

What the waste levy means for businesses

Queensland's waste levy

A levy on waste going to landfill will begin on 1 July 2019.

The levy is part of a new waste strategy for Queensland to increase recycling and resource recovery and reduce waste.

The levy will encourage business and industry to reduce, reuse and recycle more, only sending waste that cannot be recovered to landfill.

Why do we need a waste levy?

Around 10.9 million tonnes of waste was produced in 2017-18 in Queensland, enough to fill almost 9,000 Olympic sized swimming pools. The amount of waste we produce is also growing faster than our population.

Queensland is a major underperformer in recycling and resource recovery with more than half (55%) of our waste ending up in landfill.

One of the reasons for this is that Queensland is the only mainland state without a waste levy—resulting in Queensland becoming a hotspot for interstate rubbish.

Waste levy zone

The levy zone includes 39 out of 77 local government areas. This covers around 90% of Queensland's population and is where the majority of waste is generated and disposed.

Unless exemptions apply, waste going to landfill in Queensland will incur the levy, except if the waste is both generated and disposed of in the non-levy zone.

How much is the levy?

The levy applies to all waste which is disposed of in landfill.

The levy is charged at \$75 per tonne for general waste (municipal solid waste, commercial and industrial, construction and demolition). Higher levies apply for regulated wastes.

Are there exemptions?

Some specific exemptions to the levy are available in particular circumstances, such as natural disasters, lawfully managed and transported asbestos, clean earth, and those approved by the Department of Environment and Science.

Charitable recycling organisations can also apply for exemptions for items donated which can't be used or recycled.

How is the levy paid?

Landfill operators are required to pay the levy to the Queensland Government.

Each operator (council or privately owned) will determine how the levy is passed on to their customers, for example, through increased fees at the gate.

What does it mean for businesses?

Businesses are encouraged to look at how they can reduce waste, separate waste streams and recycle as efficiently as possible to help reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

It is also a good idea to find out how levy fees will be managed by your waste service provider, and finding out more about your waste collection services—how it impacts your ability to recycle and what options are available to you.

What help is available?

The Chamber of Commerce Industry Queensland (CCIQ) ecoBiz program is a free initiative funded by the Queensland Government that helps businesses save money across their energy, water and waste bills. EcoBiz provides personalised coaching, including new services specifically targeted at assessing and reducing business waste.

Planet Ark Business Recycling also provides useful tips for reducing waste: www.businessrecycling.com.au

Local councils may also provide information on how businesses can reduce their waste.

More information

www.qld.gov.au/waste-disposal-levy