

## RESOURCE RECOVERY AND WASTE SERVICES POLICY- CONSIDERATION FOR ADOPTION

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Report Author: Executive Officer - Resource Recovery  
Responsible Officer: Director Planning & Sustainable Futures  
Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

### CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

### SUMMARY

This report outlines a proposal to update the former Waste Services Policy, now called the Resource Recovery and Waste Services Policy (Policy) to reflect the new operational waste collection services and requirements to comply with recent State-wide waste management legislation.

The Policy describes the waste services provided by Council and how the charges are applied to properties throughout the municipality. The Policy has a focus on ensuring that a fair, reasonable, and consistent approach is maintained in applying and charging the waste service charge. The waste service charge is developed through the annual budget process and is based on full cost recovery.

There have been some significant changes in State legislation associated with waste collection and there is a need to ensure that Council's policy is aligned with those changes. The proposed Policy has been written to reflect the required service changes and to comply with the relevant State legislation. The Policy has also been developed to reflect anticipated future service changes.

### RECOMMENDATION

***That Council adopts the Resource Recovery and Waste Services policy.***

### RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- *Yarra Ranges Council Waste Services Policy 2018* was adopted by Council on 14 August 2018.
- *Community Waste and Resource Recovery Plan* was adopted by Council on 13 June 2023.

## DISCUSSION

### *Purpose and Background*

Council provides a range of waste services across the municipality to meet regulatory requirements and community needs. These services encourage avoidance, reuse, and recycling while minimising disposal of waste to landfill. These services are charged to the community through the Waste Service Charge on the Rates notice. The Policy outlines the services to be provided and how the charges are applied across the community.

The Waste Service Charge includes:

- Recycling collection service
- FOGO (food organics and garden organics) collection service
- Rubbish collection service
- Separate glass collection service from 2025/2026
- Hard waste and bundled branches collections (for residential only)
- Street and park litter bin services
- Illegally dumped rubbish collection
- Processing and disposal of collected materials
- Education and communication activities and resources
- Minor maintenance for closed landfills
- Administrative and systems maintenance tasks, legislative requirements and reporting and contract management required to deliver the waste services.

The current Policy was developed in 2018 and expires on 14 August 2023. There have been some significant changes in State legislation associated with waste collection services over the last few years which has resulted in changes to the way we need to provide the services. As the services are changing there is a need to ensure Council's Policy is aligned with those changes. The proposed Policy has been written to reflect the required service changes and to comply with the:

- *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*
- *Recycling Victoria A New Economy 2020*
- *Local Government Act 1989 & 2020.*

The Policy document has been developed to reflect the future service changes and includes updates to bin types, bin sizes and collection frequencies, as well as

alignment with State-wide and industry terminology. A copy of the policy is available in Attachment 1.

### ***Options considered and recommendations***

There were a number of options considered in regard to updating this Policy. The working documents that outline these considered changes can be found in Attachment 2.

One of the main considerations and changes to the Policy is for it to apply for a two-year period from 14 August 2023 to 31 August 2025. This allows for further review to reflect the predicted upcoming changes in the waste industry including: the State Government's container deposit scheme; Council's plan to rollout a separate glass recycling service; and the investigation into an improved policy for provision of bins and services to sporting reserves in the municipality.

**Item 1:** The Policy currently has provision for schools, childcare centres and kindergartens to access up to four free recycling bins. This is a well utilised service with 128 schools (out of a possible 163) who have one or more 'free' recycling bins. These bins do not cater for the school's entire waste disposal need but support their resource recovery education programs. The cost of these recycling services is recovered through residential and non-residential waste charges.

**Recommendation:** With the expansion of residential services to include FOGO (food organics and garden organics) bins, we propose in line with the following financial year's budget, from 1 July 2024, the four free bins be amended to include any combination of recycling or FOGO bins chosen by the school. This will further assist the school and early learning networks with tools to assist in the important education of resource recovery.

**Item 2:** The length of time the Policy goes for was considered. A shorter Policy timeframe was considered based on the current service changes and new State services being introduced.

It is proposed that the Policy will apply from 14 August 2023 to 31 August 2025 and therefore will be due for renewal in a shorter timeframe of two years to reflect the predicted upcoming changes in the waste industry including: the State's container deposit scheme; Council's plan to rollout a separate glass service; and the investigation into an improved policy for provision of bins and services to sporting reserves in the municipality.

**Recommendation:** A shortened timeframe for the Policy duration considering the future known changes that will have a significant impact on current waste services is recommended.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

The waste service charge is developed through the annual budget process and is based on full cost recovery. Accordingly, the changes to the waste services outlined in the Policy will impact the cost-of-service provision which will be recovered through the Waste Service Charge on the Rates notice.

Changes to the waste services which will impact the cost of service include:

- Changes in collection frequency of the rubbish bin collection service
- Changes in the rubbish bin lid to red to comply with State requirements
- Conversion of the optional garden organics bin collection service to a Shire wide weekly FOGO collection service for all properties.

Changes in the annual waste service charge reflect the cost changes of the services for each financial year. The cost changes associated with the new services form part of this Policy. The waste service charges and budget for the 2023/2024 financial year has been adopted by Council.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

- Protected & Enhanced Natural Environment - A healthier environment for future generations.
- High Performing Organisation - An innovative, responsive organisation that listens and delivers quality, value for money services to our community.

## **RELEVANT LAW**

- *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*
- *Recycling Victoria New Economy Policy 2020*
- *Local Government Act 1989 & 2020*

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Economic Implications***

The Policy supports the municipal wide service that recovers waste material, diverts waste from landfill and will assist in the strengthening of a circular economy and a reduction of natural resource use.

### ***Social Implications***

The Policy outlines a fair and equitable system for allocation of costs for waste collection services provided by Council for all residential customers and optional services for non-residential customers.

Traditional Aboriginal culture and Lore achieved a natural equilibrium unmatched as a model of environmental sustainability when Aboriginal people meticulously cared for Country over thousands of generations. Aboriginal cultural practices based on a deep, intimate understanding of the oneness of the natural world enabled all things to survive and thrive. The values of respecting, sharing and caring for each other, community and Country that informed sophisticated and elegant sustainable practices ensured the health and wellbeing of Country and all within it. We are often reminded by our Elders today that healthy Country means healthy people.

### ***Environmental Implications***

The Policy provides structure to the waste services that will lead to reduced environmental impacts by provision of collection services to minimise waste, maximise resource recovery, reduce waste to landfill and minimise greenhouse gas emissions.

The Policy is aligned with our Community Waste Resource Recovery Plan which focusses on our community working together to protect the environment, amenity, and liveability of our municipality.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

This Policy is based on operational practices and supports operational contracts as well as the services and activities outlined in the Community Waste and Resource Recovery Plan. Extensive engagement was undertaken with our community to seek their views on Council's resource recovery activities and services as part of the development of the Community Waste Resource Recovery Plan. These views and the views of Councillors have been instrumental in shaping the development of this Policy.

There has been extensive internal consultation across the organisation in relation to this Policy. Benchmarking was undertaken with several Victorian and interstate Councils by reviewing their waste policies to assist in informing the development of this Policy.

## **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

By benchmarking against other councils' waste policies, we were able to identify different options within other policies which we could consider and include in our Policy to ensure we expand our Policy to maximise benefit to Yarra Ranges Council and our community.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Resource Recovery and Waste Services Policy aims to provide clear and transparent information to the community regarding the waste services and application of charges to reduce the risk of discrepancies in the service and charges being applied to properties.

Having this Policy outline all waste budget inclusions ensures the waste service charges can only be utilised for resource recovery activities.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT**

1. Resource Recovery and Waste Services Policy 2023
2. List of key Changes to the Policy