

Bulky Waste Services – who's doing what?

Bulky waste services are provided by local councils to manage large bulky items (such as fridges) that would not be collected in a typical household garbage/recycling collection service.

These services differ widely from council to council in terms of the type of service offered (e.g. scheduled versus on-call), the materials collected, the quantities permitted and the ways in which the service is promoted or advertised.

This fact sheet explores a range of different bulky waste services that are being used across NSW.



Image 1 Example bulky waste item

Case Study 1: Inverell Shire Council

Inverell Shire Council provides a positive example of a council and community partnership with its annual e-waste and whitegoods collection. The

event is advertised via newspaper ads, radio and on Council's website and Facebook page.

Householders are invited to call Council and pre-book their pick-up but are asked not to place items on the kerb as they are collected from the house. The items are collected free of charge by members of the local Macintyre Lions Club. Council hosts a BBQ for the volunteers as a gesture of appreciation for their contribution.

The items are stockpiled at the waste facility for collection, either by a scrap metal merchant, or via the arrangement Council has in place for e-waste recycling. Income received for the scrap metal is donated to the Lions Club.

In the most recent event, 164 households participated, and a little over 13 tonnes of scrap metal was collected.

Case Study 2: Shoalhaven City Council

Shoalhaven City Council has a range of services for bulky waste.

After the two free drop-off days provided at each of their 10 waste transfer stations proved to be overwhelming, Council moved to a voucher system that allows residents free drop-off at any of the waste transfer stations each year. This has meant the delivery of materials to the facilities is now spread more evenly throughout the year. This also results in a much higher recycling rate, as residents are asked to sort the materials and place them in the appropriate locations at the facilities themselves.

Council also has a pre-booked on-call service that's more appropriate for many residents who are older and less able to handle bulky items. Residents can use their vouchers for a pre-booked collection of either bulky or green waste. Extra services can also be bought for \$68 per cubic metre for bulky waste or \$26 per cubic metre for green waste (2017-18 fees and charges).

Council has a well-organised tracking system for their vouchers and can record the number of vouchers redeemed, who redeemed them, and the quantity and type of materials delivered.

In 2016-17, almost 54,000 vouchers were redeemed for the disposal of nearly 12,000 tonnes

of materials. Recyclable materials accounted for 42% while bulky waste was 38%. This is a high recycling rate.

Case Study 3: Georges River Council

Georges River Council in metropolitan Sydney, has introduced a monitoring process to address the issue of non-compliant bulky waste materials left for Council collection.

A waste field officer inspects the materials and leaves a note if they are over-sized or non-compliant, asking the resident to remove these items from the kerbside, and to make their own arrangements.

After the collection, the officer returns, checks what's left behind and ticks off each street. If the waste is still there the following week the officer will speak with the householder and warn them. They may even be issued with a clean-up notice or fine.

Mobile surveillance cameras have also been set up at dumping hotspots, especially in front of unit buildings, where passing traffic adds to the existing pile. This has proved successful. In one case, 18 people were interviewed and warned.

Case Study 4: Fairfield City Council

Fairfield City Council holds a large-scale annual spring clean bulky waste drop-off event at the Fairfield showground. Eight garbage contractor trucks and 30 Council staff are involved. Householders can bring anything that Council normally collects from the kerbside. Only cars, utes or trailers are accepted. Trucks are not allowed.

The event allows Council to separate mattresses, metal, and e-waste for recycling, and any other types of materials are disposed of. Council hires plant and equipment from its regular bulky waste contractor, as well as using its own.

At the 2017 event, 1,500 vehicles attended and almost 100 tonnes of materials were collected: This included 35 tonnes of e-waste, metals and whitegoods, six tonnes of mattresses, and 55 tonnes of green waste.



Image 2 Example bulky waste item

Case Study 5: Lane Cove Municipal Council

In 2015, Lane Cove Council spent over \$16,000 cleaning up 254 separate kerbside dumping incidents. Almost two-thirds of these happened at multi-unit dwellings and Council received regular community complaints regarding street amenity. Council undertook a project to encourage residents not to dump and instead use the clean-up service.

With support from the EPA's Better Waste and Recycling Fund, a project officer worked with strata and property managers to distribute information about Council services. Free promotional materials were offered for display inside buildings, and Council audited building displays to ensure all residents received information. Other promotions included waste branded envelopes distributed with rates notices, resources sent with Section 94 certificates, and Council and community websites. Real estate agents in Lane Cove were provided with promotional materials to distribute with new rental agreements.

A three day per week program of patrolling hotspots allowed immediate interventions on dumping incidents and provided real time feedback to the community. Illegally dumped material stickers and tape were applied to new illegal dumping incidents. 'Under investigation' flyers were distributed to letterboxes nearby.

After 18 months, the project had resulted in 85% fewer illegal dumping incidents in the targeted hotspot areas compared to 2015 figures.

Quantities of dumping were halved; the cost to Council of collecting dumped material was reduced by 57%; and street amenity and community satisfaction in Council services were improved.

The most surprising result was the self-removal of dumped items following Council intervention. Of 312 new incidents observed between January 2016 and May 2017, 60% were self-removed following the tagging of the site, 30% within 48 hours. This resulted in a significant cost saving to Council.

Case Study 6: Bogan Shire Council

When Bogan Shire's waste facility was transformed, the problem of illegal dumping was effectively managed with a comprehensive program of community engagement, designed to educate people about the new services.

Over a three-year period, and with support from the EPA and the Environmental Trust, Council turned an unmanned, unlicensed, free-to-use landfill site, to a facility that is secured, staffed and only open five days per week at regular hours. The facility now accepts and recycles e-waste, motor oil and batteries, green waste, timber, scrap metal, white goods, clean fill, clean bricks and masonry, and receives a small income from some recyclable materials.

During the transition from free access to landfill charges, security cameras were installed to monitor dumping around the landfill. In a 4-month period there were only five dumping incidents. The offenders were caught and fined, and this was publicised. There have been no incidents since.

The bulky waste services Council provides include 12 vouchers per year for free disposal at the landfill, and these can be used for bulky furniture or mattresses. Other items such as e-waste, metals and whitegoods are accepted for free. These services appear to be adequate, and with the enforcement approach Council has adopted, dumping of bulky waste appears to be managed appropriately.



Image 3 Example e-waste items

Photos

Image 1: Bulky waste item - fridge/Creative Commons
Image 2: Bulky waste item - mattress/EPA supplied
Image 3: E-waste items/Creative Commons

NSW Environment Protection Authority

Email: info@epa.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.epa.nsw.gov.au

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