



## New Environmental Act - what you need to know

The Environmental Protection Amendment Act 2018 has now been passed into law and will take effect from 2020. The Act is the first major overhaul to Victorian environmental law in nearly 50 years and focusses on enforcing 'general environmental duty' (to prevent environmental harm) on companies and increasing compliance and strengthening powers of the EPA.

This Act flips the 1970 one on its head and moves away from the reactive view of managing the consequences of pollution to being proactive and reducing the risk of forthcoming harm.

### Key impacts and changes:

- **General Environmental Duty:** Requires businesses (and individuals) to take reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or (where elimination is not possible) to minimise risks of harm to human health or the environment from pollution or waste. The General Environmental Duty

is criminally enforceable and a breach can attract a penalty of up to \$317,000 for an individual or \$1.6 million for a corporation. A higher penalty (and/or imprisonment) may result from a more reckless/intentional breach.

- **Contaminated Land Duty:** Pre-existing contamination may need to be notified to the EPA. Land manager has the obligations to identify, assess, manage and notify affected parties of the contamination.
- **Pollution Incidents:** Requires companies (and individuals) to notify the EPA of any 'notifiable' incidents and to take action to rectify.
- **Third party community rights:** These have been introduced and will allow affected community members (in given situations) the rights to seek civil remedies.

- **Three tiered environmental permissions framework:** While historically businesses were incentivised to seek exemptions for environmental risk management, a new framework will be brought in where businesses can actively seek environmental permissions prior to the start of the activity (i.e being proactive rather than reactive). These will include registrations, permits and licenses.
- **Industrial Waste:** New duties will be imposed on Industrial Waste disposal. These are largely in relation to illegal dumping and ensuring disposal facilities are legally authorised to accept and treat waste.
- **Waste Levies:** The landfill levy scheme will continue and will be renamed to 'waste levies'. The levies will now be subject to annual indexation.

### In Conclusion

The introduction of this Act will result in a number of new environmental duties with greater responsibility being placed on the business or land owner.

It is advised that as a business (if you haven't already) you begin reviewing your environmental and waste management plans to ensure you will be compliant when the Act takes effect in 2020.

### For further information on the Environmental Protection Amendment Act 2018 go to:

<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/sustainability/independent-inquiry-into-the-epa/ep-bill-2018>.



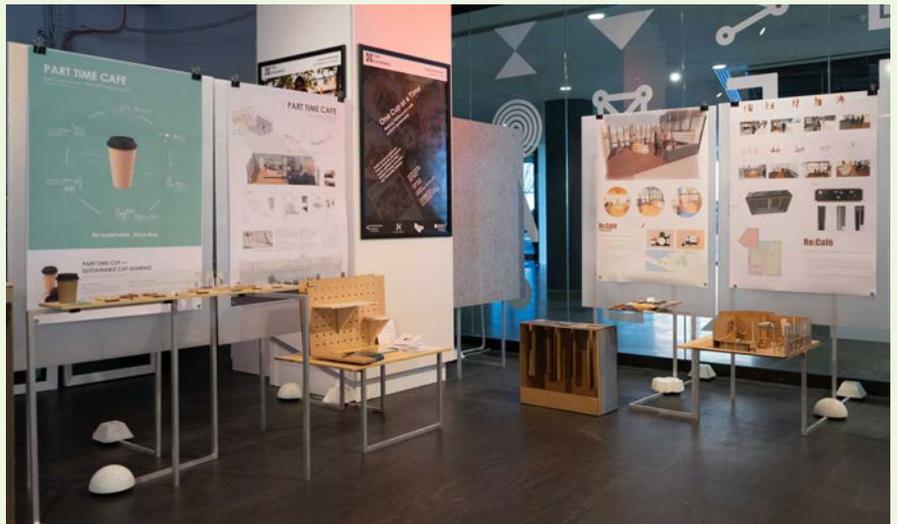
## One Cup at a Time

The coffee culture of Melbourne is undeniable, as is the rising awareness and concern for the use of disposable coffee cups. It's always great to keep up with new ideas and initiatives and we think what RMIT have been working on is pretty cool...

RMIT Master of Design Innovation and Technology students led by Studio leader Dianne McGrath have been exploring the issue in depth and have come up with some unique design proposals for a sustainable cafe culture.

September 25<sup>th</sup> marked the opening of 'One Cup at a Time', a studio exhibition which showcased these ideas and tackled issues around packaging, food waste and community engagement. There were over 100 registered attendees and the feedback has been positive with one idea already looking likely to progress into the market (watch this space!).

The exhibition will run until October 18<sup>th</sup> at The Knowledge Market, Shop 8-10, 892 Bourke Street, Victoria Harbour.



*Above some photos from the exhibition.*

*For more information, check out Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/knowma/>*

## The Sustainable Foodie



Buy (or grow) this



Not that



Find us on  
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**Connect with us on Facebook!**

Here you can expect to see industry news as well as hints, tips and interesting facts relating to waste reduction, living sustainably and recycling at home and work.

[facebook.com/  
ksenvironmentalgroup](https://facebook.com/ksenvironmentalgroup)



### Australasian Recycling Label update

If you watched the War On Waste show in August you'll be in the know about the Australasian Recycling Label (ARL). This label is a great idea as it removes all confusion for the consumer about how to properly dispose of their packaging.

The label was introduced back in 2015, and has been used by a number of brands such as Woolworths, Officeworks, Blackmores, Australia Post, T2 and Plantic. Thanks to a partnership with the Australian Packaging Covenant Organization (APCO) early this year, the ARL is now available to all APCO members, since then, more than 50 brands have signed up for the ARL and counting, so as time goes on we should start seeing the label more and more on the shelves.

We took in trip into a few Woolworth's stores recently to see how things stacked up and did notice quite a few of the Woolworths branded products with the ARL on it. It should be noted that the labelling process can take up to 3 years so it is all in a transition phase and it's expected that over the next year we will really start to see the label take off.

	<p><b>Quick Oats</b> – box into recycling, sachet into general waste.</p>
	<p><b>Tonic Water</b> – cap and bottle recyclable (crush bottle and replace cap).</p>
	<p><b>Thickened Cream</b> – bottle and lid into recycling.</p>

#### How to stay educated

At the moment there is only a small proportion of packaging featuring the ARL so it's useful to know what tools are available to answer your questions around packaging disposal until the new labelling is commonplace. **These are our favourite:**

- 'Recycling Near You' website – look up your item, put in your postcode and your waste/recycling options will come up. <https://recyclingnearyou.com.au/>
- RecycleSmart – an Australian wide app which draws data from the RecyclingNearYou site for every Australian council and allows users to easily search for information about how to recycle over 170 household items. Download from App Store or Google Play for FREE. <http://www.recyclesmart.com/>
- Sustain Me – does a very similar job but is specific to Victoria only. Download from App Store or Google Play for FREE.
- Your Council website.

#### What else can we as consumers do?

Planet Ark recommends If your favourite brands are not using the Australasian Recycling Label, why not hit them up on their social media pages. And they've made it super easy with some suggested text that can be copied and pasted:

- *Love your product! But it would be awesome if your packaging had the Australasian Recycling Label on it so I knew whether or not it could be recycled. Do you have plans to introduce this label to help a waste warrior out? [#WarOnWasteAU](http://www.arl.org.au/#WarOnWasteAU) #PlanetArk*
- *I recently bought your product but when I wanted to dispose of the packaging thoughtfully I didn't know which bin to throw it in! Are you looking to introduce the Australasian Recycling Label? [#WarOnWasteAU](http://www.arl.org.au/#WarOnWasteAU) #PlanetArk*

- *I've seen the Australasian Recycling Label on packaging to help me know whether or not to recycle it but I don't see it on your products. Are you able to look at introducing it on your packaging? [#WarOnWasteAU](http://www.arl.org.au/#WarOnWasteAU) #PlanetArk*

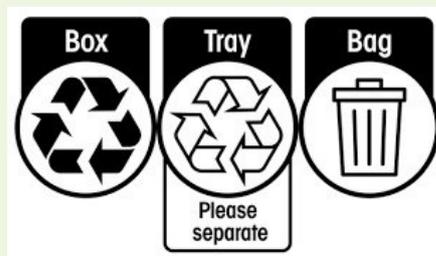
#### For brand owners

If you are a brand owner who would like to get onboard with the ARL, you would have to get your packaging assessed by the PREP tool first. PREP works as an evaluation tool of your existing packaging, so you can figure out where each part of the packaging sits in terms of recyclability. It might be that you redesign your packaging after a PREP evaluation – for example say you have a plastic tray as part of your packaging that is currently black. As we have heard recently, there is an issue with some black plastic in the recycling system because of a pigment called "carbon black" which cannot be detected by the sorting machines – so inevitably ends up in landfill or it contaminates the paper stream. For further information on the Recycling Label Program, please contact APCO ([apco@packagingcovenant.org.au](mailto:apco@packagingcovenant.org.au)).

For further information on the PREP tool visit <https://prep.org.au/main/content/home>.

#### Recycling questions in your workplace?

If you have questions around the recyclability and correct disposal of items in your workplace please speak to your current representative or email [sales@ksenvironmental.com.au](mailto:sales@ksenvironmental.com.au)





## Hidden plastic in 5 everyday items

With the growing global awareness of plastic pollution and with Plastic Free July now under our belt for another year, we thought it would be interesting to research into what products (other than the obvious) might be hiding some pesky plastic. While these items may contain very small amounts of plastic and there is debate on the real effects on the environment, we do know that plastic doesn't break down, so it is still thought provoking.

**Check it out, you might be surprised!**

### 1. Tea bags



Most of your humble tea bags have been heat sealed using polyethene to keep the tea bag from falling apart. Additionally, the 'silk' type tea bags are mostly made of a type of plastic (not silk as the name suggests!).

**Alternative:** Loose leaf tea (ideally buy in bulk to avoid outer plastic packaging) or tea's marketed as 'plastic free' for instance brands like 'Madura' and 'Pukka'. Madame Flavour 'silky' tea bags are biodegradable and instead of being made from nylon, they are made from an extract of corn.

### 2. Takeaway coffee cups



This might not be a big secret anymore but just in case you need a quick update here it is...Takeaway coffee cups are generally lined with polyethylene plastic to withstand the heat of the liquid and maintain the structure of the cup. There is also the overall recyclability issue of the coffee cup too.

**Alternative:** Your best options by far are to enjoy your coffee in the café or use a reusable coffee cup.

### 3. 'Foil' inner packaging



For instance the inside of a chip packet. You could be forgiven for thinking this was actually foil but unless it feels like metal it is more likely metallised plastic film.

**Alternative:** The good news is that silver ('foil') lined packaging can be recycled through the REDcycle programme (at your local supermarkets).

### 4. Fleece clothing

Those lovely cosy jumpers that keep you warm in Winter are made of polyester. The controversy around this synthetic material is that when these items are washed, microplastics can be released into the waterways adding to our plastic pollution and potentially damaging the health of some species. On the flip side though, more and more fleeces and other clothing items are being made of recycled plastic bottles.

**Alternative:** Wash your fleece in a 'GuppyFriend™' mesh garment bag which can capture the tiny particles of plastic (these will be available soon from Patagonia stores), or buy clothing made from natural fibres (cotton, wool).

### 5. Glitter

This seems to be another one that has really come to the spotlight lately. Most glitter is actually just tiny pieces of plastic (microplastic), and the argument is that eventually it can end up in the waterways (particularly for wash off glitter used in face paints etc) and be damaging to the sea life.

**Alternative:** We are starting to see more and more eco-friendly glitter alternatives coming onto the market now and no doubt this will only increase in the future. For now check out Eco Glitter and Bio Glitter. (Google search for various suppliers).

Back in the workplace if you need some advice on your plastic waste and what you can recycle please speak to your current representative or email [sales@ksenvironmental.com.au](mailto:sales@ksenvironmental.com.au)

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