

MEDIA RELEASE

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Victorian standards on bin auditing and shared approach to engagement and messaging to the community

Victorian households and businesses generate over 11 million tonnes of waste each year with about 70% of that diverted away from landfill (approximately 7.7 million tonnes). The success of diversion away from landfill, and what can ultimately be recycled, is largely dependent on how we decide to generate and dispose of waste. Bin audits are a standard practice that enables efficient assessment of how we are going with kerbside recycling. We all need to engage with waste disposal appropriately and put the right thing in the right bin, however we don't always get it right.

The VWMA believes the Victorian Government needs to play a greater role in advocating to the public the importance of the waste and recycling sector to help restore public confidence in the system.

Local governments across Australia carry out auditing of bins as a standard practice to better understand what is being recycled and what is contaminating our recycling bins. This is particularly important with the challenges faced around National Sword/Blue Sky implications. Auditing is sometimes managed by local government directly, outsourced to a waste contractor or carried out by a third party. This standard practice provides insights into the areas for waste education and highlights common misconceptions around recycling that can be targeted by future programs and campaigns. However, a lack of community understanding on this practice and waste management more broadly is fuelling a wave of negativity that is eroding public confidence.

The VWMA will be calling on State Government agencies and appropriate local government organisations to develop a consistent set of standards and principles related to bin auditing and engagement with the community (and business) on this practice. There is a shared responsibility with messages to the community around this, and local government shouldn't have to carry that burden themselves and defend the practice each time it is carried out.

This approach is in line with VWMA's previous position around the importance of maintaining public confidence in Victoria's waste and resource recovery system and needs to be an area that state government allocate appropriate resources to.

VWMA priorities for the medium and long term sustainability of the waste and resource recovery sector in Victoria (as previously stated) include:

Educate community on the essential nature of the services that are provided to them including the importance of recycling

Comments attributable to VWMA Executive Officer Mark Smith:

Recycling correctly is still one of the easiest things Victorians can do to help the environment and the economy. But we don't always get it right.

Bin audits are an easy and cost-effective way to gauge how we are tracking.

Fear mongering and fuelling the fire around this topic is not constructive and does a disservice to the community and may ultimately drive costs up for residents.

- Ends -

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. For more information on the VWMA please visit:

<http://www.vwma.com.au/>

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