

# POLYSTYRENE RECYCLING SERVICE NOW AVAILABLE FOR GEELONG BUSINESSES

Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) has long been considered a nasty packaging option by the waste management industry due to its extremely light weight and being difficult to recycle. Now an exciting new project has been launched in Geelong offering an EPS recycling service to Geelong businesses.

In a joint project between the Barwon Regional Waste Management Group and Geelong Disabled Peoples (GDP) Industries, funded by the National Packaging Covenant- an EPS processing facility has been set up at the GDP Industries North Geelong depot.

The facility takes waste EPS and processes it in two ways. Firstly the material can be crumbled into fine bubbles- in this form the EPS is blended into moulded cement products such as garden pavers and mouldings creating a light weight product without compromising on strength. This 'reuse' option is even better than recycling as in effect we are "closing the loop" on EPS as a waste product in our community. There are many benefits of light weighting concrete products including: reduced fuel use in transporting the products, a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from using less cement in the moulded products, and improved health and safety for people using the products as they are much lighter, easier and safer to lift.

EPS is also compacted under heat into a solid block. Once in this form it can be transported to recycling facilities to be made into new plastic products.

The project offers local businesses a more cost economical way to disposing of their polystyrene waste, and will assist in diverting large volumes of material from the regions landfills. It utilizes a trader stewardship approach to recycling, assisting and encouraging local businesses to act in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

Results from the initial developmental stages of the project show that in less than three months of the service being available to businesses in Geelong a massive 1200 cubic metres of polystyrene has been collected, processed and reused. This is the **equivalent of approximately 10,000 household waste bins full**. Previously all this material would have been deposited to landfill- now it is reused.



Chair BRWMG Cr. John Burgess, with a block of compacted EPS- uncompacted this block was approximately 6m<sup>3</sup>

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