



Latest from the Landfill



CEO, Christine Bell and some of the Lutana Waste Transfer Station team practicing new social distancing measures.

SWS implements COVID-safe practices

As the impacts of COVID-19 in Tasmania (and universally) continue to evolve, Southern Waste Solutions has implemented—and will continue to review—its response plan to keep workers safe, minimise disruption to its operations and ensure it meets the needs of its customers and the community.

The response has included the introduction of flexible work arrangements, with all employees who can work from home provided with the necessary technical support to do so. In an effort to minimise unnecessary person-to-person contact, all internal and external meetings are being held via video and tele conferencing.

Access to SWS buildings has been limited to employees only and split shifts and social distancing measures introduced to protect work teams.

Each staff member has their temperature checked at the beginning of their shift and those with a reading exceeding 37.5 degrees Celsius are not permitted to clock on.

The organisation has implemented enhanced and increased frequency of cleaning and

sanitation. SWS has provided more hand sanitisation stations on site, and implemented thorough cleaning of shared spaces and surfaces between shifts. Communal items such as coffee cups have been removed and replaced by disposable substitutes.

Delivery protocols to its Lutana site have been modified to reduce the number of trucks offloading at any one time to assist drivers in maintaining social distance from others onsite.

Chief Executive Officer, Christine Bell, said the safety of Southern Waste Solutions' workers, customers and contractors is the organisation's highest priority.

"The protection of everyone across our sites is paramount and we continue to base our response on the latest advice from state and federal health authorities," Ms Bell said.

The organisation has also made a unilateral decision to freeze its fees and charges for the 2020-21 financial year.

"The coronavirus pandemic continues to affect Tasmanians, and this is just one way Southern Waste Solutions can assist communities and businesses in the current difficult economic circumstances," Ms Bell said.

Free disposal for charities as donations pile up

Op shops in Southern Tasmania will soon be able to take advantage of free disposal of unsaleable donated items thanks to Southern Waste Solutions' decision to allocate \$50,000 in their 2020-21 budget to support the organisations adversely affected by COVID-19.

The Authority—which comprises Clarence City, Sorell, Tasman and Kingborough Councils—approved the initiative, which includes free disposal at Lutana and transport to Copping for op shops needing to dispose of unsuitable donations, at its May meeting.

Southern Waste Solutions Chief Executive, Christine Bell, said the decision to provide op shops free disposal and drop off was due to both their increased demand for disposal as unusable donations soar, as well as wanting to support organisations serving those hardest hit economically by the shutdown.

"Op shops have seen a large increase in donations of unusable items as people have more time to clean out their cupboards," Ms Bell said.

"Many charities have also needed to close recently due to the pandemic, as their volunteers are often in the highest risk category, thus they may not have the funds to dispose of unsuitable goods that are dropped off," she said.

Australian charities pay approximately \$13 million per year to send unusable donations to landfill which represents 60,000 tonnes of waste.

Many donation centres around the state were forced to close during the pandemic, as a result of volunteers electing to isolate to protect their own health. Donated items were dumped in piles outside closed charity stores—much of which is now damaged and must be sent to landfill.

Southern Waste Solutions is currently identifying potential beneficiaries and developing a policy to ensure the benefit can be spread across all eligible organisations.

The initiative will be available to eligible organisations during the 2020-21 financial year and will commence from 1 July 2020.

For further information:

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