

Newcastle Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Policy



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Part A PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a strategic framework for the development of a sustainable waste avoidance and resource recovery strategy for the City of Newcastle which will guide Council's waste management and resource recovery activities.

The policy incorporates the NSW government's waste hierarchy and landfill diversion targets while recognising the need for environmentally and financially sustainable landfilling operations to effectively manage Newcastle's residual wastes now and into the future.

Part B BACKGROUND

Local government plays an important role in waste and resource management under legislative frameworks formulated by the State and Federal governments. The various waste and resource management roles and responsibilities of each level of government are summarised in Attachment 1.

The sustainability review recommendations are applicable to this policy's strategic and operational recommendations

The City of Newcastle participates in waste management and resource recovery activities through the following functions:

- Waste/recyclables kerbside collection, processing and disposal
- Operation of the Summerhill Waste Management Centre, including carbon pollution abatement activities
- Planning and implementation of waste management projects within the LGA
- Landuse planning and development control
- Community education
- Collection of the Waste and Environment Levy and waste data and provision of same to the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW)
- Purchasing and procurement
- Waste generation during normal business activities.

These functions are influenced by a broad range of legislative drivers as detailed below. Current drivers have moved from a traditional waste management focus on public health to emphasise the need to minimise resource consumption and maximise resource recovery.

Council's waste collection and landfill business units have also been identified as Category 1 Businesses (as defined by the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*).

Part C LINKS TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

This policy aligns with the Key Focus Areas of Environmental Enhancement and Governance and Organisational Development identified in the 2010-2013 City of Newcastle Management Plan.

This policy also supports the community priority of a Protected and Enhanced Environment (SD5) identified in the 10 year Community Strategic Plan.

Part D LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY DRIVERS

The City of Newcastle's waste management and resource recovery functions are influenced by the following:

- [Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997](#) (POEO Act)
- [Protection of the Environment Operations \(Waste\) Regulation 2005](#) (Waste Reg)
- [Local Government Act 1993](#) (LG Act)
- [Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001](#) (WARR Act)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000](#) (OHS Act)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001](#) (OHS Reg)
- *NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2007* (WARR Strategy)
- NSW DECCW's Waste and Sustainability Improvement Payment Standards
- *National Waste Policy : Less Waste, More Resources 2010*

Part E PRINCIPLES

The City of Newcastle will be guided in its waste management and resource recovery functions by the following principles:

- Decisions will reflect Council's mission to provide services which:
 - Enhance quality of life
 - Ensure a sustainable future
 - Make best use of our assets
 - Are community and customer focused.
- Council recognises its role in providing leadership in regarding waste as a resource and practicing waste avoidance and resource recovery.
- Council will apply the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) (employing the precautionary principle, ensuring intergenerational equity, conserving biological diversity and ecological integrity and utilising appropriate valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms to achieve "polluter pays" outcomes).
- Decisions will be guided by the NSW Waste Hierarchy (as defined by the WARR Act) which specifies avoidance of resource consumption ahead of resource recovery (reuse, reprocessing, recycling and energy recovery) and safe disposal as a last resort. Recovery and reuse targets specified in the WARR Strategy are supported.
- Decision-making processes will be transparent, incorporate public involvement, and will consider broader sustainability issues (including carbon pollution abatement), base decisions on fact and include life-cycle assessments where appropriate.
- Council will apply the Business Excellence Framework (BEF), incorporating a systems-based approach and continual improvement, to residual waste and resource management

- Council will operate its Waste Collection and Waste Disposal services in accordance with its obligations under the NSW Department of Local Government's *Pricing & Costing for Council Business: A Guide to Competitive Neutrality* (July 1997).
- Council, through its IP&R framework, recognises that approved landfill airspace is a valuable community asset and that decisions will balance obtaining a commercial return within the annual operational and 4 year delivery program with the needs of future generations identified in the 10 year community strategic plan and 20 year community vision.

Part F POLICY STATEMENTS

The City of Newcastle is committed to the following:

1 Planning and Implementation

Council will develop and implement a comprehensive Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy which supports this policy.

2 Waste and Resource Recovery Services

Council will provide a kerbside residual waste collection system which will ensure adequate public health standards and encourage waste avoidance.

Council's kerbside residual waste collection system will be supported by additional best practice resource recovery services which encourage the source-segregation of recyclable or recoverable materials and which promote diversion from landfill of particular problem wastestreams.

Council will seek knowledge about those wastestreams it manages to assist identification of best practice resource recovery systems.

Council will provide approved landfill airspace to appropriately manage suitable residual solid wastes.

Council will strive for best practice landfilling operations at the Summerhill Waste Management Centre, ensuring as a minimum, compliance with relevant development consent conditions and Environment Protection Licence requirements. Best practice operations will incorporate appropriate carbon pollution abatement strategies.

Council will employ market-based instruments and resource recovery systems at the Summerhill Waste Management Centre which encourage source-segregation of recyclable or recoverable materials and facilitate recovery of resources and embodied energy from the residual wastestream.

3 Community Behaviour

To influence the demand for waste disposal, Council will pass on in full increases in the NSW Government's Waste and Environment Levy in line with NSW and national policies.

Council will provide community education programs which support the objectives of the WARR Act 2001 and WARR Strategy 2007.

4 Council Operations

Council will seek knowledge about those wastestreams it generates in the course of its activities to assist identification of best practice waste avoidance and resource recovery systems.

Council will continually pursue regional opportunities and efficiencies in employment of new technologies.

Council will implement sustainable waste avoidance and resource recovery systems during the conduct of its activities based on knowledge gained about current wastestreams.

Council's purchasing/procurement systems will consider ESD objectives, including waste avoidance, energy efficiency and water conservation.

Council will provide enforcement actions which discourage illegal dumping and littering.

In exercising its landuse planning and development control functions, Council will incorporate requirements which support the objectives and targets of the WARR Strategy.

Part G ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities of various NWARR Policy stakeholders are shown below.

1 Project Control Group

Coordinate development of strategies

The PCG will have an ongoing role implementing waste avoidance and resource recovery strategies

2 Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC)

Review and provide guidance and advice within the terms of reference of the EAC

3 Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

Ensure NWARR Policy is consistent with Council and community objectives

Endorse NWARR Policy for adoption by Council

Ensure availability of resources to develop strategy pending adoption of NWARR Policy

Monitor implementation of NWARR policy and subsequent strategy

Provide leadership and advocacy role

4 Council

Approve adoption of subsequent strategy

Provide leadership and advocacy role

Part H ATTACHMENTS

Government Roles and Responsibilities in Waste and Resource Management

1 Federal Government

The Federal government is responsible for ensuring that Australia's international obligations are met. These obligations flow from various international agreements which seek to control hazardous substances, persistent organic pollutants, ozone depleting substances, synthetic greenhouse gases and climate change.

The Federal government ensures compliance either via its own legislation or via state and territory instruments.

International agreements include the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal as well as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and others.

2 State Governments

The Australian Constitution assigns primary responsibility for the management of waste to state and territory governments.

All state and territory governments have enacted legislative and policy drivers to protect the environment and conserve resources.

Legislative and policy instruments can be used to set strategic directions or targets relating to waste and resource management within respective states and territories. Financial drivers (such as levies) can also be employed.

Legislation also provides enforcement powers to state and territory governments.

Primary legislation in NSW is the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* and the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2000*.

3 Local Government

The role of local government varies between States and Territories, and is determined by respective State or Territory legislation.

In NSW, local government provides household waste and recycling collection services, operates landfills, delivers education programs, provides litter management infrastructure and carries out enforcement activities against illegal disposal or littering.

Local government generally provides these services within constraints provided by State and Territory government legislation.

Liaise and develop policies in collaboration with Hunter Councils (HROC).