

Foreword

From the Minister for the Environment, John Thwaites

Becoming more environmentally sustainable is one of the greatest challenges we face, globally as well as locally.

In 2003–2004, 53 per cent of the waste generated in Victoria was recovered for recycling – double the amount that was recycled ten years earlier. Nevertheless, the amount of waste we generate continues to grow and unwanted packaging is still one of our biggest sources of waste. More than 80 per cent of the litter picked up on Clean Up Australia Day was discarded packaging.

Everyone can take simple steps to help deal with the problems of litter and unwanted packaging. Select items that come in recyclable packaging, say no to plastic bags, re-use your mug or cup at school and encourage parents and/or the school canteen to buy products in bulk.

Manufacturers and suppliers in industry also play an important role in using our valuable resources responsibly. By signing the *National Packaging Covenant*, industry committed to reducing its impact on the environment by conserving resources through better design, production and processes.

We are seeing constant improvements in packaging choice, the use of recyclable materials and designs that avoid product waste. Nevertheless, we realise that there is more to be done and that it needs to be done more quickly.

The Packaging Council of Australia's *The Pack pack – Packaging unwrapped* is a valuable reference guide to help young people make informed choices about reducing waste. I encourage you to read the guide so we can all play our part in reducing unwanted packaging and preventing litter, and work towards a more sustainable community and future.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Thwaites". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Honourable John William Thwaites
*Deputy Premier, Minister for Environment,
Minister for Water and Minister for Victorian Communities*