



CITY OF WHITEHORSE

# Rubbish to Resource!

## Waste Management Strategy 2018 – 2028





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	Definition
<b>APCO</b>	Australian Packaging Covert Organisation
<b>AWRRT</b>	Advanced Waste and Resource Recovery Technologies
<b>CALD</b>	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
<b>C &amp; D</b>	Construction and Demolition
<b>C &amp; I</b>	Commercial and Industrial
<b>CPI</b>	Consumer Price Index
<b>EPA</b>	Environment Protection Authority
<b>EP Act</b>	Environment Protection Act
<b>ESC</b>	Essential Services Commission
<b>FOGO</b>	Food Organics Green Organics
<b>Metro Plan</b>	Metropolitan Implementation Plan
<b>MUD</b>	Multi-Unit Developments
<b>MRF</b>	Materials Recovery Facility
<b>MWRRG</b>	Metropolitan Waste Resource Recovery Group
<b>WRWC</b>	Whitehorse Recycling and Waste Centre
<b>SV</b>	Sustainability Victoria
<b>SWRRIP</b>	State-wide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan
<b>WMS</b>	Waste Management Strategy



### 1 Executive summary

The Whitehorse Waste Management Strategy 2018-2028 identifies contemporary challenges and opportunities around waste and litter within Whitehorse which include:

- Increased urbanisation and multi-unit developments
- Changing community
- Minimising and disposing of garbage in the future
- The rise of technology
- Changing economic conditions
- Climate change emissions and organic waste
- Continuous improvements to services.

In order to address these, this Strategy has been developed with a future focus looking at policy, industry and data trends in order to take action for sustainable, effective while affordable services to our community in the future. Proposed actions which have been compiled considering expert advice, Council staff and community feedback include:

- Kerbside collection of green organics to include food scraps. This will reduce the quantity of waste going to landfill and emissions generated. This will involve a move to garden organics bins no longer being optional and may require changing the frequency of garbage collection. Waste bins will likely need to be collected fortnightly, so a new food and garden waste collection can occur weekly
- Investigating options for collecting better data and waste from developed areas including multi-unit developments to see better waste practices and improve recycling
- Improving our communication methods to culturally and linguistically diverse communities and those generating the most garbage. Encouraging more waste diversion from landfill and better use of recycling and waste services
- Planning for our future waste needs and looking at alternatives for waste disposal with the closure of landfill sites in the south east of Melbourne
- The need to review and consult the community sooner rather than later with sustainable future management of the rising costs of waste
- Seeking best practice hard waste collections and enforcement of current waste disposal practices
- Leading the way for the community and increasing environmentally sustainable waste management practices and purchasing in Council operations
- Best practice new kerbside waste and recycling contracts, including opportunities for multi-Council contracts to improve economics, service efficiencies and environmental outcomes
- Strategically aligning contracts for best value and where needed locking in certainty. Especially where recent commodity fluctuations of recycling have impacted cost
- Increasing Council's use of recycled materials as part of our role in developing a circular recycling economy
- Maximising the recovery of potentially recyclable or reusable items from the waste stream
- More focus on waste avoidance and raising community awareness on recycling right.



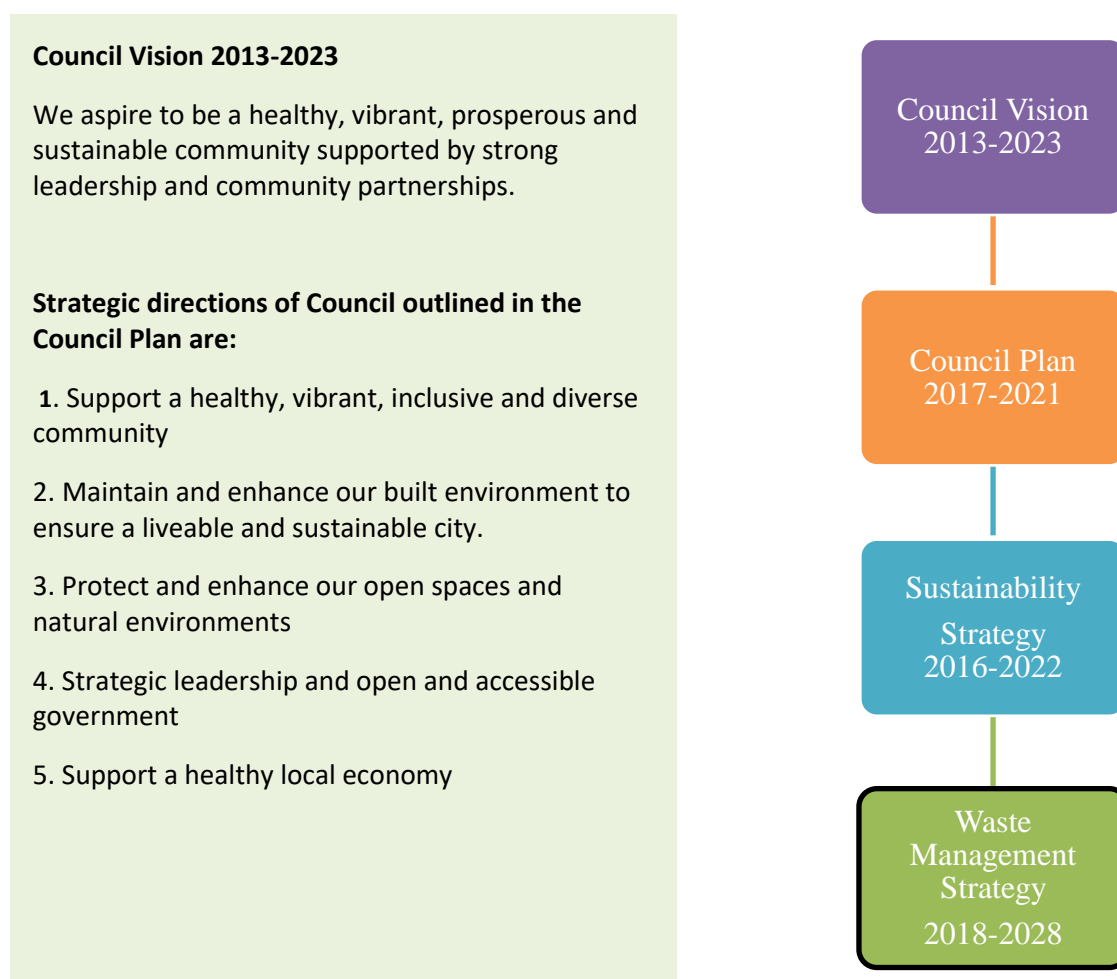


## 2 Introduction

Rubbish to Resource! Waste Management Strategy 2018 – 2028 replaces and expands on the seven year Waste Management Plan 2011. It is guided by Council’s Vision and Plan and the Whitehorse City Council Sustainability Strategy 2016 - 2022.

This strategy identifies issues and challenges around waste and determines to expand on the platform developed by the previous Waste Management Plan. It has identified further actions for minimising waste to landfill, maximising resource recovery as well as tackling contemporary challenges related to waste services, education, litter and advocacy.

**Figure 1 Council Vision**



The Whitehorse Sustainability Strategy 2016-2022 details Council’s six-year plan towards achieving priority sustainability outcomes. It sets a number of targets, including diversion of 65 percent of kerbside waste from landfill by 2022. To work towards this, it outlines a number of actions over three time periods.



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**Table 1 Actions relating to waste from Sustainability Strategy 2016-2022**

Continued actions from existing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• continue to promote sustainable gardening and composting/worm farms through the Council website, Whitehorse Leader, Whitehorse News, workshops, events and other relevant media platforms</li><li>• continue to implement Council projects in accordance with Council's engineering design and construction environmental guidelines which specifies use of recycling materials</li><li>• continue to offer a range of incentives to the community to encourage greater waste reduction to landfill and increase resource recovery</li><li>• progressively implement Council's Business Plan for the Whitehorse Recycling and Waste Centre to increase the recovery of waste (particularly construction and demolition waste and other priority streams)</li><li>• review Council's environmental data management system to ensure accurate data capture</li><li>• provide occupants of Council leased buildings with information on waste management</li><li>• continue to liaise with organisations such as MWRRG and advocate to Federal and State Government</li><li>• continue to support local schools' visits to recycling facilities and recycling/waste reduction projects.</li></ul>
New actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• implement targeted litter campaigns identified in waste management plans</li><li>• expand Council's existing food waste avoidance/reduction program in line with best practice</li><li>• expand Council's recycling education materials and community engagement programs (particularly those with access to funding).</li></ul>
Actions to be considered as part of mid-term review (2019-2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• consider offering businesses incentives to improve waste diversion practices</li><li>• develop and implement a recycling strategy for public spaces in Whitehorse (e.g. consideration of additional public place recycling bins and other measures to increase recycling within public spaces)</li><li>• consider possible composting or recycling options for the excess leaves collected during autumn heavy leaf period.</li></ul>

While thought possible at the time, 65 percent diversion of waste from landfill was a target set out in past state waste policy *Towards Zero Waste*. Recent policy has recognised this target isn't achievable with current waste infrastructure and has moved away from this figure, instead with more focus on waste as a resource, building infrastructure and markets to capture and recover materials. Ahead of the mid-term review of the Sustainability Strategy 2016-2022 in 2019 this Waste Management Strategy 2018-2028 elaborates on and identifies new actions and targets.



### 3 Council's past strategy performance

Outcomes of the *Whitehorse Waste Management Plan 2011* were reviewed in 2016. The review indicated the plan was well implemented with more than 87 percent of the recommended strategies and actions completed.

Key achievements over the life of the plan were:

- a 30 percent reduction in complaints since the introduction of the new kerbside collection contracts in 2012
- 82 percent of households downsizing kerbside garbage bins from 120 Litres to 80 Litres
- a 15 percent reduction in tonnes of garbage collected per household by 2016
- increased volumes of recycling collected from the introduction of 360 Litre recycling bins
- increased uptake of garden organics collection services by the Whitehorse community (around 62 percent serviced in 2016)
- participation in the development of the south-eastern regional contract for a regional composting facility which proposes to collect food waste
- switch to an 'at call' more flexible and accessible hard waste collection from the area-based collection service
- expansion of the material range accepted at the Whitehorse Recycling and Waste Centre (WRWC) in response to stewardship programs for fluoro-tubes, domestic batteries, x-rays and televisions
- developed and implemented annual waste and recycling education plans.

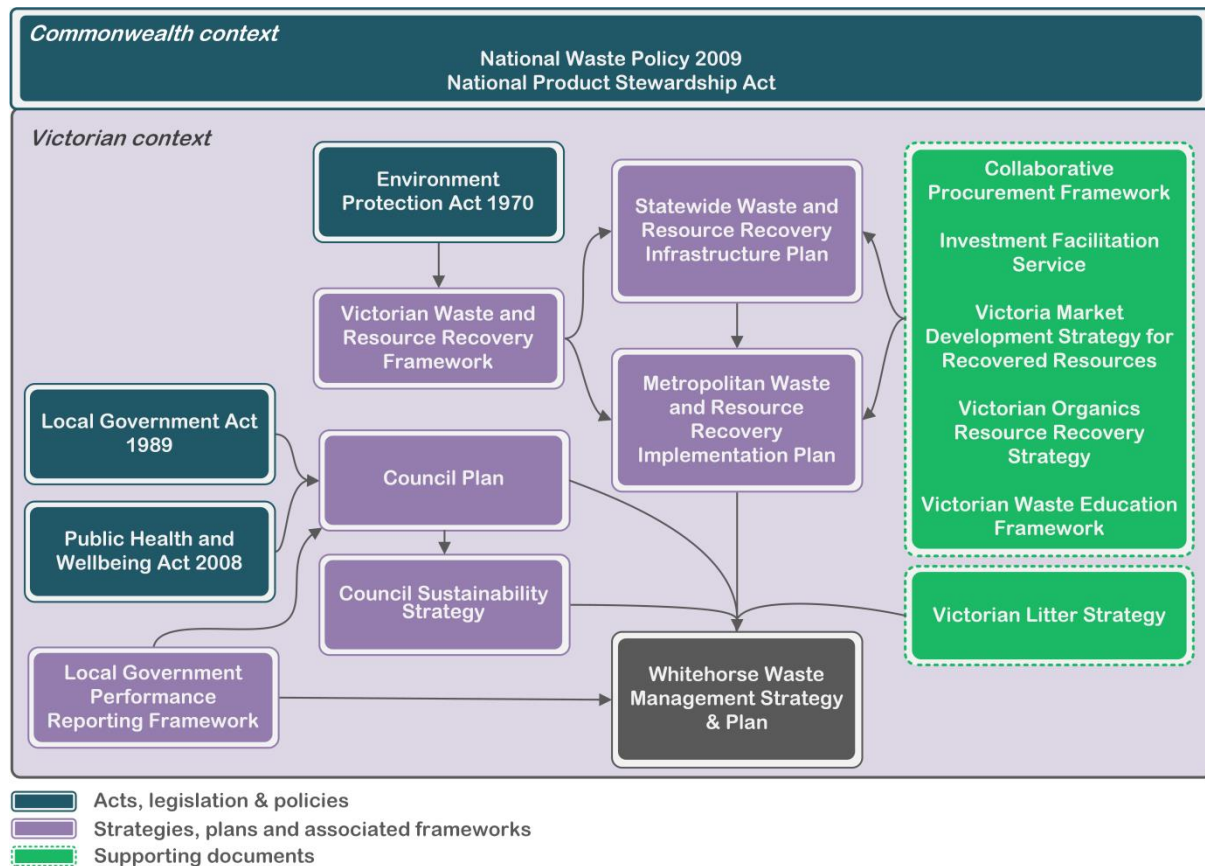
Council achieved a waste diversion rate at around 50 percent at the time of the review. Since then it has stayed close to this but fell short of the revised waste target set at 55 percent. This was mainly due to the state-wide trends where we are seeing recycling weights reducing. Packaging manufacturers are reducing material content needed in items and traditionally heavy recycling materials, including newspapers and glass are being taken up less by consumers. This in many respects is considered a positive environmental outcome, however it impacts the calculated rate of diversion of waste away from landfill.

## 4 Context

### 4.1 Legislation and policy

With consumption rising, waste is an issue gaining much attention globally. Council's efforts to manage waste sit within a wider strategic framework at national, state, and more local government levels.

**Figure 2 Relationship of Whitehorse Waste Management Strategy and Plan with policies**



## 4.1.1 National

Key policy documents include:

- *Less Waste, More Resources* (2009)
- *National Product Stewardship Act*.

In response to China banning imports of mixed plastics and paper for recycling in 2018, *The National Waste Policy: Less Waste, More Resources* review has been brought forward two years. The Commonwealth Government have also announced a target of 100 per cent of Australian packaging to be recyclable, compostable or reusable by 2025 which is a positive step. The Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) which is a co-regularity collective of companies in the supply chain and government have gradually been working on packaging design to reduce the environmental impacts and are expected to deliver this. Council supports much needed advancements in this area and shared responsibility by industry that produces packaging or products.

There is a *National Product Stewardship Act 2011* which manages the impact of different materials through a shared responsibility model, along with those who produce, sell, use and dispose of that product. Currently, schemes are in place for end-of-life tyres, mercury-containing lamps, mobile phones, paint, televisions and computers, and waste oil. Additional waste types may be introduced in the future, as the Act is reviewed every 5 years. The current Act is under review and Council does and will continue to play an important role in advocating on behalf of the community during consultation.



Container Deposit Schemes (CDS) which incentivise disposing of empty beverage containers for cash (or equivalent) are quickly becoming an approach on a national level. As of 2018 all states except Tasmania and Victoria are implementing or planning to implement the Container Deposit Scheme. Council in principle supports such a scheme for Victoria. If executed well, this will likely have positive outcomes for recycling and litter.

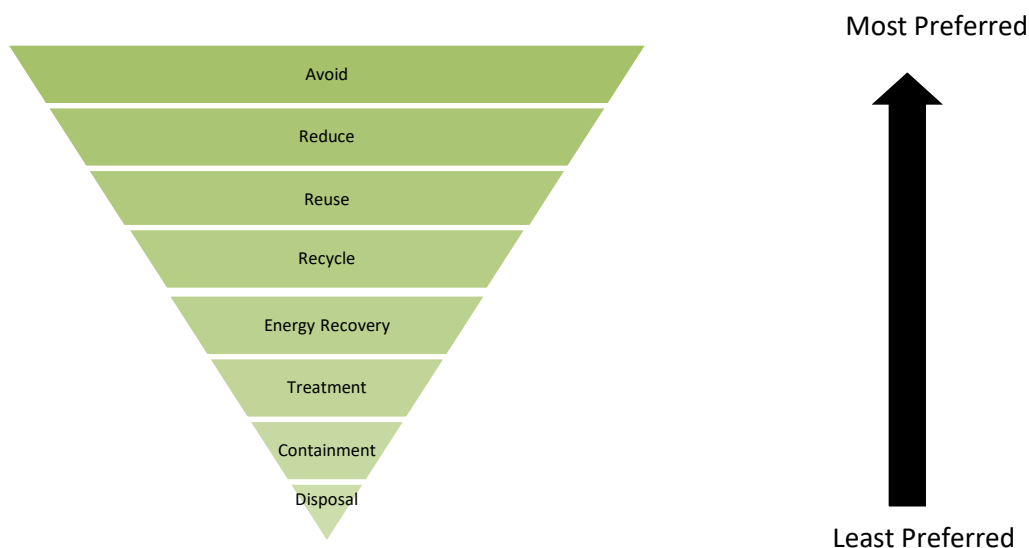
### 4.1.2 State-wide and Metro Melbourne

Key policy documents include:

- *Environment Protection Act 1970 (EP Act)*
- *State-wide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan (2015-44)*
- *Victorian Organics Resource Recovery Strategy (2015)*
- *Victorian Waste Education Strategy (2016)*
- *Victorian Market Development Strategy for Recovered Resources (2016)*
- *Victorian Litter Strategy 2012-14 (2014)*
- *Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan.*

The EP Act is the primary legislation for environmental protection in Victoria. It establishes all important guiding principles of environmental protection and statutory framework. It also outlines the Waste hierarchy which is the preferred approach to waste management.

**Figure 3 Waste hierarchy**



In recent years the Victorian Government has updated, revised or developed a number of strategy documents relating to waste. These documents set directions for the next 5-10 years and have shifted away from waste disposal and more towards rethinking waste as a resource. There is particular focus on reducing disposal of electronic waste (e-waste) which is the fastest growing waste stream, plastics, food waste and moving towards more Advanced Waste and Resource Recovery Technologies (AWRRT). Proposed bans by



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the State Government over this strategy period on single use plastic bags and e-waste to landfill will likely require additional resources, education and awareness from Council in order to support the success of these initiatives.

Victorian Policy doesn't support the practice of landfill into the future. Melbourne's expanding population, land availability and planning restrictions prohibit new landfills being established. The economics also aren't sustainable into the future. To discourage the practice and incentivise alternatives, each tonne of waste buried carries a Victorian Government imposed levy. This increased significantly in 2011 from \$9 to \$44 per tonne and continues to increase each year. The landfill levy is currently \$64.30 per tonne which represents more than 50 percent of the cost of disposal to landfill. This sets a real challenge for continuing to manage waste for our community into the future.

**Table 2 Costs of landfill levy from 2010/11 – 2018/19 for municipal waste**

Year	Cost (\$/ tonne)
2010 - 2011	\$9
2011 - 12	\$44
2012 - 13	\$48.40
2013 - 14	\$53.20
2014 - 15	\$58.50
2015 - 16	\$60.70
2016 - 17	\$62.03
2017 - 18	\$63.28
2018 - 19	\$64.30

#### 4.1.3 Local Government

Key policy documents:

- the *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Council Plan*
- *relevant Council Strategies.*

There are seven resource recovery groups across Victoria, which provide strategic support to Councils. Whitehorse City Council is one of the 31 member Councils which are part of the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group (MWRRG). Some of their work includes: coordinating and managing particular



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programs and contracts, commissioning research, facilitating information sharing and advising on better practice for waste management.

Council supplies waste services to the community under relevant acts and responsibilities to ensure local amenity and consideration of local issues. Along with the MWRRG and the other 30 Councils there is regular collaboration to get the best collective outcomes for our communities. This includes advocacy around policy and practices that are in the best interest for our community.

### 4.2 What's within Council's control and influence

Managing waste has many challenges and it requires commitment from our communities, state government, neighbouring councils and private industry for success.

Some challenges are broader issues outside Council's direct control. We recognise that to achieve desired outcomes for the future we need to foster partnerships and support our community. We will continue to remain focused on what we can control and influence, keeping up with industry developments and challenges, taking up new opportunities and participating in consultation and advocacy where possible.

#### Outside of Council's control

- Technologies available
- Market changes and industry capability
- Consumption practices
- Government legislation and policy that's adopted.

#### Advocacy opportunities

- Some State and federal policy
- Regional waste infrastructure
- Collaboration with industry on Council needs and requirements.

#### Within Council control

- Design , implementation and delivery of Council waste services.
- Influence community engagement and behaviour through education and awareness.
- Planning for future for waste and recovery .
- Council waste infrastructure including the use of smart technology, recovery opportunities and services and technologies used.
- Participating in joint opportunities to secure larger regional facilities.

### 4.3 Overview of Whitehorse

- We are located approximately 15 km east of Melbourne
- Characterised by tree-lined residential streets, with bushland settings and higher density living around Box Hill
- We have a mixture of small and busy shopping precincts and are home to a number of tertiary education institutions
- We estimate to have more than 66,000 households



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- Our estimated residential population is around 172,800
- We are culturally diverse, almost 40 percent of residents born overseas.
- Most common languages spoken other than English are Mandarin, Cantonese, Greek, Italian and Vietnamese
- We are made up of 17 percent Seniors aged 65 and over and that is expected to increase to almost 19 percent of the total population by 2036
- We are abundant with families. 35 percent of our households are couples with children
- Around 75 percent of our households are detached separate dwellings
- Traditionally our homes are mostly owner occupier.

Figure 4 Map of Whitehorse Council area



### 4.3.1 We're changing

We're growing quickly. It's expected our population will increase by 13 percent by 2036. More people will mean more waste unless we make real changes to the way we consume, manage our waste in our households, business, and Council operations.

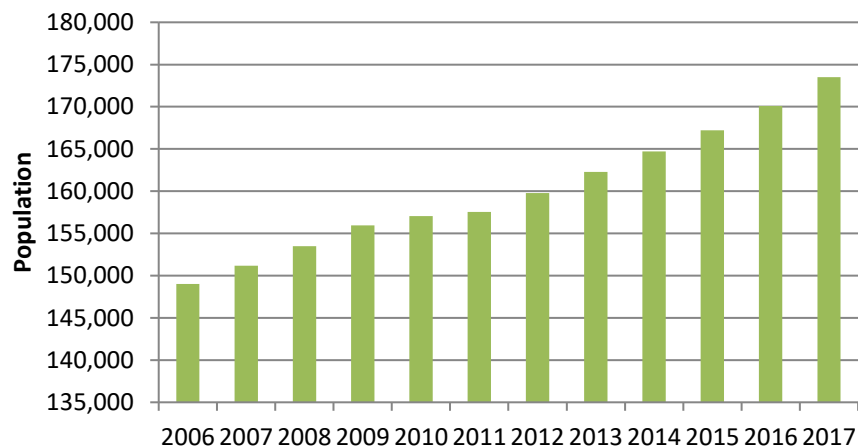
- We are seeing more medium and higher density living, which has increased by 7.4 percent since 2011
- Separate detached homes which have traditionally made up our neighbourhood, over time are being replaced in favour of terrace, townhouses, flats, units and apartments
- Reflective in the change in housing, more of our properties are being rented (3.4 percent increase since 2011).



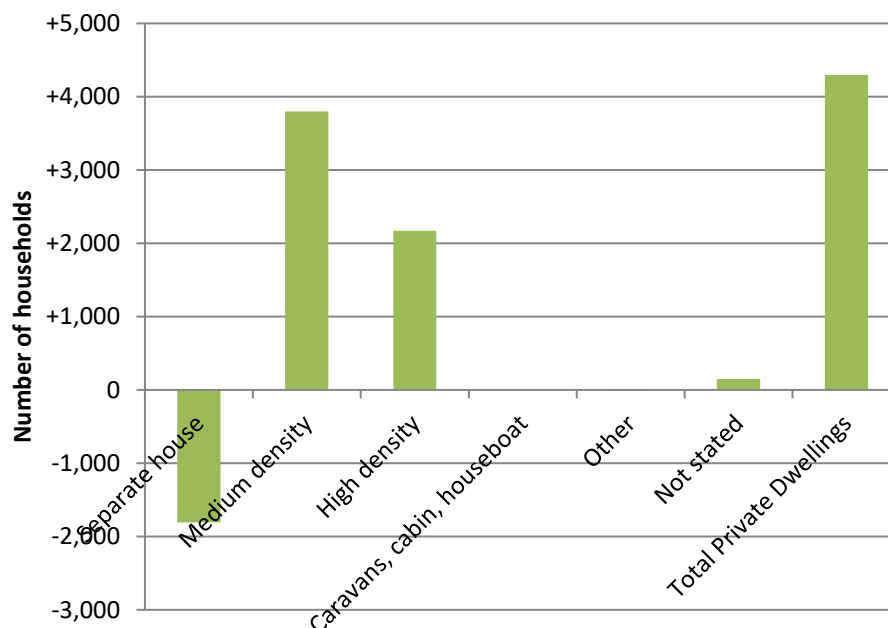
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**Figure 5 Estimated Whitehorse population over time. Source Australian Bureau of Statics, Census of Population and Housing**



**Figure 6 Change in number of Whitehorse households from 2011 to 2016. Source Australian Bureau of Statics, Census of Population and Housing**



Our community is changing too. We have:

- an emerging young population including those in tertiary education (18-24 years) and in the workforce (24-35 years)
- growing number of young families
- growing number of group households.
- growing number of lone person households.





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### 4.4 Our waste and recycling services

#### Household kerbside services

Council provides a weekly collection of waste and fortnightly collection of recycling and garden waste on alternate fortnights from each household. In 2017 this was to more than 65,000 households.

82 percent of households use the 80 litre standard garbage bin.

Cost of services including collection and disposal is included in Council's general rates. Larger garbage bins and garden organics bins are available for a fee.

All garbage collected from the kerbside is currently sent to Hallam landfill for disposal. Recycling is sent for sorting recovery at Visy's sorting facility in Springvale. Garden Waste is composted at a site in Dandenong South.

**Table 3 Bin numbers and frequency for Council's kerbside residential services**

Bin type	Bin size	Estimated bins serviced	Collection frequency
Garbage	80 L	49,875	Weekly
	120 L	12,750	
	240 L	805	
Recycling	240 L	73,800	Fortnightly
	360 L		
Garden organics	140 L	39,700	Fortnightly
	240 L		

**Table 4 Contracts for Collection and disposal of Councils kerbside collections**

Service	Contractor	Start	Length (yrs)	End	Extension options (yrs)
Garbage collection	JJ Richards	July 2012	7	June 2019	1+1
Recycling collection	Visy	July 2012	7	June 2019	1+1
Green waste collection	JJ Richards	July 2012	7	June 2019	1+1
At call hard waste collection	WM Waste Management	July 2012	7	June 2019	1+1
Garbage disposal, landfill	Suez	April 2011	6	April 2019	2+2
Recycling processing	Visy	July 2012	7	June 2019	1+1
East organics processing contract	Biogro & Enviromix	Sep 2018	15	June 2033	Up to 5 yrs



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<b>Business kerbside service</b>	The kerbside garbage and recycling collections are also extended to small and medium sized local businesses and community organisations. Larger businesses and organisations who produce high volumes of waste, for which Council's service is not suited engage one of many private waste collections contractors who operate locally.
<b>Hard and Green Waste Collection</b>	<p>Hard waste and garden prunings are collected on an 'at call' basis. Council offers two free collections per financial year. Additional collections are available for a fee.</p> <p>Hard waste is any larger general household waste that will not fit in a kerbside bin. This is usually furniture, mattresses, whitegoods etc.</p>
<b>Renew Once a year collection</b>	Once a year collections of reusable household goods and clothing collected from kerbside recycling bins (Renew service). This once a year collection is complemented by a drop-off event for larger reusable goods such as furniture and white goods at a nominated facility within Council. The last few years this has operated from Council's Operations Centre in Box Hill South.
<b>Whitehorse Recycling and Waste Centre (WRWC)</b>	<p>Council owns and operates the Recycling and Waste Centre, located opposite the corner of Burwood Highway and Morack Road, Vermont South. It's open daily from 6:30am to 4:00pm, 7 days per week, all year round except for Christmas Day and Easter Friday.</p> <p>The centre receives materials from commercial and industrial sources (70 percent) and the rest from domestic and other Council services, including street sweepings, illegal dumping collections, public place collections, etc.</p> <p>Around 30 percent of all material deposited is recycled; the remaining is transported to landfills in various locations across Melbourne for disposal.</p> <p>A range of recyclable materials are supported by product stewardship programs and accepted free of charge. A fee applies for other materials.</p>
<b>Public bins</b>	<p>Public litter and recycling bins are located on shopping strips, in parks and recreation areas. In general, this litter consists of food waste, packaging, animal waste and cigarette butts. All litter from public bins is sent to landfill.</p> <p>Some public recycling bins are available in certain locations such as shopping strips and open spaces, but often these can be highly contaminated, which makes recycling material difficult.</p>
<b>Cleaning streets and public spaces</b>	Council provides services to ensure our streets are swept regularly and public spaces are kept clean.



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Dumped waste has been a continual battle which is consistent with other Councils in Metropolitan Melbourne. Our dumped rubbish services are carried out through:

- A reactive service which responds to customer requests to investigate and collect.
- A pro-active service in known problem or hot-spot areas.

Council community laws officers investigate instances, conduct letter drops and install education signage to help reduce the occurrence of illegally dumped waste.

Street sweeping and clearing of gross pollutant traps and litter baskets also occurs regularly.

### Drop off collections

Council accepts a number of recyclables such as household batteries and light globes at each Customer Service Centre in Nunawading, Box Hill and Forest Hill. This is only available to residents.

## 4.5 Our other waste responsibilities

Council jointly owns Clayton South Regional landfill which closed in November 2015. There are ongoing cost implications to Council from monitoring and management of the closed landfill.

Council offers a range of waste education programs and initiatives to encourage residents to minimise consumption and maximise recycling. Some most recent include:

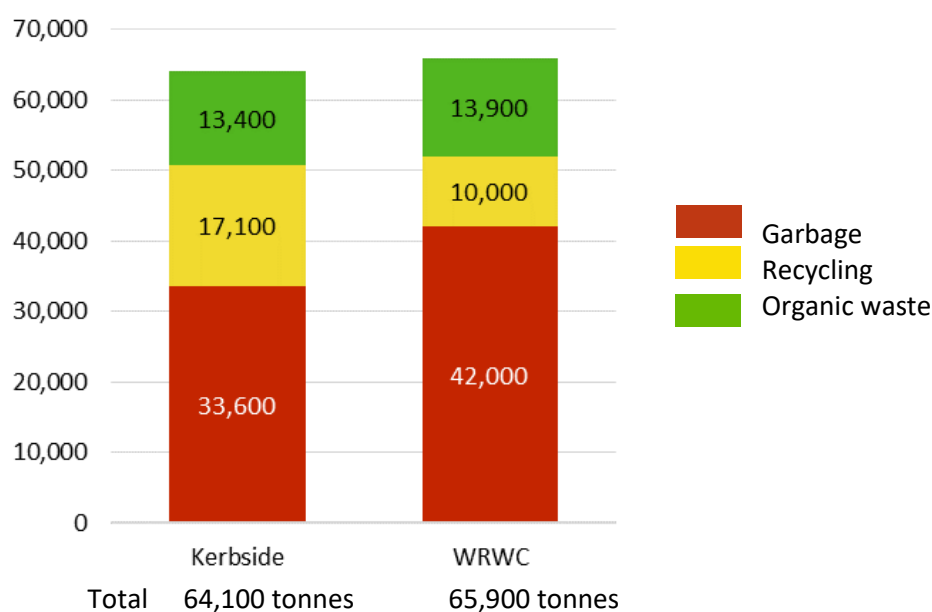
- Waste and recycling education support programs. Including for culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) school and community group sessions, materials recovery facility (MRF) tours, quarterly e-newsletters and other education resources through the Get it Right on Bin Night program
- Gold star recycling program. This rewards the community for correct use of the kerbside recycling bins following a bin inspection for prizes
- Home composting incentive program. Households can claim a \$30 rebate for purchasing home composting products worth up to \$100
- Love Food Hate Waste. This campaign encourages residents to avoid food waste
- Waste education videos and hard copy collateral that explain how to correctly use kerbside collection services including in different languages
- Other waste avoidance campaigns and events including Smarter Living series, Garage Sale Trail, Plastic Free July, and various waste education and themed events as part of Council's annual Sustainable Living week
- Community group and school waste education support, including: incursions and excursions, educational materials.

Council also supports state-wide waste initiatives including promotion of mobile *Detox Your Home* collections at other Councils for hazardous chemicals. There are currently no permanent collection points in Whitehorse.

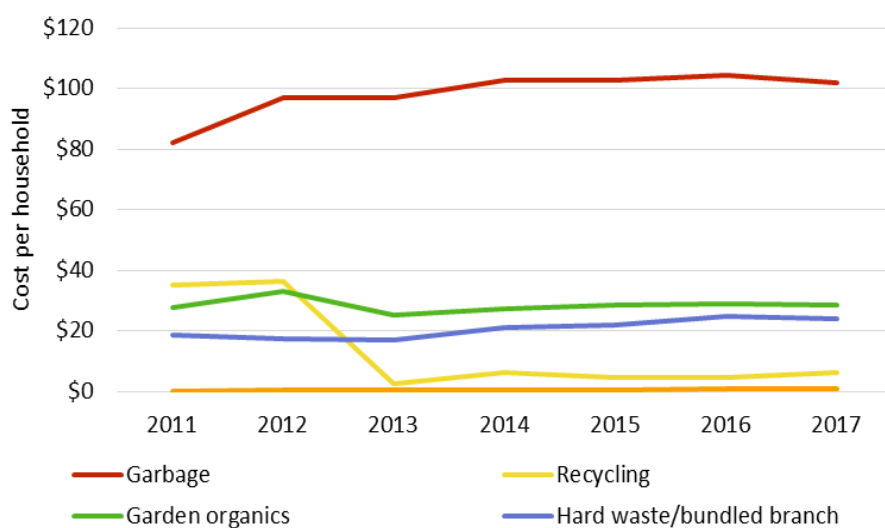
### 4.6 The waste picture now

- In 2017 our community generated around 130,000 tonnes of waste
- 50 percent was collected from kerbside services
- 50 percent from commercial and industrial sources from the Whitehorse Waste and Recycling Centre (WRWC), gross pollutant traps, illegal dumping, public place collections and street sweepings

**Figure 7 Tonnes of Council kerbside collections and the Whitehorse Waste and Recycling Centre**



**Figure 8 Costs of Council's kerbside waste services per household**

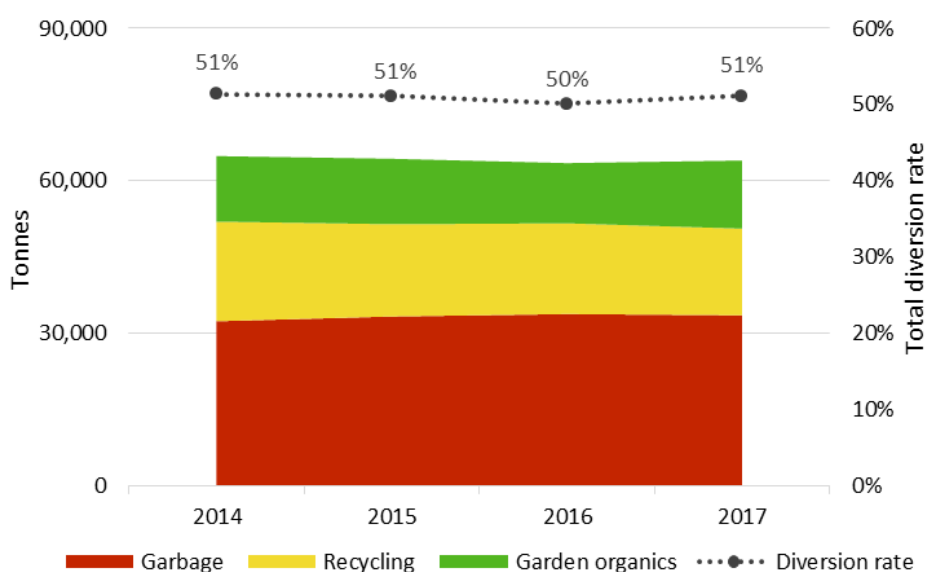


Kerbside garbage is the most costly service with collection and disposal accounting for approximately 56 percent of the total waste costs in 2017. Disposal of waste alone being the most costly component at around \$3.5 million out of a total \$11.8 million in 2017. Costly waste disposal has consistently been the trend for the last seven years, increasing over time along with the landfill levy. For recycling, the cost per household reduced in 2013 due to the income earned from recyclables. However, following market uncertainty arising from Chinese import bans in 2018 this situation will not continue into the future. Income received by Council from its contractor to process recyclable material will cease during 2018. All other services have remained fairly consistent.

## 4.6.1 Telling the full story

Our community is doing well diverting approximately 51 percent of kerbside waste from landfill for a number of years, which is well above the state average of 45 percent. This is a great effort considering recycling by weight (tonnes) is decreasing due to trends towards lighter weight packaging. The introduction of the standard smaller 80L bin in 2013 has been a big contributor to this with a steady reduction in our garbage.

**Figure 9 Total waste generated and diverted from kerbside bins 2014-17**

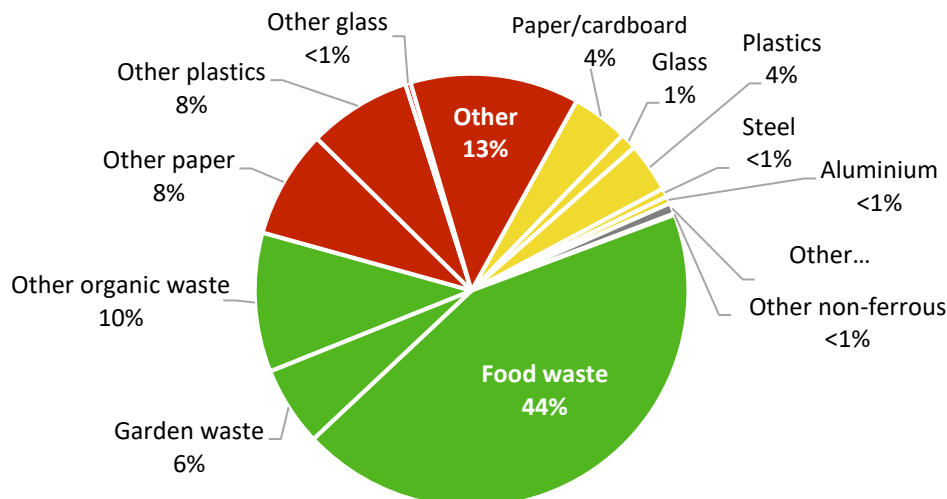


However, this may not be telling the full story. With growth we are seeing more traditional separate homes in our neighbourhoods being replaced with apartments which often, due to planning, space limitations, traffic and other restrictions, have communal or private waste collections. Amongst other issues, this means we don't necessarily have all the data on how much waste is generated by our community. A typical separate home which Council can easily service, loses on average 10 percent of recyclable material in garbage, however for apartments this goes up to 42 percent.



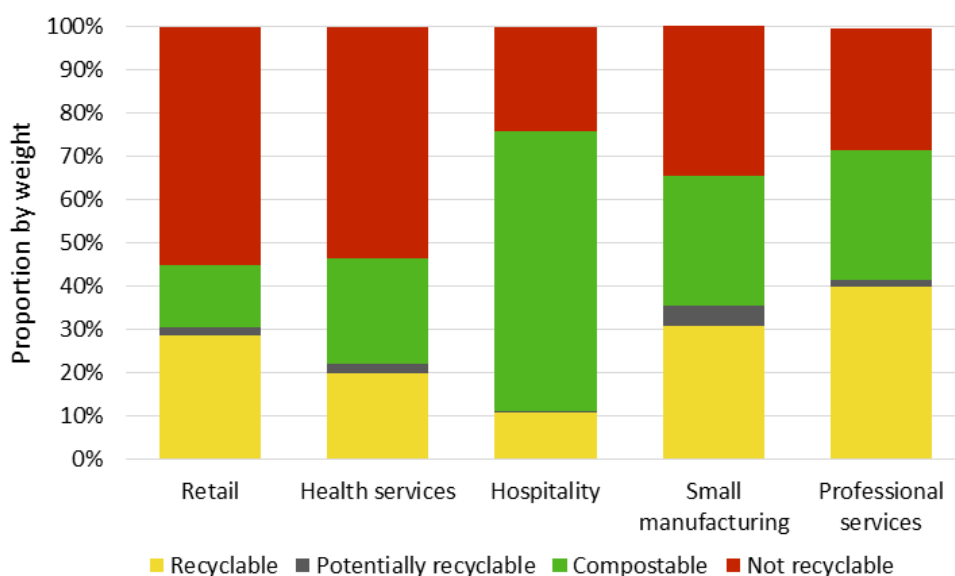
## 4.6.2 We throw away lots of organic waste

Figure 10 Residential kerbside garbage bin audit results, 2015



Our kerbside garbage bins contain 44 percent food waste, while all organic waste collectively adds up to 60 percent. This is higher than the Victorian average which is around 35-38 percent for food waste and around 50 percent for all organics. Although 60 percent of our community have the optional garden waste bin, there is a real opportunity to do better.

Figure 11 Commercial garbage bin audit results, 2013

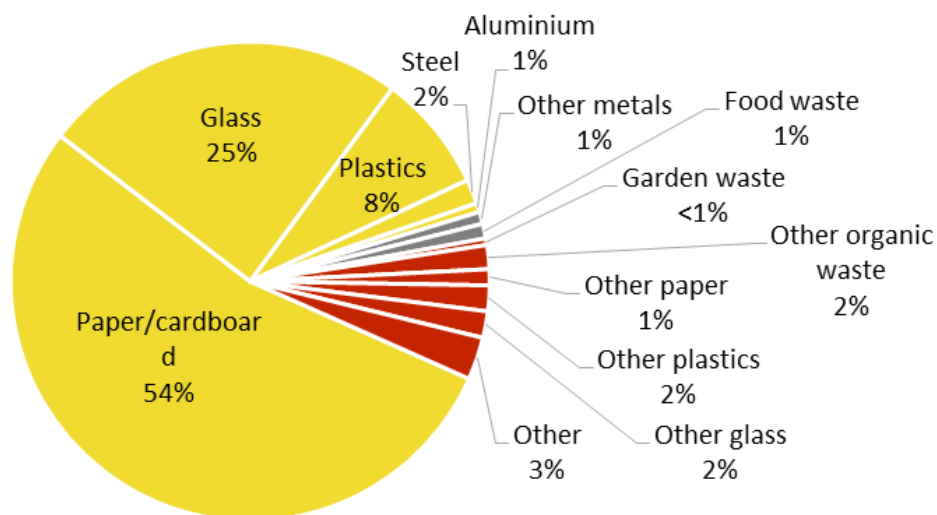


Businesses that Council services, also have varying proportions of food waste and recycling in their garbage bins, which highlights future opportunities.

### 4.6.3 Our recycling bins contain the wrong things

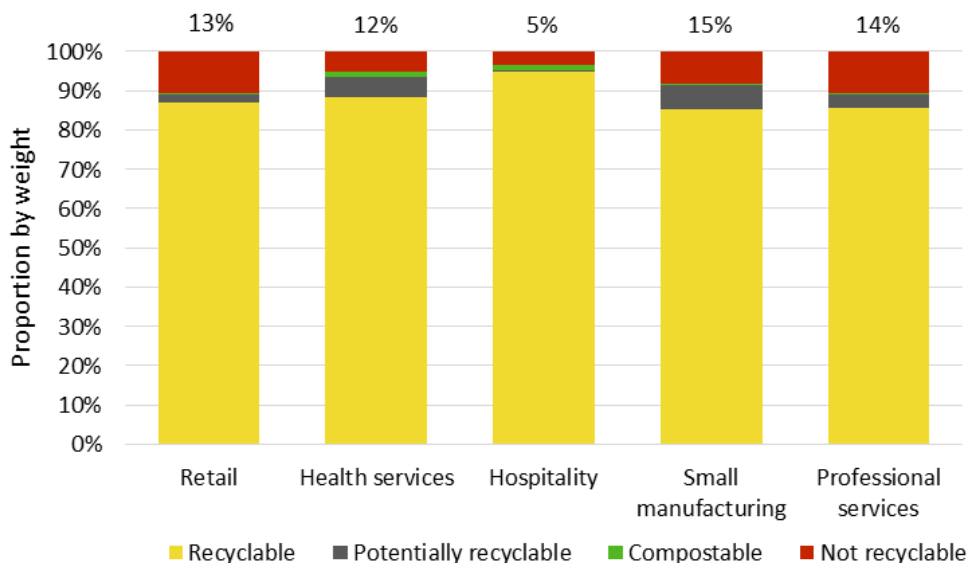
Of what we put in the recycling bins, around 11 percent is wrong (contaminate) which is behind the rest of Victoria (2014-15 averaged 5.6 percent) and way above the preferred industry level of 3-5 percent. We need to do better. Mainly this is organic waste, non-recyclable paper, plastics, glass, wood/timber and textiles. Generally bin contamination rates are higher in apartments at about 25 percent, compared to separate households at 11 percent. We should be conscious of how our neighbourhoods are changing to more medium and high density development and how this will impact upon the future, and do what we can to mitigate it.

**Figure 12 Residential kerbside recycling bin audit results, 2015**



In our kerbside green waste bins, it's a very different story with only two percent contamination. Those who choose the service, who often are separate households, are using it well.

**Figure 13 Commercial kerbside recycling bin audit results, 2013**



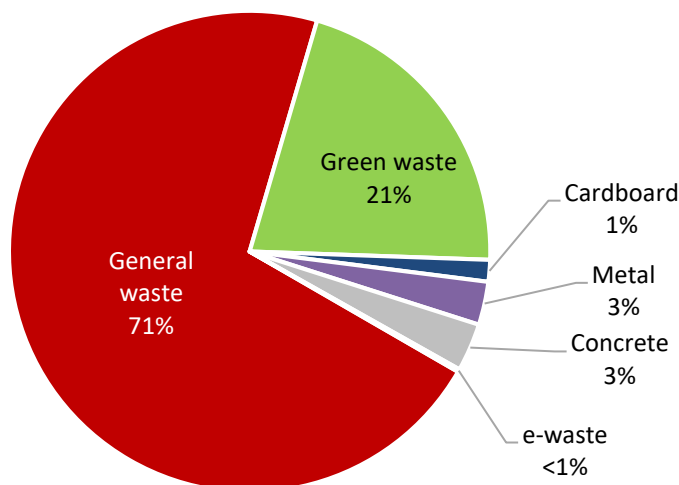
For businesses that use a Council service their recycling bins have varying levels of contamination, which in 2013 looked all relatively high except hospitality.

#### 4.6.4 *There are more opportunities*

While our community are trying to do what they can, there are still opportunities for us to help them do better.

The Whitehorse Recycling and Waste Centre collects and recycles a lot of materials but by weight 71 percent of material is still general waste. Due to safety issues it is difficult to determine the composition of material that enters the disposal pit, which is where waste is deposited. However, we believe we can be doing more to reduce waste to landfill into the future with some development of the site. Increased infrastructure and space allowance, which is currently an issue, will open up opportunities. We will continue to improve the site where we can to increase recycling.

**Figure 14 2017 Waste generation by material at the Whitehorse Recycling and Waste Centre**



We could be doing more to encourage and facilitate more recycling. In our hard waste services we can work towards diverting more away from landfill. Away from home in our open spaces, shopping areas and facilities we can be capturing more recycling and encourage our community to do the right thing by not littering or dumping. There could be more investigation and investment in community recycling points and innovative ideas to increase recycling and reuse opportunities. More guidance and standards on where and what type of bins should be located in our shopping strips, parks or playgrounds.

We have many Council facilities and events where we can be leading the charge and setting the standards of good waste minimisation and recycling practices.

### 4.7 What our community told us

In 2018 Council engaged community engagement specialists to assist with understanding our communities concerns around waste, to help develop this strategy. A number of engagement activities were conducted from February-June 2018 to inform the development of the strategy and again to comment on the draft from September – October 2018. Activities included listening posts, drop-ins, workshops, interviews, surveys (online and hard copy) and online ideas forums.

Our community are passionate about the environmental issues around waste and are looking to Council to take leadership in addressing these, but recognise that solutions require work from individuals and with others.



### 4.7.1 What we heard

#### First phase - Developing the Strategy

Our community:

- Report high levels of satisfaction with Council's Waste Management services
- Want households to take greater responsibility in reducing and managing waste
- Have growing concern about the impact of high density development on waste
- Want better recycling outcomes
- Have concerns about the level of food waste.

We also heard that our community understand there are complexities with the cost of waste. They are open to paying more for waste services that reduce waste to landfill rather than reducing services. However, residents believe that efforts should be made to reduce waste where possible first. The community also responded that those who produce more waste should pay more.

#### Second phase – Commenting on the draft

Our community:

- Have strong support for the overarching targets and priority outcomes of this strategy
- Want Council and the community to focus on avoidance and prevention of waste first
- Believe education and communication are important for the success of this strategy
- Are confident that the targets of this strategy can be achieved if Council maintains its focus and the community plays its part
- Wanted more ambitious targets and timeframes or justification for targets
- Wanted clearer actions and terminology that spoke to them.

## 5 Challenges and opportunities

### 5.1 Increased urbanisation and Multi-unit developments

Whitehorse is becoming more densely populated, especially in the Box Hill and Burwood area with a rapid increase in high rise unit developments and apartments. This puts pressure on waste infrastructure, and with a planning system in Victoria that doesn't always result in best practice waste management for multi-unit developments, this brings about a unique set of issues including:

- Traffic congestion and access issues for collection of waste services
- Limited available space for bins or hard waste
- Apartment buildings that have not been designed to make it easy for residents to recycle
- A high percentage of renters and people that move often
- Poor bin presentation practices that impact collection and neighbourhood amenity
- Poorly used bin areas that attract dumping
- Loss of recyclables in garbage.





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Although Council has been progressively trying to tackle the issues, more needs to happen. We will continue to advocate for better state planning systems and work closely with planners, developers and management bodies to proactively build capacity and capability around waste. We will do more to underpin local laws, investigate and enforce where people aren't doing the right thing.

### **5.2 Changing community**

Our community is quickly changing and we need to keep up. We have more students, young families and young professionals choosing to call Whitehorse home. With busy lifestyles, and through establishing and upgrading their homes, they have the potential to generate a lot of waste. We need to find new and exciting ways to educate and engage with our community. At the same time we have an increasing population of seniors who have specific needs.

Our community are culturally and linguistically diverse and over time are becoming more so, with overseas arrivals reaching all-time high numbers in the last five years. This presents a range of challenges in and around waste. New arrivals can be unfamiliar with Australian waste and litter practices and services. Effectively communicating and engaging around what can seem like complex issues surrounding waste even for native English speakers presents a challenge for Council. Our community reports slightly higher numbers of speaking language other than English and English not well or at all (7.5 percent) compared with Greater Melbourne (5.6 percent). Council will communicate and educate our community in ways that suit their needs and responds to new trends and changing demographics.

### **5.3 Minimising and disposing of garbage in the future**

Minimising garbage in Whitehorse with our growth, change in community and way of living will be a challenge in the next 10 years.

We believe in leading the way for our community by continuing and expanding our commitment to reduce waste to landfill. We will:

- Empower our community to do the right thing
- Lead the way by setting an example to our community and seeking better ways to track and reduce waste in Council operations
- Support the local economy and recycling industry by purchasing green and recycled products
- Ensure that Council events and facilities look to reduce waste, especially single use plastics
- Use education and awareness approaches that engage those who are generating the most waste.

Although we anticipate this will help, it's unlikely it will be enough. Capacity in what landfill there is left in Melbourne, is quickly diminishing. Over half of the remaining landfills are set to close in the next 5-15 years and those in the South-East are set to run out of space sooner rather than later. To mitigate having to transport waste longer distances in the short term, which has negative environmental impacts and will likely incur additional costs, we will need to seek alternatives.

### **5.4 The rise of technology**

Electronic waste (e-waste) is the fastest growing waste stream in the country. In 2019 a proposed ban on these items to landfill will mean the way our community chooses to dispose of electronic items at the end of their useful life needs rethinking. Council's methods of collecting and storing e-waste will need to be



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increased and more support needs to come from State Government, manufacturers and the electronic recycling industry for our community during this change and into the future.

New and alternative technologies which dictate how well we can recover recyclable items and treat waste are quickly evolving. These will be key to us increasing recycling and reducing the reliance on landfill and mitigating the impacts of waste on the environment. We will embrace this moving forward, specifying innovation in Council contracts and working with others to ensure these technologies and facilities are available to us.

### **5.5 Changing economic conditions**

The global recycling industry for many years has relied on China importing and manufacturing recycled materials into new products. In 2018 China placed tighter restrictions on waste imports particularly of mixed plastics and paper that significantly impacted the sector locally. This has negatively impacted the commodity price of recyclables and put pressure on recyclers and Councils. Councils have changed from receiving money (income) for recycled material to having to pay for processing services. This shift could see more opportunities towards more viable local processing and a circular economic approach. A circular economy approach is one with better flow of materials from raw material providers, manufacturers and recyclers in a closed loop. Council supports local industry and a circular economic approach and will continue to advocate for better and affordable provision of services locally.

Rate capping introduced by the State Government in 2016 means there is increased pressure on Council's financial resources to deliver services. The cap was matched to the consumer price index (at 2-2.5 percent per year) and unfortunately waste costs even before the recycling crisis, were calculated to be beyond the rate cap (on average 4.5 percent). Whitehorse is one of only a few Councils in Victoria who don't have a separate waste service charge. 72 out of 79 Victorian Councils already have a separate waste services charge, while reasons vary this does include:

- A more clear way of showing ratepayers all of the kerbside waste and recycling service costs
- Allows for only those accessing Council waste services to pay for the services
- Allows Councils to better manage the highly variable costs of collecting and disposing of waste.

As the cost of providing waste services and infrastructure is increasing consistently above inflation, we will have to find new ways to pay.

Future labour, fuel and landfill costs and closures over the next 10 years as well as changes in the recycling and waste industry will likely continue to negatively impact costs. Council will explore a waste service charge to align our waste services and infrastructure needs with our community's expectations, so our neighbourhoods and environment are sustainably managed for the future. We will work with the Essential Services Commission (ESC) who are an independent regulator that administer the rate capping system to ensure such a proposed change is clear and considering our community.

### **5.6 Climate change emissions and organic waste**

Although waste in landfill eventually breaks down, the process of covering and compaction means any organic waste including garden or food breaks down slowly. This releases methane, which is a potent greenhouse gas 20 times stronger than carbon dioxide. These emissions contribute to the wider issues of climate change. Home composting is a great step in the right direction. It reduces emissions from organic



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waste in landfill, with the added benefit of reduced environmental impact of transporting waste to landfill or recycling facilities. However, we understand this isn't practical for all of our community with space and lifestyle restrictions. We will continue to provide support for our community to compost at home to get organics out of their garbage bin. We will also look to implement a food and organics waste collection service sooner rather than later in line with availability of those services through Council's contracts.

### **5.7 Continuous improvements to services**

Although the rate of satisfaction with Council's waste services has remained high over the years we need to continue to ensure that Council's waste and recycling services reflect the changing needs of our community. Better technologies in capturing recyclables and data and monitoring contractor and resident waste performance is quickly advancing and we need to utilise these to see that we stay ahead. We will foster more continuous improvement in Council's waste services, systems, processes and pursue more innovative approaches to achieve our targets while keeping costs minimal. We will pursue partnerships and contracts with emphasis on technology and innovation.

Where it's feasible and with the highest impact we will increase the opportunities to expand items for recycling. In our hard waste we will look for best practice and options to divert more away from landfill. With illegal dumping in our neighbourhoods, which is often confused with hard waste, and has been a rising problem for almost all Councils in Victoria, we will look to better educate, collect and enforce.

We will do more to investigate how the impact of our changing housing stock impacts our waste and what the best way of managing this is and will continue to be in the future.

## **6 The journey to get there**

To ensure that we are successful in managing waste and recycling services appropriately, we have to consider the long term. Some of the waste facilities that will need to be in place to reduce waste to landfill and increase the resources recovered for recycling are yet to be built. We will consider our current contracts and timing of new ones. There is flexibility in some contract arrangements with opportunities to extend or vary the processes, but for some contracts Council needs to lock into long-term processes simply to provide the facility operators certainty over time at an affordable processing cost. Typically, Council achieves this by partnering with other Councils in long-term contracts that deliver reliable services, treating large volumes of waste in an affordable manner. We must think now and work in a manner to get the best environmental and economic outcomes for our community.

We will align our waste collection contracts so that future opportunities for economies of scale can be sought and potential arrangements for collections of more materials can be worked through. We will look for alternatives to landfill and work with partners on Advanced Waste Resource and Recovery Technology (AWRRT) facilities to process what garbage we have left after maximising our recovery of resources.

We will continue to be a strong voice and advocate on behalf of our community on waste to all levels of government. We will continue our advocacy efforts to the State Government to provide more funding from the Sustainability Fund for investment back into waste and resource recovery initiatives.



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### 2018

Revised recycling processing contract in response to the China ban

15 year eastern organics processing contract commences with future potential of food waste

### 2019-2020

Multi- Council contract for processing residual waste (garbage) investigation and tenders sought

### 2019

Council's kerbside waste and recycling contracts expire (2 years extension option sought)

E-waste ban to landfill proposed

### 2020/2021

Possible Waste Service charge

### 2021

Council's current landfill contract expires

### 2021/2022

New suite of kerbside waste & recycling contracts. Possible introduction of Food organic and garden organics service (As part of eastern organics contract)

### 2023

Recycling processing contract expires, Potential partner metro-wide recycling processing contract option

### 2024

Advanced waste Resource Recovery Technology contract possibly commences

In order to tackle our challenges we will focus our efforts under the banner of five priorities outcomes.

### Priority outcome 1: Minimising our waste to landfill

Reducing the amount of waste that ends up in landfill which contributes harmful emissions, costs the community and is rapidly becoming scarce. While our efforts so far have seen our kerbside collections that end up in landfill better than the State average we want to continue in the right direction. Working collectively we can achieve a significant reduction in waste over the next 5 and 10 years. Prioritising avoidance of waste in the first instance and effectively educating and communicating will be key. Focusing our future efforts on reducing and diverting food waste which is a significant proportion of landfill waste generated.

### Priority actions for the next five years:

- We will participate in relevant national, regional and State-wide waste management programs that benefit the local community
- We will advocate and work with our partners to expand the range of materials and opportunities where items can be easily reused or recycled



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- We will increase our home composting rebate to \$50 and allow schools and community groups to participate to encourage more home and onsite composting
- We will explore opportunities to increase uptake of Council's garden organics services and raise awareness of benefits of keeping organics out of landfill in preparation for introduction of a food waste collection
- We will expand promotion of the benefits of home and onsite composting to the community as the preferred option to deal with food waste
- We will investigate kerbside food waste collections and develop services that will allow for maximum food waste diversion from households.

### **Priority outcome 2: Getting the maximum from our waste**

Getting the most benefit out of the waste we generate by reusing where possible and recycling right.

Ensuring what we are recycling is in the best possible state it can be to be used again. We want to reduce our contamination of recycling and encourage our community to do the right thing with their waste and litter. This will involve a shift in the thinking of recycling and waste as something to be dealt with and more as valuable resource which can be harnessed.

#### **Priority actions for the next five years:**

- We will progressively change all our kerbside bin lids to the Australian Standard for consistency and best use
- We will review our network of public recycling and litter bins and develop material to support their best use
- We will review our current bin inspection and rewards program to further assist those contaminating recycling and generating the most garbage, primarily through improved waste education
- We will undertake internal review of waste and recycling at Council-run or supported facilities for better services and use.
- We will recognise and reward our community to do the right thing, minimising waste and recycling right
- We will partner with and support community led litter and waste initiatives
- We will put more emphasis on educating and supporting residents and businesses to know how to recycle right.

### **Priority outcome 3: Leading our community in supporting best waste management**

Advocating for and demonstrating our commitment to waste minimisation and the best environmental outcomes. This includes in our Council operations and at our facilities and events which the community use day to day. We will set an example to our community and businesses. In the first two years of this strategy we will seek to better understand the waste we generate and how to avoid, reduce, and recycle. We need to use more recycled content products in Council operations. This supports a more closed loop circular economy supporting the recycling industry.

#### **Priority actions for the next five years:**

- We will expand our purchasing of recycled products in Council operations.





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- We will support Council staff to minimise waste and recycle right in staff induction and on-going work practices.
- We will improve our capture of waste and littering data so we can continue to measure our successes.
- We will advocate to all levels of government for better waste outcomes.
- We will reduce single use plastics at Council events and facilities.

### **Priority outcome 4: Using new technology and innovation to improve the way we do things**

Reviewing our waste services and making improvements to the way we do things with forward thinking vision will be key to our future success. The world is changing and through enhancing innovation, new technologies in our contracts and practices will be important to be a step above the game. This will enable us to achieve a better customer experience for our community and the best environmental outcomes overall.

#### **Priority actions for the next five years:**

- We will continue to capture methane gas for energy at our closed landfill in Clayton South and investigate forms of renewable energy as a future use of the site
- We will continue plan for our future waste needs including review our waste contracts to ensure better services and value to the community
- We will work with partners to explore the different advanced waste technologies to inform decisions and secure alternatives for waste that goes to landfill
- We will trial the use of smart compacting bins in some of our busy public spaces to reduce overflow and littering
- We will review bins at properties and update and improve Council systems with a focus on improving customer experience.

### **Priority outcome 5: Responding promptly to modern waste challenges**

Understanding the waste related challenges we will be facing in the future and adapting to these quickly will be essential to achieving the best waste outcomes for our community. Some waste issues are timely and these will change over time and we need to be responsive as they arise.

#### **Priority outcomes for the next five years:**

- We will review and consult our community on separating out the charging of waste services from our general rates to be clear and open about the cost of waste
- We will annually review our waste education plan with a focus on dumping, waste avoidance, reduction and contamination
- We will review and build on our guidelines to encourage best practice waste management within multi-unit developments
- We will increase waste and recycling education programs and forums for our planners and stakeholders for better waste outcomes in multi-unit developments
- We will investigate options for improved services to medium to high-density developments and targeted commercial areas



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- We will explore options to improve our diversion of hard waste and better respond to dumped rubbish
- We will regularly review and improve our waste and recycling communications materials and methods to ensure they suit the needs of our changing community
- We will review this action plan annually to ensure it covers timely issues and will do a major review at the mid-point of this strategy after five years.

## 6.2 What we will strive for

To measure our successes we will aim to achieve two overarching targets. These are set to be SMART in the context of waste in Whitehorse currently. SMART targets are specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic and time bound and work from baseline data that we know we have in order to see our progress.

Where we are now	Where we want to be by 2023	Where we want to be long term 2028	Justification
<b>51% waste from kerbside diverted from landfill</b>	Increase to 60%	Increase to 80%	Increase diversion in the short term is anticipated from a food waste and garden organics (FOGO) collection. Studies show a FOGO service in addition to other services previously implemented by Council could potentially help to boost diversion from landfill to around 60% in the first few years after implementation. Community behaviour change to the new system is likely to occur over time. Further diversion in 2028 will only be possible by using alternate waste technologies for further process the remaining garbage waste stream.
<b>11% recycling bin contamination rate</b>	Reduce by 40% to achieve a recycling bin contamination rate below 7%	reduce by 60% to achieve a recycling bin contamination rate below 5%	Contamination rates in bins fluctuate depending on the time of year, including a peak in levels during summer months. On average kerbside contamination has reduced by 1.02% from 2017-2018. Public and events bins will have different levels.



## Appendix

### 5 year Action plan

■ Planning
 ■ Implementation/monitoring
 ■ Advocacy

Priority outcome 1: Minimising our Waste to landfill		Timeframe					
		Year					
Actions		1	2	3	4	5	Further details
1	We will participate in relevant national, regional and State-wide waste management programs that benefit the local community						Including product stewardship schemes, Detox Your Home, e-waste to landfill ban, Clean Up Australia Day, National Recycling Week and similar events and programs
2	We will advocate and work with our partners to expand the range of materials and opportunities where items can be easily reused or recycled						This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>extra options in the kerbside recycling for soft plastics and other materials in line with contracts, available technologies and end markets for products</li><li>investigate possible innovation opportunities for recycling collection points or events with charities/social enterprise/ or community organisations</li><li>recycling difficult items in convenient locations including recycling banks or recycling vending machines</li><li>Increasing business recycling</li></ul>
3	We will increase our home composting rebate to \$50 and allow schools and community groups to participate to encourage more home and onsite composting						Terms and conditions of the current compost rebate will be updated allowing for three composters per school and community group to encourage composting on-site
4	We will explore opportunities to increase uptake of Council’s garden organics services and raise						This will include running targeted campaigns



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	awareness of benefits of keeping organics out of landfill in preparation for introduction of a food waste collection						
5	We will expand promotion of the benefits of home and onsite composting to the community as the preferred option to deal with food waste						This will help increase our community understanding of the environmental benefits
6	We will investigate kerbside food waste collections and develop services that will allow for maximum food waste diversion from households						Costs, benefits of service and how the service should be delivered will be determined as part of the review and planning

Priority outcome 2: Getting the maximum from our waste		Timeframe					
		Year					
Actions		1	2	3	4	5	Further details
7	We will progressively change all our kerbside bin lids to the Australian Standard for consistency and best use						Currently only some of our kerbside garbage bin lids are not the Australian standard (red)
8	We will review our network of public recycling and litter bins and develop material to support their best use						Including signs on bins
9	We will review our current bin inspection and rewards program to further assist those contaminating recycling and generating the most garbage, primarily through improved waste education						Audits of what is collected in the recycling trucks form various areas will help with this work



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10	We will undertake internal review of waste and recycling at Council-run or supported facilities for better services and use						This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of waste in the first place</li> <li>Improving waste practices</li> <li>Signs and education</li> </ul>
11	We will partner with and support community led litter and waste initiatives						This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community groups</li> <li>Businesses</li> <li>Not for profit organisations</li> <li>State Government or government agencies</li> </ul>
12	We will recognise and reward our community to do the right thing, minimising waste and recycling right						This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showcasing and promoting those doing the right things</li> <li>Using apps and technology</li> </ul>
13	We will put more emphasis on educating and supporting residents and businesses to know how to recycle right						This includes advocating to other levels of government on consistent and wide reaching campaigns

Priority outcome 3: Leading our community in supporting best waste management		Timeframe					
		Year					
Actions		1	2	3	4	5	Further details
14	We will expand our purchasing of recycled products in Council operations						Giving priority to those fit for purpose and competitively priced
15	We will support Council staff to minimise waste and recycle right in staff induction and on-going work practices						Includes raising staff awareness about waste avoidance and reduction and recycling right



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16	We will improve our capture of waste and littering data so we can continue to measure our successes						This will help us strategically to manage and track waste
17	We will advocate to all levels of government for better waste outcomes						This may Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy development</li> <li>• Use of non-recyclable products and packaging</li> <li>• Stimulating more use of recycled products</li> <li>• Better Sate Planning systems</li> <li>• Use of the Sustainability Fund for waste initiatives</li> </ul>
18	We will reduce single use plastics at Council events and facilities						This will involve avoidance of waste in the first instance and alternative options

Priority outcome 4: Using new technology and innovation to improve the way we do things		Timeframe					
		Year					
Actions		1	2	3	4	5	Further details
19	We will continue to capture methane gas for energy at our closed landfill in Clayton South and investigate forms of renewable energy as a future use of the site						This involves working with other councils and industry to ensure best use
20	We will continue plan for our future waste needs including review our waste contracts to ensure better services and value to the community						Contract specifications will have more focus on using technology to do things better and provide best customer service to the community



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21	We will work with partners to explore the different advanced waste technologies to inform decisions and secure alternatives for waste that goes to landfill						Even after we maximise our diversion there will be waste leftover to dispose of and we want to be prepared
22	We will trial the use of smart compacting bins in some of our busy public spaces to reduce overflow and littering						These will be implemented in Box Hill and utilise new technology which may help with littering issues
23	We will review bins at properties and update and improve Council systems with a focus on improving customer experience						Better Council systems and improved information should help Improve customer service to our community

Priority outcome 5: Responding promptly to modern waste challenges		Timeframe					
		Year					
Actions		1	2	3	4	5	Further details
24	We will review and consult our community on separating out the charging of waste services from our general rates to be clear and open about the cost of waste						This will help ensure we manage waste appropriately in future and our community are informed
25	We will annually review our waste education plan with a focus on dumping, waste avoidance, reduction and contamination						The plan will be updated to support emerging waste issues and support waste and recycling services
26	We will review and build on our guidelines to encourage best practice waste management within multi-unit developments						This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>incorporating where possible into local planning schemes</li><li>making guidance easy to access for developers and industry</li></ul>
27							This may include:





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	We will increase waste and recycling education programs and forums for our planners and stakeholders for better waste outcomes in multi-unit developments						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with planning and State Government authorities around planning systems</li> <li>Working with local body corporates and real estate</li> </ul>
28	We will investigate options for improved services to medium to high-density developments and targeted commercial areas						This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with business and body corporates</li> <li>Sharing info with other Councils</li> <li>Looking at alternative technologies to divert more waste</li> </ul>
29	We will explore options to improve our diversion of hard waste and better respond to dumped rubbish						This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More educating on correct disposal of items</li> <li>More education around dumping</li> <li>More enforcement on dumping</li> <li>More flexibility in hard waste services</li> </ul>
30	We will regularly review and improve our waste and recycling communications materials and methods to ensure they suit the needs of our changing community						This will include looking at who our emerging groups are in our community and the way they want us to communicate with them
31	We will review this action plan annually to ensure it covers timely issues and will do a major review at the mid-point of this strategy after 5 years						This will ensure areas of focus and priority actions remain relevant and timely



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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In the spirit of reconciliation, Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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