

Fact sheet 4

MANAGING WASTE IMPACTS

What is waste?

'Waste', 'garbage' or 'rubbish' is material that is thrown away because it is considered useless or unwanted. However, waste should only be material that no longer has any use to our society, and cannot be recovered or recycled in some way. Most of what we throw away is not garbage, even though we treat it that way. Waste to some may be a valuable resource to others.

Australia is the second largest producer of waste per person in the world. Until a few generations ago, waste was not a major problem in Australia because people didn't produce as much garbage. Today our waste is a problem because there is too much of it. This creates difficulties for waste disposal and means we use valuable natural resources to make replacements for the things we throw away. Increasingly, inexpensive throwaway products are replacing long lasting items. Also, packaging alone from new products fills 30-50% of the volume of our household garbage bins. Although we live in a very large country, we cannot maintain this rate of waste disposal.

Did you know?

- Every Australian generates almost 1000kg of waste each year.
- By placing food, garden cuttings and kitchen scraps in a compost bin or worm farm you can reduce what you send to landfill by over 60%.
- Greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide are emitted as waste decomposes in landfills.

Where does the waste come from?

Waste from the Lake Macquarie region consists of household, commercial, industrial, construction and demolition wastes, most of which ends up in the Awaba Waste Management Facility. Over half of this waste is generated in our homes. Typical household waste products include food and garden material, paper, cardboard, plastic, steel, aluminium and other miscellaneous products.

What is Council doing about waste?

The delivery of waste services is one of Council's essential functions and has an impact on every household across the city. As well as providing a domestic waste and recycling collection service, Council works with other local organisations to provide waste disposal and recycling facilities throughout the city to help minimise waste and maintain our natural environment. Council is also in the process of establishing a green waste collection and processing service.

Council provides numerous ongoing and annual programs that can assist you in the correct and safe disposal of all household products.

Solid Waste

The Lake Macquarie community sent just approximately 94,073 tonnes of solid waste to landfill during the period July 2010 to June 2011. Collection of garbage bins takes place weekly on the specified garbage collection day for your suburb. Go to www.lakemac.com.au to find out the garbage bin collection day for your suburb.

Recycling

To help reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, recyclable material is collected from residents in a split-section recycling bin. Council's recycling contractor, Solo collects bins from the kerbside once every fortnight. Paper and cardboard are stored in the front section of the bin, and all other recyclable bottles and containers are stored in the back section of the bin. Recyclables from Lake Macquarie and surrounding areas are separated into different types and then transported to markets in Sydney, Wollongong and Brisbane.

In 2010-2011, Lake Macquarie residents recycled almost 18,690 tonnes of material. On average, 252 kilograms of material are recycled per household per year comprising:

Paper	135.6kg
Glass	68.9kg
All plastic bottles	20.9kg
Steel	25.2kg
Aluminium	2.0kg

Commercial Recycling

Commercial premises in Lake Macquarie can now save money by recycling. Council is offering businesses a fortnightly collection of recyclables for \$70 per year per 240 litre bin.

Commercial properties that register for the service have the choice of:

- an undivided paper and cardboard only bin, or
- an undivided containers bin for aluminium, steel, plastic and glass, or
- a split bin for paper, cardboard, aluminium and steel cans, plastic food and liquid containers that display the recycling triangle with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 (no motor oil containers), and glass bottles and jars.

Collection days correspond with the collection days for the domestic properties in the same area and businesses can have as many recycling bins as they need.

The service is flexible, cheaper than commercial waste collection services, and delivers the many environmental benefits that come from recycling.

Bulk Waste

Some waste is too large to be placed in the general garbage bin. Before placing items out for bulk waste collection, residents should check they can't be recycled or donated to charity. Council provides a bulk waste collection service for all households twice a year. Items that will be collected include bulky household items, metal and green waste. Council advises residents by mail of collection dates.

Green Waste

On average 60% of the waste in Lake Macquarie household garbage bins is made up of organic waste - such as food waste, garden waste and wood wastes. Green waste is a component of the bulk waste pick up service and Council provides an additional green waste collection for homes on the eastern side of the lake. Lake Macquarie residents will receive an extra bin for green (garden and food) waste in late 2012 or early 2013 with the green waste bin used for garden waste initially, and then food waste added once a waste processing plant has been built.

Alternatively, you could start your own home composting system, a worm farm or use grass clippings as mulch on your lawn. You could also take your garden waste to a local green waste disposal centre where it is stockpiled and mulched. In 2010-11, the Awaba Waste Management Facility converted 5,690 tonnes of green waste to mulch instead of disposing it to landfill.

Awaba Reuse Centre

The Centre is located at the Awaba Waste Management Facility site on Wilton Road, Awaba. The Centre recovers materials from the landfill and also provides recycling services for various items.

Chemical Cleanout

This is a once a year service provided to residents, in association with Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), for the safe disposal of household chemicals and other hazardous materials.

eWaste/2nd Hand Saturday

This event allows residents to safely recycle second hand items and electronic waste. A permanent drop off location is at the Awaba Reuse Centre with additional drop-off days in various locations. In 2010-11 Lake Macquarie residents recycled 84 tonnes of electronic waste.

Battery and Light Globe Recycling

Residents can drop off household quantities of batteries and fluorescent light globes at various libraries and the Customer Service Centre in Speers Point.

Mobile Muster

Residents can hand in their old mobile phones and accessories as part of the Mobile Muster program at various libraries and the Customer Service Centre, Speers Point.

Motor Oil Recycling

Service provided to residents to safely dispose of household quantities (<20 litres) of used motor oil. Drop off locations are Awaba Reuse Centre and Council Depot, Boolaroo. All petroleum based and synthetic oils are suitable for recycling. This includes sump oil, differential oil, gearbox oil, transmission oil, and power steering oil.

Public Place Waste Collection

Recycling and garbage bins located at high pedestrian traffic sites around the city to assist in the recycling of relevant waste from outdoor activities.

Sharps Collection

This service provided for the safe disposal of sharps from residents. Bins are located at various sites around the city and within selected pharmacies. See www.lakemac.com.au for locations.

Fridge Buyback

This service, run in association with the OEH, is a residential energy savings program that aims to reduce power bills by asking residents to give up their second fridge. Fridge Buyback offers free collection by professional removalists and a \$35 rebate, but some conditions apply.

What can I do?

To reduce waste generation rates, we all need to rethink our waste disposal habits. By actively following the waste management hierarchy (avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle), you can also help to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. See Fact Sheet 5 for tips to reduce consumption impacts.

The Waste Management Hierarchy

1. Avoid
 - Refuse plastic shopping bags – take your own bags or better yet, use your hands where possible for a small number of items!
 - Refuse Junk Mail – simply put a 'No Junk Mail' sign on your letterbox to reduce paper waste.
 - Choose fresh instead of overly packaged foods.
 - Plan your menus to avoid food waste.
 - Avoid disposable cups and plates.
 - Buy rechargeable batteries.
2. Reduce
 - Freeze leftover food and meals instead of throwing them out.
 - Buy refills where possible.
 - Buy in bulk.
 - Buy concentrates rather than diluted products.
 - Start a vegetable garden.
 - Repair products rather than replacing.
3. Re-use
 - Sell unwanted products and buy second hand goods.
 - Buy re-usable items instead of disposable ones, such as shavers and nappies.
 - Donate old durable goods, such as a fridge or couch, to charity.
 - Re-use gift paper.
4. Recycle
 - Make sure you recycle as much as you can in your yellow recycling bin.
 - Take your garden waste to a local green waste disposal centre for mulching.
 - Use Council's services for recycling other products such as e-waste, batteries, light globes etc.
 - Start a compost bin or heap to recycle food scraps and garden waste.



How can I find out more?

Lake Macquarie City Council 4921 0333 www.lakemac.com.au or www.arrr.com.au

Hunter Resource Recovery 1800 838 884 or www.hrr.com.au

Life Cycle www.lifecyclehunter.com.au/

Mobile Muster 1800 249 113 or www.mobilemuster.com.au

Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) 131 555 or www.environment.nsw.gov.au

OEH Love Food Hate Waste Campaign www.lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au

OEH Household Chemical Clean Out www.cleanout.com.au

Planet Ark Recycling Near You 1300 733 712 or www.recyclingnearyou.com.au

Fridge Buyback 1800 708 401 <http://www.fridgebuyback.com.au>