

TACKLING ILLEGAL DUMPING

Moorabool's Experience and the Path Forward

Illegal Dumping Summit

30 October 2025



The Scale of the Challenge

- **3,500 cleanup jobs** completed by Council's litter team between January 2024 and June 2025
- **76%** of commercial illegal dumping traced to offenders from outside Moorabool Shire
- **One Council:** \$2.3 million spent in one financial year on illegal dumping cleanup
- **Across Victoria:** Over 33,000 illegal dumping incidents reported this year
- **Materials commonly dumped:** Building waste, construction debris, tyres, asbestos, household garbage, furniture, soil

As Victoria races to build **1.2 million homes over five years**, illegal dumping is surging across the urban fringe

The \$500,000 Bill

How the EPA abandoned Moorabool Shire ratepayers

- 🕒 • **Years of inaction:** EPA monitored illegal dumping without taking enforcement action
- 💰 • **Financial burden shifted:** Imposed a \$500,000 cleanup bill on council (\$25 per ratepayer)
- 🔊 • **Communication failure:** Informed other agencies about risks while excluding the Local Council
- 🏛️ • **Statewide implications:** Creates dangerous precedent affecting all Victorian councils

Timeline of **Inaction**

Oct 2022 –
July 2023

Trailers with acetylene cylinders appear on a private property at 210 Lerderberg Park Road, Merrimu

9 March
2025

EPA calls Moorabool Shire CEO concerning the waste and informs Council it is aware of the site and asks Council to place visible cones around the trailer

11 March
2025

EPA again confirms it is investigating the site

11-31
March

EPA **suddenly shifts responsibility** to Council as landowner

22 May
2025

EPA serves a Draft Environment Action notice to Council

10 June
2025

Environment Action notice issued with a 25 July clean up deadline

16 July
2025

VCAT denies Council's stay application and orders cleanup to proceed

29 July
2025

EPA **refuses cost sharing** with Council despite VCAT suggestion

The Hazardous Reality

Up to 1,250 dissolved acetylene cylinders requiring specialized disposal:



Asbestos Contamination:

Cylinders contain asbestos a known carcinogen that requires specialized handling and disposal



Highly Flammable:

Acetylene is extremely flammable and can explode if improperly handled



Limited Disposal Options:

Only one facility in Victoria (located in Stawell) can properly dispose of these cylinders



Missing Waste Concerns:

Aerial footage shows more containers once stored on site are now missing – location unknown



Where are these containers now?

Statewide Support and Reform

- **MAV Motion of Support:** Latrobe City Council motion passed at MAV conference (October 2025) calling for public support and urgent government policy reform.
- **Victorian Government Funding:** \$21.5 million announced to bolster Illegal Dumping Taskforce and support councils.
- **Legislative Reform Required:** Current legislation fails to protect councils from financial responsibility for waste they didn't create on land they manage for the state.
- **Sector-Wide Impact:** "This is not just a Moorabool issue—it affects the whole sector. All councils are at risk."

Moorabool's Response

- **Surveillance and Technology:** Additional cameras installed at hotspots. Camera footage used to issue \$247,000 in infringements
- **Rapid Cleanup Response:** 3,500 cleanup jobs completed to prevent sites becoming larger dumping grounds
- **Targeted Communications Campaign:** Campaign targeting builders and contractors (source of 76% of commercial dumping)
- **Enforcement and Deterrence:** Active pursuit of offenders. Infringements up to \$9,880 for businesses
- **TODAY - Illegal Dumping Summit**

Fundamental Limitations: Despite these efforts, councils cannot prevent EPA from shifting responsibility, cannot force EPA intervention, and cannot access withheld information. Policy reform is essential.

Collaborative Solutions Required

- **Legislative Reform:** Urgent changes to EPA legislation to prevent shifting responsibility to councils for waste they didn't create
- **EPA Accountability and Transparency:** Hold EPA accountable for failures to act when monitoring illegal dumping; require information sharing with councils
- **Cross-Council Intelligence Sharing:** Establish formal network to share intelligence on illegal dumping patterns, known offenders, and effective enforcement strategies
- **Adequate Resourcing:** Ongoing funding for surveillance technology, rapid response teams, enforcement officers, and community education campaigns
- **Protection Framework for Councils:** Prevent Moorabool precedent from affecting other municipalities through clear responsibility delineation and mandatory EPA intervention

Next Steps Together – Today is the beginning

Immediate Actions

- Form working group to coordinate advocacy
- Develop unified position statement
- Engage with MAV on October 2025 motion
- Request meetings with Environment Minister
- Establish intelligence sharing protocols

Medium Term Goals

- Secure reimbursement for Moorabool's \$500k
- Achieve legislative reform on responsibility
- Independent investigation into EPA practices
- Implement protection framework for councils
- Ensure ongoing adequate funding

Every council has a stake in this fight. The Moorabool precedent threatens us all. We need your voices, your experiences, your data, and your advocacy, Together, we can drive the systemic change needed to protect our communities and ratepayers.

Questions

