

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

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



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Tuesday, 30 April 2019

GOVERNMENT TAKES CONTROL OF LARA WASTE STOCKPILE

The Andrews Labor Government has stepped in to clean up a huge waste stockpile at Lara, with the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) taking action to reduce the risk to community and environment.

EPA has used its powers under the *Environment Protection Act 1970* to take over management of the stockpile after the previous operator let the recycling waste grow to dangerous levels.

This action from the EPA will ensure that fire prevention can continue in the short term, ahead of a full clean up.

Poor site management practices by the previous operator, C&D Recycling, have resulted in an unacceptable risk to the local community, the environment and emergency services in the event of a fire at the site.

The occupier and owner of the site have gone into liquidation and the funding available to the liquidators to maintain security and fire prevention measures on site ends today, which is why the EPA is stepping in to make sure community safety is maintained.

The Labor Government has provided initial funding of \$30 million to maintain fire prevention measures and clean up the site – a job that could take several years as the site contains an estimated 320,000m³ of mostly construction and demolition waste, including materials such as timber, concrete, bricks, plaster, glass and ceramics.

EPA will rigorously pursue the previous site occupiers, owners, company directors and any other relevant parties to recover the costs of the fire prevention measures and clean up.

The City of Greater Geelong will project manage the works on behalf of EPA and Government.

Since August 2017, EPA has had additional powers to support Victoria's fire services and issue remedial notices to facilities not properly managing potential fire risks. These powers will be strengthened further under the new Environment Protection Act which will come into effect on 1 July 2020.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"The former operator's complete disregard for health and safety is disgraceful and has put the community at risk. We're stepping in to reduce the risk to community and the environment."

"We will be pursuing the private operators involved for every cent of the clean up cost. They created this mess, it's only right they pay for it to be fixed."

Quote attributable to Member for Lara John Eren

"It's excellent news for the whole community to know that the EPA will now take control of the clean up. This site has been a cause for local concern for some time so it's time to get on with fixing the problem once and for all."

Quote attributable to EPA Chief Executive Officer Dr Cathy Wilkinson

"EPA has had to step in because the site owner, TASCO, and C&D Recycling have failed in their duties under the Environment Protection Act to manage the unacceptable fire risk."

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