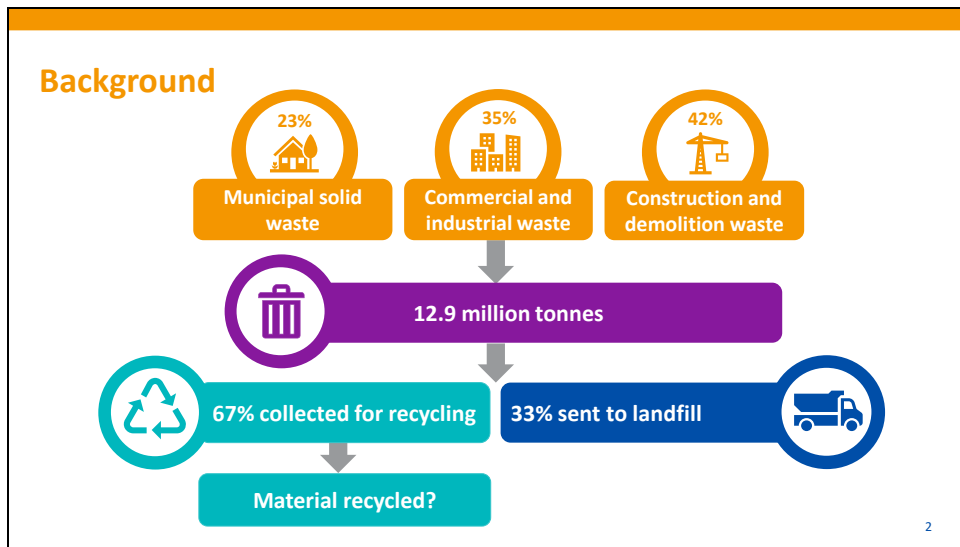


Slide 1



This presentation provides an overview of the Victorian Auditor-General's report Recovering and Reprocessing Resources from Waste.



Waste, regardless of value, are things we discard because we no longer want or need them.

Available data shows that Victorians generated 12.9 million tones of waste in 2016–17.

A third of this went to landfill, while the rest was recovered or collected for recycling.

However, there is no information on how much of the recovered recyclables was actually recycled.



The audit objective was to determine whether responsible agencies are maximising the recovery and reprocessing of waste resources.

We looked into the activities of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, or DELWP, Sustainability Victoria or SV, the Environment Protection Authority or EPA, the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group, or MWRRG, Banyule City Council and the City of Monash.

What we found

- Agencies not responding strategically to waste issues**
- Agencies not maximising the recovery and reprocessing of recyclables from waste**
- Sustainability Fund: \$511.3 million as at 30 June 2018**

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We found that DELWP, SV and EPA have not responded strategically to waste and resource recovery issues.

DELWP has not fulfilled its leadership role of the waste portfolio, EPA has not effectively regulated waste management, and SV has not effectively developed and implemented waste strategies.

As such, they are not maximising the recovery and reprocessing of resources from waste.

These issues are occurring while the Sustainability Fund, which was designed to support best practices in waste management, had \$511.3 million as at 30 June 2018.



DELWP's lack of leadership has meant that Victoria has not had a statewide waste policy since 2014.

In this uncertain policy environment, agencies have not been able to effectively prioritise their limited time and resources.

Roles and responsibilities are unclear and current waste instruments do not provide clear and coherent guidance, nor give sufficient direction, for example on waste avoidance.

Finally, sufficient markets and infrastructure have not been effectively planned to manage the state's waste.


Waste data is incomplete and unreliable

Incomplete:

- No data—recycled materials, stockpiles, hazardous waste
- Incomplete survey responses

Unreliable:

- Voluntary surveys—limited verification ability
- Data collection not standardised
- Inaccurate reporting—how much is recycled



Limits government's ability to:

- Make well-informed decisions
- Understand if 67% recovery rate is accurate

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SV has made little progress to address long-identified data quality issues on completeness and reliability.

These issues limit government's ability to:

- make well informed investment and planning decisions, and
- understand whether the reported 67 per cent recovery rate is accurate, or due to other reasons such as unaccounted waste stockpiling.



Food and garden waste make up a third of waste sent to landfill and nearly half of Victorians' rubbish bins.

While all agencies acknowledge that diverting organic waste from landfills is a key priority, there is limited effort focused on this to date.

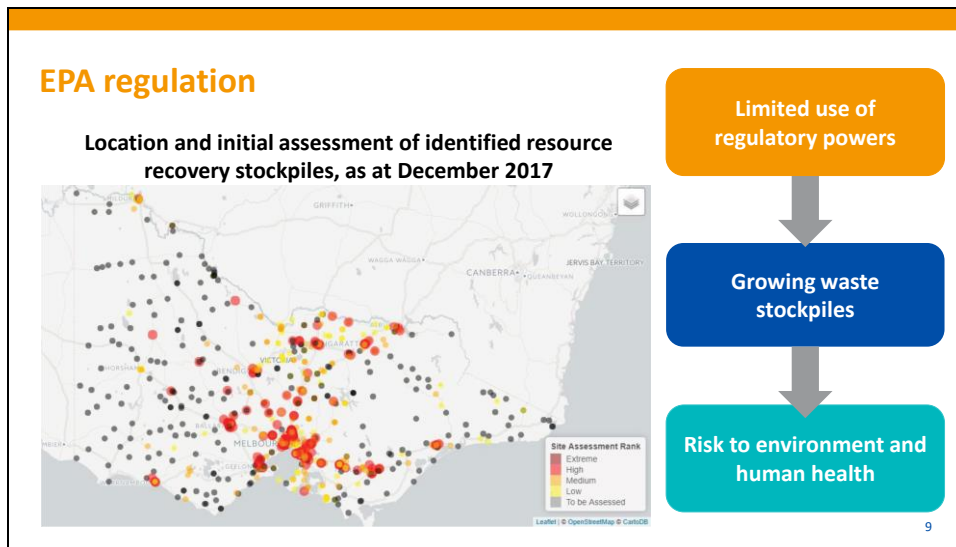


Victoria is heavily reliant on export markets for our recyclables.

Three quarters of recovered plastic and nearly half of recovered paper in 2016–17 were exported mostly to China.

China's heightened regulation in 2013 foreshadowed its Sword Policy.

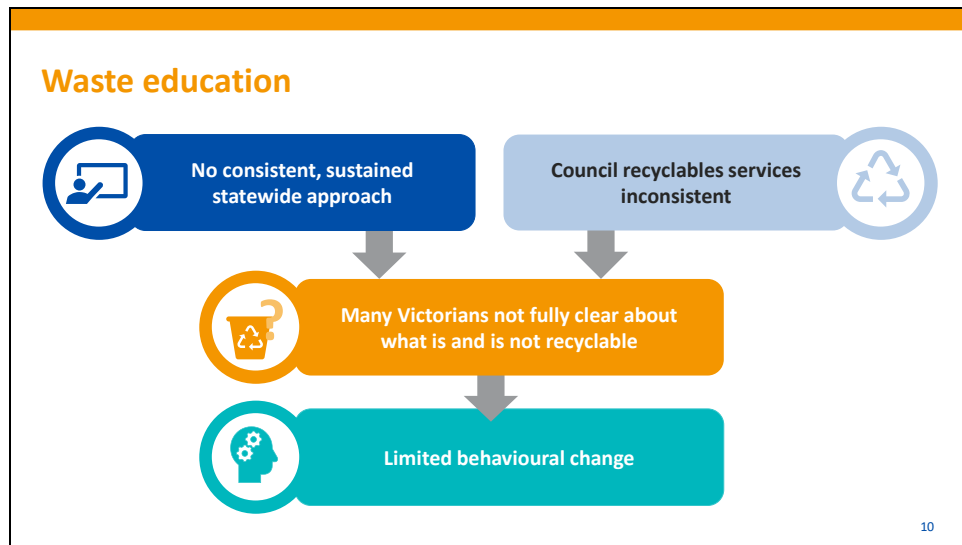
Consequently, given our reliance on exporting to China, DELWP could have more proactively monitored earlier developments in China to better anticipate potential impacts and minimise the adverse consequences.



EPA has not effectively regulated the waste industry and this has resulted in the inappropriate growth of waste stockpiles that pose unacceptable risks to health and the environment.

Since the July 2017 Coolaroo fire, however, EPA has taken more concerted effort to monitor waste activities.

EPA's more frequent use of the EPA Act's provisions could have served as a strong disincentive to improper waste management practices.



SV has not delivered a consistent, sustained statewide approach to waste education. Consequently, Victorians are not clear about what is and what is not recyclable.

One such campaign, Love Food Hate Waste, raised awareness, however, like other waste education campaigns it was short term, limiting its ability to change behaviours.

SV, MWRRG and councils can better and more efficiently work together in delivering waste education programs.

Recommendations

| | |
|---|--|
| 6 recommendations for DELWP | 8 recommendations for SV |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop overarching waste policy• Improve resource recovery outcomes• Publicly clarify roles and responsibilities• Support MWRRG capacity building initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and update waste strategies, develop action plans, evaluation and monitoring framework• Deliver a sustained statewide recycling campaign• Improve data quality and collection and reporting• Support councils' food organics collection services |
| 4 recommendations for EPA | 4 recommendations for MWRRG |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritise key noncompliance for targeted action• Review and improve regulatory instruments and processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop/implement action plans on commercial and industrial waste• Expand council capacity building initiatives |

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We made 22 recommendations which focus on the completion of statewide waste policy, the review of waste instruments having regard to emerging risks and changes in market condition, improved regulation of waste activities and the expansion of capacity building initiatives for waste issues.

For further information, please view the full report on our website:
www.audit.vic.gov.au

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