



ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 5 AUGUST 2020

11.1 'RECYCLING RESET' AND COMMENCEMENT OF TRANSITION PLANNING FOR NEW WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Council of the requirement to submit a draft transition plan to the Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning (**DELWP**) by 30 September 2020, as per the requirements of the Victorian Government's kerbside recycling reforms, defined in the circular economy policy, 'Recycling Victoria - a new economy'.
- 1.2 To seek Council endorsement to proceed with a six-month, municipal-wide 'Recycling Reset' program to assist in the management of recycling bin contamination and associated costs occurring as a result of COVID-19 and changed requirements of Council's kerbside recycling contractor.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 An officer review of the 'Don't Waste It! Waste Management Strategy 2018-2028' (Strategy) in December 2019 responded to several significant shifts in the waste and resource recovery sector that occurred since its adoption in October 2018.
- 2.2 These shifts included the China National Sword Policy, several State and Federal level inquiries into waste management, and the closure of SKM Recycling P/L which resulted in the CEO, under Council delegation, signing a contract for up to a three-year option with Cleanaway P/L to process kerbside recycling.
- 2.3 In the first half of 2020, two key events occurred, shifting again the waste sector:
 - 2.3.1 The emergence of COVID-19, which has had an immediate and unprecedented impact on the quality of Council's kerbside recycling.
 - 2.3.2 The release of 'Recycling Victoria – new economy' (**'Recycling Victoria'**) the Victorian Government's circular economy policy which outlines that major reforms are needed at the Victorian Government level, as well as across industry and local government in relation to waste and resource recovery.
- 2.4 This report provides an update on:
 - 2.4.1 The impacts of COVID-19 on Council's waste and recycling services, which includes a significant increase in contamination in kerbside recycling bins and increased patronage to the South Melbourne Resource Recovery Centre.



- 2.4.2 'Recycling Victoria' and the requirement for all Victorian local councils to develop draft transition plans to support the delivery of the Victorian Government's household recycling reforms.
- 2.4.3 Advanced Waste Processing (AWP) procurement processes for councils in the North-West and the South-East of metropolitan Melbourne, currently being managed by the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group (**MWRRG**).
- 2.5 To support the development and delivery of Council's draft transition plan, officers will commence the progressive roll-out replacement program of red-lidded, green-bodied landfill (waste) bins from 1 September 2020 to assist in meeting Victorian government requirements for uniform colour coding of bins throughout the State.
- 2.6 This report proposes a new program titled 'Recycling Reset' which will reengage the community in all things waste and recycling, and will comprise of:
 - 2.6.1 An introductory mail-out to all residents, inviting them to be a part of resetting their recycling knowledge and behaviours;
 - 2.6.2 Digital assets and a social media campaign to support providing recycling information for residents;
 - 2.6.3 Accessible printed assets for use in the home and in communal spaces; and
 - 2.6.4 A bin tagging program to incentivise getting recycling right.
- 2.7 It is proposed that this program is funded using a reallocation of \$50,000 from the project to 'prepare a report on world's best practice into recycling solutions for existing multi-unit developments (**MUDs**)' (endorsed on 4 December 2019) given the range of programs already underway in regards MUDs.
- 2.8 Together, 'Recycling Reset', and the evaluations of current 'Don't Waste It! projects will contribute to informing Council's draft transition plan prior to it being finalised.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes the significant financial and environment challenges posed by high levels of contamination in the kerbside recycling stream and increased volumes in public litter bins.
- 3.2 Notes the timelines and process for the development of a transition plan to provide four-core waste services to the community as outlined in the State Government's Recycling Victoria policy.
- 3.3 Notes that officers will commence to issue new waste bins with the colour coding of a red lid and green body from 1 September 2020, as part of the bin replacement program, as mandated by the Victorian Government's policy-backed household recycling reforms.
- 3.4 Notes the delays in the development of the business case for the north-west Advanced Waste Processing (AWP) project.
- 3.5 Approves the development and delivery of the proposed 'Recycling Reset' program.
- 3.6 Approves the reallocation of \$50,000 from the Don't Waste It! Strategy program to 'prepare a report on world's best practice into recycling solutions for existing multi-unit developments' (endorsed on 4 December 2019) to fund the proposed 'Recycling Reset' program.



4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Background

- 4.1 The 'Don't Waste It! Waste Management Strategy 2018-2028' (**Strategy**) was adopted by Council on 17 October 2018 and includes four outcome areas and twenty-five actions pertaining to waste avoidance, reuse and recycling, cleaner streets, parks and foreshores, and the use of new technology to process and treat waste.
- 4.2 The Strategy is funded for four years, from 2018-2022. Activities taking place in this period are focused on managing the waste that is currently produced, trialling new service options and engagement techniques to inform the future, and participating in regional procurement to align with Victorian Government policy.
- 4.3 There were several significant shifts in the waste and resource recovery sector in 2018 and 2019, including the China National Sword Policy, closure of SKM Recycling P/L and several State and Federal level inquiries into waste management.
- 4.4 These shifts were covered in detail in a briefing presented to Councillors on 23 October 2019 and a subsequent report presented to Council on 4 December 2019 which included an officer review of the Strategy.
- 4.5 The officer review of the Strategy proposed several new activities to realign Council's work to adapt to the changed waste landscape. These included the trial of fixed-term (eight-month) recycling services for kerbside glass recycling, communal glass recycling and food organics and garden organics (**FOGO**) recycling.
- 4.6 In October 2019, following two periods of having to send recyclables to landfill in 2019 (February and March, then July, August and September), the CEO under council delegation signed a contract for up to a three-year option with Cleanaway P/L to process Council's kerbside recycling.
- 4.7 Cleanaway P/L have different processing standards to SKM Recycling P/L, including non-acceptance of type six and type seven plastic containers and Tetra Pak (e.g. UHT milk containers) due to no end markets to sell these material to for recycling.
- 4.8 In the first half of 2020, two key events occurred, again affecting the waste sector. These are:
 - 4.8.1 The emergence of COVID-19 and associated societal and budgetary impacts.
 - 4.8.2 The release of 'Recycling Victoria – new economy' (**'Recycling Victoria'**) the Victorian Government's circular economy policy.
- 4.9 COVID-19 has had an immediate and unprecedented impact on the broader community and on Council, including increases in volumes of waste and recycling materials that have:

Impact of COVID-19 on waste and recycling services

- 4.10 On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organisation (**WHO**) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.
- 4.11 Throughout February, March and April 2020, both the Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government introduced restrictions in three stages to help contain the spread of the infectious virus amongst the community.



- 4.12 These restrictions included, at their height (Stage 3 restrictions), there being only four reasons why people should be out of their homes: shopping for food and supplies, care and caregiving, exercise, and study or work – if you can't do it from home.
- 4.13 In July and August 2020, a second wave of COVID-19 emerged in Victoria, sending metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire Council back into Stage 3 restrictions after a brief period of easing of prior restrictions.
- 4.14 COVID-19 and associated restrictions is having a significant impact on the Australian economy, with tens of thousands of people losing jobs or being stood down. Additionally, the disruption to many of those remaining in employment has been significant, with millions of Australians being required to work and/or study from home.
- 4.15 The increased numbers of people at home and in isolation in both the first and second waves of COVID-19, have seen an increase in kerbside waste and recycling generation, and increases in contamination in kerbside recycling bins across Victoria.
- 4.16 In the City of Port Phillip, the following has been noted:
- 4.16.1 Current kerbside recycling quantities have increased from an average of 778 tonnes per month to an average of 876 tonnes per month (871 tonnes in June). This is causing associated cost increases to process the additional recycling of approximately \$11,000 per month.
- 4.16.2 There have been much higher-than-normal rates of contamination in kerbside recycling bins from the usual average of ten per cent to 25 per cent (22 per cent in June). This has had a significant budgetary impact of approximately \$18,900 in the month of June alone.
- 4.16.3 A large increase in park and public litter bins being used to dispose of household waste and recycling and increases in waste generally in kerbside waste bins. The budgetary impact to dispose of these increases in waste volumes was an increase of \$49,257 in April, though at the time of the writing of this report, reduced volumes are beginning to be seen.
- 4.16.4 A large increase in patronage to the Resource Recovery Centre from approximately 50 customers per day to an average of 90-100 customers per day. This continues to have a budgetary impact of an additional \$38,000 per month to cover the costs of traffic management due to increased vehicular traffic and the need for on-site security to assist with managing physical distancing requirements.
- 4.16.5 That between December 2019 and May 2020, there were 957 more hard and green waste collections as compared with the same period in 2018/19. Bookings are now steady at 1,700 for the month of June, falling from 1,879 in preceding months.
- 4.17 Further to the direct impacts on Council's waste and recycling services, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the broader Council budget with the reprioritisation of expenditure to assist the community who are in considerable economic and social distress. Council has also witnessed significant reductions in revenue.
- 4.18 In response to these challenges, Council undertook a detailed review of all operations and projects to reprioritise efforts into key areas to support the community, manage safety and legal risks and retain capacity to 'restart' following the pandemic. The



reprioritisation of Council’s programs resulted in more targeted effort in the implementation of the Strategy.

- 4.19 In response to these localised impacts of COVID-19 across the State, the Victorian Government commenced a state-wide recycling campaign, ‘Know Your Recycling’, in May 2020, in response to impacts on communities, local councils and the recycling sector.
- 4.20 Phase one includes the promotion of the ‘Know Your Recycling’ website (recycling.vic.gov.au), which invites users to search whether something is recyclable or not, a series of social media resources and a state-wide commercial advertising program which ran until 30 June 2020.
- 4.21 Phase two of the campaign will build on the phase one elements and will include further paid advertising and engagement with councils to build capability and invite feedback on new resources and materials. Phase two will run until 31 December 2020.
- 4.22 Phase three of the campaign is currently being planned and will begin in 2021. This phase will involve evaluation of the first two phases, and then transition to the education and state-wide education and behaviour change programs noted in ‘Recycling Victoria’.
- 4.23 Further, the Victorian Government deferred the commencement of the Environment Protection Act 2017 (as amended 2018) (**EP Act**) to 1 July 2021 to allow all Victorians more time to gain compliance as they deal with the challenges of COVID-19.
- 4.24 The key impact of the deferment of the commencement of the EP Act to Council is financial, with the scheduled increase of the municipal landfill levy of \$20/tonne moving from 1 July 2020 to 1 January 2020.
- 4.25 Other scheduled increment increases have not changed, and are as follows:

Levy	1 Jan 2021–30 Jun 2021 (2020–21) (\$/tonne)	1 Jul 2021–30 Jun 2022 (2021–22) (\$/tonne)	1 Jul 2022–30 Jun 2023 (2022–23) (\$/tonne)
Metropolitan municipal and industrial landfill levy	85.90	105.90	125.90

‘Recycling Victoria, a new economy’

- 4.26 Released in February 2020, ‘Recycling Victoria, a new economy’ (**‘Recycling Victoria’**) is the Victorian Government’s ten-year circular economy policy and action plan which includes a \$300 million investment to transform the waste and resource recovery sector in Victoria.
- 4.27 ‘Recycling Victoria’ intends to move the sector from a predominantly linear economic model of extraction, use and disposal, to a circular model of minimal extraction and a preference for reuse, recycling and recovery of materials already within the system, with energy recovery from waste and then disposal as a last resort.
- 4.28 Transitioning to a circular economy will boost Victoria’s economy and create new jobs by developing markets for recovered materials, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from waste-related industries, providing Victorians with greater access to recycling



services and improving social inclusion through local initiatives such as repair cafes and community composting.

4.29 'Recycling Victoria' has four goals:

4.29.1 **MAKE** – Designing products to last, be repairable and, at the end of their life, able to be recycled.

This goal is focused on businesses and their productivity, innovation, research and development and market development.

4.29.2 **USE** – Support for Victorian communities, councils, and the charitable sector to reuse, use material more efficiently, and change purchasing decisions to align with a circular economic model.

An action falling under this goal is the delivery of state-wide education and behaviour change programs.

4.29.3 **RECYCLE** – Facilitation of recycling more resources through changing household collection systems, setting landfill levies to incentivise resource recovery and recycling, and improved regulation and planning.

Actions falling under this goal include household recycling reforms (access to all householders to four core waste and recycling services: FOGO, glass, combined paper, plastic and metals and residual waste), the introduction of a container deposit scheme (consultation to begin in late 2020), and planning for waste to energy facilities.

4.29.4 **MANAGE** – Reducing harm from waste and pollution through the establishment of a Coordinated Prevention and Response Framework to manage high-risk and hazardous waste sites and prevent and regulate waste-related crime.

4.30 'Recycling Victoria's' goals align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 8 ('promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth') and Goal 12 ('ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns').

4.31 'Recycling Victoria's' targets align closely with those of Council's Strategy (see **Attachment 1**).

4.32 To support the delivery of 'Recycling Victoria', the policy outlines that major reforms are needed at the Victorian Government level, as well as across industry and local government. It is intended that collaborative change will facilitate these reforms.

4.33 The reforms will be governed by a new, dedicated waste and recycling act which will provide greater transparency and accountability for the sector. The Essential Services Commission have been asked to provide advice to the Victorian Government on the new legislation, and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (**DELWP**) will be developing options and engaging with the sector to progress this work in late 2020.

4.34 'Recycling Victoria' calls for a new waste authority to be established in 2021. Consultation including the purpose, functions and powers of the new waste authority will also occur in late 2020.

4.35 Local councils, over the next 10 years, will be required to 'transition' to align with the goals and targets of Recycling Victoria's household recycling reforms, and the first step in this process is the development of draft transition plans by all Victorian councils.



- 4.36 The process of developing transition plans will be significant as they will involve different solutions depending on each local council's community's needs, aspirations and financial willingness to pay.
- 4.37 The first step is for each local council to register their intent to transition, followed by the development of the draft transition plan by 30 September 2020. The community will be consulted on the draft transition plan prior to the final transition plan being provided to DELWP, which is to occur at least six-months prior to commencement of service changes.
- 4.38 The registration of intent requests high level data and CEO sign off before submission to DELWP. This document will allow local governments and DELWP to enter into a funding agreement to obtain funding to then develop their draft transition plan.
- 4.39 The draft transition plan will be a detailed plan of how a local council intends to transition to the four-core waste and recycling service model, and will include timing of service introductions, infrastructure needs, education requirements, consultation periods and costings.
- 4.40 The draft transition plans from all councils are due at the end of September 2020, and they will allow DELWP to develop a State-wide transition plan which will coordinate funding, identify options for strategic procurement and ensure infrastructure is in place and markets are developed to support transition. This stage will involve negotiation with councils.
- 4.41 Council's current three-year contract with Cleanaway P/L for processing of kerbside recycling will be taken into consideration in the preparation of Council's draft transition plan.
- 4.42 An additional consideration will be Council's current kerbside waste and recycling, booked hard waste and dumped rubbish collection contracts. These contracts are currently due to finish on 30 June 2021.
- 4.43 Due to the significant upheaval in the waste and recycling sector and the impending changes to procurement regulations for local government as part of the Local Government Act 2020, it is not viewed as being in Council's best interests to approach the market for new long-term kerbside collection contracts at this point.
- 4.44 Officers are currently awaiting the outcome of an application to the Local Government Minister to allow Council to extend these contracts to expire in July 2022.
- 4.45 It is common practice that such contracts are for a term of at least eight-years. This long-term contract term is to ensure commercial terms are attractive to prospective suppliers given the extensive upfront capital investment required for fleet provision.
- 4.46 Given the considerable uncertainty in the recycling and waste sector, it is not currently in Council's best interest to enter into long-term contracts for kerbside collection.
- 4.47 Given the lack of infrastructure in Victoria to process kerbside materials and the pending embargoes due in 2024 to cease materials heading offshore, it is not in Council's best interest to enter into long-term contracts for both collections and processing.
- 4.48 Finally, to support the development and delivery of Council's draft transition plan, officers will commence roll out of red lidded landfill (waste) bins from 1 September 2020 to assist in meeting Victorian government requirements for uniform colour coding of bins throughout out the State.



- 4.49 The total funding package for household recycling reforms is \$129 million, funded by the Sustainability Fund. The dissemination of this funding will not be an even distribution between all local councils, but rather, will be allocated by DELWP based on the needs identified via the State-wide transition plan and its implementation.
- 4.50 Costs associated with ongoing service delivery will not be covered by the household recycling reforms funding package. As such, Council will need to consider the funding of these increased services through its budget process. Estimates of these costs have been included in Council's 10-year financial plan.
- 4.51 An alternative funding source, such as a waste and amenity levy, or significant service reductions/reprioritisations across Council will be required to fund the delivery of Council's transition to the waste and recycling collections services required by 'Recycling Victoria'.

Community consultation on a potential introduction of a waste and amenity levy

- 4.52 Throughout February and March 2020, Council consulted the community on the topic of waste and recycling. This included the potential to introduce a waste and amenity levy to cover the rising costs of waste management.
- 4.53 The consultation included an online survey via Have Your Say and a series of pop-up sessions around the municipality.
- 4.54 Overall, there was support for improved and increased recycling services, a desire for increased waste avoidance, particularly soft plastics, reuse and repurposing, enforcement and education.
- 4.55 57 per cent of respondents expressed a preference for both a FOGO service and a glass recycling service, 15 per cent wanted a FOGO service only and 12 per cent wanted a glass recycling service only.
- 4.56 When asked what their preferred option was for Council to explore further to fund increasing industry costs to deliver current and new waste services, 55 per cent of respondents indicated support for a waste and amenity levy.
- 4.57 A waste and amenity levy is not proposed as part of Council's 2020/21 draft budget. The costs associated with providing waste services are funded through Council's general rates revenue.

Update on Advanced Waste Processing (North-West and South-East)

- 4.58 North-West: In February 2020, Council agreed to an MOU with the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group (**MWRRG**), committing to take part in development of a business case for the collaborative procurement of Advanced Waste Processing (**AWP**) for the North-West cluster of Melbourne councils.
- 4.59 The MWRRG has since advised that due to the impacts of COVID-19, the development of a Business Case for AWP to service the North-West Group of Councils (including Port Philip) has been delayed to align with formation of the new State Waste Authority.
- 4.60 The delay has also been influenced by initial results from the concurrent South-East AWP procurement process, and to allow for industry recovery from COVID-19.
- 4.61 A Business Case for the North-West is now expected to be completed by the end of 2020-21 for Victorian Government consideration, and Council remain actively involved in the working group.



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- 4.62 South-East:-The MWRRG recently announced that, after a competitive tendering process, three tenderers, including world leading providers of resource recovery infrastructure, have been short-listed to join the solution development stage for the development of the first, large-scale Victorian AWP facility for councils.
- 4.63 The short-listed tenderers are: Veolia Environmental Services Australia; Sacyr Environment Australia and Pacific Partnerships and REMONDIS (A consortium comprised of Pacific Partnerships and REMONDIS Australia, together with CIMIC Group Companies CPB Contractors and UGL) (**Attachment 2**).
- 4.64 These tenderers will work with the 16 councils in the South-East group to develop an AWP solution that delivers environmental, economic and social benefits to the community.
- 4.65 During stage two of the process, to be completed over the next two years, there will be community engagement, and preparation of detailed specifications and performance criteria ahead of going to full tender.
- 4.66 Whilst the City of Port Phillip is not party to the south-east joint procurement, it remains possible for Council to engage with this process. Key considerations will be the site of the facility or facilities that end up being constructed, cost effectiveness, haulage costs and haulage distances and the processing options that are available

'Recycling Reset'

- 4.67 Whilst Council has continued to engage with the community through social media, letters and targeted communications, it is apparent from the high levels of contamination in the kerbside recycling stream that more is needed.
- 4.68 The change in recycling processor in October 2019, the impacts of COVID-19 and the resultant state-wide recycling campaign, and the significant media attention on the household recycling reforms (reported by many media outlets as a four-bin kerbside system) in 2020, have seen the release of inconsistent messaging and sometimes, misinformation.
- 4.69 This is confusing, frustrating and stressful for the community who, in market research undertaken by Council 2019, stated that they wanted 'clear and consistent' information about Council's waste and recycling services.
- 4.70 As such, it is proposed to run a new program, 'Recycling Reset', to re-engage with the community in all things waste and recycling.
- 4.71 It is proposed that 'Recycling Reset' will run for an initial six-month period and consist of the follow components:
- 4.71.1 Introductory mail-out to all residents, inviting them to be a part of resetting their recycling knowledge and behaviours.
 - 4.71.2 Digital assets and social media campaign throughout.
 - 4.71.3 Accessible printed assets for use in the home and in communal spaces.
 - 4.71.4 Bin tagging program to incentivise getting recycling right.
- 4.72 The **introductory mail-out to all residents** will consist of a letter introducing the program, and inviting residents to re-engage with waste and recycling, and to 'reset' their views and behaviours.



The letter will also state Council's commitment to providing up-to-date information about our waste and recycling services, and our ongoing commitment to providing answers to questions and enquiries in a responsive and friendly manner.

The mail-out will also include a fridge-friendly flyer outlining the latest information on materials that are accepted in the kerbside recycling bin so that all residents have current, clear and consistent information.

- 4.73 The **digital assets and social media campaign** will consist of newly revised waste and recycling pages on Council's newly launched website (as part of the existing Customer Experience Program), sharable videos highlighting key information and facts, two social media posts each week, providing information to our community and responses to frequently asked questions.

Council will invite the community to engage on this platform and be part of the conversation as together, Council and the community 'reset'. Officers will also share monthly contamination figures, so that together the community and Council can track improvement or identify areas of focus.

All messaging will complement and enhance the state-wide recycling campaign.

- 4.74 A suite of **printed assets** will be made available on the Council website for residents to view and/or download and print. These will include: artwork for labelling waste and recycling bins and/or for placing on the fridge.

Further, printed, all-weather bin room signage will be available from Council, at request, for residents in multi-unit developments.

- 4.75 The **bin tagging program** is an incentive-based initiative to encourage correct use of kerbside recycling bins to lower contamination rates from over 20 per cent back down to 10 per cent (pre-COVID-19 levels). **Attachment 3** details this process.

It is proposed that each week, 500 kerbside recycling bins are visually checked via a flip-top check (bin lid is opened, and contents is viewed only – *no material is removed or touched*) by a Council officer. The same properties will be checked over a period of three weeks to follow up on previous weeks' inspections.

The intent of the program is to enable and educate residents on how to recycle correctly and to reward and recognise those who do so consistently. In recognition that the entire community pays a financial and environmental price for kerbside recycling contamination, the program will allow for the removal of a recycling service if constant and egregious behaviour is observed. This is an absolute last resort and every effort will be made under the program to help residents do the right thing.

Such a program is common across Metropolitan Melbourne, with officers undertaking a benchmarking exercise in June 2020 to gather this data (**Attachment 4**).

The data gathered via the benchmarking exercise, coupled with the success of a similar approach taken in Council's kerbside glass recycling trial, has informed the proposed 'Recycling Reset' program for Council to consider for managing contamination in kerbside recycling bins.

The kerbside glass recycling trial commenced in March 2020 with 180 bins delivered to residents in Garden City. Bin presentation rates are currently around 41% and in the four months of the trial contamination rates have dropped from 28% of bins having contamination in them to 12% of bins having contamination in them.



The improvement in contamination rates is owed to the intensive auditing, education and enforcement approach which is proving effective and is being well received by residents. The education and enforcement approach follows the following process:

- Four weeks prior to the trial, all residents in the trial area received a letter outlining details of the trial, what to expect and the option to opt-out.
- One week prior to the trial, all residents in the trial area received a second letter, along with their new bin, an information brochure about what can and cannot go into the bin and a collection calendar outlining collection dates.
- During the trial, weekly audits of the glass recycling bins and the mixed recycling bins are undertaken as follows:
- Ninety-five per cent of the bins undergo flip-top audits (flip bin lid open and undertake a visual inspection, not touching the contents), and the remaining five per cent of bins undergo a full waste audit (all contents).
- Once a month waste bins undergo flip-top audits.
- If no contamination is found, residents receive a 'well done' tag on their bin and the bin is collected.
- If any contamination is found, residents receive an 'oops' tag on their bin noting what contaminants were found and Council's kerbside waste collection contractors are alerted not to collect the bin.
- The resident is encouraged to contact Council's Assist service who then direct the query to the Waste Management Team. The team then provide guidance to the resident to assist them in identifying the contamination and implementing the appropriate recycling practices.

This process, whilst resource intensive, is proving to be highly successful and is avoiding the persistently high contamination rates that some other municipalities have experienced when introducing new services.

Proportionate to the size of the municipality, 500 bin checks each week may not seem enough to make an impactful difference, however the engagement of the program will be wide-reaching owing to the other three components of the program.

It is expected that approximately 4,000 bins will be checked in total as the same 500 bins will be checked each week for three weeks over the proposed six-month period of the program.

Safety will be of the utmost importance for the duration of the program. Officers completing bin checks will be required to wear all appropriate personal protective equipment as defined by Council's Occupational Health and Safety team to prevent the contraction and/or spreading of COVID-19, or other conditions, and will be required to maintain physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres from any person.

- 4.76 It is anticipated that the program requires 0.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) at a cost of \$33,270 for six months. Whilst funding for this program can be made available through reallocation within the program, an additional person will be required. Owing to the ongoing impact of the pandemic response, there are service impacts on other areas of Council that mean staff are available to be redeployed. It is proposed that this auditing program make use of these resources and an additional staff member only be recruited if this is not possible due the lifting of restrictions or the like.



- 4.77 In addition to the cost of an additional resource, approximately \$20,000 will be required to cover design and printing of the introductory mail-out to all residents, bin tags, auditing equipment and software licences and gift vouchers.
- 4.78 It is proposed that this program is funded using a reallocation of \$50,000 from the project to 'prepare a report on world's best practice into recycling solutions for existing multi-unit developments (**MUDs**)' (endorsed on 4 December 2019) given the range of programs already underway in regards MUDs (see **Attachment 5**).
- 4.79 Further to this, officers will be requesting funding from DELWP, via the transition planning process, to investigate how to best integrate a four-core waste and recycling service model into both new and existing MUDs. Given this, and the high costs that Council is incurring on a monthly basis due to poor recycling practices, the diversion of this program funding is considered prudent.
- 4.80 The proposed 'Recycling Reset' program will be evaluated after a six-month period and Council will be briefed on its effectiveness and whether it is necessary for it to continue.
- 4.81 Together, 'Recycling Reset', the results of the glass recycling trials and the FOGO trial will contribute to informing Council's transition plan prior to it being finalised.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 The proposed 'Recycling Reset' program was informed by the success of the approach currently being undertaken in the delivery of the kerbside glass recycling trial, the benchmarking exercise, and market research undertaken by Council in 2019.
- 5.2 The market research noted that residents wanted 'clear and consistent' information and messaging in regards waste and recycling services and this program will provide this.
- 5.3 A communications and engagement plan will be developed in consultation with Council's Communications and Engagement team to ensure our community is well-informed of the program, and that it is accessible to all community members.
- 5.4 In June 2020 Council undertook a benchmarking exercise to understand how other metropolitan Melbourne councils manage contamination in kerbside recycling bins. This is summarised in **Attachment 4**.
- 5.5 Bin inspection programs are quite common and are generally well received by residents. Councils note improvements in the quality of kerbside recycling, and greater engagement with their communities as a result of such programs.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Council's Safety and Amenity department have been involved in the development of the bin tagging component of the proposed 'Recycling Reset' program and confirm that removal of kerbside recycling bins can be supported by Council's Local Law No.1.
- 6.2 Clause 36(7) of Council's Local Law No.1 (Community Amenity) provides the authorising framework to support the cessation of a recycling service to a property through the removal of bins using this approach noting that 'a bin issued to premises: (a) is owned by Council.
- 6.3 Council officers will prepare an internal process for managing enquires regarding the proposed 'Recycling Reset' program, including addressing the risk of 'dob ins', and potential risk of other people contaminating other bins.



- 6.4 The targets set out in the 'Don't Waste It! Waste Management Strategy' are at risk if a solution is not found to address the high levels of contamination currently being experienced.
- 6.5 As noted in section four, officer and community safety will be of the utmost importance for the duration of the program. Officers completing bin checks will be required to wear appropriate personal protective equipment as defined by Council's Occupational Health and Safety team to prevent the contraction and/or spreading of COVID-19 or other conditions and will be required to maintain physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres from any person.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 It is proposed that the proposed 'Recycling Reset' program is funded by the reallocation of \$50,000 of funding set aside for the MUDs study. If this is approved there will be no additional financial impact to Council.
- 7.2 The proposed 'Recycling Reset' program will only be funded for six-months, and if is required to be extended or made ongoing, an additional funding source will be required.
- 7.3 As outlined in Council's ten-year financial outlook, the financial challenge faced by Council to continue to provide waste and recycling services that achieve Council's targets is significant.
- 7.4 Whilst the 'Recycling Victoria' policy commits funds to assist local governments transition to the more sustainable four-core waste and recycling service model, it explicitly states that ongoing funding for the services will be the responsibility of local governments.
- 7.5 The financial challenge presented by the increasing costs and increasing obligations on Council in the provision of waste and recycling services is significant.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 'Recycling Reset' will contribute to the following environmental impacts:
- 8.1.1 Provide a reduction in recyclables being sent to landfill via contaminated loads from Cleanaway P/L, contributing to Council's efforts to move towards a low-carbon future, in-line with Council's declaration of a climate emergency.
- 8.1.2 Improve Council's recovery and management of resources, contributing to Council's efforts to move towards a circular economy to reduce reliance on extractive industries to obtain virgin products by keeping resources out of landfill.
- 8.1.3 Present and opportunity to reduce the pressure on existing resource recovery systems.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 As evidenced in the early 2020 community engagement, the community have high expectations to be provided with suitable options to maximise resources for recycling. The 'Recycling Reset' program outlined in this report aims to meet those community expectations.
- 9.2 The proposed timing of this program is such that it allows for two months of education and engagement with the community prior to the bin tagging component commencing. This is to ensure that the community has all the information they need to recycle right,



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prior to the educational interventions being launched – vouchers and at a last resort, the non-collection of bins.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 The proposed 'Recycling Reset' program will contribute to delivering on actions one and eight of the 'Don't Waste It! Waste Management Strategy' and will contribute to achieving Council's 2022 landfill diversion target of 40% for houses and 29% for apartments and a 50% reduction in contamination of kerbside recycling bins by 2022.
- 10.2 The 'Don't Waste It! Waste Management Strategy' delivers on Strategic Direction 3 of the Council Plan 2017-2027, 'We have smart solutions for a sustainable future' and relates to Council's 'Waste Management transformation'.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

- 11.1.1 5 August 2020 – Council endorsement of 'Recycling Reset' at the Ordinary Meeting of Council.
- 11.1.2 August 2020 – commencement of social media posts on recycling, in line with current communications plan for 'Don't Waste It! Waste Management Strategy' and the state-wide recycling campaign.
- 11.1.3 September 2020 – program launch, beginning with the introductory mail-out to all residents.
- 11.1.4 October 2020 – all digital assets uploaded to new Council website, commencement of 'Recycling Reset' social media posts, printed assets available to MUDs.
- 11.1.5 November 2020 – Commencement of bin tagging program.
- 11.1.6 March 2021 – program concludes and is evaluated.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

- 11.2.1 The 'Recycling Reset' program will be supported by a communications and engagement plan which frame the program for maximum engagement to support its success in the community.
- 11.2.2 The key messages of 'Recycling Reset' program will be focused on the 'what' of what can and cannot go into kerbside recycling bins, the 'why' of why certain things can or cannot go in the recycling bins, explanations around why things have changed recently, how to avoid packaging and buying recycled.
- 11.2.3 There will also be a monthly update to community on current contamination levels to provide transparency as to how we are tracking and improving over time.
- 11.2.4 The communications and engagement plan will be developed in consultation with Council's Communications and Engagement team to ensure that our community is well-informed of the program, and that it is suitably accessible to all people.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.



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TRIM FILE NO: 30/21/27

ATTACHMENTS

1. Recycling Victoria and DWI target comparison_2020-07-13
2. Media release regarding AWP-MWRRG_2020-06-29
3. Bin tagging process_2020-07-13
4. Benchmarking Council Bin Inspection Programs_2020-07-27
5. Current CoPP MUDs programs_2020-07-16