

ITEM 12

PUBLIC EXHIBITION - DRAFT REVISED WASTE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY - FEES AND EXEMPTIONS COUNCIL POLICY

Council has a longstanding policy of accepting mixed general waste without charge for Pensioner Concession Cardholders and eligible Community Service Organisations. There are implications arising from this practice, which discourages the sorting and reuse or recycling of material and is misaligned with Council's commitment to reduce our municipal solid waste, divert waste from landfill and reduce greenhouse gas emissions as set out in:

- The *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001* and associated NSW Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014 to 2021; and
- Wollongong City Council's Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022.

The proposed modifications to the Waste and Resource Recovery – Fees and Exemptions Council Policy are reflected in the draft Fees and Charges.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 Exhibit the draft Waste and Resource Recovery – Fees and Exemptions Council Policy for 28 days which includes the changes outlined in Points 2 and 3.
- 2 Pensioner Concession Cardholder fee exemptions:
 - a. Remove current fee exemptions for mixed general and green waste from 1 October 2020.
 - b. Develop an education program for Pensioner Concession Cardholders to promote the use of the Community Recycling Centre, Enhanced Waste Services and kerbside bulky Collections.
- 3 Council staff to support eligible Local Community Service Organisations through the development and implementation of Individualised Waste Management Plans to assist in waste reduction and increase diversion of material from landfill.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Joanne Page, Manager Open Space & Environmental Services

Authorised by: Andrew Carfield, Director Infrastructure + Works - Connectivity Assets + Liveable City

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Waste and Resource Recovery - Fees and Exemptions Council Policy

BACKGROUND

Waste from Community Service Organisations

Local Community Service Organisations with active EPA Community Services Exemptions are currently entitled to dispose of an unlimited volume of unusable goods and materials recovered from public donations received at local facilities without charge. In 2019, this practice resulted in approximately 1,200 tonnes of material being landfilled.

This practice is misaligned with the practices of other local governments and the mixed general waste volumes from these organisations has been increasing over the past five years.

Pensioner Concession Cardholder

Pensioner Concession Cardholders currently receive the following each year without charge:

- Two (2) garden waste 'drop offs' of up to 100kg each.
- Two (2) mixed general waste 'drop offs' of up to 100kg each.

In 2019, this practice resulted in approximately 750 tonnes of material being landfilled.

PROPOSAL

Waste from Local Community Service Organisations

The Draft 2020-2021 Revenue Policy Fees and Charges recommends the following changes to waste fee exemptions for eligible Community Service Organisations.

Current exemption	Proposed exemption
Unlimited volume of unusable goods and materials recovered from public donations.	Unlimited volume of unusable good and materials recovered from public donations if the material is sorted for reuse or recycling.
Illegally dumped material.	Illegally dumped material.

To support this change, it is proposed for Council staff to work with Local Community Service Organisations to develop individualised Waste Management Plans which are designed to:

- reduce unwanted material received by these Organisations;
- assist these Organisations when they receive illegally dumped material;
- encourage the sorting, reuse, and recycling of unusable material.

Local charity shops run by Community Service Organisations have only recently started to reopen in line with changes to COVID-19 restrictions. COVID-19 restrictions have delayed consultation with these Organisations on the development of individualised Waste Management Plans.

Due to COVID-19, it is expected that local charity shops will receive a greater than average amount of donations and illegally dumped material. To remove the fee exemption, as per the Draft 2020-2021 Revenue Policy Fees and Charges at this time could create a large financial burden on Local Community Service Organisations. In response to this situation, it is proposed to grant fee exemptions through the General Manager's delegation to eligible Local Community Service Organisations impacted by COVID-19 until individualised Waste Management Plans are developed.

Pensioner Concession Cardholder

If the proposed fee exemption changes to Pensioner Concession Cardholders are adopted by Council, it is intended for funds to be redirected to Enhanced Waste Services across the LGA that encourage the diversion of waste from landfill including:

- Two (2) Green waste 'drop offs' conducted throughout the LGA, over 4 weeks to assist with household hazard reduction (bushfire and windy weather); and
- Post-Christmas Recyclables 'drop offs' throughout the LGA between Christmas and New Year focusing on cardboard and co-mingled recyclables.

These services would be accessible by more residents across more locations to improve convenience and reduce the transportation of garden, cardboard and co-mingled recyclables. These services were trialled in FY2020 and significant positive feedback was received from the community.

If adopted by Council, it is proposed to bring these changes in from 1 October 2020, to allow for community notification and education of community members impacted.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Consultation with Local Community Service Organisations has been delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions. It is proposed to work with Local Community Service Organisations on the development and implementation of individualised Waste Management Plans.

An education program is proposed to promote the Community Recycling Centre, Enhanced Waste Services and the kerbside bulky waste collection service to Pensioner Concession Cardholders if proposed fee exemptions are modified.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2028 Goal “We value and protect our environment”. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program 2018-2021	Operational Plan 2019-20
Strategy	3 Year Action	Operational Plan Actions
1.2.1 Reduce our ecological footprint, working together to minimise the impacts of climate change and reduce waste going to landfill.	1.2.1.1 Develop and implement a range of programs that encourage community participation in reducing Wollongong’s ecological footprint.	2. Deliver waste minimisation programs in accordance with the Waste Strategy.
	1.2.1.3 Methods to reduce emissions are investigated and utilised.	1. Continue to deploy Council’s Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations support the sorting and reuse or recycling of material and are aligned with Council’s commitment to reduce our municipal solid waste, increase diversion of waste from landfill, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase landfill life as set out in:

- The *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001* and associated NSW Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014 to 2021; and
- Our Waste and Resource Recovery 2022 Action Plan.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The recommendations consider the ongoing regulatory risk of Council continuing to accept material from Community Service Organisations and Pensioner Concession Cardholders without providing an incentive for the waste to be sorted for reuse and / or recycling rather than landfilling.

The recommendations consider reputational and social risks of imposing additional costs on Local Community Service Organisations through:

- Delaying changes to fee exemptions until individualised Waste Management Plans are developed through the General Manager’s delegation;
- Continuing to provide support for illegally dumped material;
- Continuing to provide support for sorted material that can be reused or recycled.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs of developing and implementing the individualised Waste Management Plans; and the Pensioner Concession Cardholder education program are accommodated in the Waste and Resource Recovery budget. If changes to the Pensioner Concession Cardholder fee exemption is adopted it is intended to divert funding to the Enhanced Waste Services.

CONCLUSION

The recommendations are aligned with Council’s commitment to reduce municipal solid waste, increase the diversion of waste from landfill and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



WASTE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY – FEES AND EXEMPTIONS COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: [TO BE COMPLETED BY GOVERNANCE]

PURPOSE

To establish a consistent approach for the exemption of fees from Council's prescribed waste and resource recovery.

POLICY INTENT

The main objective of this policy is to:

1. Provide a consistent approach for exemptions to waste fees;
2. Provide support to Community Service Organisations with active Community Services Exemptions from the NSW Environment Protection Authority to reduce the environmental and financial impact from illegally dumped and unusable material.

WOLLONGONG 2028 OBJECTIVES

This Policy contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2028 goal "We value and protect our environment". It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program 2018-2021	Annual Plan 2020-2021
Strategy	3 Year Action	Annual Deliverables
1.2.1 Reduce our ecological footprint, working together to minimise the impacts of climate change and reduce waste going to landfill.	1.2.1.1 Develop and implement a range of programs that encourage community participation in reducing Wollongong's ecological footprint.	2 Deliver waste minimisation programs in accordance with the Waste Strategy.
	1.2.1.3 Methods to reduce emissions are investigated and utilised.	1 Continue to deploy Council's Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy.

POLICY

The following rules will apply in relation to waste fee exemptions.

1. There will be no exemption for:
 - Garden Organics, Food Organics and Wood Waste;
 - Commercial and business waste; and
 - Specified items including tyres and mattresses.
2. Suitable domestic material destined solely for the recycling or revolve centres will be exempt from fees (other than items in Point 1).
3. The RSPCA is exempt from the Dead Animal fee.
4. Cover material may be exempt from fees subject to consultation with Waste Services.

WASTE & RESOURCE RECOVERY – FEES & EXEMPTIONS

COUNCIL POLICY

5. Council will proactively support eligible Local Community Service Organisations through the development of individualised Waste Management Plans to align with Wollongong City Council's Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022.
6. Organisations with an active Community Services Exemption with the NSW Environment Protection Authority will be exempt from Council waste disposal fees under the following conditions:
 - Suitable domestic reusable or recyclable items are sorted and diverted through the Revolve Shop or Recycling Area, where possible;
 - Material has been illegally dumped (at the Organisation's premises or bins) and the Incident has been reported to Wollongong City Council.
7. The General Manager has the delegated authority to determine individual requests for waiving fees for eligible Local Community Service Organisations.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001.
- NSW Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014 to 2021.

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every two years from the date of each adoption of the policy, or more frequently as required.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Waste and Resource Recovery Manager	Implementation of this Policy.
Waste Projects Coordinator	Development of Waste Management Plans in consultation with Organisations with an active Community Services Exemption.

RELATED PROCEDURES

Wollongong City Council Waste and Resource Recovery Plan 2022.

WASTE & RESOURCE RECOVERY – FEES & EXEMPTIONS

COUNCIL POLICY

APPROVAL AND REVIEW		
Responsible Division	Open Space and Environmental Services	
Date/s adopted	<i>Executive Management Committee</i> [updated by policy owner]	<i>Council</i> [DD Mmmm YYYY]
Date/s of previous adoptions	[Dates of previous adoptions]	
Date of next review	[Two years from last adoption]	