

ITEM 11 WASTE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY - FEES AND EXEMPTIONS COUNCIL POLICY

Council has a longstanding policy of accepting mixed general waste without charge from eligible Community Service Organisations. There are ongoing implications from this practice, as it discourages the sorting and reuse and/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 the associated NSW Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014 to 2021;
- Council's Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022; and
- Council's Climate Change Mitigation Action Plan 2020.

This Paper recommends the adoption of the revised Waste and Resource Recovery – Fees and Exemptions Policy effective from 11 January 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 Council adopt the draft Waste and Resource Recovery – Fees and Exemptions Council Policy from 11 January 2021.
- 2 Council 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.
- 3 Council undertake additional community consultation in relation to fee exemptions for Pensioner Concession Cardholders in early 2021.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Joanne Page, Manager Open Space & Environmental Services
Authorised by: Glenn Whittaker, Director Infrastructure + Works - Connectivity Assets + Liveable City (Acting)

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Draft Waste and Resource Recovery - Fees and Exemptions Council Policy (proposed changes highlighted)

BACKGROUND

Waste from Community Service Organisations

Council's current *Waste and Resource Recovery Park – Fees and Exemptions Policy* entitles Community Service Organisations with active EPA Community Services Exemptions to dispose of an unlimited volume of unusable goods and materials recovered from public donations received at local facilities without charge. In FY2019 and FY2020, this practice resulted in approximately 1900 tonnes of material being landfilled.

The practice of not sorting material for reuse and / or recycling and providing a full fee exemption for the landfilling of General Mixed Waste is misaligned with the:

- practices of other local Councils; and
- expectations of the broader community who are participating in recovery through reuse, composting and / or recycling.

Waste from Pensioner Concession Cardholders

During July and August, Community engagement was constrained due to COVID-19 restrictions, which may have led to low numbers of impacted residents providing a response. Therefore, additional consultation is proposed for early 2021.

PROPOSAL

Waste from Local Community Service Organisations

The following changes are recommended to the current *Waste and Resource Recovery Park – Fees and Exemptions Council Policy* for eligible Community Service Organisations.

Current exemption	Proposed exemption
<u>Illegally dumped material</u> Not specifically specified.	<u>Illegally dumped material</u> Will receive the full gate fee exemption (currently \$384 / Tonne) for illegal dumping events where the Event is reported and investigated by Council prior to the material being delivered to Wollongong Waste and Resource Recovery Park.
<u>Unusable goods and materials (sorted):</u> Not specified.	<u>Unusable goods and materials (sorted):</u> Unlimited volume from public donations where the material is sorted for reuse and / or recycling (sorting area to be established).
<u>Unusable goods and materials (not sorted):</u> Unlimited volume from public donations receive a full gate fee exemption (currently \$384 / Tonne).	<u>Unusable goods and materials (not sorted):</u> Unlimited volume from public donations will receive a reduction in the gate fee by the NSW EPA Waste Levy - (Currently \$238 / Tonne = \$384 / Tonne - \$146 / Tonne) .

To support the proposed changes, Council staff will work with Local Community Service Organisations to develop and implement individualised Waste Management Plans which are designed to:

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

Local charity shops run by Community Service Organisations have been impacted by COVID-19 restrictions which has delayed the development of individualised Waste Management Plans.

Temporary fee exemptions will be granted through the General Manager's delegation to eligible Local Community Service Organisations until 1 March 2021 to allow enough time to develop and implement Individualised Waste Management Plans.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Consultation was undertaken in July and August 2020 in the general community and via direct contact with all Community Service Organisations who were eligible and utilising the fee exemption.

Of the Community Service Organisations utilising the exemption:

- 40% were already sorting materials, with 1 of these separating up to 20 different streams; and
- 80% were supportive of the sustainable approach proposed by Council.

Members of the community who responded during the community engagement period supported the proposed changes if suitable infrastructure was provided for Community Service Organisations to sort the material received.

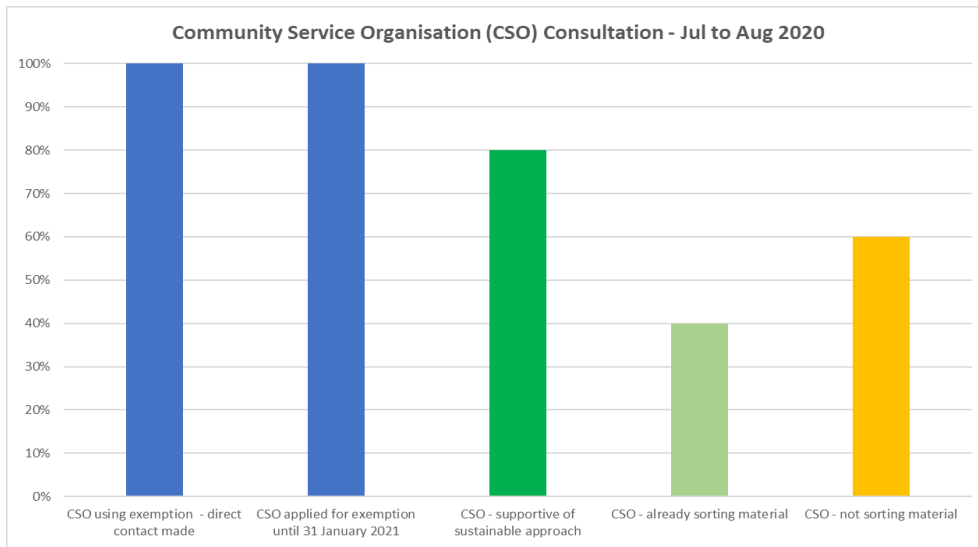


Figure 1: Summary of Consultation with Community Service Organisations currently utilising the fee exemption.

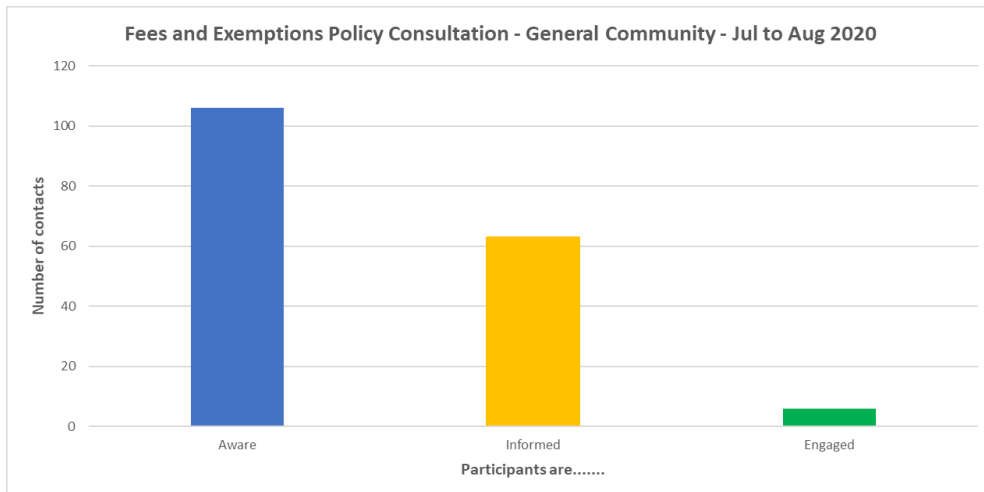


Figure 2: Summary of Consultation with the community regarding the draft Waste and Resource Recovery – Fees and Exemptions Council Policy

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 2018-2022	Operational Plan 2020-21
Strategy	4 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 and/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;
- Our Waste and Resource Recovery 2022 Action Plan; and
- Our Climate Mitigation Action Plan 2020.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The recommendations consider the ongoing regulatory risk of Council continuing to accept material from Community Service Organisations 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 eligible Local Community Service Organisations through:

- Development and implementation of individualised Waste Management Plans;
- Fee exemptions for eligible Community Service Organisations through the General Manager's delegation until 1 March 2021;
- Continuing to provide support for illegally dumped material;
- Continuing to provide support for sorted material that can be reused and/or recycled.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is expected that the current cost of landfilling material received from Community Service Organisations will be offset by the cost of reusing and recycling the material. The costs associated with implementing individualised Waste Management Plans and the purchase and installation of signage and sorting bins at Wollongong Waste Resource Recovery Park will be funded from the NSW EPA Waste Less, Recycle More grant funding. The sorting facilities will also be made available to the general community.

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 objectives of this policy are to:

1. 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.
2. Provide support for Pensioner Concession Cardholders from the Wollongong Local Government Area.

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 the Revolve Centre 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 Council's Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2022.
6. Organisations with an active Community Services Exemption issued by the NSW Environment Protection Authority under Section 88 of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 will be exempt from Council waste disposal fees **under the following conditions:**
 - Proof of the exemption must be in writing and current;
 - Material is sourced from the Wollongong Local Government Area;
 - Suitable reusable and / or recyclable items are sorted and diverted through the Revolve Centre and/or Recycling Area including eWaste, scrap metal, white goods, cardboard, paper, fabric, mixed recyclables, timber, batteries, gas bottles and fire extinguishers;
 - Material has been illegally dumped (at the Organisation's premises or bins) and the Incident has been reported to Wollongong City Council and investigated prior to delivering the material to Wollongong Waste and Resource Recovery Park;
 - No specified items including tyres and mattresses.
7. The General Manager has the delegated authority to determine individual requests for waiving fees for eligible Local Community Service Organisations.
8. All Pensioner Concession Cardholder from the Wollongong Local Government Area are exempt from fees for up to:
 - Two (2) transactions of 100 kg or less of Mixed General Waste per financial year;
 - Two (2) transactions of 100 kg or less of Garden Organics for reprocessing per financial year.

Where the following conditions are met:

- Proof of residency is provided
- Current Pensioner Concession Card is provided
- Pensioner Concession Cardholder is present.

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

WASTE & RESOURCE RECOVERY – FEES & EXEMPTIONS

COUNCIL POLICY

Role	Responsibilities
Waste and Resource Recovery Manager	Implementation of this Policy.
Strategic 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.

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]	