



WASTE SERVICES INFORMATION

E-WASTE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is e-waste?

E-waste (electronic waste) refers to unwanted and discarded electrical and electronic products – this means anything powered by a battery or an electrical cord and plug.

Q: What is the e-waste ban?

From 1 July 2019, e-waste cannot be disposed of in landfill. The ban will be implemented to help recover hazardous and valuable materials when e-waste reaches the end of its working life. More information on the regulator changes and policies can be found at www.environment.vic.gov.au/sustainability/e-waste-in-victoria.

Q: What should I do with e-waste? How can I recycle e-waste?

Residents can dispose of their e-waste by taking it to a Council Resource Recovery Centre for free, or by using one of the other e-waste drop off/collection services as listed by Sustainability Victoria (www.ewaste.vic.gov.au).

Once collected e-waste is sent to a sorting facility where it is dismantled, sorted and then sent to recyclers for reprocessing. By utilising the drop off points at Council's Resource Recovery Centres or another e-waste recycling service your e-waste will be recycled and will not end up in landfill.

Have a look at "How can I avoid creating E-waste?" before disposing of an item.

Q: Will fees apply to e-waste dropped off at any of Council's Resource Recovery Centres?

Mitchell Shire Council is pleased to currently offer free e-waste disposal at all of our Resource Recovery Centres.

The cost of this service is reviewed regularly as part of Council's annual budget process.

Q: What happens to e-waste collected at Councils' Resource Recovery Centres?

E-waste that is collected at Council's Resource Recovery Centres is periodically collected by our e-waste recycling contractors. It is then taken to the contractors EPA certified facility to be safely sorted into different recycling streams.

Q: Why should I recycle e-waste?

There are many reasons why you should recycle e-waste.

It's good for the environment.

E-waste products can contain hazardous materials. Ranging from heavy metals like lead, mercury and cadmium to ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and flame retardants. Even in small amounts, these dangerous chemicals can cause environmental contamination. When you multiply the millions of e-waste items being sent to landfill, the environmental impact becomes much more serious.

It's good to recover and reuse.

E-waste contains a range of valuable materials, including tin, nickel, zinc, aluminium, copper, silver, gold and plastic. A million mobile phones contain an estimated 15–16 tonnes of copper, 340–350 kilograms of silver and 24–34 kilograms of gold. When you consider there are more than 22 million discarded mobile handsets in Australia (and this figure is growing), we're throwing away a lot of precious resources.

Keep it out of landfill.

In 2016, 44.7 million metric tonnes of e-waste

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was generated worldwide. Of this enormous figure, only about 20 per cent, or 8.9 million metric tonnes was recycled. The rest ended up in landfill. Hazardous and precious metals aside, putting this huge volume of 'stuff' in the ground is not sustainable. Keeping e-waste out of landfill is a much smarter idea.

Q: How can I avoid creating e-waste?

Recycling your e-waste is important and necessary. But even better is to try and avoid creating e-waste in the first place.

Before you buy an electronic item, you can:

- > Carefully select the right product for your needs.
- > Choose a brand that's environmentally responsible.
- > Only upgrade your tech if there's a real reason to do so.
- > Support businesses that are working to solve the e-waste problem.

If you have an item you no longer need, but which still works and is in good condition, consider trying to find a new home for it first, you could:

- > Offer it to friends or family.
- > Try swapping or giving it away for free via an online recycling site.
- > Donate it to a charity or a Not-For-Profit organisation (make sure they're happy to accept it first).
- > Sell it. There's a large market for quality second-hand electronics. You'll make money and be helping reduce the e-waste burden.

If you have an item that is broken, you can:

- > Contact the manufacture to see if the item can be repaired.
- > Check warranties and returns from the seller and manufacturer.

- > Take the item to a Repair Café. The Seymour Repair Café is open on the 3rd Saturday of each month, 2pm to 4pm. More Repair Café locations and times can be found at <https://repaircafe.org/en/>.

Q: How is the e-waste ban different from what is already happening?

Council has been providing free e-waste disposal for a number of years at its four Resource Recovery Centres. This year alone (Jan – April 2019) there have been 1,152 visits to our e-waste collection bins.

However according to Sustainability Victoria research, most Victorians are unsure of what e-waste is, and how to dispose of it. Many people donate unwanted and even broken items to charity shops or store it in garages and sheds until they decide what to do with it. Unfortunately, some e-waste gets dumped at clothing recycling bins, opportunity shops or on the sides of roads. A number of smaller e-waste items are put in kerbside garbage each month and end up in landfill.

Sustainability Victoria is partnering with local councils to help raise awareness around e-waste and help stop it from ending up landfill. To assist local government with this change, funding has been provided through the Victorian Government's E-waste Infrastructure Support Program to upgrade e-waste collection and storage facilities. Council has received \$200,000 for its Broadford and Wallan Resource Recovery Centres for infrastructure upgrades that will enable Council to continue to safely collect and store more e-waste as the ban is introduced.



More information

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