

Managing e-waste in Victoria – Submission

Background

WM Waste Management Services currently collect kerbside hard waste from 16 municipalities in Victoria, from which we separated 420 tonnes of e-waste (excluding large appliances) last year. E-waste with a significant metal content including large and small appliances and electric tools have been recycled from hard waste collections since 1985. We first starting separately collecting e-waste (TVs and computers) for recycling in 2006 (Frankston City Council).

WM Waste Management Services affiliated company KTS Recycling operate four Transfer Stations located at: Coldstream, Frankston, Knox and Wesburn.

Comment

WM Waste Management Services supports the Victorian Governments proposed comprehensive ban of all e-waste from landfill.

The definition of e-waste is broad and includes categories of items with very different properties. The most effective means of handling, transporting and storing items such as large appliances, small appliances and electronic tools is quite different than for IT, telecommunications and TV equipment.

WM Waste Management Services believe that the definition of specified e-waste is very useful as it differentiates between hazardous and non-hazardous e-waste. It is important that specified (hazardous) be handled carefully to avoid breakages. However non-hazardous e-waste (such as appliances with electric cords) do not need to be handled as carefully. Non-hazardous e-waste does not need to be stored undercover and can be compacted to ensure efficient transport.

WM Waste Management Services support compliance with AS/NZS 5377:2013; except for clause 2.4.3. The requirement that *end of life electrical and electronic equipment shall not be mixed with other types of waste within the same container or receptacle*, is to be too onerous for non-hazardous e-waste. It is normal practice for Transfer Stations to place e-waste appliances (eg washing machines) in their scrap metal bin where it is mixed with metal waste which is not e-waste. Many hard waste and skip bin collections mix non-hazardous e-waste with other hard waste and sort at recovery facilities. WM Waste Management Services suggest that only specified e-waste be required to be kept separate from other types of waste.

We note that section 1.3 on E-Waste trends failed to note that e-waste products are becoming smaller and lighter. People now buy tablets or lap tops not PCs. For this reason, we believe the assumption that television and computer e-waste alone will grow by over 60 percent or 85,000 tonnes over the decade to 2024. (p.1) is flawed. Large appliances now contain much less metal than previously and weigh much less than even a decade ago. People now buy mobile phones not landline phones. .

The majority of municipalities that provide a hard waste collection have had e-waste recycled from their collections as a contract requirement for many number of years (not as trials). WM Waste Management Services believe that kerbside hard waste collections provide an ongoing, convenient and efficient means of collecting e-waste for recycling that is well understood and expected by householders.