

Barwon Regional Waste Management Group

Polystyrene Recycling Service

now available for Geelong businesses

Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) has long been considered a nasty packaging option by the waste management industry. It's extremely light weight which makes it difficult to recycle. Now a new project has been launched in Geelong offering a polystyrene recycling service.

An EPS processing facility has been set up at the GDP Industries North Geelong depot by Barwon Regional Waste Management Group in partnership with Geelong Disabled Peoples (GDP) Industries with funding from the National Packaging Covenant.

The facility takes waste EPS and processes it in one of two ways. One method is to crumble the material into fine particles and blend the particles into moulded cement products such as garden pavers and mouldings. This blended product is light weight product without compromising strength. This 'reuse' option is better than recycling as we are "closing the loop" on EPS as a waste product locally. 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.

An alternative method is to compact EPS under heat into a solid block. The solid block can then be transported to be made into new plastic products.

The project offers local businesses an improved economic method of disposing of polystyrene waste, and assists in diverting large volumes of material from landfill. It uses a trader stewardship approach to recycling, assisting and encouraging local businesses to act in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

Results from the developmental stages of the project show that in less than three months a massive 1200 cubic metres of polystyrene has been collected, processed and reused in Geelong. This is the equivalent of approximately 10,000 household waste bins. Previously this material would have been sent to landfill, instead it is being reused and recycled.



Chair BRWMG John Burgess with a block of compacted EPS, in its uncompressed form this block would have filled approximately fifty 120litre bins



Garry Haberfield and Brad Strong crumbling polystyrene



Cross section of concrete products showing the blended polystyrene



For more information contact

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