

Managing waste in the Construction and Demolition sector

The Tasmanian construction and demolition sector generates approximately 44000 tonnes of waste per year. Only 1% of waste is recovered for reuse or recycling, making it the lowest rate in Australia at 63% below the national resource recovery average.

Tasmania's distance to mainland markets and processing facilities and the relatively under-developed local resource recovery industry contribute to this result, but there is more we can be doing today to positively impact Tasmania's environment and the wellbeing of future generations. Here are some simple steps to help your business rethink waste...

1. Assess what waste your business generates

Write down the different waste types generated and where each goes. Does your site waste contain recyclables, hazardous materials or organics that could be managed better?

Common construction and demolition sector waste includes:

Inert material: non-decomposing materials that are typically heavy such as bricks, concrete, rock, asphalt, soil, gravel and roof tiles. Sometimes referred to as 'clean fill'.

Recyclables: items that can be converted into new materials and objects via commercial or government services. Includes glass, cardboard, some plastics and metals such as copper and brass.

Excess or decommissioned goods: items that can't be recycled but could be re-used or re-purposed. Includes windows, doors, mirrors and surplus new stock such as plasterboard and electrical wiring.

General garbage: waste that cannot be recycled, reused or sold second hand. Includes polystyrene; some soft plastics; damaged fabric, plastic strapping; and waxed cardboard.

Hazardous materials: waste with properties that make them dangerous to human health or the environment. Includes batteries, asbestos, petrol, glue, contaminated soil and paint.

Organics: waste that is biodegradable or compostable. Includes food scraps, lawn clippings, timber, leaf litter and other green waste.



2. Look for ways to minimise waste

Once you understand what kind of waste your business generates, review the waste management ladder to determine how individual waste items or entire waste streams may be moved up the steps.

Consider your supply chain too and engage providers with good waste management practices to help reduce waste at every step.

Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Avoid purchasing products with excess packaging. – Design with waste in mind: carefully estimate and plan to avoid the cost and waste of ordering materials you don't need. – Choose materials that don't require pre- or post-treatment, e.g. core composite decking.
Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consider changing the on-site work practices and purchasing procedures of your business so that waste is reduced. – Consider using recycled materials instead of new materials in construction jobs.
Reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rather than immediately recycling cardboard packing boxes, re-use them as site storage until the job is completed. – Use offcuts such as plasterboard for smaller areas and wood for boxing. – Consider what will happen to your building materials and products at the end of their useful life. Prioritise items that can be recycled or re-used. – Waste items in good condition can be sold or donated via online resale sites, Council tip shops or Men's Sheds.
Recycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rather than throwing offcuts and scraps in landfill, place separate mini skip bins on site to sort unwanted items such as timber, concrete and steel into recyclable components for collection. – Inert material is used extensively in landfill operations as road material and landfill regeneration after the landfill is decommissioned. – Some landfills offer a reduced gate fee (prior approval required) for good quality inert waste. – Take advantage of take-back programs for materials including plasterboard, paint and pallets.

3. Ensure your business is set up with the right waste management equipment and processes

Start by writing a waste management plan with your staff and suppliers to identify waste that can be avoided, reduced, reused and recycled.

You can also consider having a Waste Reduction Assessment completed for your business with the help of a consultant or seek accreditation in a waste minimisation program relevant to your industry, such as Green Star.

Consider:

- equipment such as bin types and sizes
- processes for purchasing
- protective equipment for workers handling or sorting waste
- signage and education requirements
- staff incentives
- what can be managed in-house versus what may need to be outsourced
- design and planning to minimise waste.

RETHINK...

Search online for Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plans to find time-saving templates and checklists.

4. Take note of local, state and national regulations

Rules exist for the safe disposal and transport of waste in Tasmania and interstate based on the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 (EMPCA)* and the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control (Waste Management) Regulations 2010*.

Some Tasmanian landfills have permits issued by EPA Tasmania to accept certain types of controlled or hazardous waste such as asbestos and contaminated soil. There are

many hazardous materials and chemicals that cannot be accepted by regulated landfills and instead require industrial waste contractors to collect and dispose of the material. EPA Tasmania maintains a list of authorised controlled waste contractors, simply search 'controlled waste registered transporters and agents' on www.epa.tas.gov.au



5. Make the most of free waste management services and programs

Voluntary and regulated national product stewardship schemes help fund many programs targeted at high volume or potentially hazardous waste and provide either ongoing collection services or special drop-off events. Examples include:

- Drum Muster
- ChemClear
- PaintBack
- Tyrecycle
- Gyprock plasterboard recycling
- FluoroCycle
- Mobile Muster programs.



6. Make informed choices about where your waste goes

Always choose reputable service providers when selecting waste contractors, scrap merchants, processors or landfills; not only is this important for the environment but it can also protect your business reputation.

Registered landfills operate under an environment protection notice issued by EPA Tasmania which ensures that environmental protection best practices are followed by the operator and there is a long term plan for the site's rehabilitation.

Registered landfills are regularly audited for compliance so you can be sure that your business is contributing to a safer, cleaner environment for all Tasmanians.

RETHINK....

Your waste management efforts can be promoted as a competitive advantage to attract and retain like-minded customers. You may even find ways to reduce your business operating costs or generate new sources of income.

Want more information or advice?

Contact your local Council or visit:

Rethink Waste Tasmania: www.rethinkwaste.com.au

EPA Tasmania: www.epa.tas.gov.au/epa/resource-recovery-waste

National Product Stewardship Schemes:

www.environment.gov.au/protection/national-waste-policy/product-stewardship

