

Appendix A:

Submissions and comments

We have consulted with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, EPA Parks Victoria, Sustainability Victoria and WorkSafe, and we considered their views when reaching our audit conclusions. As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, we gave a draft copy of this report, or relevant extracts, to those agencies and asked for their submissions and comments.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

Responses received

Agency	Page
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	A-2
EPA	A-3
Parks Victoria	A-6
Sustainability Victoria	A-7
WorkSafe	A-8



Department of Energy, Environment
and Climate Action

PO Box 500, East Melbourne,
Victoria 8002 Australia

SEC-231000429

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Level 31
35 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr Greaves

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 2023, enclosing the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) proposed report on Reducing the Illegal Disposal of Asbestos (the Report) and for providing the opportunity to comment. I appreciate the work of your office in conducting this audit.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) supports the outcomes of the Report and acknowledges the impact which improved coordination across state and local government will have in reducing the illegal disposal of asbestos.

We will continue to work together with other agencies across state and local government to improve asbestos management.

If you would like any further information on this matter, please contact Angela Hoefnagels, Director, Programs and High Risk Waste DEECA on [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED].

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

John Bradley
Secretary

27 / 10 / 2023



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Response provided by the Chief Executive Officer, EPA

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EPA ref: C1916

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Level 31, 35 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
via email: natalie.egan@audit.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Greaves

Proposed Report - Minimising the Illegal Disposal of Asbestos

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 2023 regarding Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) Audit Report - Reducing the Illegal Disposal of Asbestos.

Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) welcomes the findings and recommendations in the report and expects that implementation of the recommendations will support reductions in illegal disposal of asbestos in Victoria.

The recommendations for EPA complement several activities already underway that aim to improve results from our strategic priority to prevent harm from illegal waste dumping, as well as provide new impetus to deliver further priority actions.

EPA is committed to delivery of all four recommendations, noting delivery of recommendation 1 is likely to require funding support however we accept this recommendation in principle. A proposed action plan for delivery against each relevant recommendation is attached to this letter.

I acknowledge the consideration and acquittal of our comments on the provisional report and more broadly, the constructive engagement EPA has experienced through the audit.

If you would like any further information, please contact Mr Matt d'Abbs, Chief Quality Officer at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely



Lee Miezi
Chief Executive Officer

30 / 10 / 2023

Encl.

epa.vic.gov.au
Environment Protection Authority Victoria
GPO Box 4395, Melbourne VIC 3001
1300 372 842



Response provided by the Chief Executive Officer, EPA – continued

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No.	VAGO recommendation	Acceptance	Agreed management actions	Target completion date
1	Coordinates the central collection of data on illegal asbestos disposal statewide, including the establishment of a standard for collecting data, in partnership with other agencies and councils.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In principle	EPA acknowledges the benefits of a central repository of data on illegal asbestos disposal. EPA will co-develop a data collection standard in partnership with other agencies and councils through the newly established role of the Chief Data and Insights Officer and leverage the Waste Intelligence Network as a conduit to centralise the collection and sharing of illegal asbestos disposal data. EPA will seek resources from Government to deliver these improvements.	30 November 2024
5	Reviews and maintains its website so the list of locations where asbestos can be disposed of legally is correct.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input type="checkbox"/> In principle	EPA agrees that the information on the EPA website on locations for asbestos disposal should be current and comprehensive. EPA is currently undertaking a comprehensive website review, which includes implementing new content governance arrangements. Through this process, EPA will ensure procedures are in place to review the relevant sections of our website and maintain the information on an ongoing basis. The list of locations where asbestos can be disposed of legally will be prioritised.	28 February 2024
6	Develops and documents a monitoring and enforcement strategy to reduce illegal asbestos disposal. It should do this in collaboration with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action Parks Victoria WorkSafe Victoria 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input type="checkbox"/> In principle	EPA recognises the importance of establishing a monitoring and enforcement strategy to reduce illegal asbestos disposal in collaboration with our partners. EPA will prepare a strategy to reduce illegal asbestos disposal as part of our annual process to set our regulatory priorities to address identified key risks of harm. This annual process delivers a statewide regulatory response to critical environmental risks facing the Victorian community.	31 May 2024

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Response provided by the Chief Executive Officer, EPA – continued

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local councils any other relevant agencies 			
7	<p>Further develop its tools for understanding and analysing information to regulate illegal asbestos disposal. It should do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving the quality of user data in Waste Tracker producing reports to understand illegal asbestos disposal incorporating data from external agencies, including WorkSafe, into its analysis and reporting tools. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input type="checkbox"/> In principle	<p>EPA is committed to continuous improvement of Waste Tracker, its data and data quality, and the intelligence products it supports.</p> <p>EPA will continue to improve duty holder user interface controls that ensure high quality data can be collected through Waste Tracker on waste asbestos, and other Reportable Priority Waste (RPW) types (for example, blocking the input of invalid data into the waste tracker system). Where such controls are not possible, EPA will create a cleansed dataset with associated formulas to identify and correct erroneous data as far as reasonably practicable.</p> <p>EPA has already produced a suite of analytical reports using the waste tracker dataset to inform intelligence products, identify non-compliance and non-participants with waste tracking requirements. These reports already enable EPA to filter to specific waste types such as asbestos.</p> <p>EPA commits to making further improvements to identify those who are not using waste tracker that are required to use it.</p>	31 December 2024



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ABN 95 337 637 697

24 October 2023

Mr Andrew Greaves
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Level 31, 35 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Greaves

REDUCING THE ILLEGAL DISPOSAL OF ASBESTOS

Thank you for your letter of 16 October 2023 regarding *Proposed Performance Audit Report - Reducing the Illegal Disposal of Asbestos*.

Parks Victoria welcomes the proposed report into the illegal disposal of asbestos and thanks your team for the work so far undertaking the audit and the considered response to Parks Victoria's comments.

The proposed report does not identify any recommendations for Parks Victoria to lead, but it is noted that Parks Victoria will participate in any state-wide initiatives to further understand the scope and coordinate action to reduce the volume of illegal disposal of asbestos.

I am unaware of any information in the proposed report that would prejudice any criminal investigation or proceeding, or any investigation by the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission or the Victorian Inspectorate.

Should you require further advice on this matter please contact Hugh Tunnecliff, Environmental Advisor on [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Chief Executive Officer



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30 October 2023

Andrew Greaves
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Level 12
321 Exhibition Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000

ABN 62 019 854 067

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Greaves

Performance Audit Report – Reducing the Illegal Disposal of Asbestos

Sustainability Victoria (SV) recognises the importance of the safe and effective management of asbestos in Victoria. On behalf of SV, I thank you for the work undertaken by your office on this important issue and for highlighting some of the work still required to reduce the impacts of the illegal disposal of asbestos.

We acknowledge the report and VAGO's findings in relation to the Asbestos Disposal Management Plan.

SV remains committed to advocating for asbestos disposal solutions. Noting the Asbestos Disposal Management Plan's 10-year outlook, SV will continue to work with our portfolio partners on the most appropriate way of implementing the plan over the coming years.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Matt Genever
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Sustainability Victoria

[REDACTED]

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**Reducing
workplace
harm.**

**Improving
outcomes for
injured workers.**

WorkSafe Ref: WSV23-1648

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Level 31/35 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Greaves,

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 2023 addressed to Chief Executive Officer, Colin Radford, regarding the Victorian Auditor General's Office proposed report on *Reducing the Illegal Disposal of Asbestos* and consideration of the matters raised by WorkSafe Victoria (WorkSafe) in response to the provisional draft.

WorkSafe has responded to the action plan, addressing the recommendations outlined in the proposed *Reducing the Illegal Disposal of Asbestos* report.

Our response, detailed in the attachment *Action Plan Template – WorkSafe*, indicates our acceptance of the three recommendations; actions we propose to take in relation to these, and the completion dates.

We look forward to liaising with your staff periodically to monitor our progress in implementing the audit recommendations.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Perdita Dickson, Program Manager at WorkSafe on [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

Narelle Beer
Executive Director
WorkSafe Victoria

31/10/2023

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WorkSafe action plan to address recommendations from Reducing the Illegal Disposal of Asbestos

No.	VAGO recommendation	Acceptance	Agreed management actions	Target completion date
2	Updates its provider directory to ensure it is complete and easy to use.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In principle	WorkSafe will develop a project approach after internal consultation with stakeholders that will enable the WSV Service Provide Directory to be complete and easy to use.	March 2024
3	Reviews the Asbestos in Victoria website (www.asbestos.vic.gov.au) to ensure information on legal asbestos disposal is up to date, guided by the Victorian Asbestos Forum.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input type="checkbox"/> In principle	WorkSafe will review the Asbestos in Victoria website (in consultation with the Victorian Environmental Protection Agency) to ensure information on legal asbestos disposal is up to date.	July 2024
4	Contacts all Victorian councils and request they provide a link to the Asbestos in Victoria website on their council websites.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In part <input type="checkbox"/> In principle	WorkSafe will contact all Victorian Councils requesting they provide a link to the Asbestos in Victoria website, requests will be recorded.	July 2024