Chemsafe Homes Tasmania, a free household chemical waste drop-off service, has completed the first year of operation and the results look promising. On the designated drop-off days across the state, nearly 1,100 people carefully removed over 25,000kg of potentially hazardous material from their homes.

The majority of materials collected included paints, flammables and a high volume of horticulture chemicals including some very nasty herbicides and pesticides. All participants should be proud of their efforts in following instructions for packing and conduct on the day, as no environmental incidents were reported over the 10 days of operation.

The program is increasing its range this year with 20 further sites planned for weekends in December 2010 and March 2011. In December, locations include Burnie, Latrobe/Devonport, Launceston, Deloraine, Glenorchy, Huonville, Sorell and Nubeena. On the drawing board for March next year are Oatlands, Campbell Town, Bicheno, St Helens, Wynyard, Ulverstone, Sheffield, Georgetown, Kingston, New Norfolk, Brighton and Ouse.

Chemicals accepted at drop-off sites include all garden, kitchen, and garage chemicals, fuels, oils, lubricants, paints, thinner, solvents, poisons and many more. An informative brochure, outlining rules and drop-off sites will be delivered to households in October. Information will soon be available at your local council office, on 1800 857 002 and online at www.lgat.tas.gov.au.

Householders are encouraged to gather up their chemicals in a sturdy box or container and, on the advertised day, carefully drive to a designated drop-off site. They are then required to follow any instructions given by the operator on-site, and to stay in their car while the chemicals are removed – for free.

The program is jointly funded by a DPIPWE Living Environment Program (LEP) grant and Tasmania’s 29 councils, and has been coordinated by the Local Government Association of Tasmania. Environmental benefits are expected through the increased resource recovery, treatment and correct disposal of household hazardous waste, and diversion of such waste from entering landfills, wastewater systems and the environment.

Chemsafe Homes Tasmania Coordinator Ben Mooney said after the success of last year, we are expecting bigger and better things from Tasmanians. “I encourage everyone to take advantage of this free service to rid your homes of hazardous chemicals,” he said.

Daniel Moody helps out at a chemical waste drop-off day

A resident takes advantage of one of the chemical drop off days held around the state
Clarence City Council’s town of Richmond was awarded the Environmental Innovation and Protection prize at the Keep Australia Beautiful, Australian Tidy Towns Awards, after representing Tasmania in two out of the three possible categories.

Leading by example, Clarence City Council has encouraged communities to think sustainably about their waste by ‘closing the loop’. In the village of Richmond, Clarence City Council has begun using recycled plastic decking and bollards, specifically designed for the heritage town.

With the help of Replas and their recycled plastic products, Clarence City Council is taking an active stand to reduce the amount of plastics going to landfill and to save natural resources. After successful installations in Richmond, the council has shown their support for the recycled product by using recycled plastic Enduroplanking™ for their footbridges at Mortyn Park in Howrah and then in collaboration with Landscape Architects Inspiring Place chose Enduroplanking™ and recycled plastic wharf fenders for the prominent Bellerive Boardwalk redevelopment, at Kangaroo Bay.

By using recycled plastic for the deck and fenders, Clarence City Council are not only providing a safe and stylish boardwalk, while saving timber and virgin plastics, but they are also saving money; the plastic will not deteriorate for at least thirty years, will require little maintenance and won’t even need painting. By using the recycled product, the Council has also made a sensible choice for the bay’s marine environment, as the fenders will not rot or corrode in the water, nor will they leak harmful substances, or be damaged during flood.

The planking and fenders are made from both domestic and industrial waste; these include items such as medical wrap, milk bottles, single use and reusable shopping bags and Dulux paint containers.

The council bought almost 13.3 tonnes of recycled plastic for the Kangaroo Bay redevelopment. That equates to over 332,000 2-litre milk bottles. In landfill, that 13.3 tonnes of plastic would have taken an estimated 600 years to decompose and could have spanned anywhere up to 830 cubic metres.

For information on recycled plastic products, please contact the team at Replas Tasmania on (03) 6231 3171, or email tas@replas.com.au.
Kingborough’s National Tree Day activities were a hit with students from Taroona Primary and High Schools, Woodbridge District School and Illawarra Primary School, who planted 780 Tasmanian native tree and shrubs, donated by Kingborough Council.

The donated plants were grown at the Council nursery by Landcare Volunteers.

Council Bushcare Officer, Bridget Jupe, helped Illawarra Primary students to plant trees at Sherburd Oval and the southern end of Blackmans Bay Beach. Kingborough Mayor Dr Graham Bury was busy planting trees with help from two very excited Storm Bay Girl Guides, Amber Beltz and Chloe Weatherhead who were both elated to meet their local Mayor. Sixty-five people turned up on the day, with the Kingborough Lions Club hosting a free barbecue for participants.

Trees were planted along Whitewater Creek near the Kingston Stormwater Wetlands to form a river corridor of vegetation that links to other work previously done along the creek and will help to improve water quality in the area. The Kingston storm water wetlands can be found on the left-hand side of Channel Highway travelling towards Taroona about 100 metres from the main traffic lights in Kingston and provides a very pleasant, gentle walk for all levels of fitness.

To talk about your waste management solution, contact 1300 134 242

www.veolia.com.au
Tasmania’s Little Swanport Catchment Management Plan Implementation Committee (LSCMPIC) received the prestigious Toshiba Community Group Award at the 2010 National Landcare Awards for their work with a wide range of natural resource management projects in the region. The awards, held at Parliament House in Canberra on 25 June, celebrate the work of volunteers from around Australia who are making a significant contribution to the environment.

The ongoing activities of the LSCMPIC has provided many opportunities for members and local land managers to communicate, encourage, share and learn from the knowledge and actions of a broad variety of stakeholders from both within and outside the catchment. Projects have included fencing off riparian land and priority remnant vegetation such as saltmarsh, and engaging the community in water quality monitoring activities.

LSCMPIC has had representation and administrative and financial support from both the Southern Midlands and Glamorgan Spring Bay Councils since its inception in 2003. The committee is chaired by Southern Midlands Councillor Helen Scott, and is supported by the Natural Resource Management Officers from both councils, namely Melanie Kelly and Helen Geard.

Also recognised at the 2010 National Landcare Awards was Huon Valley Council which received the Local Government Landcare Partnership Award. The award acknowledges a Local Government organisation that is collaborating with its community to preserve and manage its local environment and natural resources, encouraging a landcare ethic and action in the local community, and cooperating on landcare issues and projects with neighbouring organisations, businesses, other councils and landowners.

The Huon Valley Council has been a key supporter of Huon Valley Care groups for many years. Over the past decade, it has worked successfully with local Care groups and key stakeholders on various environmental projects – developing partnerships and increasing levels of support. The Council now works with 20 Care groups throughout the Huon Valley, offering the various groups financial assistance, tools, administration support and technical support though its Natural Resource Management Unit.

The Council’s NRM staff work with, support and advise a range of Care groups. The presence of an NRM unit within Council ensures that Care groups can seek strategic and on-ground advice, confident that their work is going to address high priority issues in the Huon Valley. The Council has worked collaboratively on several projects with Care groups over the past ten years. One current project the Council is working with Care groups on is an Envirofund funded project called Skills Development and Training for Care Groups. Through this project, the Huon Valley Council has partnered with a neighboring council to deliver training on a wide range of issues.


Pictured at the National Landcare Awards (from L-R), Maria Weeding - Manager of the Southern Midlands NRM Unit, Melanie Kelly - Natural Resource Management Officer for Glamorgan Spring Bay Council, LSCMPIC Chairperson - Cllr Helen Scott of Southern Midlands Council, Actor Jack Thompson, and Natural Resource Management Officer - Helen Geard of Southern Midlands Council
Hobart Enjoys Recycling Revamp

Hobart City public-place recycling bins – and surrounding suburbs - have been revamped with more than 150 waste and recycling bin stations, displaying new metal signage carrying the Do the Right Thing, Use the Right Bin message.

Funded by the Packaging Stewardship Forum (PSF) of the Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC), and supported by the Hobart City Council and Southern Waste Strategy Association (SWSA), the project started in February and was completed in time for World Environment Day on 5 June.

PSF General Manager, Jenny Pickles, said the PSF’s Do the ‘Right Thing, Use the Right Bin’ message is now being used by more than 300 councils and major venues Australia-wide and we’re looking to increase that figure. “Australians are great recyclers at home, through their convenient and easy to use kerbside collection systems,” Ms Pickles said. “The challenge that we’ve taken on is to make recycling just as easy and effective for people whilst they’re away from home, whether it be in shopping centres, sporting stadia, entertainment venues, universities or walking through Salamanca Place.”

Through the work of the PSF, SWSA and local councils around the state, there are now more public place recycling bins in Tasmania per head of population than any other state in Australia.
The new water corporations are now one year old. While much of that time has been spent bedding down the corporations and preparing for the heavily regulated environment within which we will operate, much work has also been done in beginning the capital investment necessary to bring the water and sewerage services up to the required standard.

One of the significant challenges for Ben Lomond Water is drinking water quality and we have a number of projects already underway to meet this challenge. The largest project we currently have is the new Distillery Creek water treatment plant which will supply the CBD and inner suburbs of Launceston. This is a 30 ML/day plant that was commenced by Esk Water and will replace the old, much larger, Distillery Creek plant that commenced in 1925. It was possible to construct a smaller plant as water consumption in the Launceston area has reduced over the last 20 years. Commissioning of this plant is about to commence.

Prior to Ben Lomond’s formation, the Break O’Day Council purchased a package membrane plant for Scamander. Ben Lomond Water has completed the necessary design processes for the civil works, including buildings, tanks and sludge lagoons. A contract has been let to Gradco and equipment is expected to be installed in September, so we expect to have treated water to Scamander in time for the summer tourist season.

A design and construct contract has been let to Water Treatment Australia to construct a treatment plant at Campbell Town. This project, costing more than $5 million, will provide treated water to Campbell Town and Ross. The design process is currently underway and we are awaiting the outcome of a rezoning application. Once construction commences we expect the works to be completed within a year. This plant is a dissolved air flotation plant and the contractor is currently building the Distillery Creek plant. In fact, Water Treatment Australia was the process contractor for our Mt Leslie treatment plant.

The final water quality project currently underway is a pipeline from Longford to Cressy. The project, costing more than $1 million, is being undertaken by Paul Zanetto and is expected to be completed within the next three months. This pipeline will deliver treated water from the existing Longford water treatment plant to Cressy.

As part of the regulated environment, the Director of Public Health provided us with a public health priority project list in December 2009. This list provided guidance on the communities most in need of improved water quality. Ben Lomond Water was required to submit to the health regulator, a Drinking Water Quality Compliance Plan by the end of June. This plan sets out how we will deliver projects to comply with the health regulator’s priority project list.

The largest community in our region without treated water is Westbury/Hagley. This project will be delivered in two stages over the next two years. Stage 1 will include pipelines, pump stations and an elevated clear water reservoir. Stage 2 will be the water treatment plant. It is also intended to construct pipeline between Westbury and Exton the following year to extend treated water to Exton.

Another town on the regulator’s list is Lilydale. Launceston City Council previously investigated possible alternative supply options and concluded that a pipeline from the existing North Esk trunk main was the preferred option. It is planned that this pipeline be constructed over the next three years. It is possible that this pipeline may also supply Karoola and Lalla.

Funds have also been allocated this year to undertake planning for works at Fingal, Branhcolm Bracknell and Mole Creek. Treatment plants are likely to be constructed at each town the following year. The Branhcolm plant is also expected to supply Derby.

While Ben Lomond Water also has significant challenges in wastewater treatment, we are concentrating on water treatment in the next year or so. This is because we have a large number of towns with very poor water quality, but it is also because water treatment projects are able to undertaken more quickly than are wastewater projects.
In Brief

Spring Cleaning Time for Old Electrical Goods

More than 100 cubic metres of electrical waste was saved from landfill as a result of Launceston City Council’s E-waste Drop off Day, held on 29 August at the Cimitiere Street, Cameron Street Car Park. Launceston residents took full advantage of the free drop off day to get rid of their old televisions, computers, printers, scanners, toasters, vacuum cleaners, video players, mobile phones, microwaves and stereos. Many of these items are 100% recyclable. Householders brought their electrical goods to the car park where there were people available to help them unload. E-waste contains an alarming range of toxic materials, including lead, cadmium and mercury.

Green Corps Graduates

The effort and hard work of nine young Tasmanians paid off recently when they officially graduated from a six-month Green Corps program. The Green Corps team has been working throughout the Huon Valley on various community projects, helping to restore and preserve the area’s natural environment. The group’s latest project was assisting with the rejuvenation of a patch of forest on Flood Road, near Huonville. Long used as a dumping ground for rubbish and garden waste, the area has undergone an extensive two-year restoration. The team worked at the site for three months, along with the Huonville Landcare group and the Huon Valley Council, helping to remove blackberries and other weeds. Work included constructing a public walking track and a viewing platform to allow the community to experience a native forest close to Huonville’s town centre. Green Corps is an Australian Government youth development initiative.

Natural Systems Project and Climate Change

The Adaptation to Climate Change for Tasmania’s Natural Systems Project is a four-year initiative (2009-13) to guide conservation planning and adaptive management for Tasmania’s biodiversity and natural environments. The project addresses the need for the Tasmanian Government and the community to develop and implement adaptation responses to reduce the vulnerability of Tasmania’s natural systems and biodiversity to climate change, and will provide information about the potential impacts of climate change on the state’s terrestrial, freshwater and marine natural values. Biodiversity is one of the sectors identified as the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The initiative will enable adaptation to be incorporated into policy and management responses for the sustainable management and conservation of the state’s natural resources. Key measures include development of a vulnerabilities report, risk assessment tools, spatial layers to inform planning processes, management and policy principles, and monitoring and adaptive management programs. The report will be made available on the Department of Environment, Parks and Heritage website.

FluoroCycle

FluoroCycle is the national, voluntary scheme that aims to increase recycling of lamps that contain mercury. It targets the commercial and public lighting sectors and gives recognition to businesses and organisations that become signatories. Lighting Council Australia has been appointed as the administrator of the scheme, which opened for business on 21 July this year. To find out more about the scheme and how to join, please visit the FluoroCycle website at www.fluorocycle.org.au/release/. Organisations that apply by 20 October will be given special recognition as ‘Foundation Signatories’ for their early commitment to recycling lamps that contain mercury.