

**Subject:** *Kerbside Recycling Bin Contamination*

**Description:** This policy outlines the procedures for managing contaminated kerbside recycling bins.

**Objectives:** To appropriately manage contaminated kerbside recycling bins.

## PART 1 - POLICY

### OVERVIEW

In conjunction with Uralla Shire Council's community waste and recycling education program, contaminated kerbside recycling bins should be identified and communication with the resident should occur.

This policy outlines the appropriate action to be taken when a recycling bin is inspected and found to be contaminated.

### DEFINITIONS

Contamination: That portion household recycling bins which is not recyclable. Specifically a bin is considered contaminated if it contains any item that is not identified as recyclable on the top of the recycling bin. Contamination concludes food waste, green waste and dirty , soiled items. Contamination includes dirty and soiled recyclable items.

Kerbside recycling bin: 240L comingled recycling bin

Designated waste collection area: Parcels of land subject to a waste or recycling levy under section 496 of *Local Government Act 1193*. The designated area is the area as resolved by Council.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all kerbside recycling bin collections within Uralla Shire's designated waste collection area, and any kerbside recycling bins collected under a public works arrangement.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Contaminated recycling bins create additional workload for landfill and recycling staff and further contaminate other recyclable material in the truck during the

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transportation and sorting processes. Contamination is hazardous to staff during the sorting process and creates a difficult working environment for landfill staff. Contaminates can potentially damage equipment. Contaminated material has to be collected after the sorting process and deposited into landfill.

To reduce the incidence of contamination comingled recycling bins are inspected randomly by Uralla Shire Council staff prior to collection. When bin is found to be contaminated the bin is stickered indicating the reason for rejection, and the address and rejection reason is recorded by Council on a data base. The recycling bin is not collected.

From 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012, 135 residences had recycling bins identified as containing contaminants and were rejected from the collection service. From July 2011 to 31 January 2012, 9 of the residences that had recycling bins inspected and rejected incurred a second rejection; and 1 resident had their recycling bin inspected and rejected on 3 occasions. After the second occasion, residences were sent a recycling rejection letter. The letter outlines why their bin has been rejected and provides some information about recycling and Council contacts if they have any further questions.

The NSW average for household contamination level in recycling bins is 5.4%. (*Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy Progress Report 2010, Environmental Climate Change and Water*). Uralla Shire Council's contamination rate target is set in the *Draft Waste and Resource Policy* as 10% by 2013.

## **MONITORING AND BREACHES**

Inspection of recycling bins to be conducted by staff on a random basis. A register of rejected recycling bins, including address, contamination type and where possible photos of bin contents, to be maintained by Uralla Shire Council.

### **PART 2 - EXEMPTIONS**

NIL.

### **PART 3 - CRITERIA**

In the interests of avoiding further recycling contamination and penalising the infringing household, this policy outlines action to be taken by Council when contamination is found in a kerbside recycling bin within any 12 month period.

#### **First infringement**

The recycling bin is inspected by staff and stickered to indicate to the resident why the recycling bin is not to be collected.

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### **Second infringement**

The recycling bin is inspected by staff and stickered to indicate to the resident why the recycling bin is not to be collected. Uralla Shire Council will notify the resident in writing to explain why their recycling bin was rejected and offer assistance to the resident to improve their recycling practices. The assistance offered can be in the form of written information, verbal instruction and further reference material.

### **Third Infringement**

Recycling bin is inspected by staff and if found to be contaminated the recycling bin is removed. The residence would still be charged a recycling levy, but if they wished to utilize a recycling service, they would then have to purchase a new recycling bin at a cost as per the Operational Plan – Revenue Policy.

Council will continue to undertake community waste and recycling education including notices to households, items in the community newsletter, school education program and participation in waste and recycling campaigns. Staff have and will continue to speak with and assist residents to improve their recycling habits. The removal of the recycling bin is a reluctant but necessary action to improve the integrity of the comingled recycling system and achieve a contamination rate for the Shire in accordance with the *Draft Waste and Resource Management Plan*.

## **PART 4 - OTHER MATTERS**

This policy will take effect immediately.

### **Review:**

This policy is to be reviewed initially in twelve months from its adoption and then as necessary in conjunction with Uralla Shire Council's Waste and Resource Management Plan.

### **Resolution No:**

**Adopted 27 August 2013 (249/13).**

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