

FACT SHEET

Waste management fees in the Cradle Coast



Do you know how your garbage and recycling fees are determined?

Your Local Council and the region's waste service providers take into consideration many financial, social and environmental factors when apportioning rates to waste management services and when setting gate fees at Waste Transfer Stations, Material Recovery Facilities and at landfills.

Subsidies are sometimes applied to encourage recycling or waste minimisation or to discourage illegal dumping by making waste management fees more affordable. Unfortunately, some unintended subsidies have developed over time too, such as the fees paid for smaller, more frequent loads of waste helping to subsidise the fees paid for larger, less frequent loads.

Your Local Council, via the Cradle Coast Waste Management Group, is reviewing the fees associated with waste management and is working to deliver a fairer system for the community.

A fairer system doesn't just apply across the different residential, business and public waste users that exist now but also takes into account what issues *future* rate payers will be facing because of historic waste management practices. Your Local Council is planning ahead and considering what costs will be incurred once current landfills reach their capacity and are closed, what changes are on the horizon regarding environmental protection laws, and how different waste types require different processing and different equipment and – in some cases - generate different re-sale prices.

This fact sheet, and the others in the Rethink Waste series, has been created to provide you with information on waste management in the Cradle Coast region. It shows how our contributions to rates and the gate fees we pay at waste and recycling centres help us all to benefit from good waste management services.

Isn't all waste the same?

Aside from the obvious difference between recyclables and general waste, it doesn't seem like there's much more to know about what gets thrown into our bins. But in reality, waste management has improved greatly in the past decade and as a result is providing better outcomes for our air, water and soil quality and for the wellbeing of residents across the region.

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These benefits are largely due to advances in two areas: waste management technologies and equipment, and improved research and understanding of different materials and how they can either be on-sold, reused or composted (if at all).

Waste management technologies and equipment

Some of the new technology and equipment involved in waste management is visible to us all such as upgraded garbage and recycling collection trucks, the style and composition of our bins, and the installation of weighbridges at landfills.

Other advances have taken place behind the scenes including improvements to recycling sorting machines and innovations in landfill lining and capping. Some of these developments make waste management more efficient and therefore help to contain costs, other developments incur costs but are balanced by benefits in other areas including reductions in noise pollution, ground and surface water pollution, air pollution, odours or the risk of fire.

Research and understanding of different materials

As our knowledge grows of the different materials that make up common types of waste, so does our understanding of the impacts those materials have on the environment and on human health.

A rapidly growing waste type is known as E-waste which is a term used for electronic devices including computers, televisions and household appliances. Electronic devices contain a range of heavy metals and fire retardants that pose pollution risks if they enter landfills. E-waste collections and special drop-off sites are important services that are relatively new to waste management and that generate new costs not previously encountered.

Similarly, as our knowledge of the harmful effects of greenhouse gases has grown, so have our waste management efforts to divert these materials away from landfills.

Garden organics make up 10-20% of household waste and 5-10% of commercial waste delivered to the region's landfills. One tonne of garden organics can emit methane with the warming potential equivalent to around 0.9 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

This knowledge has led to more local and regional services including using municipal green waste to create compost and a household organic collection trial. Advances in processing organic waste have associated costs but are important alternatives to illegal dumping and rising emissions through landfilling.

To find out more about the different types of waste and recyclables and how they can be reduced or reused, visit www.rethinkwaste.com.au

Good to know

How can I minimise my waste management costs?

We can all play a part in keeping our waste management fees fair.

Simple things like ensuring that your recycling bin is not contaminated with items that cannot be recycled at the Materials Recovery Facility is an important start. Items such as garden waste, plastic bags, nappies, meat trays and electronic devices put in a recycling bin lead to unnecessary time and money spent sorting it out. If the bin is badly contaminated, then all of the contents end up in landfill which requires more money to manage the potential pollution hazards and more landfills to manage the increased volume of waste.

Another way you can minimise your waste management costs is by minimising the amount of waste generated. Consider a worm farm or compost bin for your household organics, reusing old items for new purposes rather than throwing them away, or buying products that have less packaging.

Be sure that you make the most of the waste management services available to you. Become familiar with what regular services exist in your Local Council area, and keep an eye out for special collection days, trials and other waste collection programs that you can take part in as a ratepayer.

For more tips on ways to reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink how you manage your waste, visit www.rethinkwaste.com.au.

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