiQ program.

Finalise the Industry and Infrastructure Development Package

The Industry and **Infrastructure Development Package** (IIDP), implemented by Sustainability Victoria increases investment in infrastructure for the recovery and local re-processing capacity of priority materials.

The package supports diversion of organic materials from landfill through increased capacity for organics recycling. It is estimated the package will increase organics recovery by 700,000 tonnes per year once the package has been fully implemented. IIDP has also invested in the quality improvement of 310,000 tonnes of organics, including food and garden organics, adding high-value products on the market.

Actions to reduce methane released into the atmosphere from landfills

Require all landfill operators to reduce risks of harm by capturing methane emissions from landfills

Methane capture from landfills in Victoria has improved in the last 15 years, but more can be done to further reduce methane emissions.

Environment Protection Authority Victoria's (EPA) information and guidance for landfill operators will reinforce the importance of improving landfill gas capture. It will support landfill operators to identify, put in place and maintain controls to minimise risks of harm. This will be part of operators' general environmental duty under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* and the methane gas action levels in Schedule 3 of the *Environment Protection Regulations 2021*. The EPA will also establish clear regulatory expectations for landfill operators regarding the management of landfill gas through targeted engagement, compliance and enforcement activities.

Less household organic waste to landfills



The Victorian Government is transforming the way households recycle. The **Household Recycling Reform** supports councils and Alpine Resorts Victoria (ARV) with implementing the 4 stream household waste and recycling system, which includes new separated streams for glass and FOGO.

As of 2025, approximately 68% of all Victorian households across 60 local government areas currently have access to a FOGO service.

Since 2020, approximately 2.3 mega tonnes of FOGO materials have been collected through kerbside services and diverted from landfill where their decomposition would have otherwise produced methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.

When complete, separating Victoria's household food and garden waste will divert up to 650,000 tonnes from landfill each year.

The continued rollout of FOGO services across Victoria is easing pressure on landfills by conserving limited landfill space and reducing methane. Collected material can be recycled into high-quality compost for use in local parks, community gardens and horticulture and agriculture through buyback programs, supporting local opportunities.

Additional benefits include cost savings for councils through reduced landfill gate fees, contributions to statewide emissions reduction targets and potential energy recovery through anaerobic digestion or gasification.

Kerbside reforms have been supported by the comprehensive public education campaign, **Small Acts, Big Impact**, which helps Victorians understand and adapt to the new FOGO and glass bins. Through statewide campaigns and support for councils to deliver local messaging to residents, the education program has increased waste diversion from landfill, improved community understanding of the new bins and reduced contamination.



Explore opportunities to improve methane capture at closed landfills

It's important to reduce methane emissions in closed landfills where possible because landfills continue to release methane into the atmosphere for decades after their closure. Closed landfills are regulated by the EPA through the general environmental duty, contaminated land duties and in some cases, through EPA operating licences or site management orders. EPA guidance supports those in management or control of closed landfills by minimising risks of harm from landfill gas.

EPA information and guidance for landfill operators will reinforce the requirements for landfill gas capture for closed landfills.



Building roads from coffee: Reducing organic waste to landfill with coffee biochar concrete on the Victorian Big Build

Major Road Projects Victoria and project contractor **BildGroup** are working alongside **RMIT University** on the first use of coffee concrete on the Pakenham Roads Upgrade, using spent coffee grounds and converting them into an organic biochar.

This coffee biochar concrete has the potential to not only remove waste from landfill but also to strengthen the resulting concrete by 30% based on research undertaken by RMIT University.

For this project alone, five tonnes of spent coffee grounds – approximately 140,000 coffees worth of grounds – has been converted into 2 tonnes of usable biochar, which has been laid into the 30 cubic metres of concrete used in the footpath on McGregor Road, Pakenham.

This initiative continues to challenge traditional concrete mixes and push the market for further innovation.

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November 2025

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ISBN 978-1-76176-631-2
(pdf/online/MS word)

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom have ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

