



Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes

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Ms Libby Chaplin
Chief Executive Officer
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Ref: MIN076914


Dear Ms Chaplin

REQUEST FOR HAZARDOUS WASTE AND RECYCLING INDUSTRY SUPPORT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Thank you for your email of 3 August 2020 about coronavirus (COVID-19) and the hazardous waste and recycling industry.

I appreciate the impact of current circumstances on your member businesses and the battery industry, and your concerns regarding the risks to human health and the environment associated with stockpiling and inappropriate disposal of used batteries. The Victorian Government recognises the waste and recycling sector provides crucial services and operates key infrastructure to support Victorian communities to dispose of waste safely, which becomes particularly important under these current circumstances.

The Premier released a 'reopening roadmap' on Sunday 6 September 2020 to provide certainty and clarity to businesses and the community on the pathway to 'COVID Normal' for Victoria. Prior to taking further steps under this roadmap, the current restrictions continue to apply, and I have provided some information below for you to pass on to your members about what these mean for waste and recycling services.

Provisions for permitted work premises

Under Stage 4 restrictions, the default is that workplaces in metropolitan Melbourne are required to close unless listed as a 'permitted work premises'. Among the permitted work premises are those providing waste and resource recovery services, including collection, treatment and disposal; transfer stations are permitted to remain open for commercial customers but are required to close to the public.

The Department of Health and Human Services website (www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/workplace-obligations-covid-19) provides information on the requirements for businesses that are permitted to operate in metropolitan Melbourne, which must:

- comply with the Permitted Worker Scheme;
- take reasonable steps to ensure workers are wearing face coverings and the appropriate level of personal protective equipment;
- record contact details for all workers and visitors to the premises who attend for longer than 15 minutes;
- comply with density quotient of one worker per four square metres in shared spaces and other publicly accessible areas;
- adhere to signage and cleaning requirements;
- reduce work across multiple sites;
- make sure workers who are unwell do not attend work; and
- have a COVIDSafe Plan in place which meets the requirements above and is regularly updated.

Support for business and industry

On 13 September 2020, the Government announced a \$3 billion package to further support businesses that have been affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) and to assist with the transition to 'COVID Normal'.

Key elements of this latest package include:

- assistance for eligible small and medium businesses with grants of up to \$20,000 through the Business Support Fund;
- support for Victorian businesses to increase exports, including by helping them to address logistics and supply chain issues, establish new trade channels and adapting export strategies; and
- waivers and deferrals of taxes and charges, including payroll tax deferrals, bringing forward the stamp duty discount for commercial and industrial property in Regional Victoria and deferring the landfill levy.

Further information, including how to access key programs, is available at: <https://www.business.vic.gov.au/support-for-your-business/grants-and-assistance/business-resilience-package>

If you would like more information about this matter, please call Sebastian Chapman, Executive Director, Waste and Recycling, in the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, on (03) 9637 8372 or email sebastian.chapman@delwp.vic.gov.au.

Thank you again for writing to me and I trust this information will be of assistance.

Yours sincerely



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