

waste minimisation

“Recycling of everything which can’t be fixed. Recycling collection more frequent than the waste collection. Composting in every yard and ‘Clean Up Australia Day’ abolished through lack of need.”

City of Mitcham Community Visioning Forum, December 1998

Effective waste minimisation requires a change in our understanding of waste. Waste is not ‘something to be got rid of’, but rather something valuable which has not yet been fully utilised (*City of Newcastle, EMP*).

Council is active in waste minimisation in the areas of recycling, waste minimisation, litter control, hard waste collection and municipal waste.

WHY IS WASTE MINIMISATION IMPORTANT?

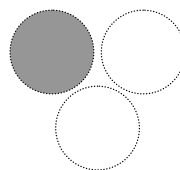
Waste minimisation has many benefits, including:

- Conservation of valuable resources including minerals, energy, native forests, petroleum and land fill sites,
- The saving of money through cleaner production and reduced waste disposal costs,
- Reduction of environmental impact through reduced energy needs and reduced pollution of soil and water near land fills, and
- The raising of environmental awareness and the conservation of the environment for present and future generations.

(Source: Recycle 2000 Fact Sheet 3)

MEASURING SUSTAINABLE WASTE MINIMISATION

PRESSURE



TONNES OF DOMESTIC WASTE TO LANDFILL PER PERSON

Waste minimisation requires reducing the amount of waste generated as well as finding ways to treat or reuse waste. This indicator shows the success of strategies to encourage waste reduction at the source. Total waste per person is included to ensure that population changes don't skew the total waste figure.

Tonnes Of Residential Waste To Landfill In The City Of Mitcham			
Financial Year	Total Tonnes to Landfill	Tonnes per Household	Tonnes per Person
96/97	17138	0.710	0.289
97/98	18470	0.765	0.312

Source: Envirolink

Note: Figures are based on weekly residential kerbside domestic collection.

How Are We Doing?

Although a limited sample, the data shows that we are generating more waste as a community and as individuals. This highlights the need for strategies targeted at minimising waste as well as recycling or reusing waste.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL WASTE

No detailed assessment of the quantities of commercial and industrial wastes being generated by the City of Mitcham has been carried out.

The main non-residential facilities in the City include the Waite Campus (University of Adelaide, CSIRO and SARDI), Flinders University, Flinders Medical Centre, major shopping centres (Cumberland Park, Mitcham, Blackwood, Pasadena) and light industry concentrated in Melrose Park and St Marys.

Some assessment of metropolitan Adelaide waste streams has been done. Although not specific to Mitcham, it is useful to highlight the significant role of non-residential waste.

Sources Of Waste In Metropolitan Adelaide			
Source of Waste	Waste From Each Source (%)	Waste Recycled Or Reused (%)	Landfill From Each Source (%)
Domestic / kerbside	22.2	15	34.1
Other Municipal	8.6	45	8.2
Private Traffic	6.1	33	7.1
Commercial and Industrial	16.1	31	19.3
Construction and Demolition	46.4	61	31.2
Total (Tonnes per year)	1,482,260	634,760	847,500

Source: Recycle 2000 (1997)

How Are We Doing?

The metropolitan data shows that commercial and industrial waste represents 16.1% of total waste stream and the recycling/reuse rate for this source was 31%, the second lowest after domestic/kerbside.

Although the data is not Mitcham-specific, strategies to address commercial and industrial waste will contribute greatly to reducing waste to landfill from the City of Mitcham.

COMPOSITION OF DOMESTIC WASTE STREAM

This indicator shows changes in the types of material we dispose of through the domestic waste stream (either to landfill or recycling). The trends in this indicator highlight the areas to target with waste reduction strategies.

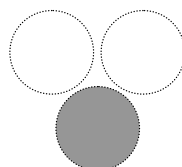
Percentage Of Waste Stream By Weight			
Material Category	1986	1991	1995
Paper	26.5	23.8	28.6
Plastic	9.2	7.15	6.9
Green/Putrescibles	40.4	46.5	48.3
Metal	5.9	4.8	4.0
Glass	13.4	7.9	9.1
Miscellaneous	4.5	8.9	3.6

Source: AMDEL, Recycle 2000

How Are We Doing?

The data shows that garden and food waste is an increasingly significant component of the domestic waste stream. Given that there is no widely used community recycling operation for this waste, this suggests that strategies to encourage home composting, green waste collections and putrescibles recycling should be embraced.

RESPONSE



DOMESTIC RECYCLING DIVERSION RATE

This indicator shows the amount of domestic waste recycled as a percentage of the total waste stream. Increasing the diversion rate will indicate success of recycling strategies.

City Of Mitcham Recycling Diversion Rate			
Financial Year	Total Tonnes to Landfill	Total Tonnes Recycled	Diversion Rate %
96/97	17138	2625	13.2%
97/98	18470	2699	12.7%

Source: Envirolink

Note: Data refers to Council's kerbside recycling service. It does not include green waste collected during recent trials or waste collected during hard refuse service.

How Are We Doing?

The data shows that, although we are recycling more, we aren't doing so quickly enough to keep up with our increasing generation of waste. This suggests that strategies to minimise waste generation at source should be pursued alongside recycling or re-use strategies.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN WASTE MINIMISATION

Recycling

Participation in existing recycling services in the City of Mitcham is high, with only about 5% of residents not using the service at some time.

Which statement applies to you as far as recycling??	
	% of respondents (sample size = 307)
We recycle each fortnight without fail	71.3
We recycle things every now and again but not strictly each fortnight	21.3
We don't collect enough recyclable material to warrant putting out the recycling crate	4.9
Other	2.0

Source: Harrison Market Research Pty. Ltd. 1997

Composting

Another important and environmentally sound method to reduce domestic green organic and putrescible waste going to landfill is home composting. A survey conducted by The Marketing Centre (1998) found that 40% of the 192 Mitcham residents surveyed compost their food and some garden waste.

COUNCIL WASTE INITIATIVES

Recycling

EnviroLink offers a fortnightly recycling service for glass, plastic, newspapers, other paper and cardboard products, tin and aluminium.

Green Waste

In the area of green organics, the City of Mitcham has been trialing a user pays green organics collection service through Green Recycled Organics Waste (GROW) Pty Ltd. In the financial year 1997/98 these trials achieved a diversion of 90 tonnes of green organics from the waste stream, which was recycled into mulch and compost. This

figure will have to be increased significantly to address the estimated 7200 tonnes green organic waste per year (*Recycle 2000, 1995*).

Green waste is also collected and recycled through Envirolink's hard refuse collection. Council is currently preparing an options paper for providing a sustainable green waste collection service.

Chemical Waste

Council is investigating the feasibility of a domestic chemical waste drop-off service.

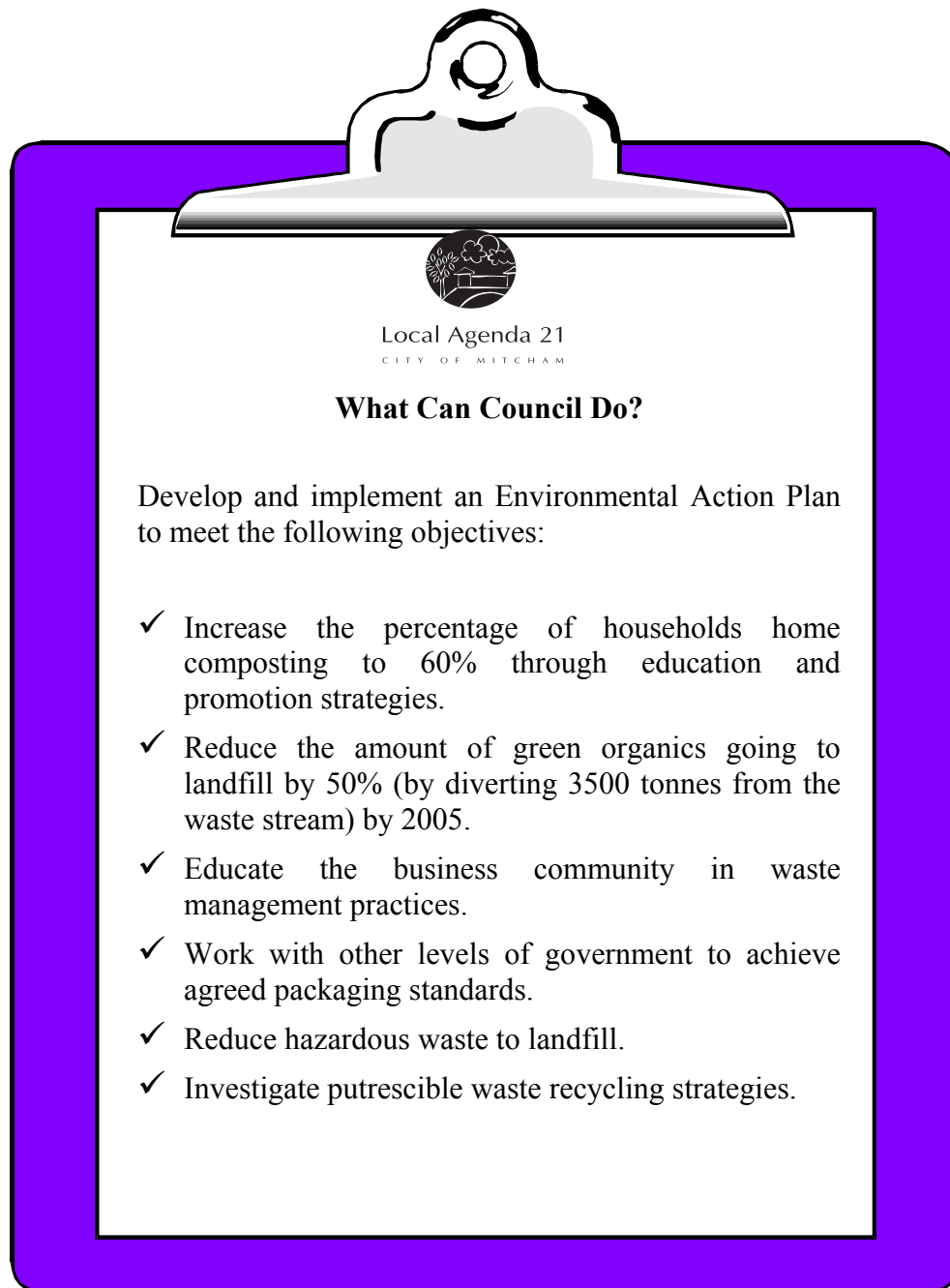
How Are We Doing?


Although community recycling participation rates are high, it is also important to note that an additional 36% of the waste stream in Mitcham was potentially recyclable, compared with 5.4% and 27.2% for Marion and Unley, respectively (*Recycle 2000, 1997*)

What Can I Do?

Individual actions by community members can encourage sustainable waste minimisation. These actions include:

- *Think about what I am putting in my mobile garbage bin.*
- *Support traders who recycle plastic shopping bags or offer alternatives.*
- *Take my own bag to the supermarket.*
- *Compost non meat food scraps.*
- *Leave grass clippings and leaves to break down naturally, or compost them.*
- *Support the GROW greenwaste recycling system.*
- *Apply the rules: refuse (excess packaging), reduce (buy in bulk, repair rather than replace), re-use (containers, building materials, clothing), and recycle (everything you can't refuse, reduce or re-use).*




Local Agenda 21
CITY OF MITCHAM

What Can Council Do?

Develop and implement an Environmental Action Plan to meet the following objectives:

- ✓ Increase the percentage of households home composting to 60% through education and promotion strategies.
- ✓ Reduce the amount of green organics going to landfill by 50% (by diverting 3500 tonnes from the waste stream) by 2005.
- ✓ Educate the business community in waste management practices.
- ✓ Work with other levels of government to achieve agreed packaging standards.
- ✓ Reduce hazardous waste to landfill.
- ✓ Investigate putrescible waste recycling strategies.