

BlinkyBulb solution to mercury issue

Used light globes and fluorescent tubes are the largest source of mercury contamination in landfills. Mercury is the world's most toxic pollutant, after radioactive substances.

"Over 10,000 tonnes of mercury-contaminated waste every year goes into landfills across Australia," said Cr John Doull, Director of the Barwon Regional Waste Management Group.

"In landfill, mercury from fluorescent tubes can convert to methyl mercury; this toxic and volatile gas can easily escape into the environment. With the phasing out of incandescent globes, the problem is becoming urgent," said Cr Doull.

A new recycling initiative is being launched this week in response to this problem. The BlinkyBulb Recycling Project was created by Rotary International District 9780 Preserve Planet Earth (Water & Environment) Committee, in partnership with the Regional Waste Management Groups from Highlands, Barwon, Central Murray, Grampians and Desert Fringe.

Rotary District 9780 established collection points at local businesses for members of the public to bring their used compact fluorescent (CFL) globes and fluorescent tubes where they will be boxed for collection.

"We encourage residents to take their used fluoro bulbs to any of the participating traders," Cr Doull said. "Bulbs need to be transported carefully to ensure there are no breakages, broken globes will not be accepted by the collection points."

Collection points for used fluoro, globes and tubes: Patsys Place High St Belmont, Barbeques Galore Torquay Rd, Faggs Mitre 10 South and North Geelong stores, Graylings Store West Fyans St, 7Eleven Store Cnr Ryrie and Swantson St, East Geelong Discount Drug Store, 3D Paint and Colour Torquay Rd, GoodYear Autocare South Geelong and Mercer St stores, 44 Frame Factory East Geelong, Height's Sewing Centre Pakington St, Highton Automotive Service, Standby Security Services Newtown, and Home Hardware Ocean Grove, Mitre10 Colac and Budget Furnishings Colac.

Kester Baines, spokesperson for Rotary International District 9780, said, "The initiative includes 25 Rotary Clubs in District 9780, across major centres such as Geelong, Ballarat and Horsham, as well as Bacchus Marsh Rotary (District 9800)."

Rotarians will transport the boxes of used globes and tubes, to the City of Greater Geelong's Douro Street Transfer Station. From there, they will be stockpiled for transport to the recycling facility.

The service does not yet extend to the commercial sector, but businesses can contact the Barwon RWMG to find how to dispose of their bulbs correctly. For more information, including a full list of drop-off sites, contact the council or visit www.blinkybulb.com.au

For further information please contact: Amy O'Brien, Barwon Regional Waste Management Group: 0418 149 068
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Kester Bains (Rotary), Tamara Dickins (Faggs Mitre10) and Cr John Doull at the Faggs Mitre10 South Geelong drop-off point.