

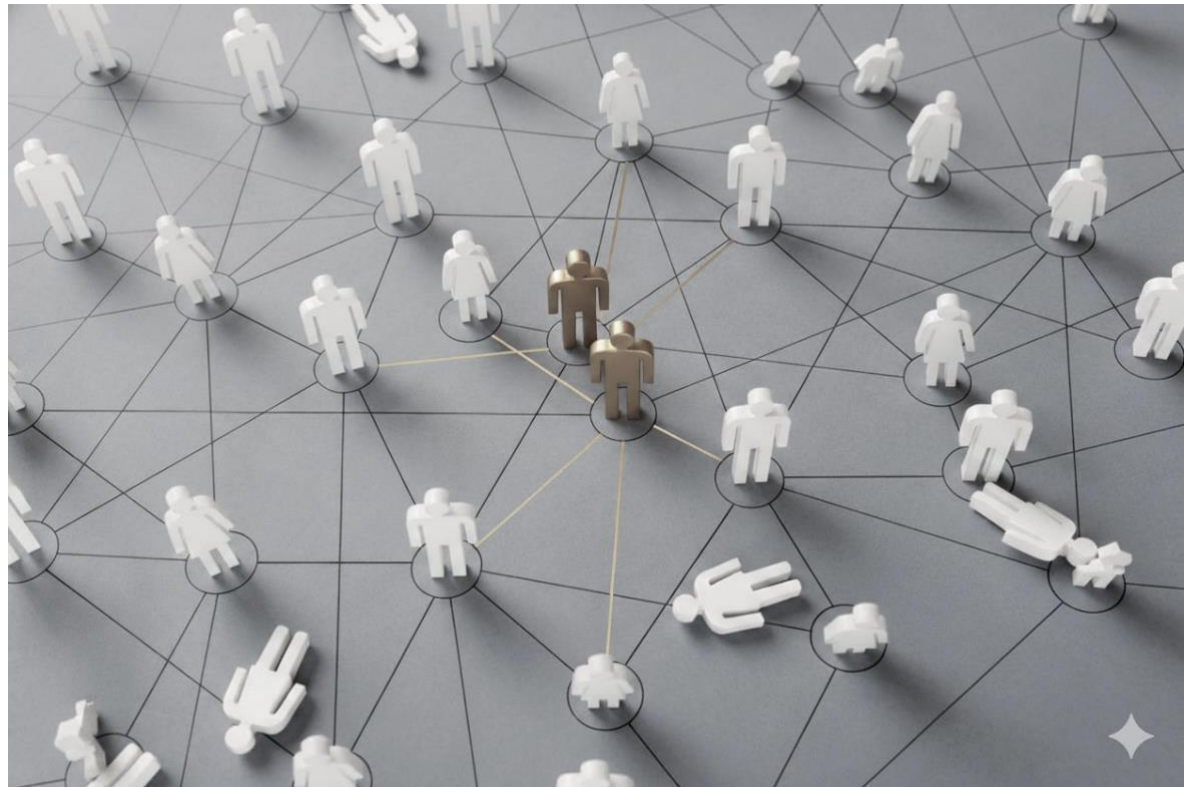
SUITABLY QUALIFIED PERSONS TRAINING

ONLINE TRAINING FOR THE WASTE AND RECYCLING INDUSTRY

Our online training
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REGULAR UPDATES

Our courses are updated
regularly to provide the
most up-to-date and
compliant waste
management education
available in Victoria



A Turning Point for Liquid Waste: How Crisis Created an Industry

By Andrew Swann

The history of liquid waste management in Victoria serves as a stark reminder of why rigorous environmental compliance is so critical today. When we look at the highly technical and specialized liquid waste sector of the present, it stands in sharp contrast to the alarming casualness of the past. Victoria has been on quite a journey, transitioning from an era of unchecked, highly dangerous disposal practices to boasting the second oldest environmental protection laws in the world.

Before these strict regulations were established, the prevailing attitude toward hazardous liquids was largely unregulated, which eventually led to a massive environmental disaster. It was this very crisis that permanently altered the landscape of waste management and forced the creation of the industry we know today.

The Catch-All Landfill

In the early days of Victoria's waste management, long before specialized treatment facilities existed, the disposal of liquids was highly unregulated. It was not uncommon for liquids to be dumped directly into local rivers, creeks, and streams.

As municipal landfills became the primary method for waste disposal, they were treated as a universal solution. Landfills took absolutely everything, including vast amounts of volatile liquid waste. The scale of this practice was staggering—at one point, 70% of all used motor oil in the State was disposed of directly into landfills.

The Tullamarine Disaster & The 1987 Ban

This unsustainable approach eventually reached a breaking point. In 1987, the Tullamarine Landfill experienced a catastrophic failure of its containment systems. Because the landfill was packed with unregulated liquid waste, the failure resulted in severe groundwater contamination.

The fallout from this containment failure forced immediate legislative action. In direct response to the contamination, the state officially banned liquids from being disposed of in landfills from 1987 onward. The practice of simply burying liquids was outlawed, and an entirely new industry was created specifically around the safe handling, treatment, and disposal of liquid waste.

“Today, liquid waste management is one of the most highly specialized and carefully tracked sectors of the Victorian waste industry—all stemming from a hard-learned lesson in environmental protection.”

The Birth of Traceability

Because liquids naturally find their lowest point, they tend to drain away and spread rapidly, making them incredibly problematic when dumped. Furthermore, because dangerous and hazardous liquid wastes are expensive to safely dispose of, they sometimes "disappear" to unlawful disposal sites.

To combat this, modern regulations introduced strict oversight. Today, the waste traceability system is managed by EPA Victoria and requires the mandatory tracking of "Reportable Priority Waste" (RPW), which encompasses these hazardous and dangerous liquid wastes to ensure they reach a lawful place.

Trade Waste and Specialization

As regulations grew, so did the need for highly specialized liquid waste businesses. A prime example is the management of trade waste from the hospitality sector. When a business runs a restaurant, it must operate a grease trap to reduce the amount of Solids, Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) entering the sewer.

If unchecked, FOG creates massive "fatbergs" known to completely block sewer lines. Every 8 to 13 weeks, these grease traps must be cleaned out, and the resulting liquid waste requires specialized treatment at a licensed site to neutralize and separate the water from the fats and solids—a far cry from the days of dumping everything into a landfill.

About SQPT

Suitably Qualified Personnel Training (SQPT) was founded by industry experts with over 40 years of combined experience in Victoria's waste and recycling industry.

The Authors have not only managed operational businesses for some of the world's largest waste and recycling businesses, but also in the environmental compliance space, helping the waste and recycling industry and other waste producing organisations to operate both efficiently and compliantly.

SQPT has extensive experience in the compliant management and operation of waste and recycling businesses throughout Victoria.

We understand the pressures faced by people working in our industry and this is the driver behind the creation of courses such as this one, to help you improve your knowledge and understand the requirements associated with conducting your valuable role, compliantly.

Our knowledge comes from hard-earned experience. We understand the industry and how it operates.

SQPT believe that sharing our knowledge about the waste and recycling industry will help create a stronger industry and better prepare participants for their work in this vitally important sector.

SQPT produce a range of courses. These can be viewed at our website, www.sqpt.com.au.

We thank you for choosing SQPT as your Training supplier and remind you to always operate safely and compliantly.

Kind Regards,

The SQPT Team

