

COMMUNITY WASTE RESOURCE RECOVERY PLAN

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

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

In preparation for future waste service changes, a Community Waste Resource Recovery Plan (Plan) was developed. This Plan outlines the future service direction and priorities for waste management services for the Yarra Ranges' Community. The Plan is a key part of the process facilitating Council meeting the requirements of the State Government's *Recycling Victoria Policy – A new Economy*, and the service changes in the Plan are required under this policy.

Community consultation on the draft Plan was conducted between September and November 2022. In response to feedback from our community, some changes were made to the Plan including strengthening the vision, including a new advocacy action around product stewardship, and introducing an option for reduced recycling bin sizes for smaller households. A summary of the consultation is provided as Attachment 1.

The Plan is now ready to be presented to Council for final approval and adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Adopts the Community Waste Resource Recovery Plan as the strategic document for future waste services.***
- 2. Implements the service changes and actions outlined in the Community Waste Resource Recovery Plan.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council Meeting 13 September 2022. Council approval was provided to release the draft Waste and Resource Recovery Plan for community consultation.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Purpose

In December 2020 the Victorian Government released its *Recycling Victoria Policy – A new Economy*. This policy outlines some of the largest reforms in the Waste and Resource Recovery Sector, many of which Council is responsible for implementing.

The adoption of the Plan will assist in providing direction on future service requirements that meet the State Government's level of service requirements, whilst also balancing input from the community to ensure that the services being delivered meet its needs. The Plan outlines the actions that Council will take to ensure best practice services are provided that maximise resource recovery and reduce the reliance on landfill.

The Plan envisions a future where Council and our community are committed to producing less waste, maximising the life of the materials used and the recovery of recyclable materials.

Background

Waste disposal to landfill has a significant impact on the environment. There is a clear need to change community behaviour to reduce the amount of waste households produce, and to ensure that material is placed in the correct bins.

Reducing waste to landfill by putting food waste into the Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) bin, and all recyclables in the recycling bin, will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impact.

Additionally, landfills are filling up quickly and the last available landfill in the Eastern suburbs is expected to close around 2025, which will require us to transport waste across Melbourne for disposal in the Western suburbs.

This Plan seeks to promote the change in behaviour that is required to maximise resource recovery, reduce waste going to landfill and reduce our impact on the environment.

Service Change Summary & Education Campaign

The Plan details the required changes to the waste collection services to be implemented over the next seven years. The changes to waste collection will assist Council in reducing waste, maximising resource recovery and meeting the State Government's 2030 targets under the *Recycling Victoria Policy – A new Economy*.

To meet the State Government's targets, the following collection services will change:

- Change the optional **fortnightly** Garden Organic bin service to a Shire wide **weekly** Food Organics and Garden Organics Service (FOGO) – to commence 2 October 2023;
- Change the **weekly** waste bin lid to red and collect **fortnightly** – to commence 2 October 2023;
- Introduce a **monthly** Glass bin collection service – to commence in 2025/2026; and
- The fortnightly Recycling bin service will remain **unchanged**.

Over the next few months Council will be promoting the key changes to the waste service delivery as well as providing detailed community education campaigns in preparation for the service changes. The campaign will include direct mailouts, social media engagement, development of a micro website that explains key changes and text messages sent to residents.

Community Consultation

Community consultation on the draft Plan was extensive, running over an eight-week period beginning in September 2022. It included online consultation via Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges website, pop-up stalls at community events and festivals and webinars. A total of 435 community members were directly engaged through these various touch points, including 78 online responses provided via the Shaping Yarra Ranges website.

The feedback received was largely focussed on the new waste collection services, rather than commentary on the content of the draft Plan. The concerns raised by community included concerns over smelly bins and nappies, and lack of need for FOGO bins. All these concerns will be addressed through our community education campaign which we will be rolling out prior to the changes in services being implemented. A copy of the consultation summary on the draft plan is contained in Attachment 1.

Based on the feedback from the consultation process the Waste Management Team have undertaken some amendments to the Plan outlined below in the *Options considered and recommendations* section of this Report. A copy of the updated Plan is contained in Attachment 2.

Options considered and recommendations

The following summarises the consultation feedback considered in the development of the Plan.

Item 1: Council currently provides a 120-litre recycling bin option only for residents living in retirement villages or who have physical difficulties in moving a larger bin to the kerb.

Several respondents to the consultation have requested that the 120-litre recycling bin option be made available to everyone, so that people in smaller households, low-waste households etc who don't need a 240-litre recycling bin can select this option.

Recommendation

To include the 120L recycling bin as a future service option for all properties to be available in 2024 (after initial service transition) to allow small households, businesses and residents who produce less recyclables to opt for a smaller bin.

Item 2: Several residents suggested that Council offers programs and incentives for households to adopt low-waste lifestyles, including rebates and rate relief.

Note – Council already offers composting rebates, and the team are currently looking at opportunities to support households with using re-usable nappy and sanitary items. Council also has different waste service charges based on residents selecting and using the smaller bin options which provides a financial incentive.

Recommendation

- To primarily provide encouragement and assistance for waste minimisation through Council's waste education programs; and
- To continue to provide Council's compost rebate program and expand it to cover systems to manage pet waste. This incentivises residents to compost organic waste that can't be placed into FOGO bins (e.g., pet waste by encouraging the use of in-ground systems located away from edible gardens).

Item 3: Several respondents raised concerns regarding the amount of packaging of food and other household items, and the resultant difficulty for people to reduce waste without regulated product stewardship.

Recommendation

- To include a specific action in the Plan to strengthen Council's role in advocating to Government and industry for product stewardship and highlight the importance of avoidance in Council's community education packages.
- To advocate on behalf of Council and the community to Government and the waste industry for improvements in packaging recyclability, recovery and product stewardship. Wherever possible, this will be done in collaboration with partner councils, networks and bodies such as the Municipal Association of Victoria.

Item 4: It was highlighted that the focus for the Plan should be on circular economy rather than zero waste, as waste is inevitable in any system and the focus should be on maximising reuse of resources, in addition to reducing waste.

Recommendation

- To amend the overall vision of the Plan to include the key outcome of creating a circular economy.

From: Our vision is for a Yarra Ranges community working together towards zero waste sent to landfill.

To: Our vision is for a Yarra Ranges community working together towards a circular economy, minimising waste sent to landfill and maximising resources.

A summary of the key changes can be found at attachment 3.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The collection services changes within the Plan are required under the new *Recycling Victoria Policy – A new Economy* and will be covered under the new waste contract service arrangements.

Based on the service changes required to implement the new services, an increase in the waste budget of approximately \$2.6m has been forecast. This is largely attributed to:

- The provision of additional FOGO bins to properties who don't currently have a garden organics bin;
- The changing of all waste bin lids to red;
- The changes in service delivery frequencies; and
- Additional staff resources to implement the service changes.

There are ongoing service costs over the contract term, however the additional resourcing costs for the implementation will reduce and drop off post implementation.

Next year's 2023/24 budget also includes an increase in education resources of approximately \$200,000. These funds will cover service information development and distribution, as well as increased education resources, to ensure smooth implementation during the transition period.

Discussions will be required with Council's collection contractor to implement the inclusion of the 120-litre recycling bin as a standard service offering to all properties.

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.

Develop a *Municipal Waste Plan*, education programs and pursue innovative waste processing technologies to maximise waste resource recovery for a more sustainable future.

RELEVANT LAW

The works and outcomes associated with this report relate directly to the requirements outlined in the State Government's *Recycling Victoria Policy – A new Economy*.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

A municipal wide service that recovers material and reduces waste to landfill along with additional education programs to promote recycling and waste minimisation will assist in the direction of a circular economy and a reduction of resources.

By reusing material that is currently in our economy, we see greater value in products due to a sustainable footing for growth over the long term.

Economic impacts have been considered as part of finalisation of the Community Waste Plan.

Social Implications

Social impacts of the Plan will include social connection. For example, we envision community gatherings with options for groups to be involved in repair style cafes, recycling workshops and webinars; this is identified in the Community Waste and Resource Recovery Plan.

Environmental Implications

The introduction of services that comply with the *State Government Recycling Victoria Policy – A new Economy* will lead to reduced environmental impacts by introducing services to minimise waste, maximise resource recovery and reduce waste to landfill.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extensive engagement with the community has been undertaken as part of the Community Waste Survey in 2021 and draft Community Waste and Resource Recovery Plan consultation in 2022 in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

A high-level summary of the feedback is detailed in the discussion section above, it largely focussed on the new waste collection service. Detailed analysis of the consultation is provided in Attachment 1.

Further community consultation and community education will be a focus throughout the transition process and beyond to ensure continued engagement with the community on the circular economy and waste reduction.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Plan outlines future services required to meet state requirements and objectives which includes maximising recovery and seeking alternative methods for managing and disposing of waste to landfill.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The State Government's legislated policy directs Council's action in the introduction of services to minimise waste, maximise resource recovery and reduce waste to landfill.

Council's reputational risk is a consideration in the delivery of the new services.

The kerbside collection services provided to the Yarra Ranges community is for residential, non-residential and commercial properties. The changes in the residential services, including collection frequencies will apply to all properties that utilise Council collection services.

As the service will be standardised to the residential service, there will not be an opportunity for commercial businesses to have waste collections multiple times per week or at different frequencies to the standard service. This is to ensure that all Council services provided are based on compliance with service requirements and maximising resource recovery. Altering the services for commercial businesses to have a varied collection cycle for waste bins would impact the maximisation of recycling and recovery.

Businesses do not have to utilise Council's collection service, this is provided as an optional service to them, and they will only be charged for the service if they choose to use it. Businesses have the option to engage a private contractor to undertake their waste and recycling collection services that may better suit their needs. Many businesses in the Shire already utilise private contractors for this purpose.

This may not satisfy all commercial businesses, potentially impacting Council's reputational risk. This is because having Council providing and charging the service through the rates notice is sometimes more convenient than having to engage a separate service provider. This will be addressed through communication material and direct engagement with businesses.

Multi-unit development (MUD) properties are anticipated to contact Council with concerns around the number of bins associated with storage and collection locations. The team will work with these developments/body corporates to find a mutually agreed solution.

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. Draft Community Waste Resource Recovery Plan – Consultation Summary
2. Updated Community Waste Resource Recovery Plan
3. Community Waste Resource Recovery Plan changes summary.