

Newcastle Voice Household Waste Service



September 2009

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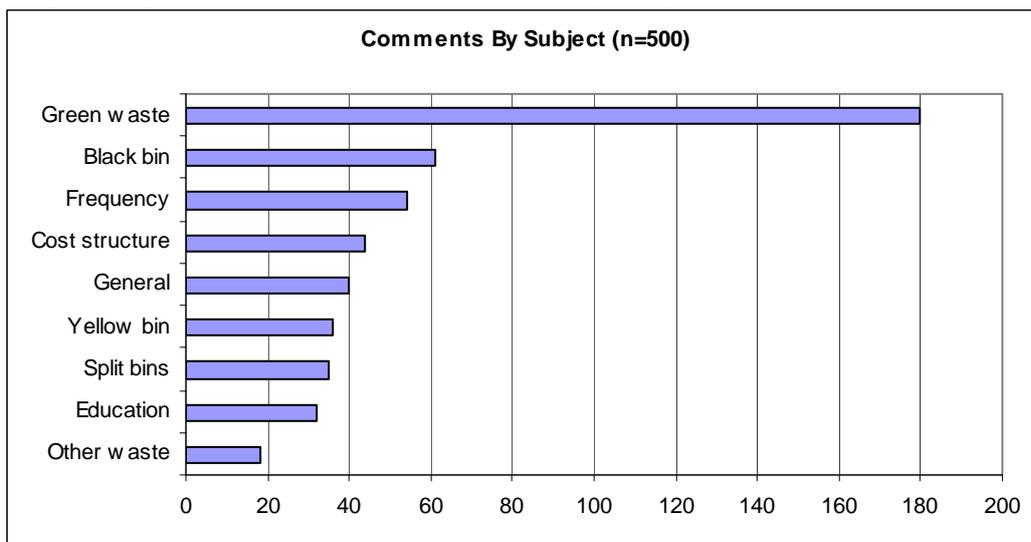
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Executive Summary

City Presentation Services is conducting a full Waste Review in 2009 with Sustainable Infrastructure Australia to deliver a market leading waste collection and disposal service for Newcastle City Council. As part of this review, consultation was conducted with the community to gather opinion on the current household waste collection service. This report summarises the results of the household waste collection service consultation which was conducted within the Newcastle LGA, through the Newcastle Voice community reference panel.

A survey was sent to 1517 Newcastle Voice members and had a 62% completion rate (933 out of 1517). A wide variety of constructive comments were received regarding bin size, frequency of collection service, education/information and cost. Respondents also made reference to waste collection service models from other councils in Australia such as the Gold Coast, Nedlands WA, Toowoomba Qld, Darabin Vic, Canberra, Queanbeyan, Burnside SA, Wollongong, Sydney, Central Coast, Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens councils. The following graph is a breakdown of the 500 comments received via the survey, by subject.

Graph 1: Open-ended Comments Received by Subject



The consultation revealed that the majority of respondents are satisfied overall with both their household waste and kerbside recycling collection service.

- Over 81% are satisfied with the household waste collection service.
- Over 87% are satisfied with the household kerbside recycling service.

Household Waste Collection Service

- 81% want household waste collection to remain weekly
- 97% use a 240-litre (standard size) waste bin
- 44% indicated that they would be willing to use a 120-litre waste bin

Quality of Household Waste Collection Service

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements. Below are the results pertaining to those respondents who agreed or strongly agreed.

- 97% - Garbage bin is always collected on my waste collection day
- 97% - Garbage bin is always left on the same side of the road
- 69% - Garbage bin is always left close to where it was put out
- 55% - There is never any waste spillage from my garbage bin or the vehicle
- 48% - Garbage bin is always left upright
- 24% - Garbage bin's lid is always left closed

Household Kerbside Recycling Collection Service

- 70% want household kerbside recycling collection to remain fortnightly

Of those who indicated a preference for a weekly collection service (27%)

- Only 38% were willing to pay approximately \$56 per year for the service
- Only 1% were willing to use a 120-litre recycling bin

Quality of Household Kerbside Recycling Collection Service

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements. Below are the results pertaining to those respondents who agreed or strongly agreed.

- 97% - Recycling bin is always left on the same side of the road
- 93% - Recycling bin is always collected on my waste collection day
- 82% - Recycling bin is always left close to where it was put out
- 64% - Recycling bin is always left upright
- 63% - There is never any waste spillage from my recycling bin or the vehicle
- 36% - Recycling bin's lid is always left closed

Green Waste Services

The top five ways households currently deal with green waste they produce are as follows:

1. Throw it in the garbage bin
2. Council kerbside collection (4/year)
3. Compost it
4. Use leaves as mulch
5. Leave grass clipping on lawn

Weekly Garden Waste Drop-off Service

- 29% of respondents use the drop-off spots and 72% said they were extremely or very convenient

Proposed Household Green Waste Recycling Bin Service

- 55% are interested in having a separate green waste recycling bin collection service
- Respondents are split between 120-litre and 240-litre bin (45%-55%)
- Respondents are split between fortnightly and monthly collection frequency (47%-47%)
- 42% are not interested if there is an additional charge
- 74% are not interested in the split bin service if there is an additional charge

Introduction

Newcastle City Council is committed to presenting Newcastle as a clean, attractive and welcoming city. A wide range of services are required to manage our community's waste effectively. Newcastle City Council is responsible for treating and disposing of waste safely, and its waste services form part of its greater environmental management plan for the City.

Annually, the City of Newcastle produces over 200,000 tonnes of waste, with about 47,000 tonnes produced by Newcastle residents' households. In 2008-2009, Newcastle residents recycled 15,533 tonnes of material through their collection service.

Report Purpose

City Presentation Services is conducting a full Waste Review with Sustainable Infrastructure Australia to deliver a market leading waste collection and disposal service for Newcastle City Council. The current Waste Review will encompass all aspects of waste collection, disposal and opportunities for resource recovery.

There is an agreement between Council and the United Services Union to consult with the community to determine required household waste service levels.

City Presentation Services seeks community input on three major themes: household waste, recycling and green waste regarding quality and frequency of household waste service, so that Council can make informed decisions. This community consultation will help Council:

- Find out what is important to the community
- Monitor the effectiveness of our services
- Improve our services
- Plan services to meet the community's needs and expectations.

Both quantitative and qualitative data is required to better understand how the community perceives the current service quality and frequency. Because the household waste collection service affects everyone in the Newcastle local government area (LGA), it is necessary that a large sample of the population be asked to be involved in the consultative process. A survey was undertaken as part of the consultation program to explore Newcastle LGA residents and ratepayer needs and expectations about household waste services.

This community consultation report will be part of the overall Waste Review report, and play an integral role in assisting Council to plan for future domestic waste management strategies and services. The presentation to Council is currently scheduled for December 2009.

Methodology

Data Collection

A survey, using a structured questionnaire with a total of 28 questions, was sent to all active Newcastle Voice members. The survey was developed using the following headings: household waste service, complaints about household waste service, recycling service, complaints about household kerbside recycling service, green waste services, weekly garden waste drop-off service, and proposal for household green waste recycling bin service. The last question was an open-ended question to record additional comments. To control order bias, the Sparq system automatically rotated the presentation of items within certain questions on a random basis. A copy of the survey questionnaire is provided in Appendix I.

A survey invitation and link to the on-line survey was sent on 4 September. Electronic reminders to those online members who had not yet completed the survey were sent on 11 September and 16 September.

The survey was duplicated, printed and distributed in hard copy to those Newcastle Voice members who requested printed surveys. The survey was mailed out on 4 September. A pre-paid envelope was included to encourage their return.

The survey closed at midnight on 18 September.

Survey Area

Residents and ratepayers from the Newcastle City Council local government area were consulted, through the Newcastle Voice community reference panel. The breakdown of the demographics by suburb is provided in Appendix II.

Sample Selection

A total of 1517 Newcastle Voice members were surveyed. This number represents active, on-line and off-line panel members who have previously completed the Profile Study.

Participants

The breakdown of the demographics by gender, age, and employment status is provided for the sample as well as for the respondents in Appendix II. The demographic information is managed in Sparq. In brief, results show that:

- 10.61% of respondents live in Merewether, 5.57% in Wallsend, 5.36% in Mayfield, 4.72% in Cooks Hill and 4.72% live in New Lambton
- A relatively even proportion of respondents were 25-39 years old, 40-54 years old or 55-69 years old (26.37%, 28.72%, 30.65% respectively)
- 41.26% of respondents live in the Inner City South & North planning districts.
- 69.21% of respondents are employed full or part-time.
- 66.78% of respondents have lived in Newcastle LGA for more than 10 years.
- The gender split was 50.38% male and 49.62% female which is consistent with the gender split for the Australian population.

It should be noted that being a Newcastle Voice member is voluntary, and therefore participation in its activities is also voluntary. The survey was open to Newcastle Voice members only.

Representation

Although sampling 1517 panel members represents over 1% of the Newcastle local government area population, the sampling frame for this survey was not statistically representative of the population.

This is due to the fact that all active Newcastle Voice members, on-line and off-line were surveyed. With the exception of Inner City South and Inner City North, the other planning districts are underrepresented. Responses are over-represented from Ward 1 and 2, while they are under-represented in Wards 3 and 4. Furthermore, panel members in the 16-24 and 70+ age brackets are also underrepresented.

Data Handling and Analysis

The data handling and analysis was carried out using Sparq software.

Trend analysis was conducted from the open-ended question responses. All responses are treated in confidence to ensure the anonymity of respondents.

Response Rate & Survey Design

The survey had a 62% completion rate (933 out of 1517) and a 63% participation rate (959 out of 1517). That means that 63% of respondents started the survey, but 1.8% did not complete it (26 out of 1517). Of those who chose not to complete the survey (1.8%), 46% dropped out before reaching the first question.

- 65% response rate (793 out of 1218) from on-line Newcastle Voice members.
- 47% response rate (140 out of 299) from off-line Newcastle Voice members.
- 63% of qualified respondents (482 out of 758) wrote a comment/suggestion through the open-ended questions.

The Hunter Valley Research Foundation (HVRF) collaborated with Newcastle City Council to ensure that the survey questions were clear, unbiased, straight-forward and not open to misinterpretation.

While the survey was in the field, Newcastle Voice received a few e-mails regarding question 3. The feedback revealed that the survey wording needed to be changed to mention only apartment, flat or unit dwellers. The Topline Report indicated that 88 respondents (9%) completed the survey prematurely by stating that they lived in an “apartment, townhouse, unit or villa complex” when in fact they do not share their bin with another household and could have continued to complete the entire survey. On 9 September, the survey was updated to reflect the wording change for all remaining respondents to read, “Do you live in an apartment, flat or unit?”

Additional comments on survey design were few and generally positive, with an opportunity for Newcastle Voice to take up a suggestion regarding modifying the font color for on-line surveys.

Survey Findings

Household Waste Collection Service

Over 99% of Newcastle Voice respondents indicated that their household waste was collected from their residential property. When asked if respondents shared a household waste or recycling bin with anyone else, only 8.5% (80 out of 933) said they did.

When asked how frequently they would want their household waste bin collected, 81.13% said they want their household waste collection to remain once per week, with only 18.87% wanting a less frequent service provision. This concurs with the Newcastle Voice Environment survey from March 2009 which identified that over 85% of respondents put their black bin out weekly.

There are no significant differences to report when looking at the different age groups, genders, suburbs or employment status.

In comments received, 11% (54 out of 500) addressed the relative frequency of both the household waste and kerbside recyclable collection services. Indicative comments:

- “Any move to reduce the frequency or capacity of general waste collection will be **STRONGLY** rejected and you can expect opposition to be both firm and vocal.”
- “Our general household waste bin is only ever about a quarter full by collection day. General household waste should only be collected fortnightly.”

The majority of respondents (97.36%) said that they used a 240-litre (standard size) waste bin. Of those, 43.63% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to use a smaller household waste bin (120-litre), with another 12.33% unsure. Again, these findings concur with a recent Newcastle Voice Environment survey conducted in March 2009, which identified that over 54% of respondents put out their black bin with them only being ¼ or ½ full when collected.

Of those respondents who stated that they would not be willing to use a smaller household waste bin (45.12%), 60% were males. The results from the survey revealed that on average, male respondents over the age of 40 who are retired, and live in the following suburbs: Beresfield, Birmingham Gardens, Fletcher, Georgetown, Hamilton East, Maryland, Mayfield, Merewether, New Lambton, New Lambton Heights, Shortland, The Hill, Wallsend and Wickham were less inclined to use a smaller household waste bin.

Please refer to Appendix IV for more details on the Newcastle Voice Environment survey conducted in March 2009 and the results on garbage and recycling bins.

Quality of Household Waste Collection Service

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements:

1. My garbage bin is always collected on my waste collection day
2. My garbage bin is always left on the same side of the road
3. My garbage bin's lid is always left closed
4. My garbage bin is always left upright
5. My garbage bin is always left close to where it was put out
6. There is never any waste spillage from my garbage bin or the vehicle
7. Overall, I am satisfied with the household waste collection service

Over 81% of Newcastle Voice members strongly agreed or agreed that overall they are satisfied with the household waste collection service. When asked about the above mentioned statements, 96.97% agreed or strongly agreed that their waste bin is always collected on their collection day, 96.7% agreed or strongly agreed that it is always left on the same side of the kerb and 68.87% agreed or strongly agreed that the waste bin is always left close to where it is put out.

Of all comments received in open-ended feedback, many make positive remarks about the service, as follows:

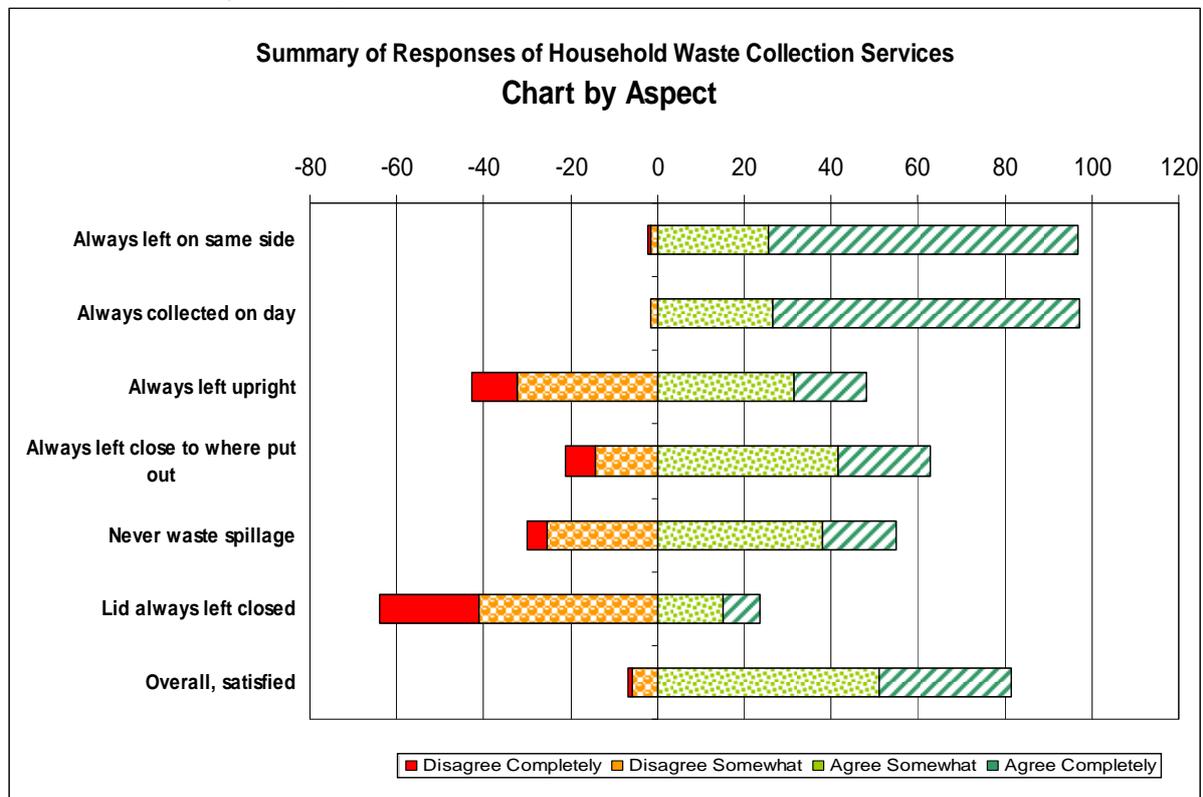
- "Newcastle has an excellent waste service and I believe Council should be congratulated."
- "Thank you NCC for the e-waste disposal as well. And for the kerbside collections (green and junk) All in all I think service is very good."
- "In general I am happy with the waste service, even if they leave the lid off or move the bin along, I mean we have to take some responsibility ourselves don't we?"

However, only 55.01% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there is never any spillage from their bin or the vehicle, 48.15% agreed or strongly agreed that the waste bin is always left upright and a mere 23.62% agreed or strongly agreed that their garbage bin's lid is always left closed.

There are no significant differences to report when looking at the different age groups, genders, suburbs or employment status.

The following chart lists the level of agreement with various aspects of the household waste collection service.

Chart 1: Summary of Responses of Household Waste Collection Service



In comments received, 12% (61 out of 500) related primarily to the black bin garbage services, with the following indicative comments on the subject of noise, truck speed and bin damage.

- “We are woken prior to 6am by the sound of the bin being pulled off the footpath onto the road – surely they can start later. Secondly the speed and abruptness of the stopping and starting between properties – anyone would think it was a race!”
- “I am generally satisfied with the exception of the damage that occurs to bins through the rough handling by the hydraulic arm on the truck operated by the driver.”
- “Excessive noise caused by the harsh breaking and equally harsh acceleration which I believe contribute to the spillages at the pick up points”
- “Normal waste collection drivers are crazy, they speed, leave bins all over the place and it is a rare day when your bin is left upright, don't even think that the lid will be on it. They are in too big of a hurry to knock off.”

Lodged Complaints about Household Waste Collection Service

The vast majority of respondents have not made, nor had a member of their household made, a complaint about the household garbage collection over the past six months. Of the 13.85% who answered yes, 88.57% had made one or two complaints in this time.

Of those surveyed who had made a complaint (13.85%), 35.24% of those complaints were due to the garbage bin not being collected on the usual waste collection day, 17.14% said it was due to their garbage bin being damaged and 10.48% said it was due to spillage of waste from garbage bin or vehicle.

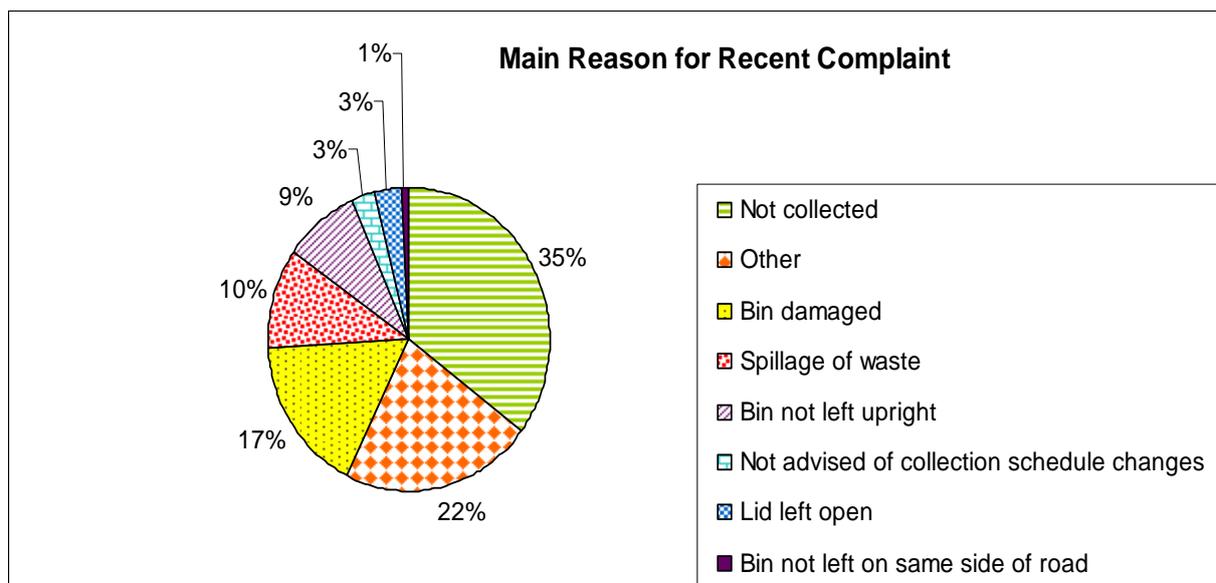
Among the 21.90% 'other' responses, the reasons ranged from poor quality of collections, non-collection on the day, noise and damage to bins:

- "Garbage bins throughout my whole street and in the general area had been left all over the place, on the road, in the road, on their sides, say every 4th or 5th bin, very dangerous to pedestrians and traffic. It was not the first time, so I complained."
- "Driver damaged property, bins not collected, rude driver."

Of the respondents who said that they had made a complaint (13.85%), 67.62% were dealt with satisfactorily and another 14.29% were not yet resolved or were unsure of their satisfaction level.

There are no significant differences to report when looking at the different age groups, genders, suburbs or employment status.

Graph 2: Main Reason for the Most Recent Household Waste Collection Service Complaint



Household Kerbside Recycling Collection Service

When asked how frequently they would want their household kerbside recycling bin collected, 69.92% of respondents said they want their collection service to remain fortnightly, with only 27.31% wanting a more frequent service provision. This concurs with a recent Newcastle Voice Environment survey conducted in March 2009, which identified that over 91.49% of respondents put their yellow bin out fortnightly. Furthermore, the findings from the Newcastle Voice Environment survey identified that over 21.7% of respondents put out their yellow bin with them being only $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ full when collected. Please refer to Appendix IV for more details on the Newcastle Voice Environment survey and the results on garbage and recycling bins.

Of those who indicated that they would prefer a weekly service (27.31%), there are no significant differences to report when looking at the different age groups, genders, or suburbs. However, responses by employment status reveals that Newcastle Voice respondents who work full-time were more inclined (55%) to want a weekly collection service.

Furthermore, of those who indicated that they would prefer a weekly service (27.31%), only 37.68% were willing to pay approximately \$56 per year to cover the cost of the increase in frequency, and 16.43% were unsure about making the annual payment.

Results also revealed that of those respondents who indicated a preference for a weekly kerbside recycling service (27.31%), the majority of respondents (98.55%) said that they would prefer to use a 240-litre (standard size) recycling bin in the future.

Quality of Kerbside Recycling Collection Service

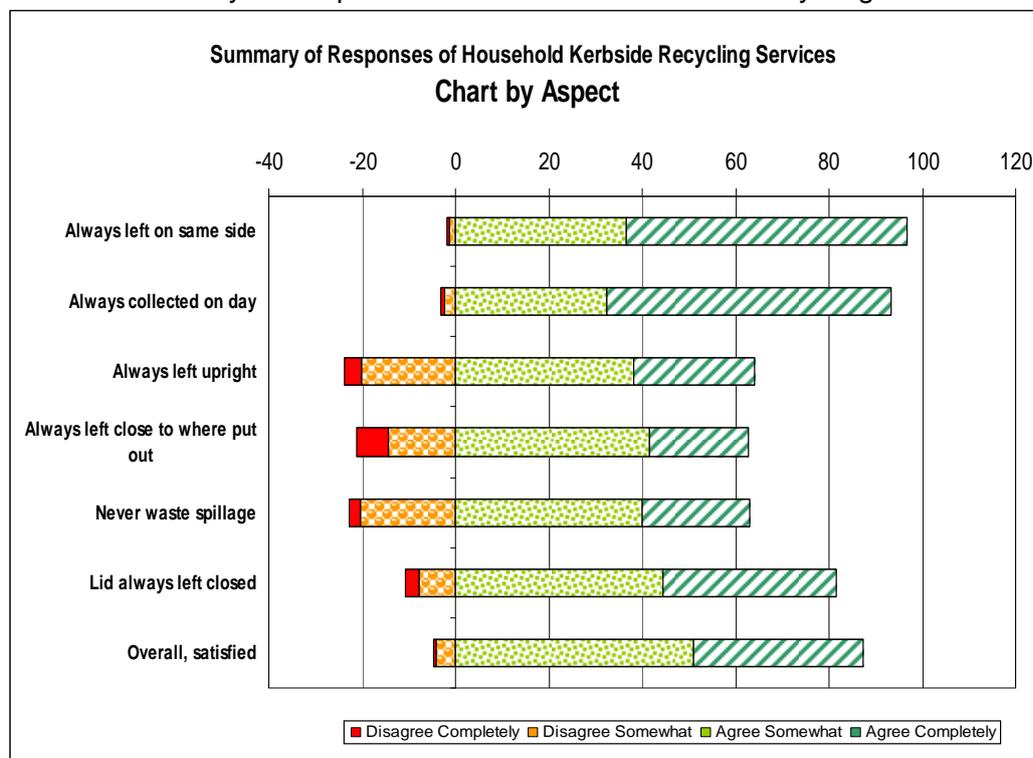
Respondents were again asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements pertaining to household kerbside recycling services:

1. My recycling bin is always collected on my waste collection day
2. My recycling bin is always left on the same side of the road
3. My recycling bin's lid is always left closed
4. My recycling bin is always left upright
5. My recycling bin is always left close to where it was put out
6. There is never any waste spillage from my recycling bin or the vehicle
7. Overall, I am satisfied with the household kerbside recycling service

Over 87% of Newcastle Voice members strongly agreed or agreed that overall they are satisfied with the household kerbside recycling service. When asked about the above mentioned statements, 93.27% agreed or strongly agreed that their recycling bin is always collected on their collection day, 96.7% agreed or strongly agreed that it is always left on the same side of the kerb and 81.53% agreed or strongly agreed that the recycling bin is always left close to where it is put out, 62.93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there is never any spillage from their bin or the vehicle, 63.99% agreed or strongly agreed that the recycling bin is always left upright and a mere 35.88% agreed or strongly agreed that their recycling bin's lid is always left closed.

The following chart lists the level of agreement with various aspects of the household recycling collection service.

Chart 2: Summary of Responses of Household Kerbside Recycling Collection Service



There are no significant differences to report when looking at the different age groups, genders, suburbs or employment status.

Of all comments received, 7% (36 out of 500) address the yellow bin recycling collection service. The following indicative comments address damage to bins, use of the kerbside recycling collection service, and accuracy of items placed in the yellow-lidded bins.

- “Evaluating and improving recycling and garbage collection systems (and not cutting back funds) will further improve the waste collection services.”
- “I believe that we need to have 2 recycling bins for paper, plastic and items that can be recycled. If household waste was collected fortnightly and recyclables each week, our household would recycle more. We run out of room in our recycling bin and share our neighbours bin so we can recycle as much as possible.”
- “The household waste trucks always leave the lids open and now the recycling trucks are doing likewise.”

Lodged Complaints about Kerbside Recycling Collection Service

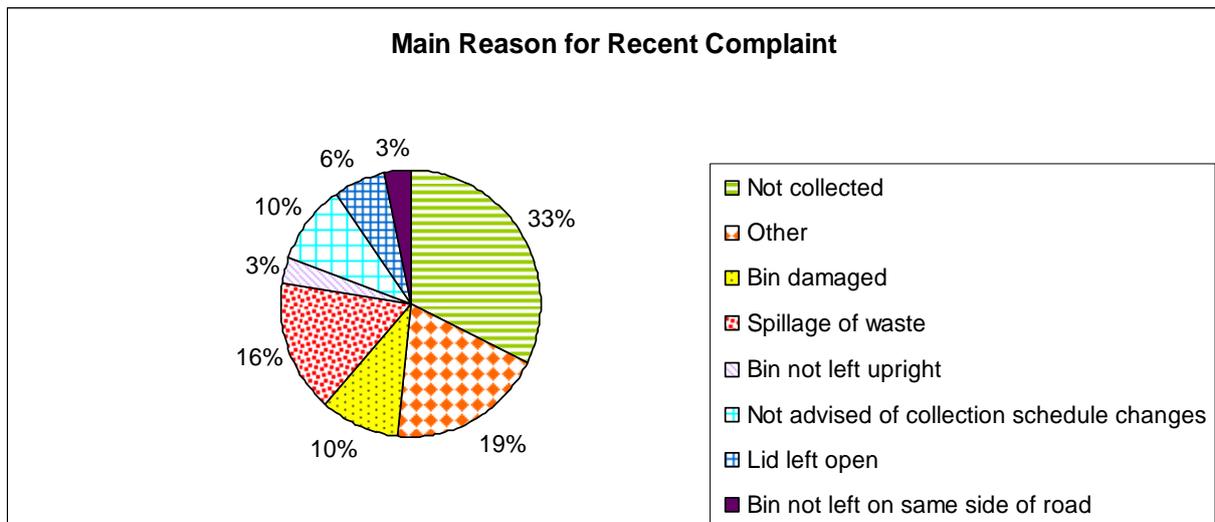
Very few people have lodged a complaint about their kerbside recycling collection service in the past six months. Of the mere 4.09% who have, 87.10% had made one or two complaints in the last six months.

Of those surveyed who had made a complaint (4.09%), 32.26% of those complaints were due to the garbage bin not being collected on the usual waste collection day, 16.13% said it was due to spillage of waste from their recycling bin or vehicle, 9.68% said it was due to their garbage bin being damaged and 19.35% said 'other'. Examination of the 'other responses' revealed that infrequency of this collection service is a concern.

Of the 4.09% of respondents who said that they had made a complaint, 64.52% were dealt with satisfactorily and another 22.58% were not yet resolved or were unsure of their satisfaction level.

There are no significant differences to report when looking at the different age groups, genders, suburbs or employment status.

Graph 3: Main Reason for the Most Recent Household Recycling Collection Service Complaint



Comparisons

There were a few marked differences when comparing the household waste collection service and household kerbside recycling service, as perceived by respondents. Below are two tables that highlight key similarities and differences.

Interestingly, although respondents scored some aspects of their household waste collection services lower than household kerbside recycling service, overall, respondents are equally satisfied with both services, as evident from the following comments received:

- “All collections at present very good.”
- “If it’s not broken don't fix it. Excellent service the way it is now.”
- “There is nothing wrong with the household waste collection, green waste or recycling services. Why change it? To waste more time and money. I think that is ridiculous.”

It should also be noted that people generally are less likely to make a comment about services they are satisfied with.

Table 1: Aspects

Aspects	Household Waste Collection Service Agree & Strongly Agree	Household Kerbside Recycling Service Agree & Strongly Agree
My bin is always collected on my waste collection day	96.97%	93.27%
My bin is always left on the same side of the road	96.70%	96.70%
My bin is always left close to where it was put out	68.87%	81.53%
There is never any waste spillage from my bin or the vehicle	55.01%	62.93%
My bin is always left upright	48.15%	63.99%
My bin’s lid is always left closed	23.62%	35.88%
Overall, I am satisfied with the service	81.53%	87.34%

Table 2: Complaints

Complaints	Household Waste Collection Service	Household Kerbside Recycling Service
Made a complaint in last 6 months	“yes” - 13.85%	“yes” - 4.09%
Number of complaints made in last 6 months (by household)	“1 or 2” – 88.57%	“1 or 2” – 87.10%
Main reason for complaint	“bin not collected on collection day” – 35.24%	“bin not collected on collection day” – 32.26%
Complaint dealt with satisfactorily	“yes” – 67.62%	“yes” – 64.52%

Frequency of Kerbside Collection Service

In comments received, 11% (54 out of 498) address the relative frequency of both collection services. Indicative comments:

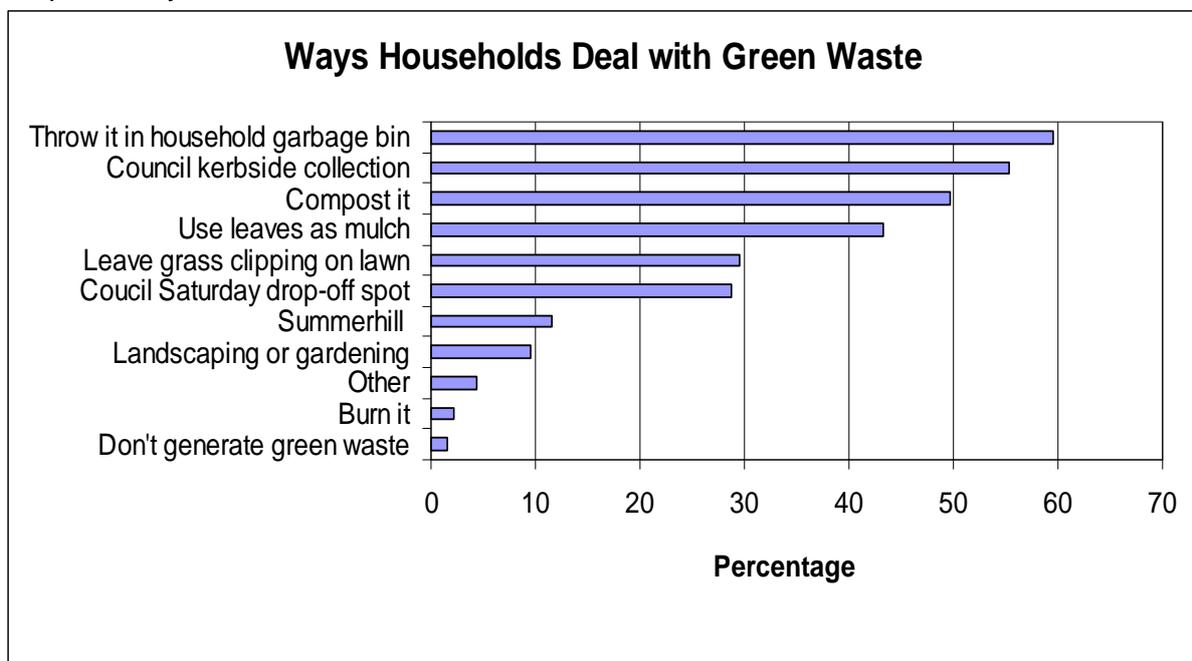
- “Our recycling bin is always overflowing by collection day, and I would prefer to have the recycling bin collected weekly.”
- “My usage requires a small waste bin collected every 2 weeks and a 240 litre green waste bin and 240 recycle bin every 4 week or a split 240 waste and green waste collected weekly and 240 recycle every 4 weeks.”
- “I have thought for a long time that we could greatly reduce costs and increase awareness of what we send to landfill by having household waste and recyclables collected on alternate weeks.”
- “We live by the 3 R's - reduce, reuse, recycle. This results in us having a near empty waste bin for the weekly collection, and a very full recycle bin for the fortnightly delivery.”
- “I believe a weekly recycling service would reduce household garbage markedly. Adding a green waste service will reduce household waste even further. I suggest a 1/2 household, full recycling and full green waste service every week as being suitable.”

Green Waste Services

Respondents were asked about questions that related to the management and disposal of green waste produced by households. Green waste includes grass clippings, tree branches, general garden waste and excludes food waste.

The graph below shows the ways households currently deal with the green waste they produce. The overall results add up to more than 100% as survey respondents were able to select all that apply to their household and many have multiple means of dealing with green waste.

Graph 4: Ways Households Deal with Green Waste



On examination of the 'other' category in Graph 4 above, most responses actually fall into one of the categories above, as indicated by the following comments:

- "Mower man disposes of it." – *landscaping or gardening services* as above.
- "Piled and hoping it will go away" – *compost it* as above

Newcastle's domestic chickens, birds and worms benefit from much of the green waste produced, as evidenced by the following remarks:

- "Grass clippings to chooks."
- "We also use a worm farm, and chooks to process our green waste, and we don't have lawn."
- "As we have chooks and compost, I rarely have any unwanted green waste and am happy with the current collection dates, which we utilise for larger wastes e.g. tree pruning."

The table below shows the key way households deal with green waste by age and gender. Interestingly, there are no significant differences between the age groups and genders. Please note that there are no notable differences between suburbs.

Table 3: Key Ways Households Deal with Green Waste by Age and Gender

Age Group	Gender	1 st Preference	2 nd Preference
16-24	Male	Throw it in the household garbage bin	Compost it
	Female	Leave grass clippings on lawn	Compost it
25-39	Male	Throw it in the household garbage bin	Put it out for Council kerbside collection (4/year)
	Female	Throw it in the household garbage bin	Put it out for Council kerbside collection (4/year)
40-54	Male	Put it out for Council kerbside collection (4/year)	Throw it in the household garbage bin
	Female	Throw it in the household garbage bin	Compost it
55-69	Male	Throw it in the household garbage bin	Put it out for Council kerbside collection (4/year)
	Female	Throw it in the household garbage bin	Put it out for Council kerbside collection (4/year)
70+	Male	Compost it	Throw it in the household garbage bin
	Female	Put it out for Council kerbside collection (4/year)	Compost it

The majority of comments received, 36% (180 out of 500), address the various options for green waste disposal, with many respondents giving serious thought to the options and varying seasonal requirements for green waste disposal.

Key suggestions revolved around the possibility of selling the mulch generated to offset costs and providing a service to residents; as well as the differing disposal needs for different materials, (i.e. lawn clippings vs. large branches):

- “There is a much greater demand for green waste removal in summer months than there is in winter months. If possible this should be considered in any proposed pick up services to increase efficiency of the service and cost to the public.”
- “NCC’s current greenwaste service is not user friendly and results in many messy piles being left on the kerb for weeks after collection! As for putting it into my boot to transport to a drop off - no thanks! Please consider the 3rd 240L greenwaste bin in addition to existing services. I have lived in two other areas with this service and it is excellent! (Toowoomba Regional Council QLD & Nedlands City Council WA)”
- “I would be willing to pay for more regular green waste collections if the mulch were made freely available.”

Weekly Garden Waste Drop-Off Service

Newcastle City Council operates weekly garden waste drop-off spots on Saturdays between 9.00 am and 2.00 pm at Hamilton South, Mayfield West, Lambton and Shortland, and monthly at Beresfield and Stockton.

Of the survey respondents who take their green waste to one of Council's green waste Saturday drop-off spot (28.76%), 72.01% said that the drop-off spots were extremely or very convenient.

In open-ended comments received, there were several requests for this type of service, or comments about the existing service.

- “We find the Saturday green waste drop off centre at Hamilton South, to be an excellent service, and the staff to be cheerful and helpful. We have used it often, and would be very disappointed if it was replaced by something that did not retain the human touch or the proximity to home.”
- “I work all week and work in my garden at the weekend. As a result the Saturday morning collection points are not useful. I need some way of removing green waste at the end of the weekend, not the beginning. That's why it ends up in the household bin.”
- “I didn't realise there were so many 'weekly garden drop off places', I will start using them.”
- “Perhaps unattended green-waste collection points could be designated in all suburbs for weekly collection. For example, drop offs would only be permitted on Friday and Saturday for collection on Saturday. All you'd need is a quiet spot, away from houses, with signage. This would be cheaper than giving everyone another bin.”

Quarterly Kerbside Green Waste Collections

Graph 4 above shows that 55.28% of respondents currently deal with the green waste they produce by putting it out for Council's kerbside collection (4 times/year). Comments received reflect a cross-section of experience with this service:

- “I believe the council green waste kerb-side pick up (4 times per year) to be a waste of time and money. It seems as though the guidelines are set so minimal people use the service but council still gets the credit for supplying a service, even if it is impractical and under-utilised.”
- “All greenwaste that I discard into the household waste bin is weeds with seedheads. Apart from this I have not lived in a house in Newcastle yet that has produced enough greenwaste that I could not store it until neighbourhood collection.”
- “The quarterly kerbside pickups work very well for us. The dropoff spots are going to suit people where something unexpected happens between these quarterly pickups. I appreciate the choice - and am not keen on additional costs for the green bin idea. Compare costs of green bin introduction with the cost of the quarterly pickups?”
- “The green waste people are often rude if the bundles are not tied appropriately or placed in the most convenient position. Also the flyer that you send out could be a little more user friendly and less aggressive.”

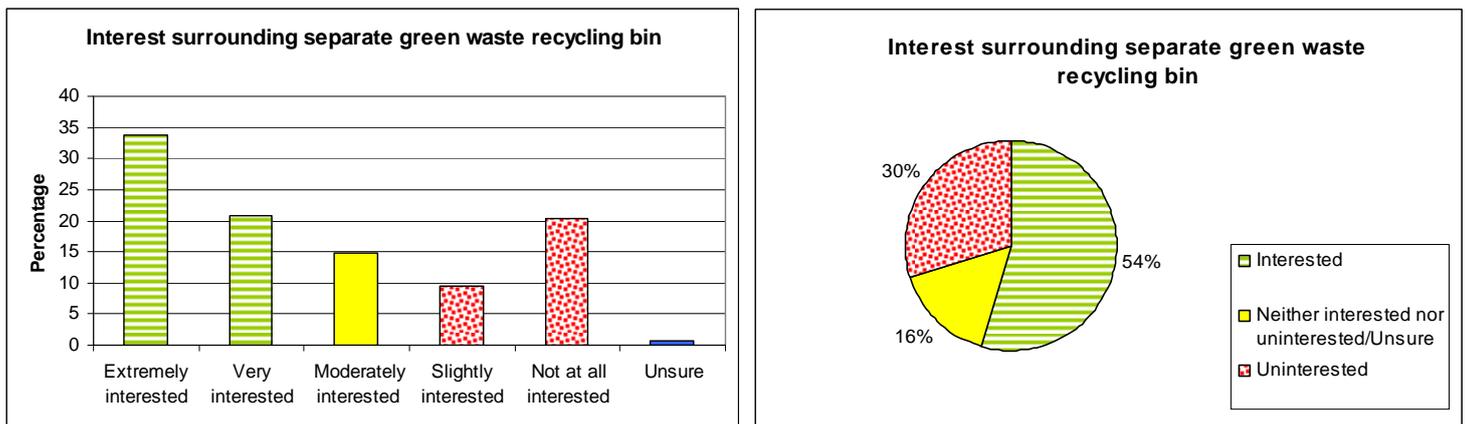
Proposed Third Weekly Bin

There is a proposal for Council to introduce a third household bin for the recycling of grass clippings, tree branches and general garden waste. The proposed green waste recycling service would not accept food scraps or other organic matter which would need to be disposed of in the household waste bin.

When asked how interested they would be to having a separate green waste recycling bin collection service, 54.56% of survey respondents stated that they were very or extremely interested in the proposal. Over 20% of respondents were not at all interested in having a separate green waste recycling collection bin. Of those respondents who were not interested:

- 53% are employed full-time
- 60% are males across all age groups

Graphs 5 & 6: Interest About Separate Green Waste Recycling Bin

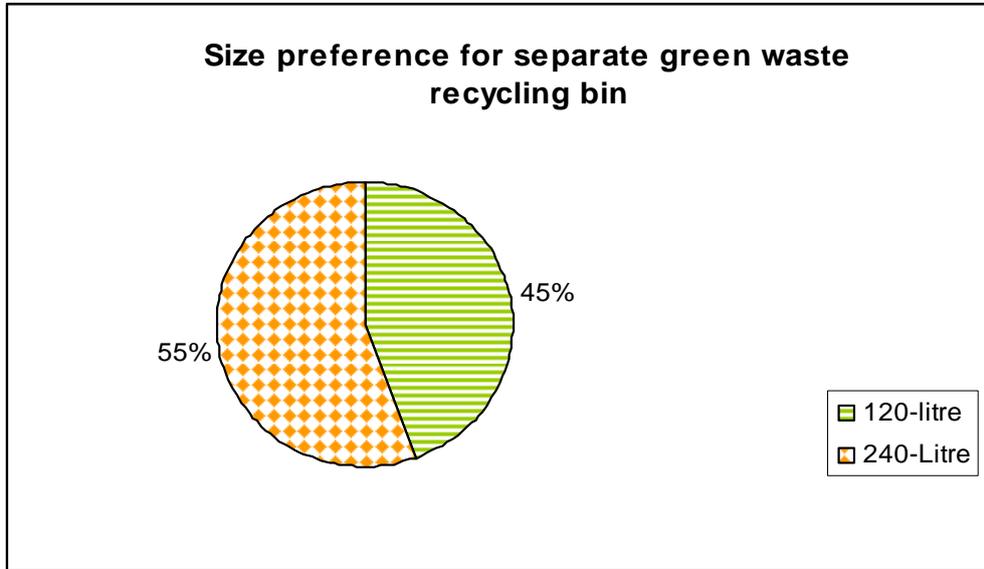


The figures above contrast with the nature of open-ended comments from respondents. Despite significant support - at 54.56% of all respondents - the comments address some of the problematic aspects of the proposal such as storage of a third bin on their premises and the relative priority of this option:

- “Could a regular green waste bin collection service replace the current kerbside quarterly collection service at no additional cost to ratepayers?”
- “I have no room for a third bin. Present arrangements are more than satisfactory.”
- “I only really generate green waste in the summer. I think if there was a separate bin for green waste, you only really need to have this collected during the months of daylight saving.”
- “A green waste bin is a great idea. You should be able to reduce the standard bin to 120 l for everyone. Great idea!”
- “I don't feel adding a bin has any benefit as those environmentally inclined would already use a compost/mulch system and gain nothing from the cost of paying for an empty green bin. Those who don't currently compost probably won't use the green bin either!”
- “I am unsure of the benefits of keeping green waste separate from household waste.”

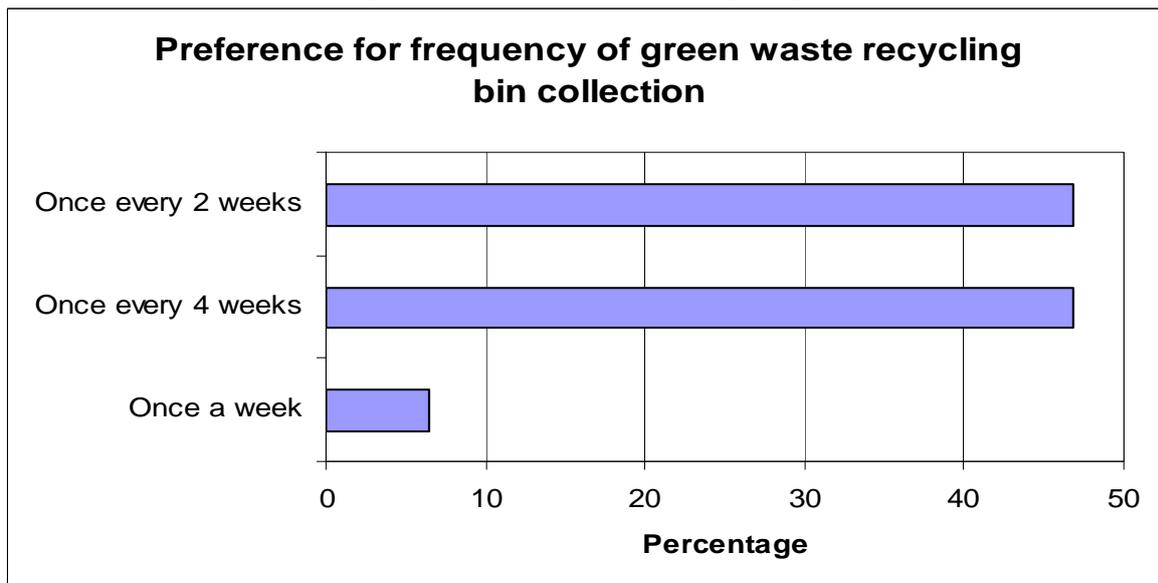
With the exception of those respondents that indicated they were not interested in a separate green waste recycling bin or were unsure (21.18%), respondents were asked what size bin they would like. On balance, respondents to this question are divided in terms of bin size. Respondents are split 45%-55% between the 120-litre and 240-litre bins.

Graph 7: Size Preference for Separate Green Waste Recycling Bin



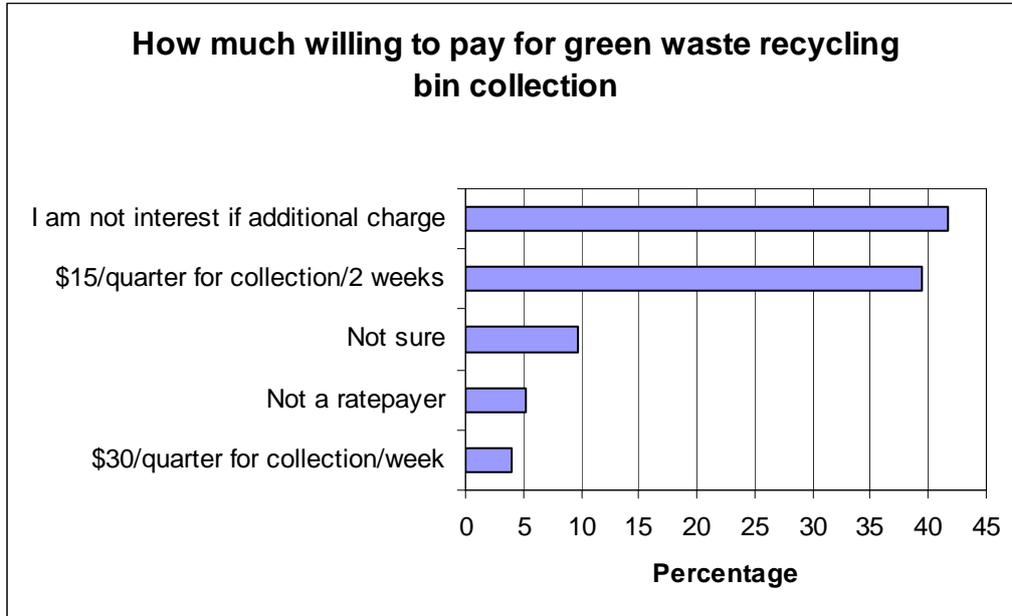
Furthermore, when asked how frequently they would like the green waste recycling bin collected, respondents were once again divided, with a 47%-47% split between a fortnightly and monthly collection frequency. Only 6.46% of survey respondents preferred a weekly collection service for the proposed green waste recycling bin.

Graph 8: Preference for Frequency of Green Waste Recycling Bin Collection



In terms of introducing a cost per household for green waste recycling bin collection, 42% were not interested if there is an additional charge, while 40% were willing to pay an additional \$15 per quarter for a fortnightly collection and a mere 4% were willing to pay \$30 per quarter for a weekly collection.

Graph 9: How Much Willing to Pay for Green Waste Recycling Bin Collection



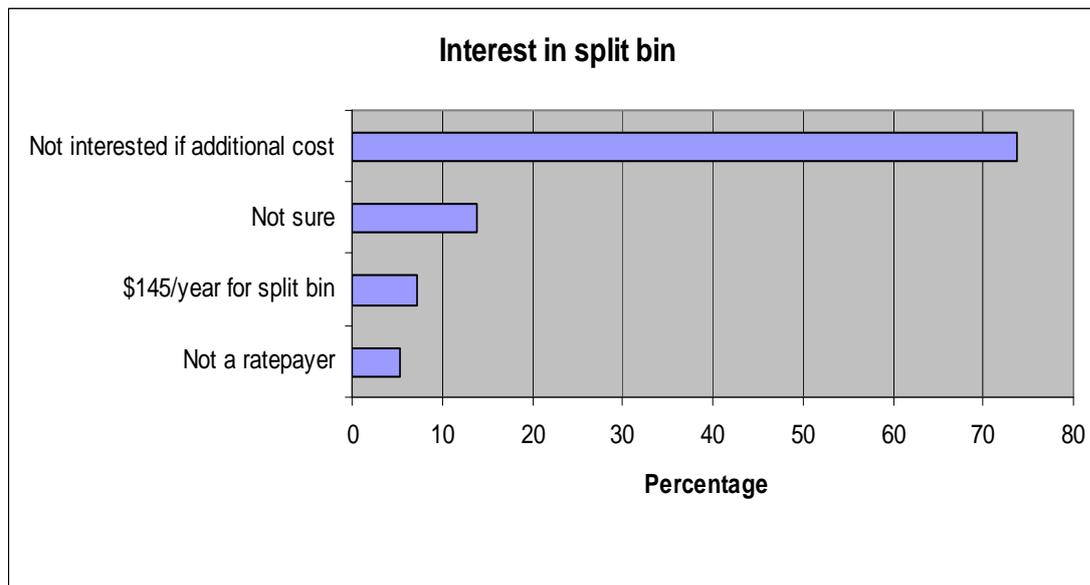
Comments received support the view that household waste collection should be covered through existing rates, with the following indicative comments:

- “I would prefer the green waste bin was only charged to people who use it, if that's me then I'm happy to pay.”
- “We are very supportive of improving the way green waste is managed but would be reluctant to consider an increase in rates.”
- “I pay high rates for Council services and like most other rate payers I am not disposed to paying more for services that I already pay for Council to provide.”
- “Why would I want to pay for a green waste bin when I use my normal waste bin when I need to?”

Split Bin Option

One future option is for Council to introduce a split bin (standard size, 240-litre) which is collected weekly for regular household waste and green waste. This service would incur an additional cost. Only 7.12% of respondents were willing to pay approximately \$145 per year for a split bin, with 73.75% indicating that they would not be interested in the split bin service if there was an additional charge.

Graph 10: Interest in Split Bin



Respondents commented 7% (35 out of 500) about concerns with ease of use, costs of introduction, and a relatively high awareness of similar initiatives and negative outcomes in other Council areas:

- “Split bins are a failure! Port Stephens tried them and abandoned the idea - people ignore the partitions and put items in the wrong sections.”
- “A split bin would be of no use to families as we need the full 240ltr bin for rubbish. As for paying extra for the bin - forget it, we pay enough now and I am not interested in paying any extra.”
- “I have experienced having to use a 240L split bin system - they are not a good idea. One side usually fills up fast (with paper, plastic, tins) while the other side is usually left empty - the council later had to spend ratepayer's money to rip out all of the bin centres, and replace with new lids and a second bin for Green waste. I hope NCC is going to fully explore their options and weigh up the pros and cons before jumping in to this idea.”
- “I do not see why a split bin should incur a further cost as it would reduce your fleet and amount of bins. Over all greater efficiency.”
- “In a split bin I probably would have difficulty fitting big bits of cardboard (like nappy boxes) so it would be better to have the big bin just for recycling.”

Other Subjects Raised

Several major themes emerged from this survey.

Education Opportunities

The main theme centred around people's uncertainty about what can be recycled in the yellow-lidded recycling bin and the need for clarification and education on this topic:

- "Clearer instruction, on what can and cannot be recycled, is required to reduce the amount of unusable recycled waste, because of plastic bags, household rubbish, polystyrene, carpets and the like being left in yellow-lidded bins for "recycling".
- "Maybe some educational prompting on TV would encourage these people in the right direction."
- "Providing a sticker households can place on their bins outlining EXACTLY what can and can't be recycled would be helpful. The specific number of the recyclable plastics to be recycled. I often get confused as to whether I can recycle certain plastics or not. Also clarify do we need to wash out containers?"
- "Having looked in many of the neighbours' recycling bins (looking for space for our additional recycling) I have been disappointed to see many people putting rubbish in their recycling bin. What happens in that case? Does it mean we are wasting our time recycling as it is contaminated? Or do the recycling people sort the rubbish from the recycling? Also it would be helpful to know whether it's okay to leave the lids on the recycling items and how clean they need to be."

Other opportunities exist to impart information to the community, as apparent in the following comments:

- "I desperately hope that the recycling is genuinely being recycled."
- "Would be good to get more feedback from Council re how well we do with recycling and whether there are areas we can improve on? Are we getting it right?"
- "I would like more information regarding the pros and cons of a green waste bin or split bin, from a Newcastle wide perspective and the possible benefits to all parties involved."
- "You could also make it clearer what to do with chemical waste plus there should be an electronic waste disposal service. A flyer which could be magnetic and put on the fridge with dates of special collections should be given to all households - this happened at my previous council in Sydney."

Cost Structure

Nine per cent (9%) of comments from respondents (44 out of 500) refer to the overall cost structure of Council's various waste collection services. Pensioners are particularly opposed to higher waste collection charges. The following comments reflect the spectrum of opinion:

- "If you are thinking of increasing charges for new services, are you thinking of a DECREASE in charges for those of us who are light users of the existing services?"
- "As a lone pensioner I do not generate a lot of household rubbish or recycling during the year. But at holiday times when there are family and visitors the bins can be very full so I wouldn't want anything smaller particularly at any extra cost."
- "I would be agreeable to accepting a 120 litre general waste bin, plus a 120 litre green waste bin in the interest of recycling green waste but I am not interested in the extra cost as I feel that I pay enough rates (\$1900 per annum) to cover the cost of garbage removal."
- "Council needs to make Summer Hill cheaper it is ridiculously expensive. All this does is forcing people to dump their waste in parks lands, side of roads, the bush etc. There should be no extra charges for green waste collection. We pay some of the highest council rates for really poor decision-making and massive in-action."

Other Waste Collection Needs

A proportion of comments, 4% (18 out of 497) address other waste collection needs. They represent further opportunities for improvement, with perhaps a community education component around bulk waste and electronic waste items. Indicative comments follow:

- "We are always happy to know it is nearing a kerbside greenwaste collection day, we would NOT be happy if these were to stop, they prevent many people from dumping their waste in the bush, the same goes for the bulk waste collection service."
- "Would like more frequent used household goods collection: currently x 2 per year; prefer 3-4/year. There is no-where to dispose of large unwanted goods - the back lanes and dead-end streets are full on old rotting mattresses, broken white goods - and junk: a constant eyesore! and hazard (especially when left on footpaths)."