

Response to ESC Request for Information (24/4/2025)

Thanks for the follow up questions, these are answered below. Council is keen to ensure that the ESC has all the information required to assess the proposed revenue-neutral transfer from a levy to general rates, and we welcome any further questions that you may have that are relevant to this scenario.

185E(3)(a) – Higher Cap

Council's approach to the EMC is to review the income and expense over a 10-year period. Historically this assessment produces a deficit result that enables council to feel confident that there is no long-term surplus that might be considered a breach of the ombudsman's recommendations.

Budget setting

You request an explanation about how this is practically applied and ask if a future year's EMC is calculated to adjust for a past surplus/deficit.

The way that council has applied this each year needs to be considered in the context of council's acceptance of an overall long-term deficit position. Council does not seek to finely balance the EMC and waste costs in every individual year to ensure full short-term cost recovery. Instead the focus is on 1/ ensuring that the EMC does not produce a long-term surplus (this would go against the Ombudsman's advice), and 2/ using the EMC to subsidise the waste costs (not necessarily cover all costs).

In this context council does not need to make abnormal year-to-year adjustments to ensure that the EMC exactly balances. Usually council simply increases the EMC by the annual rate cap. The long-term deficit position in the waste service means that the overall picture is in deficit and council is comfortable with this. This makes the setting of the EMC an easier job (because there is no attempt to recoup any specific past deficit by significantly increasing a future EMC, and it is unlikely that council will find itself in a long-term surplus position while this conservative approach is used).

Instead of focusing on trying to finely balance each individual year, this council reviews the following factors when setting the EMC:

- The default position each year is to simply increase the EMC by rate cap. Council is focused on community affordability and believes that the rate cap is the expected default increase amount. Because we know that expenses (both waste expenses and overall council expenses) increase by more than the annual cap, we start with a check of the income and costs (to make sure that council isn't raising too much revenue for the service delivery costs).
- Then council calculates the budget and looks at how the 1-year and 10-year net figure looks. In most years the result is an overall deficit in both the short and long term.

- This then gives confidence that council can comfortably set the EMC increase at the rate cap level (and find efficiencies elsewhere to cover any shortfall between the EMC income and the waste costs).
- Occasionally, the result is not considered to be acceptable, and council makes a decision to increase the EMC at a rate that is higher than the cap. As the application points out this has happened twice in the last 6 years. This was in response to cost escalations that could not be covered elsewhere in the budget build.

Two of the six years showing a surplus

The application document has the following paragraph on page 50.

The result of this analysis is that two of the six years shown in the attached spreadsheet are years of surplus (i.e. the waste service has a funding excess). The other four years result in a deficit. Overall, the net result from the six years is a deficit of \$88,297. This deficit was funded by general rates.

Unfortunately, this paragraph is a drafting error. Originally the application intended to supply some additional financial information (additional to the ESC spreadsheet), and this paragraph was written to reference this separate spreadsheet. In the end it was decided to not provide the additional spreadsheet (because it would only cause confusion with the official ESC data). However, the references in the application document were not deleted.

This section should be disregarded.

Discrepancy between kerbside revenue and kerbside costs

You are correct that this relates to apportioned costs (Management Overhead and Corporate Overhead) for the 2025-26 financial year the \$294,829 difference between income and expenditure is in organisational costs to run that service.

Note that this has changed (see section below on corporate overheads). The apportionment method has also been explained below to assist with any further calculations.

Cost growth vs EMC increases

Costs have grown at a rate that is greater than the EMC has increased (the default being the annual rate cap). This has been accommodated through a number of methods:

- Contract renegotiation. The contract that services the waste transfer stations, and the public space bins (including event bins) has been recently renegotiated resulting in a single-year cost improvement. This cost will now increase each year, but the 'reset' was helpful. It should be noted that the EMC did not match this cost reduction because – as previously explained – the EMC is assessed over a long-term timeframe and the result (even with the cost improvement) remained a deficit. Therefore, this one-year efficiency

was trivial in the long-term picture (other than to help keep the EMC at a lower level whilst costs were rising).

- Some service has been reduced. The best example of this is that council previously held hard waste drop-off days where ratepayers could bring their hard waste to centralised locations. These were expensive and operationally difficult. The Waste Strategy (2019 – 2024) made the following recommendation: “Discontinue the hard waste weekends program due to high costs, safety risks and misalignment with the overarching objectives of the waste hierarchy and this waste strategy”. The abolition of these hard waste weekends provided a cost saving.
- Council accepts that waste services will run in deficit. Therefore, any differences between the EMC revenue and the non-kerbside costs can be balanced by general rates. Council takes a long-term approach to this service and will accommodate a small short-term surplus (if one arises through unanticipated cost improvements such as lower inflation) and will adjust future budget settings to ensure that in the long-term position remains in deficit.

As a final overall comment on this subject. The statement about waste costs increasing at a rate higher than the EMC increase is simply a very small example of what is happening in all areas of council’s budgets across 79 municipalities. Council’s overall costs exceed the annual increase in rates, FAGS, etc. and councils across Victoria are facing significant sustainability issues caused by inadequate funding, increasing community needs, and cost-shifting. In this way, the issue of the waste costs increasing at a rate higher than the EMC/rate cap is simply a very small case study of the entire sector’s battle with the income rate cap. In many respects, the answer to the question about “How does council manage the escalating costs that are increasing well beyond income growth?” is that this is an ongoing and unresolved financial sustainability challenge for all councils – and one that does not yet have an answer.

Late last year the Victorian Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee tabled a report on *Local government funding and services* (2024). The findings and actions from this inquiry highlight the sector-wide financial sustainability issues. This inquiry’s findings provide a snapshot of some of the key challenges faced by Victorian councils, and smaller rural councils in particular.

- FINDING 1: The costs of infrastructure and service delivery have risen at a pace that outstrips the growth in grant funding.
- FINDING 3: Local councils are facing increased budget pressures due to cost shifting by state and federal governments. Without substantial changes, the financial sustainability of council operations is at risk, with some services already being reduced or discontinued entirely.
- FINDING 5: There are several issues that disincentivise councils applying to the Essential Services Commission for a higher rate cap. These include:
 - a burdensome administrative process to apply
 - concerns about community backlash; and
 - concerns about the capacity of residents to afford higher rates, particularly in large and small shire councils.
- FINDING 7: Expenditure has grown faster than council revenue in recent years. Growth is primarily driven by the steady increase in operating expenditure, which makes up the

majority of council spending. Capital expenditure has also risen over this period, but varies from year to year and council to council.

- FINDING 9: Councils face increased asset renewal costs if they do not prioritise early and ongoing renewal in an asset's lifecycle. A failure to keep up with asset renewal results in more expensive repair and replacement costs.
- FINDING 11: The renewal and upgrade of roads and bridges are a significant cost pressure, particularly for large and small shire councils due to their geographic size and comparatively small rate base. Grants programs, including Federal Assistance Grants, have regard for these issues when awarding funding. However, it remains a threat to the ongoing financial sustainability of rural and regional councils.
- FINDING 12: Victorian councils have faced significant increases in the cost of delivering infrastructure. This is due to a rise in the cost of labour and materials. Increased infrastructure costs constitute a significant financial pressure for growth area councils who are responsible for delivering new infrastructure for their growing communities.
- FINDING 14: Extreme weather events driven by climate change are a significant cost pressure on Victorian councils. Among other things, this includes:
 - disaster relief efforts, including staff resourcing
 - insurance premiums
 - the repair of damaged infrastructure; and
 - the proactive maintenance or upgrade of infrastructure to improve climate resilience.
- FINDING 16: The cash reserves held by Victoria's local government sector as a whole are currently adequate, but are showing signs of ongoing deterioration.
- FINDING 19: Victorian councils face a trend of deteriorating financial sustainability across all council types, a trend predicted to continue over the next five to ten years, due at least in part to cost shifting.
- FINDING 20: Rate capping and cost shifting has significantly constrained councils' revenue, and is a key threat to ongoing financial sustainability.
- FINDING 27: Council asset pools requiring management exacerbate financial sustainability challenges for councils in the long term. This is of particular concern to smaller, rural and regional councils who have more a limited financial capability to meet ongoing operating, maintenance and renewal costs.
- FINDING 28: Limited capacity to meet long term operating, maintenance and renewal costs is deterring smaller rural and regional councils from applying for new asset grant programs.
- FINDING 29: Failing to acknowledge resource disparities between councils may result in grant funding being diverted away from deserving projects in rural and regional areas to councils with the capacity to prepare high quality grant applications.
- FINDING 31: While co-contribution grant programs can be beneficial in delivering an increased number of services, this requirement prevents some lesser resourced smaller rural and regional Councils from applying for grants.
- FINDING 32: Overly onerous auditing and reporting requirements are deterring smaller and less-resourced councils from participating in important grant programs.
- FINDING 39: The Victorian Government has failed to maintain a 50/50 shared funding agreement for public libraries, placing a significant financial burden on local councils.
- FINDING 40: The Victorian Government has significantly reduced funding for the School Crossing Supervisor program and has failed to uphold its agreed equal funding

arrangement with local councils. This has placed additional financial pressure on councils and risks the sustainability of this important service.

- FINDING 41: Ongoing increases in the waste levy are a financial burden for some Victorian councils.
- FINDING 42: Councils who use the Department of Health's Central Immunisation Records Victoria have been informed they will be charged an ongoing fee to access the system. Councils reported this is in contravention of assurances that ongoing access to the scheme would remain free.
- FINDING 43: In some cases, councils who have agreements to maintain State Government assets or Crown land are not adequately funded to do so.
- FINDING 44: The existing funding model for Maternal and Child Health services places an excessive financial burden on local governments, particularly regarding immunisations, staffing, and facility costs, threatening the long-term sustainability of these services.
- FINDING 45: Many statutory service fees charged by local councils, including planning fees, are set by the Victorian Government. These fees are set too low for some councils to recover the cost of providing the service.
- FINDING 47: There is a lack of Victorian Government coordination and oversight on the nature and extent of cost shifting that has been mandated by the State Government on local councils.

Council awaits the state government's response to this situation and hopes that a solution can be found that allows councils to continue to provide the critical services to the community whilst balancing affordability for ratepayers. In this context, the growth of ~\$800k of waste costs above the EMC income is simply a small part of a much much bigger problem.

185E(3)(c) – Engagement

Community consultation source data

- Request for background documents for the recent community consultation for the 2025-2030 Council Plan
 - Attached are:
 - **Attachment 1 - Presentation to Councillor Strategic Workshop 17 February.**
 - This document is a summary of the consultation themes and feedback.
 - **Attachment 2 - CONFIDENTIAL – Survey Responses**
 - This document is confidential because:
 - This is a source document that contains verbatim comments it is possible that identifying or inappropriate comments may be present.

- Indigo Shire’s commitment to the community is that their feedback will be kept confidential.
- Request for a copy of the Resource Recovery & Waste Management Strategy Background Report and Service Review referenced on page 20.
 - **Attachment 3 – Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy – Background Report (2019).**

Document request

The following documents are supplied..

1. Service review.
 - a. **Attachment 4 – CONFIDENTIAL - Service Review Waste Management.**
 - b. Note that service reviews are not public documents and therefore this has been designated as confidential for the purposes of this application.
 - c. The financial figures in the service review are ‘management view’ and do not include management overhead, etc.
 - d. The scope of the service review was core waste services. Therefore, costs for street sweeping, event bins, etc. (costed to different parts of the organisation) are not included in this analysis.
2. Resource Recovery and Waste Strategy Background Report
 - a. Copy attached (Attachment 3).

185E(3)(d) – Value and efficiency

Apportionment of Overheads

This council uses two types of overheads to assist with cost allocation.

- Management Overhead
- Corporate Overhead

“Management overhead” is an expense grouping within the waste service area where direct expenses are attributed to this category of expenses throughout the year, and this forms part of the monthly management reporting of costs in this service. The usual expense types for Management Overheads are shown below.

8399. Waste Management OH
Contract Payments
Employee Costs
Materials & Consumables
Other Expenses

These costs relate directly to the provision of waste service.

“Corporate Overhead” is an allocation of the corporate costs for HR, media and coms, IT, risk management, finance, procurement, executive management, etc.

The Minister’s Guidelines state that a council should (emphasis added) “determine the **direct and indirect** costs of the service, deciding on an activity based costing or pro-rata approach and form an appropriate pricing”. It is common practice for smaller councils to allocate on a pro-rata basis and to only do so periodically (see: VAGO “*Delivering Local Government Services September 2018*”). This is the approach taken by Indigo Shire Council.

Indigo Shire Council does not routinely apportion corporate overheads to service areas as part of the monthly/quarterly/annual financial reporting. Instead, these corporate expenses are reported as separate and discrete services. Apart from being a more practical and efficient financial system, Indigo Shire Council also believes that this is a more transparent and accountable method of showing ‘back-of-house’ costs.

The departments that provide organisation-wide services that could be considered a “corporate overhead” are:

Service Plan Area	Annual Expense Budget (24/25)
Communications	411,002
Customer Experience	580,774
Executive Management	1,752,810
Financial Services	809,546
Governance	365,583
Information Management	192,476
Information Technology	1,683,593
People & Culture	855,481
Rates & Property Services	225,315
Risk Management	1,023,744
Total Expense	7,900,324

When compared to the total council expense budget of \$44.2 million (excluding depreciation in this calculation as it is not a significant driver of corporate overhead) the corporate overheads are 21.7% of the (non-overhead) expenses. Using the method that is referenced in the VAGO (2018) report it would be appropriate to allocate a corporate overhead of 21.7% of the expense cost of each service.

In the case of the waste services council has traditionally used 10% as a corporate overhead allocation. This reduction is mainly to ensure a very conservative approach to the allocation of overheads thus ensuring a confident position on the setting of the EMC, as well as certainty in council's long-term surplus/deficit position. Put another way, council prefers to have a conservative margin for error when making these calculations (that are often scrutinised by the community and state government authorities) to ensure that an inadvertent error or lumpy annual cost does not put council in an awkward surplus position).

In looking at this part of the ESC's request for information it was found that the corporate overheads in the ESC spreadsheet are not apportioned correctly. With all due apologies for this error the figures for corporate overhead (in cells D61 to I61 in tab 8 of the spreadsheet) have been corrected in the attached spreadsheet.

This changes the total overheads for the six years shown in the spreadsheet from \$1,639,201 to \$1,934,072, and removes the variability in the annual overhead % allocation that was previously showing.

In relation to the allocation of corporate overheads between the kerbside component of the waste service and the other waste activities, council uses the same 10% methodology for all waste activities. Therefore, the cost of each individual component x 10% is the corporate overhead allocation.

Reference to \$1,041,084 of waste costs on page 39 of the application

One of the clarifying questions raised is the source of a statement on page 39 of the application where the figure of \$1,041,084 is quoted.

The context is important here. The figure is being used in this section to explain that the non-kerbside component of the waste costs is not much more than the total EMC income. The point being made here is that the option of simply removing the EMC without replacement through general rates would be devastating to all other (non-kerbside) services and this option would result in the closure of transfer stations, etc.

As mentioned above, the original application document intended to supply a separate spreadsheet of financial information (essentially this was a normal management view of the financials – used for internal and council reporting purposes). In the end council chose not to do this and to simply refer to the ESC spreadsheet to avoid any confusion that may happen when

looking at different reports. Unfortunately, the reference to \$1,041,084 was not updated and therefore this figure is not supported by the ESC spreadsheet.

Rather than providing a correcting commentary on this part of the application, it is easier to simply re-write this section (below) that now references to the (updated and attached) ESC spreadsheet. Note that the figures below have changed to be traceable to the ESC spreadsheet, and the commentary has changed to match, however the point being made is exactly the same as the original application.... That the removal of the EMC without replacement would require the near-complete abolition of all other waste services.

The replacement section (from page 39 of the application document) is shown below.

Option 2: Cut or reduce the relevant waste service

Council's waste service is relatively simple and can be thought of in three parts:

1. Kerbside collection. This is provided under a contract with Cleanaway and is funded using a fee structure that recoups the cost of the service (in accordance with the Ministers guidelines).
2. Other waste services such as transfer stations, parks and gardens, street sweeping, event waste services, etc. These services are currently funded by the EMC.
3. Management and administration. This covers staff to run the waste service as well as associated costs such as legal fees, etc.

The annual costs (2024/25 budget) for the waste service are shown in the attached EMC spreadsheet (Tab 8).

Using the draft 2025-26 budget as an example, the total direct cost of the service (i.e. excluding the corporate overhead) is \$3,888,401. This can be split into:

- Kerbside costs of \$2,718,955.
- Other costs (transfer stations, street sweeping, public bins, etc) of \$3,888,401 - \$2,718,955 = \$1,169,446.

(Plus 10% for corporate overheads for full costing)

Without needing to dive deeper into this scenario, it is immediately clear that the removal of \$802k of income (the EMC for 2025/26) from the \$1,169,446 total would necessitate the near-complete abolition of all other waste and recycling services to balance this lost revenue.

Recent community consultation for the 2025-2030 Council Plan indicated a desire for more transfer station services not less, and the closure of all waste and recycling services (apart from the kerbside collection contract) is not a reasonable or viable option.

Finally, Council's Resource recovery & Waste Strategy (2019-2024) provides many examples of community support for the waste and recycling services provided by council. A survey that was conducted as part of building this strategy indicated strong support for waste services, including those funded by the EMC.

In summary, the reduction of the waste budget to cover the EMC would close all waste and recycling services except for the weekly kerbside service. In a shire of 17,000 people it is inconceivable that council would close all transfer stations, stop collections from public parks and public areas, no longer provide any bins for the many tourism events that happen every year, stop sweeping the streets, and walk away from the community partnerships and programs that work to reduce waste.

Requested Documents

Could we please have a copy of the final report from your most recent waste service review, conducted in June 2020?

- **Attachment 4 – CONFIDENTIAL – Service Review Waste Management**

Could we please have a copy of the "19/04045 Tender Evaluation Summary Report (July 2023)" that arose from the 2023 joint tender for waste services?

- **Attachment 5 – CONFIDENTIAL – RKC8 Joint Tender Summary Report**
- Please note that this is a commercial in confidence document and not for public exhibition.

Could we please have a copy of the Victorian Ombudsman's report from 2019 that arose from an Indigo Shire resident with a concern that Council may be profiting from the EMC?

- **Attachment 6 - CONFIDENTIAL - Indigo Shire Council Environmental Management Contribution - 18 April 2019.**
- Note that this is a copy of the response letter sent to the person who raised the question to the Ombudsman. The confidentiality (or otherwise) of this letter is uncertain and therefore, at this stage, this document has been marked as "Confidential". If the ESC believes that it is important for this document to be publicly exhibited, then council will contact the Ombudsman for further advice.

185E(3)(f) – Long term planning

Many of the questions in this section relate to differences between the adopted budget./LTFP and the ESC spreadsheet submitted with the application documents.

To clarify this, the application is being made during the new budget build period for 2025/26 and council now has more recent and updated information compared to the last adopted budget. This new information is almost one full year more recent than the adopted 2024/25 budget, and council chose to use this newer information in the ESC application to provide the best information that is available at the time. If this is an error, then please confirm that you would like us to change all the spreadsheet figures back to the last adopted budget/LTFP (as at June 2024) and we will do so.

The remainder of this section assumes, however, that the ESC is happy to proceed with more recent information and the remaining questions are answered on this basis.

We note significant differences between the Adjusted Underlying Result forecasts found in tab "5. Financial indicators" of the "Higher Cap Information" sheet and your recent 2024-25 budget. Can you please explain why this is?

Increase in capital non-recurrent grants. Most recent data has \$9.8m compared to \$4.1m in adopted 24-25 budget.

In tab "2. LTFP" of the "Higher Cap Information" sheet, upgrade expenditure and expansion expenditure are listed as "included above" for 2025-26 and beyond, while your 2024-25 budget has values listed for asset upgrade in future years. Can you please explain why this is?

Our capital works plan has been updated, as such the breakout of upgrade was merged with renewal. We have now reviewed the budget upgrade numbers provided and they are still relevant, but overall total capital expenditure has changed compared to the adopted budget. The ESC spreadsheet now has updated 2.LTFP row 118 upgrade expenditure for columns E to G (years 25-26 to 27-28) to match the 24-25 budget.

In tab "2. LTFP" of the "Higher Cap Information" sheet, other financial assets are forecast as nil for future years while your 2024-25 budget forecasts this as \$5,702,000. Can you please explain why this is?

Most recent data has resulted in the other financial assets diminishing because the main figure is term deposits invested for longer than 3 months. As Council's cash position is being impacted by the ongoing rate cap environment the luxury of being able to invest longer term is diminishing.

In tab "5. Financial Indicators" of the "Higher Cap Information" sheet, asset renewal has not been forecast beyond 2024-25. Can we please have a copy of this forecast?

Use of the wording "included above" in the sheet 2.LTFP row 118 upgrade expenditure for columns E to N (2025-26 to 2034-35) resulted in no indicators being populated in sheet 5. Financial Indicators for rows 29 and 30 Asset renewal for columns E to N (2025-26 to 2034-35). Again, results will be different based on up-to-date capital program used. As such we have updated sheet 2.LTFP row 118 upgrade expenditure for columns E to N (2025-26 to 2034-35) by using 24-25 budget figures as explained earlier and removed the wording "included above" in the sheet 2.LTFP for columns H to N (2028-29 to 2034-35).

A final clarification on the financial data supplied

Council is keen to ensure that all requested information is supplied to the satisfaction of the ESC and that any differences (rate cap application vs budget, etc.) are explained correctly. The ESC's "Request for information" has provided an opportunity to clarify some matters and correct some errors that were unfortunately not picked up in the application. However, some of the questions did appear to indicate that the ESC may be looking at long-term impacts of this rate cap application, and this prompted a final comment to clarify exactly what council is proposing to do in the event that this application is not approved.

Depending on the outcome of this application the four yellow highlighted calls shown below will change to move the EMC to general rates in 2025/26.

Rates and charges	Forecast Actual	Budget
	2024-25	2025-26
General rates	13,337,460	14,315,105
Municipal charges	3,060,346	3,376,259
(Total General rates and municipal charges)	16,397,806	17,691,364
Waste management charges	2,955,053	3,043,705
Service rates and charges	778,276	-
Special rates and charges	-	-
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments	66,000	30,000
Cultural and recreational	-	-
Revenue in lieu of rates	-	-
Other rates and charges	-	-
Total rates and charges	20,197,135	20,765,069

However, if the application is unsuccessful, council will continue to use the levy in the same way as it has been used in the past.

Therefore,

- If the application is approved, then the yellow-highlighted cells will change as indicated above and council's total revenue will be \$20,765,069.
- If the application is not successful then the EMC will remain in place and council's total revenue will be exactly the same at \$20,765,069. There is no change to council's total revenue under either scenario.

Because the rate cap decision makes no difference to revenue then all other financial projections remain exactly the same, and the remaining 1,519 cells in the ESC's LTFP spreadsheet will not change at all, regardless of the outcome of this decision.

The adjusted underlying result will not change under either scenario. The upgrade expenditure and expansion expenditure will not change under either scenario. The other financial assets will not change. The asset renewal indicators will not change.... etc. The clarifying questions asked about these items prompted concerns that the ESC may be looking at future financial projections that won't change under either an approval or a refusal. Hence it was felt important to clarify this point.

Attachments

- ESC Application Spreadsheet – Updated 24/4/25
- Attachment 1 - Presentation to Councillor Strategic Workshop 17 February
- Attachment 2 - CONFIDENTIAL - Survey Responses
- Attachment 3 - Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy - Background Report (2019)
- Attachment 4 - CONFIDENTIAL - Service Review Waste Management
- Attachment 5 - CONFIDENTIAL - RKC8 Joint Tender Summary Report
- Attachment 6 - CONFIDENTIAL - Indigo Shire Council Environmental Management Contribution - 18 April 2019

**Attachment 1: Presentation to Councillor Strategic
Workshop 17 February**



Community Vision & Council Plan

Summary of community engagement and Councillor/ELT survey feedback

Introduction

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, all Victorian councils must develop, maintain, and review a Community Vision with its community and develop a four-year Council Plan.

Community Vision

- Has an outlook of at least 10 years and describes the community's social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspirations for the future of the Shire.
- Provides the 'what' and 'why'.

Council Plan

- Aligns with and supports the Community Vision.
- Ensures the day-to-day operations and long-term projects of Council are directed towards achieving the community's aspirations.
- Provides the 'how' and 'when'.

Put simply, the Community Vision sets the destination, and the Council Plan maps out the journey to get there.

So what did we hear?

Combined feedback – Community, Councillors and Executive

The consolidated feedback points to a shared vision for a Shire that successfully balances preservation with progress, maintains high-quality essential services, and leads in environmental sustainability.

- Core infrastructure and essential services are the highest priority.
- There is strong agreement on the need to address the infrastructure maintenance backlog, particularly roads, drainage, and public amenities, while ensuring financial sustainability in a rate-capped environment.
- Environmental sustainability and climate resilience feature prominently in all feedback, with strong support for proactive climate adaptation, environmental protection, and renewable energy leadership.
- Strategic challenges consistently identified include housing affordability and availability, youth retention, aging population needs, and economic diversification. There is clear recognition of the need to balance tourism growth with community amenity, and to support local businesses. The potential UNESCO World Heritage listing is seen as a significant opportunity that requires careful planning.
- Community engagement and governance emerged as critical priorities, with stakeholders emphasising the importance of meaningful consultation, transparent decision-making, and practical outcomes.
- There's support for the existing Council Plan strategic themes, however they could be more ambitious and action-oriented.
- Financial sustainability and responsible resource management were consistently highlighted as fundamental to achieving community aspirations.

Community Vision Engagement Summary

Between March and September 2024, community members were invited to participate in the Community Vision review engagement.

The opportunity to participate included an online survey or attendance at one of four drop-in sessions held across the Shire.

The objective was for community members to review the current vision and associated statements to see whether they remained relevant and reflected their aspirations and priorities for the Shire. There is no obligation under the Act to prepare a new vision given Indigo Shire's community vision was adopted in 2021 with a 10 year outlook.



63

Participants
completed
the survey



4

Drop-in sessions
held in Barnawartha,
Beechworth, Rutherglen
and Yackandandah



91

Pieces of
feedback
from drop-in
sessions



1,220

Visits to the
Engaged
Indigo
website



Community Vision – what we heard

- 59% of respondents believe the current vision statement reflects how they envisage Indigo's future state, while 41% disagree.
- Respondents suggested that some terms used in the current Community Vision could be clearer or better defined
- Respondents shared the importance of everyone in Indigo Shire, regardless of where they live, having fair and equal opportunities to engage, share their perspectives, and influence decision-making.
- They shared that maintaining the balance between preserving what we have – including our built heritage and natural environment – and facilitating growth and development is important
- In general, respondents thought Council could do more to be a sustainable leader and also shared that they are supportive of Council's efforts to preserve and promote the Shire's histories and stories.

Council Plan Engagement

Community engagement opened in October 2024, immediately after the Council elections, and closed on 20 December. The opportunity to have a say was widely promoted using various digital and traditional media channels, with a monetary incentive used to encourage participation.



YOUR INDIGO Electronic Newsletter – 7 editions



Facebook – 29 organic social posts



Instagram – 14 posts



Newspaper – Kiewa River Gazette, O & M Advertiser, Chiltern Grapevine, Yackity Yack, Stanley Nine Mile



Social Media Advertising – 2 x campaigns with a combined reach of 25,358



Attended 3 Farmers Markets (1 cancelled)



Engagement Hubs/Pop ups in Beechworth, Rutherglen, Chiltern, Yackandandah and Tangambalanga



Hard copy and digital fliers included in 9,921 rate instalment notices



Advisory Committee meetings



Business and tourism Electronic Newsletters

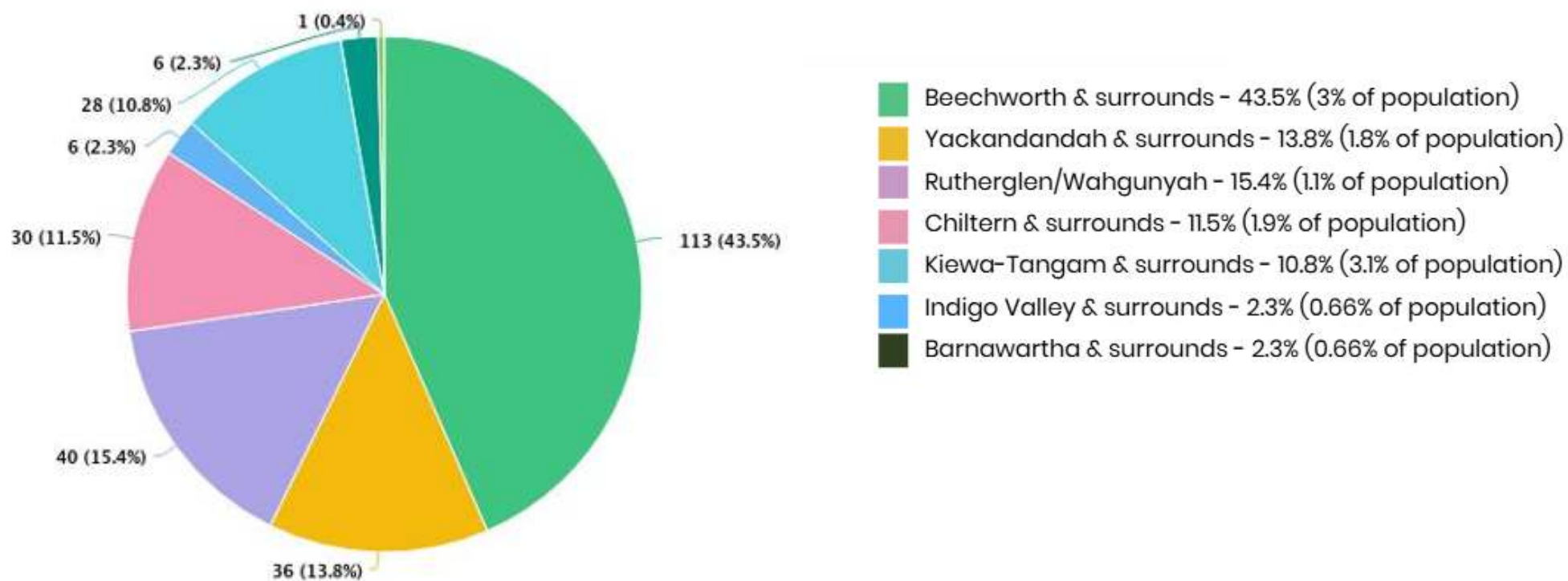
Council Plan engagement

All communications included a link to the ENGAGED INDIGO digital platform which housed the tools for the engagement which included a survey, ideas board and a mapping tool.

During the engagement period, there were 1900 visits to the ENGAGED INDIGO platform, with 284 people actively contributing via one or more of the engagement tools.

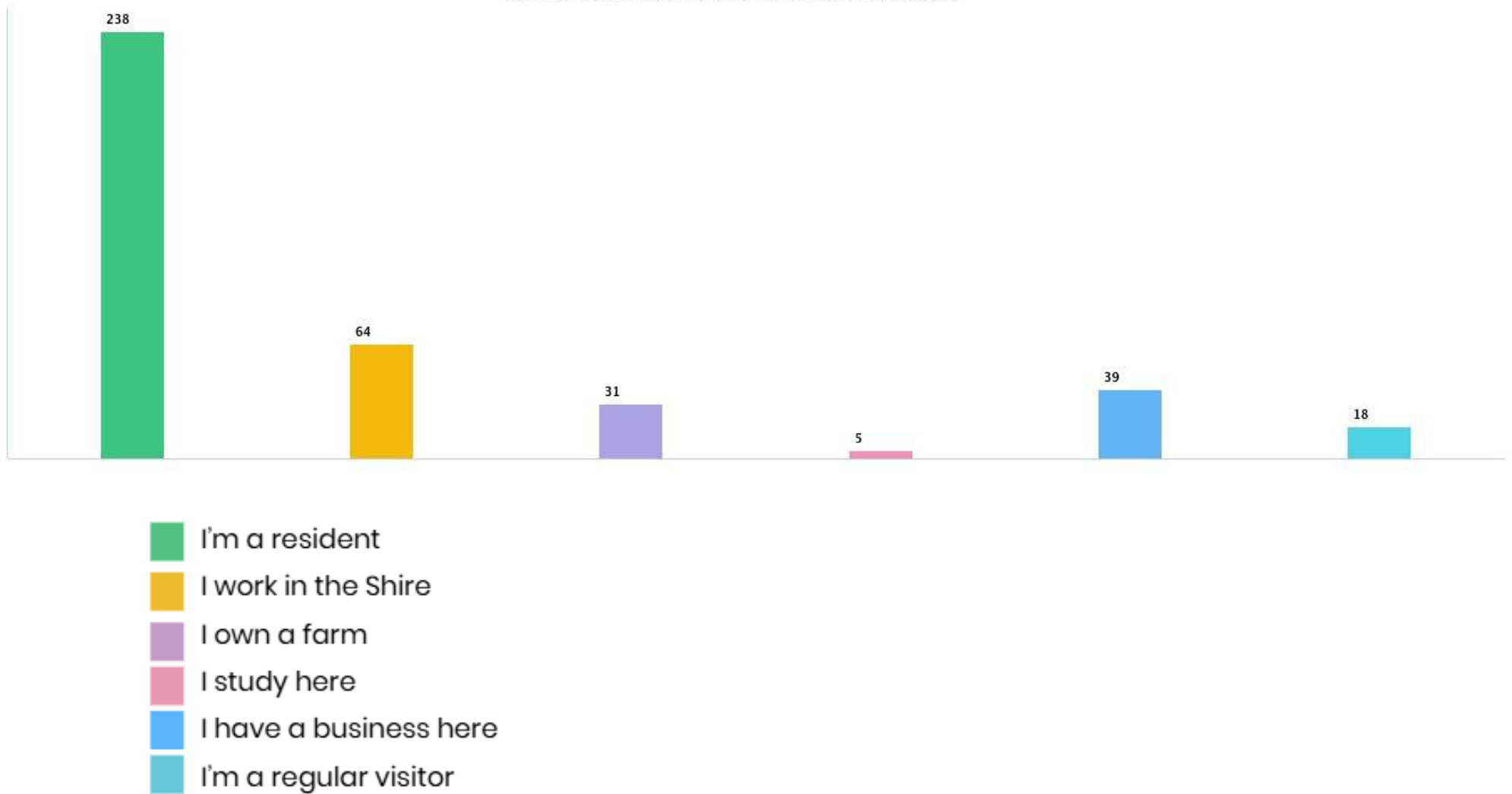
- 260 surveys submitted
- 121 contributions to the ideas board
- 41 pins dropped on the map

Location of respondents

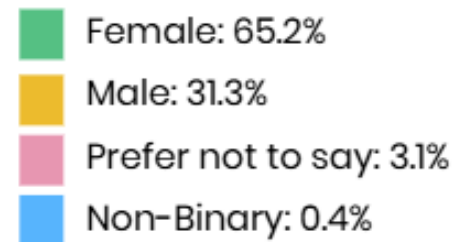
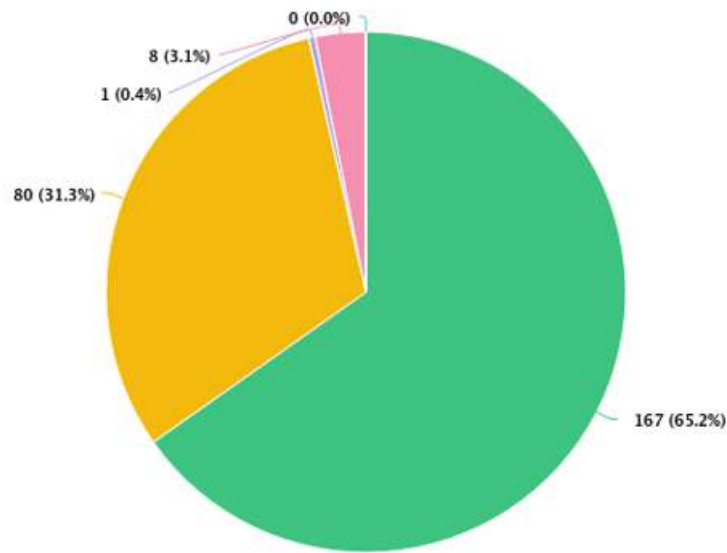


Connection to the Shire

Which option best describes your connection to Indigo Shire? (Tick all that apply)



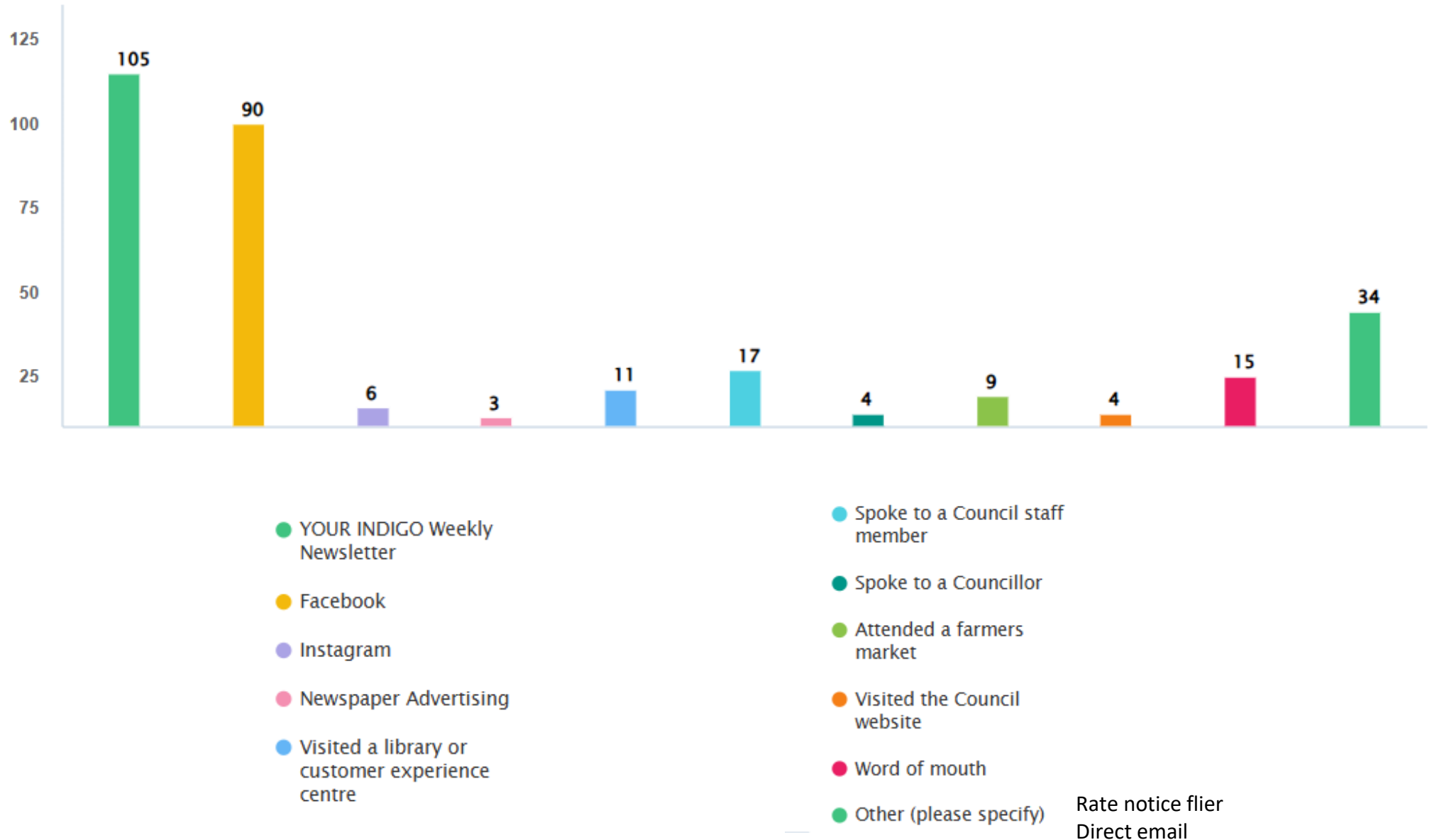
Gender and age of respondents



Age range of respondents

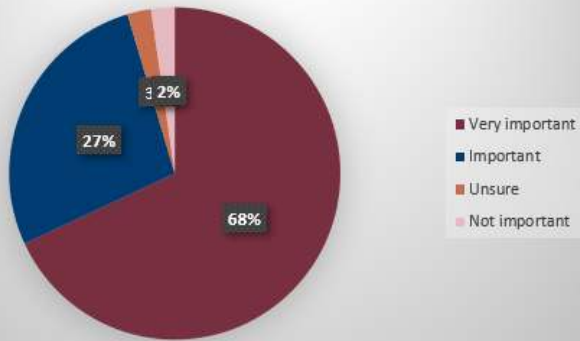
- 60-69: 24.6%
- 40-49: 21.5%
- 50-59: 16.5%
- 30-39: 14.2%
- 70-79: 13.5%
- Prefer not to say: 3.8%
- 19-29: 3.5%
- 80-89: 1.5%
- Under 18: 0.8%

How respondents heard about the engagement

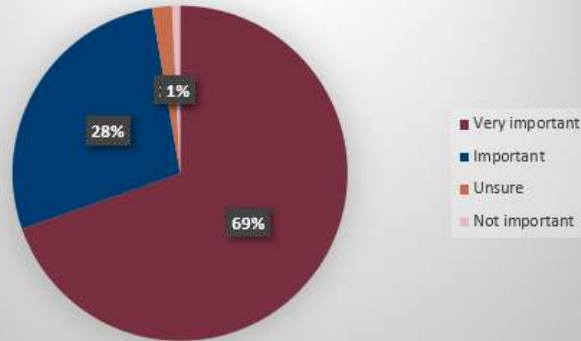


Importance of existing themes

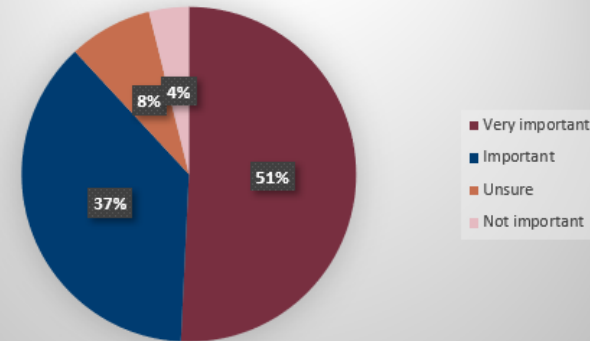
Communities



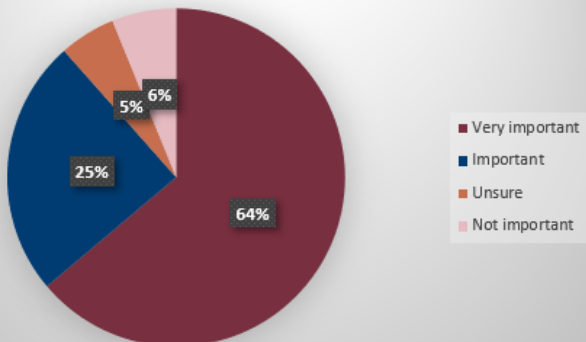
Liveability



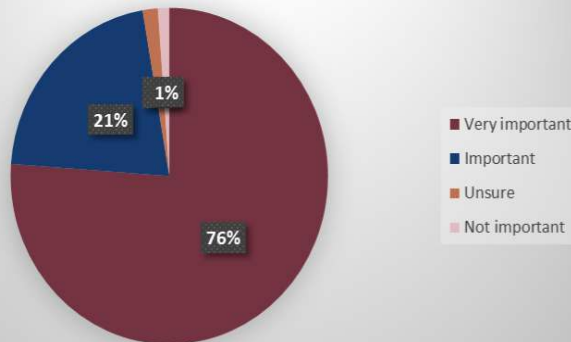
Prosperity



Environment



Accountability



Key findings – Very important scores:

- 76% Accountability
- 69% Liveability
- 68% Communities
- 64% Environment
- 51% Prosperity

Communities

We asked participants to rate the importance of the six outcomes for creating the type of community they want to be a part of.

Emergency preparedness and disaster response emerge as the top priority among respondents. Youth support and engagement also received strong backing, followed by access to health and wellbeing services, which more than half of respondents considered very important. Community connectivity through various services and infrastructure was similarly prioritised by a majority of participants.

Outcome	Very important	Important	Unsure	Not important
Our preparedness to respond and recover from increasing natural disasters is well planned and executed.	67.7%	26.5%	5.0%	0.76%
Our young people are supported, engaged and encouraged to contribute to their communities.	61.9%	31.9%	4.2%	1.9%
We have access to support services that help us achieve and sustain physical and emotional health and wellbeing.	56.9%	36.9%	3.0%	3.0%
We have access to the services, activities, programs and infrastructure that make it easy to stay connected and get involved in community life.	53.4%	40.7%	3.0%	2.6%
Our First Nations people are valued, respected and their contributions recognised and celebrated.	43%	28.8%	14.2%	13.8%
Our communities are enriched by a thriving and diverse arts and creative sector.	35%	37.3%	13.8%	13.8%

Communities

High level summary of open-ended feedback grouped into themes

Overall sentiment suggests that while there is appreciation for current efforts, there is significant room for improvement across most areas. Many respondents emphasise the need for practical, tangible outcomes rather than just strategic planning.

Connected communities

- Strong calls for improved infrastructure, particularly playgrounds and recreational facilities
- Improve roads, footpaths, and drainage systems
- Access to medical and health services and better public transport connections
- Accessible infrastructure for people with disabilities

Youth engagement and support

- Widespread concern about lack of youth services and engagement
- Limited opportunities for young people to stay in the area
- Lack of affordable housing for younger residents
- Importance of creating future community leaders

First Nations recognition

- Mixed views on First Nations recognition. Some supporting increased recognition and celebration, others advocating for equal treatment of all community members
- Need for better education about local Indigenous history
- Suggestions for Indigenous art and cultural projects

Emergency preparedness and community resilience

- Need for better disaster preparedness
- Concerns about climate change impacts
- Importance of community resilience

Liveability

The results show a strong emphasis on infrastructure maintenance and development, with nearly two-thirds of respondents prioritising both the upkeep of sealed roads and the renewal of essential infrastructure like roads, drains, buildings, and bridges.

This focus on infrastructure extends to township maintenance, with a similar proportion (62.6%) rating well-kept public spaces and facilities as very important. Additionally, half of the respondents emphasised the importance of balanced population growth planning for the Shire.

Outcome	Very important	Important	Unsure	Not important
Our roads, drains, buildings, bridges are renewed and expanded to meet the needs of our growing community	65%	29.6%	4.6%	0.8%
Our network of sealed roads is well maintained in both our urban and rural areas	63.4%	31.15%	3.8%	1.5%
Our townships, streetscapes, facilities, amenities and open spaces are safe, inviting, attractive and well maintained, contributing to a sense of place and pride	62.6%	32.6%	2.7%	1.9%
Our Shire is well planned with a balanced approach to population growth	50%	39.6%	7.6%	2.7%
Our built heritage is highly valued and protected	43.6%	36.1%	13%	8.0%
Our cultural assets are highly valued and protected	40%	40%	12%	8.0%
Our network of cycleways and pathways are expanded and connected, providing safe and improved cycling and walking opportunities	35.77%	35.3%	13.46	15.3%

Liveability

High level summary of open-ended feedback grouped into themes

Overall sentiment suggests that while these outcomes are considered very important for community liveability, there is significant room for improvement across most areas. Road infrastructure and drainage emerge as particularly urgent concerns. There's also a clear tension between preservation and development, with many calling for a more balanced approach that maintains town character while allowing for necessary growth and improvements.

Road Infrastructure and safety

- Widespread concern about poor road conditions, potholes, and maintenance
- Many comments about roads being unsafe, particularly after weather damage
- Specific concerns about rural/unsealed roads being neglected
- Calls for wider roads to accommodate multiple users safely
- Issues with dangerous intersections not being addressed

Heritage and Cultural Assets

- Mixed views on heritage preservation. Some feel heritage controls are too strict and hinder development, others value heritage as crucial to town character
- Concerns about maintenance of historic buildings (e.g. Chiltern Athenaeum)
- Need to balance heritage preservation with modern accessibility needs

Cycling and Walking Infrastructure

- Split opinions on cycling infrastructure
- Some feel too much emphasis/spending on cycle paths
- Others view it as important for tourism and local transport
- Calls for more walking/footpaths paths, especially for aging population
- Need for better connectivity between towns

Key findings – Liveability cont...

Basic Infrastructure and Services

- Significant drainage issues reported across multiple towns
- Need for better public toilets and amenities
- Concerns about water and sewerage capacity for growth
- Street lighting improvements needed
- Better maintenance of existing facilities required

Growth and development

- Desire for "balanced approach" to population growth
- Concerns about maintaining small town character
- Need for better planning around new subdivisions
- Housing affordability and availability issues
- Infrastructure capacity for growth questioned

Public spaces and amenities

- Better maintenance of parks and gardens
- Need for more shade trees
- Better playgrounds and youth facilities needed
- Public toilet improvements required
- More focus on accessibility for all ages

Prosperity

There is strong support for economic development and business support within the community, specifically the farming sector. Business growth and development is also highly valued, with over half of respondents prioritising support for existing businesses, while 42.3% consider attracting new businesses very important. Creating career opportunities for young people in the region emerged as another key priority,

There is more moderate support for tourism and population growth initiatives.

Outcome	Very important	Important	Unsure	Not important
Supporting the farming sector	60%	28.4%	7.3%	4.2%
Facilitating career pathways for young people so they can stay and work in region.	54.2%	36.5%	6.5%	2.6%
Assisting existing businesses to grow	53.4%	35.7%	6.5%	4.2%
Attracting new business	42.3%	45.3%	9.6%	2.6%
Tourism is a major economic driver	35.7%	41.1%	13.4%	9.6%
Attracting tree changers and welcoming new residents	24.2%	36.1%	23.4%	16.1%

Prosperity

High level summary of open-ended feedback grouped into themes

Feedback indicates more concern and frustration than satisfaction with current approaches. Major concerns include planning and permit processes, housing affordability, youth migration, business support, and perceived inequity between towns.

Opinions on tourism, population growth, and "tree-changers" are mixed. Smaller towns feel overlooked, Beechworth residents worry about over-tourism, and rural residents feel disconnected from services.

Housing and Infrastructure Challenges

- Critical housing affordability issues affecting both existing residents and newcomers
- Concern about infrastructure capacity in smaller towns
- Need for diverse housing options (including medium density and smaller dwellings)
- Too many short-term rentals (Airbnbs) affecting housing availability
- Infrastructure struggling to keep pace with growth in some areas
- Call for more subdivisions and housing developments, particularly in Chiltern

Business Support and Economic Development

- Perception that business support is inconsistent or inadequate
- Concerns about empty shopfronts in several towns
- Need for faster planning and permit processes
- High rental costs affecting business viability
- Desire for economic diversification beyond tourism
- Call for more industrial land, particularly in Rutherglen
- Need for better support for existing businesses before attracting new ones

Key findings – Prosperity cont...

Tourism Balance and Development

- Mixed views on tourism's role - some see it as essential, others as over-emphasised
- Concern about over-reliance on tourism and cycling initiatives
- Need to balance tourist needs with local community needs
- Desire for sustainable tourism that targets quality over quantity
- Some feeling that tourism focus is too narrow (Kelly Gang, cycling)
- Call for better food and wine experiences in some areas

Youth Retention and Opportunities

- Strong desire to keep young people in the region
- Need for better career pathways and job opportunities
- Importance of education and training options
- Recognition that some youth movement to cities is natural
- Need for better support systems for young people who want to stay
- Concerns about lack of opportunities forcing youth to leave

Agricultural Sector Support

- Mixed views on Council's role in supporting farmers
- Recognition of farming's importance to local economy
- Need for support transitioning to regenerative practices
- Concerns about rate burden on farmers versus services received
- Interest in developing agritourism opportunities

Community Character and Growth Management

- Tension between growth and maintaining small-town character
- Concern about becoming "too suburban"
- Need to balance new development with heritage preservation
- Different views on "tree-changers" and population growth
- Desire to maintain rural character while allowing for development

Environment

The results demonstrate a strong environmental consciousness within the community, with more than two-thirds of respondents prioritising the protection and improvement of the natural environment, including biodiversity, waterways, and water conservation.

Waste management also emerged as a key priority, with more than 60% of respondents rating the reduction of landfill waste through recycling and reuse as very important.

While there is substantial support for addressing climate change, with 53% rating it as very important, opinions become more divided when it comes to specific actions like achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Outcome	Very important	Important	Unsure	Not important
Our natural environment, including our biodiversity and waterway habitats, are protected and improved, and our water resource is valued and conserved.	67.7%	25.7%	3.8%	2.6%
Waste to landfill is minimised through greater recycling and reuse, and the environment is protected from the effects of landfill.	61.1%	29.6%	6.1%	3.0%
Address the impacts of climate change and mitigate the impact on the health of the community, environment and the planet.	53%	27.6%	10%	9.2%
Strive for net zero greenhouse gas emissions and support reduction in community emissions.	45.7%	26.5%	12.6%	15%

Environment

High level summary of open-ended feedback grouped into themes

Feedback suggests while there is strong community interest in environmental initiatives, there's some diversity in views about priorities and implementation approaches. The community appears to want practical, affordable solutions that consider local context while maintaining essential services and quality of life.

Climate Change

- Many express urgent concern about climate action being critical for future generations
- Some view climate change as beyond local council scope or question its validity
- Several emphasise need for practical, balanced approaches rather than extreme measures
- Recognition that while local impact may be small, everyone needs to contribute

Waste management and recycling

- Positive feedback on orange bag soft plastics recycling trial and current recycling programs
- Desire for transfer station 'tip shops' to reduce landfill waste
- Need for better transfer station access/hours
- Calls for more green waste options
- Interest in community composting
- Better recycling facilities in outlying areas

Natural environment and biodiversity

- Protection of waterways and natural habitats
- Concern about weed management (especially blackberries)
- More tree preservation and planting programs
- Better wildlife protection
- Maintaining balance between conservation and public access

Key findings – Environment cont...

Council's role and responsibilities

Mixed views on council's scope:

- Some believe environmental issues exceed local government capacity
- Others see council as crucial leader in environmental action
- Calls for better collaboration with state/federal agencies
- Debate over balancing environmental goals with other priorities (e.g. growth, affordability)

Community education and management

- More community education programs
- Better communication about current initiatives
- Support for community-led environmental projects
- Programs targeting youth and children
- Greater transparency about environmental actions and outcomes

Accountability

The results reveal an overwhelming emphasis on governance and financial management within the community, with nearly three-quarters of respondents prioritising both good governance and sound financial management by Council and staff. This strong focus on responsible leadership is further reinforced by the high value placed on Council's advocacy role, with 67.6% of respondents rating it as very important for Council to represent community issues and priorities.

The data also shows robust support for effective community engagement and service delivery, with approximately 64% of respondents highlighting the importance of both a collaborative, customer-focused workforce and meaningful community participation in Council decision-making processes.

Outcome	Very important	Important	Unsure	Not important
Councillors and staff are committed to the highest level of good governance.	73.8%	22.3%	3.4%	0.38%
Council's financial management is sound, responsible and effective.	72.3%	22.6%	4.2%	0.76%
Council advocates on issues, priorities and needs that matter to our community.	67.6%	28%	3.0%	1.1%
Council's workforce is collaborative and customer-focused.	64.2%	30%	4.2%	1.5%
The community is well informed and provided with opportunities to meaningfully contribute to Council decision making.	63.8%	30%	3.8%	2.3%

Accountability

High level summary of open-ended feedback grouped into themes

Feedback suggests a mixed response to Council's performance, with some appreciation for existing efforts but significant room for improvement. Many respondents acknowledge the importance of good governance and accountability but feel there is a gap between stated goals and actual implementation. There is a strong desire for more genuine community engagement and transparent decision-making processes.

Decision making and governance

- Greater transparency in decision-making processes
- Concern about delays in processes like building and planning permits
- Desire for focus on local issues rather than broader political matters
- Need for better strategic planning
- Stay focused on core local government responsibilities
- Prioritise economic growth for the shire

Community engagement and communications

- Skepticism about consultation processes and desire for more genuine community input
- Perception that consultation is sometimes "directive" rather than genuinely open
- Need for better engagement with First Nations communities
- Desire for more community meetings and active involvement
- Need for better communication about available services
- Need for more proactive and earlier communication on decisions
- Desire for more face-to-face engagement beyond digital platforms
- Requests for better explanation of financial constraints and grant funding

Key findings – Accountability cont...

Financial management

- Perception of wasted resources
- Questions about equitable distribution of funds across the Shire
- Specific concerns about Beechworth receiving disproportionate funding
- Calls for more funding for smaller towns

Staff and resource management

- Concerns about staff shortages and high turnover
- Perception of inefficient use of staff resources (multiple staff attending single jobs)
- Need for better internal communication between departments
- View that Council is "top heavy" with insufficient ground-level workers

Project implementation

- Slow pace of project completion
- Gap between community input and actual outcomes
- Issues with planning decisions and project management
- Need for better maintenance priorities
- Concerns about response times to inquiries

Asset Plan

The results demonstrate an overwhelming community consensus on the importance of fundamental infrastructure, with 98% of respondents rating roads, bridges, footpaths, and transport infrastructure as important or very important.

This strong support extends to other essential infrastructure, with drainage assets and buildings (including offices, libraries, and community facilities) also receiving very high importance ratings of around 95%.

Recreational facilities generally received strong support, with 93.3% rating recreational assets as important or very important, and 88.4% similarly valuing swimming pools. However, pathways and cycleways showed somewhat lower levels of support, with 83.7% rating them as important or very important, and a notably higher level of uncertainty or lack of importance (16%) - with evidence suggesting this lower support is specifically directed at cycle paths rather than footpaths

Asset	Very important	Important	Unsure	Not important
Roads, bridges, footpaths & transport infrastructure	73.4%	24.6%	1.5%	03%
Drainage assets	62.3%	33.4%	3.0%	1.1%
Buildings (offices, libraries, public toilets, community halls, recreation buildings etc)	52.6%	42.6%	3.0%	1.5%
Pathways and cycleways	41.1%	42.6%	7.6%	8.4%
Recreation assets	40.7%	52.6%	3.36%	3.0%
Swimming pools	38.8%	49.6%	7.6%	3.8%

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing

Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance the priorities for public health and wellbeing as identified in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027.

OPTIONS	AVG. RANK
Preventing all forms of violence	3.55
Improving wellbeing	4.28
Increasing active living	4.41
Tackling climate change and its impact on health	5.18
Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use	5.47
Increasing healthy eating	5.62
Reducing injury	6.03
Reducing Harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use (vaping)	6.54
Decreasing antimicrobial resistance across human and animal health	6.87
Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health	7.05

MPHWPB Plan

Key findings from open ended questions

The data highlight several key themes, including the role and scope of Council, healthcare access, community safety, substance use, and mental health. Respondents questioned the Council's jurisdiction over various issues and suggested a focus on core responsibilities like infrastructure. There was a strong call for more doctors and better healthcare services, while safety concerns included violence and road safety. Substance abuse and youth mental health support were also identified as major issues.

Role and Scope of Council

- Respondents questioned whether certain issues fall within Council's jurisdiction.
- Suggestions for Council to focus on core responsibilities like infrastructure and town planning.
- Multiple comments indicating these matters are State/Federal government responsibilities.

Healthcare Access and Services

- Strong emphasis on the need to attract more doctors to the area.
- Concerns about GP accessibility and medical appointments.
- Suggestions for improved local health clinic access and consideration of a major local hospital.
- Issues with elderly residents accessing Meals on Wheels services.

Community Safety and Violence Prevention

- Concerns about increased violence in the community.
- Requests for increased police presence, particularly in smaller towns.
- Domestic violence highlighted as a significant concern.
- Road safety and traffic management issues raised.
- Pedestrian safety concerns, especially in Yackandandah.

Substance Use and Mental Health

- Concerns about alcohol abuse and drug use in the community.
- Need for discrete support services (e.g., AA meetings) in small towns.
- Youth mental health support services needed.
- Suggestions for preventative programs.

Online mapping tool

What are your local priorities?



Online mapping tool - Feedback by location

Beechworth:

- New indoor 25m pool requested
- Improved opening hours for outdoor pool
- Skate park revamp needed for beginners
- Traffic calming measures around St Joseph's Primary School
- New play/adventure park for 8-16 year olds
- Gorge Road bridge repairs/replacement (multiple requests)
- Hard footpath along Stanley Road
- Safer crossing where rail trail intersects Albert Road
- Heritage-style pedestrian crossing at Ford Street
- Long vehicle/trailer/caravan parking (15-minute zones)
- MTB Park improvements (toilets, water facilities)
- Relocation of Beechworth Indigo Epic trailhead
- Expanded childcare services (noted as biggest economic growth issue)
- Dog-friendly walking trails

Rutherglen:

- Improved accessibility in Apex Park
- Better access to the Battery
- Walking path between schools

Yackandandah:

- Cycle Activity Hub development (aligned with multiple strategic plans)
- Sir Isaac Isaac Park playground upgrade
- Contemporary art installations/sculpture trail
- Men's shed
- Public swimming pool maintenance
- High Street public toilets refurbishment
- Upgrade of gravel footpath to cemetery
- Creekscape improvements (weed removal, beautification)
- Placemaking Guidelines for consistent infrastructure
- Public space activation through lighting
- Place activation grants program

Kiewa/Tangambalanga:

- Improved footpaths around Kiewa Primary
- Bridge widening for truck traffic
- Pedestrian crossing with flashing lights
- Accessible walking track improvements
- Leash-free dog area near community gardens
- Small oval for football/soccer
- Sealing of Gentle Road

Barnawartha:

- Memorial Hall improvements
- Road pavement repairs

Chiltern:

- New regional tourism information centre
- Fire assembly facility for township

Digital Ideas Board - Feedback summary by location

121 ideas shared

Yackandandah:

- Request for 30 km/h zone on High Street
- Need for concrete path and covered seating at Sir Isaac Isaacs Park
- Pedestrian crossing at Sir Isaac Isaacs Park
- Concerns about closed shops and desire for more business advocacy
- Desire to keep the Yack pool operational
- Interest in making town center more pedestrian friendly
- Request for dog litter bags around town

Beechworth:

- Need for water fountain replacement outside Gold shop on Camp Street
- Requests for better cricket nets at Baarmutha Park
- Children asked for splash park, bigger pool, bigger library, and art-making space
- Need for footpath in Camp Street to bottom of hill
- Heritage drain in Camp Street needs extension past Wood Street
- Library upgrade needed
- Request for enclosed and heated swimming pool
- Skatepark revamp requested for safety and accessibility

Kiewa-Tangambalanga:

- Need for more commercial space and CBD rezoning
- Request for community car partnership with Lions
- Dangerous footpath along Bonegilla and Kiewa East Roads
- Zebra crossing for Main Street outside general store
- Need for playground improvements opposite vets
- Request to seal and widen Coulston Road
- Continue progress on Coulston Park Masterplan

Chiltern:

- Request for dog park
- Need for new Tourist Information Centre
- Request for community fire assembly area on Anderson Street

Rutherglen:

- Concerns about trucks on Main Road
- Request for more tree shading on Main Street
- Monthly cellar talks suggested for public engagement

Shire-wide requests:

Better planning for affordable housing

Protection of native vegetation

Improved road maintenance

Better accessibility to services for seniors

Regulation of AirBnB properties

Linking of various sections of the High Country Rail Trail

Councillor Survey Feedback

How we want people to describe the Shire 10 years from now

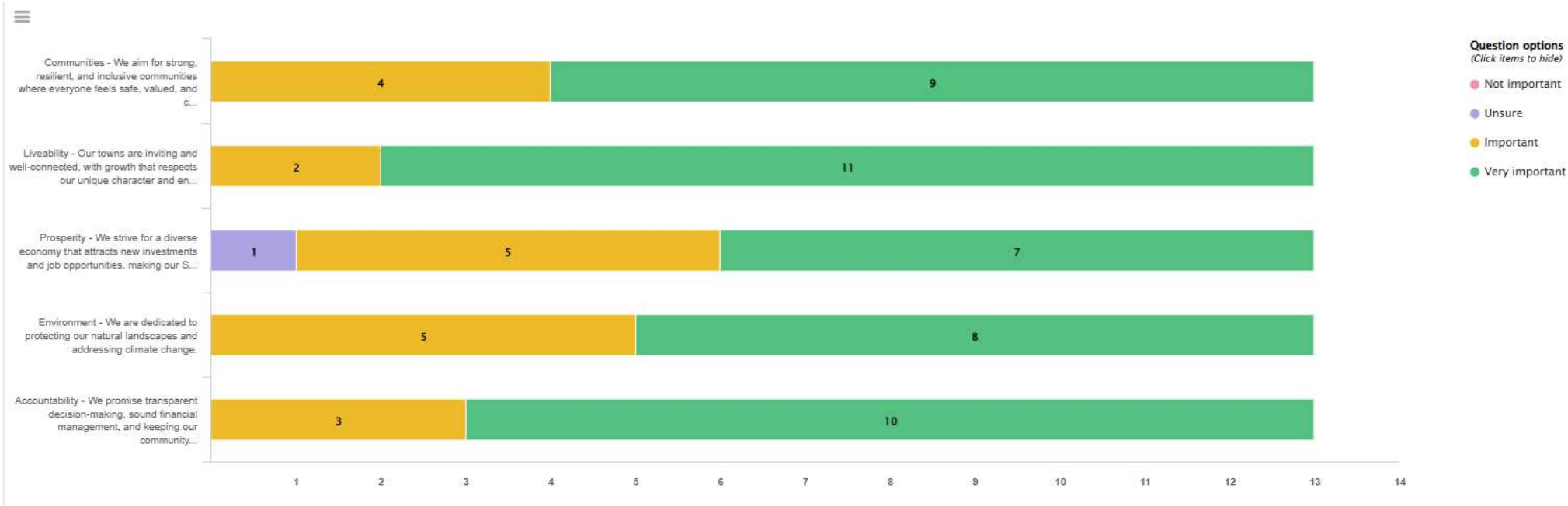


Councillor Survey Feedback

Existing Council Plan Themes – should they remain or be changed (combined Councillor and ELT feedback)

General consensus:

- The five existing themes are generally supported as appropriate categories
- The main concern is that the descriptors aren't ambitious enough
- There's a desire for stronger language around community participation and decision-making



Councillor Feedback

What does this Council want to be remembered for?

A desire to maintain core services while pursuing strategic growth, with a strong focus on community engagement, environmental sustainability, and preserving the shire's unique characteristics. Specifically:

Leadership and Strategic Vision

- Establish Indigo Shire as a leading LGA in the region
- Focus on climate resilience and renewable energy leadership
- Balance heritage preservation with innovation
- Implement comprehensive strategic town planning
- Protect important waterways and landscapes

Community Engagement and Governance

- Implement meaningful community consultation
- Ensure community voices are heard and acted upon
- Maintain transparency and robust democracy
- Build a cohesive council team working effectively with staff and stakeholders
- Make decisions based on community needs rather than external pressures

Infrastructure and Services

- Clear infrastructure maintenance backlog
- Improve service delivery compared to previous years
- Develop sustainable asset renewal programs
- Focus on basic service improvements

Economic and social development

- Support local businesses, particularly in agriculture
- Develop innovative agritourism
- Create employment opportunities
- Foster relationships with educational institutions (especially TAFE)
- Support creative industries

Planning and Housing

- Implement future-focused strategic planning
- Provide affordable and age-appropriate housing
- Create conditions for young people to stay/return
- Ensure positive growth strategies for all communities

Environmental and Cultural Heritage

- Enhance natural resources and waterways
- Protect Aboriginal heritage areas
- Preserve dark skies and cultural landscapes
- Work sensitively with First Nations people
- Lead in climate change and sustainability initiatives

Councillor Feedback

Top priorities for this term of council?

Infrastructure and Basic Services

- Secure investment for essential infrastructure upgrades
- Improve public amenities and sports facilities
- Enhance cycling infrastructure
- Focus on basic service reliability
- Improve town amenity and streetscapes (including Tangambalanga)
- Maintain roads (particularly gravel roads)

Strategic Planning & Financial Sustainability

- Develop robust long-term financial planning
- Complete strategic planning framework
- Mature approach to town planning
- Ensure value for money in rates and charges
- Success in grant applications for major projects
- Sustainable design strategy implementation

Community and Housing

- Safety and wellbeing of residents
- Affordable and age-appropriate housing initiatives
- Increased community involvement and consultation
- Democratic debate and transparency
- Social cohesion building
- Support for town-specific place plans

Environmental and Climate Action

- Climate resilience strategies
- Tree strategy and canopy increase
- Cooler towns project
- Environmental overlays for important areas
- Sustainable town and housing design

Heritage and Culture

- Unite heritage preservation with innovation
- Promote arts and cultural expression
- Work with First Nations communities
- Prepare for UNESCO World Heritage listing
- Protect significant landmarks

Economic Development

- Support small business growth
- Enhance tourism opportunities
- Build resilient local economies
- Fair caravan park management
- Reduce heavy vehicle impact on villages

Councillor Feedback

High level summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rich heritage and unique character of townships• Natural environment and landscapes• Strong community engagement and volunteering• Strategic location and accessibility• Growing arts and culture sector• Extensive trail network (cycling/walking)• Diverse local produce and food/wine scene• Attractive lifestyle (clean air, dark skies, safety)	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aging infrastructure and maintenance backlog• Limited financial resources (small rate base)• Housing availability and affordability• Service gaps (childcare, youth services)• Community trust and engagement challenges• Staff retention and service delivery issues• Infrastructure constraints (water, wastewater)• Challenges retaining youth
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tourism growth (eco, heritage, cycle, agri-tourism)• UNESCO World Heritage listing potential• Clean energy leadership• Strategic planning for future growth• Community partnerships and engagement• First Nations connections• Innovation in agriculture and sustainability• Cultural events and festivals development	Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate change impacts and resilience• Financial sustainability in rate-capped environment• Infrastructure funding and maintenance• Balancing tourism growth with community needs• Cost of living pressures• Aging population needs• Resource constraints• Managing community expectations

Councillor Feedback

Capital Works Priorities

Roads and Transport

- Shire-wide road maintenance and renewal
- Main street upgrades (Rutherglen, Tangambalanga)
- Footpath improvements near schools and aged care
- Drainage improvements
- Traffic management and parking solutions

Essential Facilities

- Public toilet upgrades (annual program)
- Swimming pools maintenance and improvements
- Caravan park infrastructure upgrades
- Historic building maintenance

Recreation and Open Space

- Yackandandah Sports Park development
- Stanley Tennis Court upgrade
- Parks and green spaces enhancement
- Splash parks and pump tracks
- Street trees program

Community Facilities

- Rutherglen Community Hub
- Childcare facilities (Beechworth, Rutherglen, Tangambalanga, Barnawartha)
- Youth facilities in Barnawartha

Arts and Culture

- Yackandandah Sculpture Trail
- Rutherglen arts precinct
- Good's Shed Beechworth

Planning and Development

- Chiltern Land Master Plan
- Social housing partnerships
- Rail trail completion to Wodonga

Signage and Wayfinding

- Township entrance signs
- Interpretive signage
- Consistent wayfinding system



Councillor Feedback

Community priorities

- Road maintenance and safety improvements
- Essential services (roads, rates, rubbish)
- Town amenity improvements (e.g., Tangambalanga main street)
- Infrastructure maintenance and renewal
- Safe footpaths and crossings
- Implementation of Place/Resilience Plans for all towns
- Balanced approach to development
- Protection of town character
- Strategic planning framework
- Sustainable growth
- Housing for young families and aging residents
- Support for farming and agricultural industries
- Climate change readiness
- Environmental sustainability
- Community project support



Councillor Feedback

Key Advocacy priorities

Healthcare access & services

- New single site Albury-Wodonga regional hospital
- Access to quality regional healthcare service
- Better ambulance response times

Essential Infrastructure

- Swimming pools funding and sustainability
- Murray Valley Highway improvements
- Rutherglen main road safety and speed management
- Water and sewer infrastructure for residential growth
- Storm water management for new developments
- Climate resilience infrastructure funding

Financial support & funding reform

- Implementation of Local Government funding inquiry recommendations
- Increased Federal Assistance Grants (FAGS)
- Additional funding for climate-related infrastructure damage
- Long-term financial sustainability for council services

Housing Crisis Response

- Affordable housing initiatives
- Social housing development
- Age-appropriate housing
- Women's and youth shelters
- Transitional accommodation
- Glenview complex repurposing opportunities

Governance and Community

- Enhanced democratic processes
- Transparency in decision-making
- Increased community involvement
- Australia Day long weekend consideration (date change)

Key Projects & Planning

- Public utility infrastructure aligned with development
- Infrastructure replacement due to climate events
- Regional development coordination with Wodonga Albury Council

Executive Feedback

High level summary or survey responses grouped into themes

Financial sustainability & resource management

- Strong emphasis on sound financial management and long-term sustainability
- Recognition of challenges with small rate base and rate capping
- Need to balance community expectations with limited resources
- Concerns about infrastructure maintenance costs and depreciation
- Focus on doing fewer things well rather than many things adequately

Infrastructure & Basic Services

- Priority focus on core infrastructure (roads, drains, footpaths)
- Public facilities maintenance (pools, toilets, parks)
- Heritage building preservation and maintenance
- Duplication of services across multiple small towns
- Capital works priorities including public toilets and recreation facilities

Strategic vision & governance

- Clear and focused strategic priorities
- High standards of professionalism and integrity
- Long-term planning
- Value for money and responsible decision-making
- Strong risk and governance frameworks

Community & environmental sustainability

- Community engagement and collaboration
- Environmental sustainability and climate action
- Unique character preservation of different towns
- Balance between residential amenity and tourism
- UNESCO World Heritage preparation



Executive Leadership Team Feedback

Key Advocacy priorities

Healthcare access & services

- New single site Albury-Wodonga regional hospital
- Improved access to general healthcare services
- Better ambulance response times

Infrastructure & connectivity

- Telecommunications improvements (addressing blackspots in areas like Indigo Valley)
- Public transport options and accessibility
- Road funding and maintenance

Financial support & funding reform

- Increased Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) to at least 1%
- Greater untied community grant funding for small community facilities
- Funding for cost-shifted services (including weed control, maternal health, school crossings)
- Improved disaster recovery funding rules and processes
- General funding sustainability

Community Services

- Increased childcare availability
- Local government reform on municipal building surveyors

All raw data from the community, Councillors and ELT surveys can be found in the Councillors folder on Sharepoint

Attachment 3: Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy - Background Report (2019)



Resource Recovery and Waste management strategy Background report

2019

v0.4

Resource recovery and waste management strategy background report
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2 Kurrajong Way Beechworth, VIC 3747

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Abbreviations and glossary

AWMC	Albury Waste Management Centre
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
EFT	Equivalent full-time (employment/resourcing)
EfW	Energy from Waste
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
EP Act	Environment Protection Act 1970
FOGO	Food organics and garden organics
ISC	Indigo Shire Council
LGPRF	Local Government Performance Reporting Framework
MRF	Materials recovery facility
NEWRRG	North East Waste and Resource Recovery Group

RRC	Resource Recovery Centre
RRWMS	Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy
SV	Sustainability Victoria
State infrastructure plan	State-wide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan
TBL	Triple bottom line assessment evaluates sustainability on the basis of environmental, social and economic factors
Treatment	To process or handle material to remove contamination or reduce harm to the environment or public health
WRRG	Waste and Resource Recovery Group
WTS	Waste transfer station

1. Summary

“Roads, Rates and Rubbish” – this mantra has long described the traditional core functions of local government. Although the range of services provided, and the way that local governments interact with the community has changed significantly, waste is still a core function, and one that affects all rate payers and therefore generates high interest. For this reason, it is of ongoing importance that waste is managed responsibly, with a focus on reducing costs to the rate payer. At the same time, community expectations about waste services, and the environmental impacts of waste are growing.

The waste and recycling industry is currently undergoing transformative change. For many years, for many people, waste has been thought of as someone else’s problem, and once the bin has been put out on the kerb it is out of sight and out of mind. However, landfills are becoming full, and contributing to climate change. Items for recycling were shipped overseas for cheaper processing. Recently, the main recipient of much of the recyclable materials, China, announced bans on accepting these materials. This has disrupted the waste sector significantly and lead to a realisation that Australia needs to move towards a circular economy with domestic waste recycling, and use of those recycled materials. Growing population, increasing waste generation per capita, and finite landfill space is also triggering consideration of alternative waste technologies. Additionally, the primary regulator in the waste sphere, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), is undergoing reform. It is very timely at this junction to consider the current and future challenges in the waste sector, and plan council’s response.

2. Introduction

This report considers current and future waste management and resource recovery in Indigo Shire. This is a background report which reviews and analyses waste and resource recovery issues for development of the Indigo Shire Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy (RRWMS).

The Indigo Shire RRWMS is developed to provide a strategy for sustainable waste management over the next five years and is documented in the accompanying strategy. The strategy document is a more concise summary of this background report.

Indigo Shire Council (ISC) is a member of the North East Waste and Resource Recovery Group (NEWRRG) and the Indigo Shire RRWMS was developed in accordance with the NEWRRG Implementation Plan.

This background report was developed through consideration of the following:

- existing waste and recycling collection and management services provided;
- consultation with the local community and relevant stakeholders;
- review of local, state and national policies, regulations and plans;
- review of achievements and outcomes to date;
- analysis of current and future waste trends;
- assessment of waste and resource recovery infrastructure;
- analysis of management options for improving waste and recycling services; and
- assessment of the environmental, social and financial impacts of future strategies for sustainable waste management.

3. Context

Development of the RRWMS is influenced by national, state and local government acts, legislation and policies, as well as regional initiatives of the NEWRRG. It is also developed within the context of community expectations, past performance and other issues. An overview of the strategic framework for Council's RRWMS is shown in Figure 1.

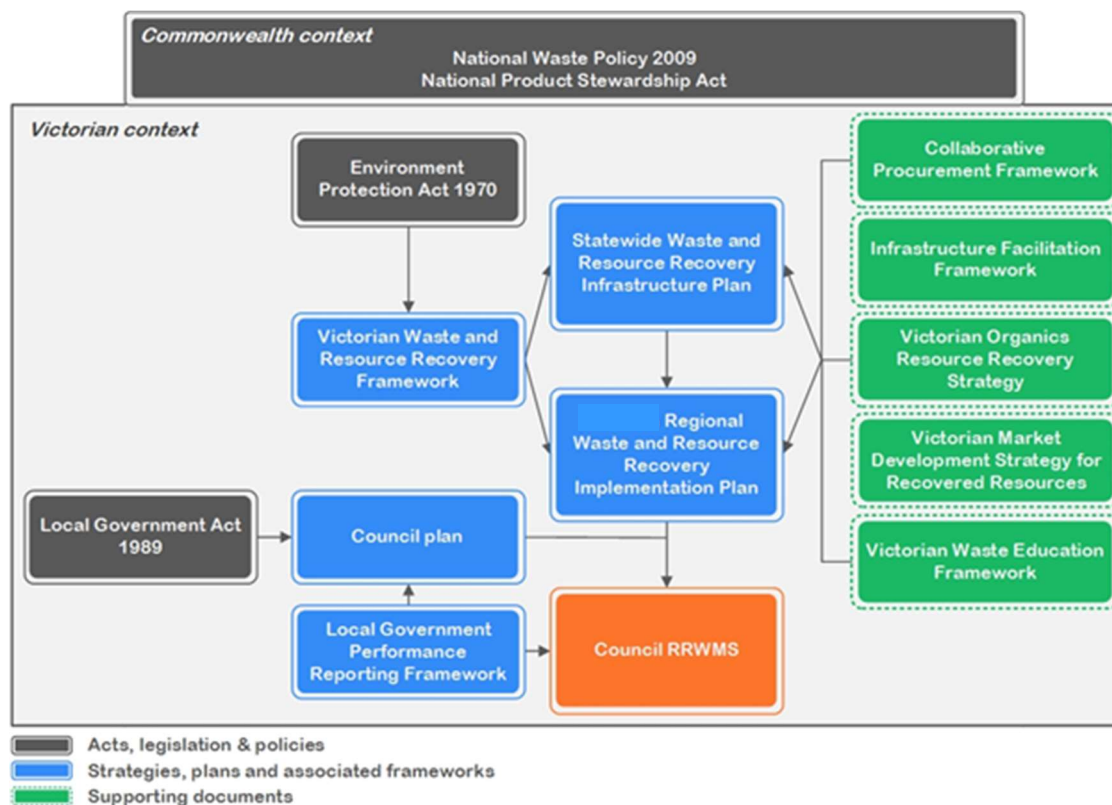


FIGURE 1: WASTE MANAGEMENT LEGISLATIVE AND STRATEGY CONTEXT

3.1 Policies and regulation

This section provides an outline of the legislation, policy and planning framework relevant to the management of waste at council level.

Commonwealth Government

The *National Waste Policy: Less Waste, More Resources* was updated in 2018 by the Commonwealth Government. This is the overarching policy for waste management and resource recovery in Australia and it complements other government action to deliver greenhouse gas emission reductions, reduce energy and water use, support jobs and invest in future long term economic growth. The updated Policy has a strong emphasis of the need to transition to a circular economy. The policy sets out strategies against five key principles:

- Principle 1: Avoid waste.
 - Prioritise waste avoidance, encourage efficient use, reuse and repair.
 - Design products so waste is minimised, they are made to last and we can more easily recover materials.
- Principle 2: Improve resource recovery
 - Improve material collection systems and processes for recycling.
 - Improve the quality of recycled material we produce.
- Principle 3: Increase use of recycled material and build demand and markets for recycled products.

- Principle 4: Better manage material flows to benefit human health, the environment and the economy
- Principle 5: Improve information to support innovation, guide investment and enable informed consumer decisions.

The Commonwealth Government also established National Environment Protection Measures (NEPMs); these set the basis for agreed national objectives for protecting or managing aspects of the environment (and are enforced through state legislation). Waste-related NEPMs currently in place address used packaging materials and the movement of hazardous waste between states/territories.

National product stewardship arrangements (between government and industry) are in place for televisions and computers, end-of-life tyres, waste oil, mobile phones and other products. Future arrangements for other materials are likely to be established, e.g. household batteries.

Victorian Government

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is responsible for enforcement of the *Environment Protection Act 1970* (EP Act) which is the key legislative mechanism for environmental protection in Victoria. Among other things, it outlines the Victorian waste and resource recovery planning framework, and scope for the development of state and regional waste plans, the establishment of landfill levies and industrial waste policies, as well as supporting regulations for waste and recycling facilities. Under this Act, councils are required to perform waste management functions that are consistent with Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plans (such as the NEWRRG Implementation Plan).

The EP Act was reformed in 2018, with various changes to be enacted by July 2020. A cornerstone of the new Act is the concept of general environmental duty, which requires people and operators to undertake reasonably practicable measures to eliminate or otherwise reduce the risk of harm to human health and the environment from pollution and waste. Additionally, ISC's waste management services will be subject to new controls, including the requirement to have transfer stations registered as a lawful place for waste storage.

The EPA introduced, in 2018, a new Waste Management Policy (Combustible Recyclable and Waste Materials) in response to several resource recovery and recycling facility fires in 2016 and 2017. The new Policy enables the EPA to continuously monitor and regulate these sites to minimise the risk of fire. In August 2017, the government established the Resource Recovery Facilities Audit Taskforce to actively work with resource recovery facilities through inspections to improve their compliance with this policy.

The EPA publication 1563.1 *Landfills exempt from licensing* provides rehabilitation and aftercare recommendations for former landfills that were unlicensed (all of ISC's former landfills).

The *Local Government Act 1989* outlines the roles and responsibilities of Victorian councils, with additional waste management responsibilities set out in the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. These responsibilities include maintaining the municipality in a clean and sanitary condition, planning for and providing community services and infrastructure, ensuring that services are delivered in accordance with best value principles, and striving for continuous improvement in service delivery.

The Victorian Government also established the *Local Government Performance Reporting Framework* (LGPRF) in 2014, which is a mandatory system for consistent local government reporting across the state. Councils are required to measure and report annually on 66 performance measures set out in the framework, including waste management services. Council performance levels can be viewed and compared with other councils via the *Know Your Council* website (<https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/>), and is summarised in this report (section 4.1).

There are additional waste issues currently under consideration which may affect future waste management in the region:

- The Victorian Government has committed to banning e-waste from landfills from July 2019.
- The Victorian Government has committed to introducing a single-use plastic shopping bag ban by the end of 2019.
- With recent regulations announced by all other states, Victoria currently remains the only state in Australia without legislation planned to introduce a deposit on beverage containers. There may be future pressure on the Victorian Government to join a national scheme to enact this.

3.2 Victorian Strategic directions and initiatives

Sustainability Victoria (SV) is responsible for implementing Victorian Government policies on resource recovery and waste management including the development of the *State-wide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan 2015-44* (State Infrastructure Plan). This plan provides strategic directions for improving waste and resource recovery infrastructure to achieve the long-term vision of an integrated state-wide waste and resource recovery system that provides an essential community service to:

- Protect the community, environment and public health;
- Recover valuable resources from our waste; and
- Minimise long term costs to households, industry and governments.

Strategic directions outlined in the State Infrastructure Plan (Sustainability Victoria 2015a) are to:

- Maximise the diversion of recoverable materials from landfills;
- Support increased resource recovery;
- Achieve quantities for reprocessing;
- Manage waste and material streams;
- Maximise economic outcomes, provide cost effective service delivery and reduce community environment and public health impacts; and
- Facilitate a cost effective state-wide network of waste and resource recovery infrastructure.

SV has also developed a range of other strategies and frameworks related to waste including the following:

- The *Collaborative Procurement Framework* (Sustainability Victoria undated) outlines a consistent approach to identifying, assessing and planning collaborative procurement of waste and resource recovery infrastructure and services.
- The *Infrastructure Facilitation Framework* (Sustainability Victoria undated) provides a coordinated, consistent and long-term approach to promoting and facilitating waste and resource recovery investment opportunities locally and abroad.
- The *Victorian Market Development Strategy for Recovered Resources* (Sustainability Victoria 2016a) aims to stimulate markets for recovered resources by reducing barriers and supporting the right conditions for material and product markets to grow and mature.

- The *Victorian Organics Resource Recovery Strategy* (Sustainability Victoria 2015b) outlines the goals, directions, outcomes and actions for improving the management and recovery of organic waste.
- The *Victorian Waste Education Framework* (Sustainability Victoria 2016b) provides a coordinated approach to waste and resource recovery education in Victoria.

In the past couple of years, the recycling industry has been subject to significant disruption and challenges, often called the “China Sword”. China historically received over 50% of the waste exports of paper and plastic for recycling. Starting in 2013, China introduced a series of policies with increasing controls about contamination rates it would accept in imported waste for recycling. This culminated in March 2018 with China enforcing a contamination threshold of less than 1%, which is not economically feasible at the current Australian MRFs. The Victorian Government responded in July 2018 with a financial support package to councils and a *Recycling Industry Strategic Plan* (RISP) with the aim of building a resilient recycling sector that is part of a circular economy and characterised by:

- Adaptability to market disruptions and opportunities;
- Cost-effective, safe and reliable household services;
- High recovery rates; and
- Long-term supply of recycled materials is aligned with demand from downstream markets and uses.

The plan commits to developing a circular economy policy by 2020, which will build on Victoria's existing waste and resource recovery strategies, with a focus on waste minimisation and sustainable production and consumption.

The circular economy concept is gaining increasing currency in waste policy, which envisages keeping products, components, and materials at their highest utility and value at all times. This contrasts with the ‘take, make and dispose’ economic model, which relies on plentiful, cheap and easily accessible materials and energy. The role of local governments in the circular economy is not only as a producer, collector and transporter of waste, but importantly, as a purchaser of domestically recycled products.

As part of the RISP, The Victorian government has released model clauses for recycling contracts between local governments and recycling providers. The model clauses are not mandated by law, but all local governments that signed up to the State's recycling relief package agreed to implement the model clauses in future contracts (before they were developed). The model clauses recognise that there are aspects of the recycling system which are out of the control of both the recycling provider and the council, while council and/or the recycling provider have varying levels of control or influence over other aspects. The model contract clauses aim to balance out the impacts of external market changes with cost/loss sharing between council and the recycling provider. The model clauses include:

- Councils accepting a pricing review mechanism based on a range of different indices on the basis that recyclers will provide a full and verified breakdown of costs.
- Councils accepting the risk of price increases on the basis that recyclers will disclose to councils their fixed and variable costs on an “open book” basis.
- Councils accepting the risk of a change in law, include a change in foreign law and policy. This would expose councils to the risks of further changes in law or policy in foreign markets in, for instance, South East Asia.
- Councils accepting the risk of contamination, including landfill and transport costs.
- Councils accepting greater risk in relation to over compaction of loads delivered to recyclers for processing.

- Councils accepting the risk of a “force majeure” event, including a fire. The Model Clauses do not specify what happens in the case of a prolonged force majeure event.

If councils adopt the Model Clauses, the implications could be far reaching. The Model Clauses propose that councils accept significantly more risk than they have in the past. With a fixed and variable pricing model, ISC will have increased uncertainty regarding the annual budget processes and calculation of waste management charges. The acceptance of risk (and payments) for contamination and compaction rates over an agreed threshold means that ISC would need to have greater investment in educational and auditing programs.

3.3 Regional and council plans

The North East Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan (NEWRRIP) was developed by NEWRRG in 2017. The plan identifies the infrastructure capacity needs and priorities of the region and shares the strategic directions and visions of the State Infrastructure Plan. Regional strategic objectives are to:

- Achieve behaviour change that reduces waste generation and increases resource recovery;
- Encourage innovative and cost-effective ways to increase resource recovery;
- Identify and establish industry relationships to build market opportunities to maximise resource recovery;
- Facilitate the aggregation of services through joint procurement to maximise resource recovery and cost effectiveness; and
- Plan for future waste and resource recovery infrastructure and service needs for the region.

To comply with the EP Act, Councils need to adopt these (or similar) strategic waste objectives to ensure Council waste management functions are consistent with the regional plan.

To deliver on these objectives, NEWRRG has developed eight priority actions. Each priority action has sub-activities and initiatives involving various stakeholders such as NEWRRG, councils, DELWP, EPA, industry, etc.

Councils are required to play either a lead role or partnering role in almost all of the activities and initiatives outlined in the regional plan. These are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. NEWRRG Implementation Plan Priority Actions

Priority action (PA)	Short term actions	When	Role
Develop and support solutions to increase the recovery of priority materials including organics, plastic, glass, textiles, timber, aggregates and low toxicity materials	Investigate and if viable conduct a trial to provide RRC organics as feedstock to EfW facilities.	2018-19	Partner
	Investigate and, where viable, facilitate opportunities to increase recovery of timber pallets.	2016-18	Partner
	Investigate opportunities and, where viable, facilitate linking business with existing food recovery collections.	2016-18	Partner
	Facilitate discussions with industry to investigate opportunities for local glass crushing and reuse.	2016-21	Partner

Priority action (PA)	Short term actions	When	Role
	Facilitate discussions with local government, alpine resorts and other pipe infrastructure providers about using reprocessed crushed glass in road construction and as pipe bedding.	2017-19	Partner
	Facilitate discussions with stakeholders to develop new local processing facilities meeting the identified needs of the north east implementation plan.	2017-22	Partner
	Work with industry to identify and implement opportunities to increase the recovery of textiles.	2018-19	Stakeholder
	Work with local and state government to identify opportunities to expand collections of batteries, paint and fluorescent lights.	2016-18	Partner
Assess and, where viable, support systems to increase recovery from mixed loads of materials and waste	Conduct waste audits to inform pre-sort viability assessment.	2016+	Partner
	Investigate viability of pre-sort infrastructure at landfills and large RRCs.	2017-20	Partner
Facilitate the development of regional partnerships to enable efficiencies in materials and waste transport, disposal and resource recovery	Develop infrastructure that enables efficiencies in materials and waste transport.	2016+	Partner
	Facilitate collaborative procurements to maximise waste and resource recovery outcomes.	Ongoing	Partner
	Consider options to consolidate and upgrade landfill and RRC infrastructure.	Ongoing	Partner
	Work across state government to consider and facilitate regional needs to facilitate diversion of e-waste to landfill in line with government commitment.	2016+	Partner
	Work with councils/alpine resorts and state authorities to develop mechanisms to appropriately manage materials and waste during and after emergency events.	2017-18	Partner
Support councils, alpine resorts and industry to upgrade infrastructure and improve operations	Support councils and alpine resorts to establish waste management strategies aligned with this north east implementation plan.	Ongoing	Partner
	Promote the strategic directions of the north east implementation plan to the waste and resource recovery industry in the region.	2017+	Stakeholder
	Facilitate training opportunities to support councils and alpine resorts to continuously improve landfill and RRC operations.	Ongoing	Partner
	Investigate options to improve infrastructure and systems to collect and aggregate quantities of viable materials for reprocessing.	Ongoing	Partner

Priority action (PA)	Short term actions	When	Role
	Establish hardstand areas to reduce contamination of organics at RRCs.	2017-19	Partner
Work with councils and across state government to site new infrastructure appropriately and protect existing and proposed facilities and hubs from encroachment	Work with local government to discuss potential planning controls to protect buffers for proposed facilities and hubs.	2017-19	Partner
	Work with local government to establish a procedure to ensure that regard is given to the north east implementation plan when considering planning permit applications for new waste and resource recovery infrastructure.	2017-19	Partner
	Support industry and local government to identify possible sites for new resource recovery infrastructure.	Ongoing	Partner
Work with councils, alpine resorts and industry to investigate innovative and technological advancements that could inform future infrastructure development	Monitor and provide advice on opportunities and advances in the waste and resource recovery sector and consider their application and viability for the region.	Ongoing	Partner
Facilitate work between councils and the EPA to develop appropriate risk-based approaches for rehabilitation of unlicensed closed landfills	Facilitate work between councils and the EPA to agree on risk assessment for unlicensed closed landfills.	2017-19	Partner
	Facilitate work between councils and EPA in developing and implementing management strategies for unlicensed closed landfills.	2018-2021	Partner
Develop a long term regional strategy for landfill	Work with councils and alpine resorts to develop regional strategy for landfill.	2018	Partner
	Facilitate adoption of regional landfill strategy by councils and alpine resorts.	2018-19	Partner

ISC has undertaken collaborative procurement with other councils in the north east of Victoria and Southern New South Wales, resulting in an arrangement for kerbside collections by Cleanaway, disposal at Albury Waste Management Centre (AWMC) landfill, and an education program that is co-managed by Cleanaway and Halve Waste, directed by an annual education plan.

The Indigo Shire Council Plan 2017-21 includes the strategic objective “We support reduction in community consumption of non-renewable resources”, with a key strategy to achieve the objective being to support initiatives and projects that reduce consumption of resources. Specific strategy actions included in the Council Plan relating to waste are:

- Develop a waste management strategy
- Implement Plastic-wise Indigo policy and programs

The Indigo Shire environment strategy 2019 includes a strategic action to develop a detailed waste management plan to meet the objectives of increasing diversion percentages from landfill, as well as decreasing total waste to landfill. Indigo Shire *Local Law No. 2 – Environmental* (2010, part 4) includes requirements regarding waste and bins.

Indigo Shire adopted a Plasticwise Policy in 2018. The Policy aims to reduce, and eventually eliminate single use plastics from within council operations and at council events. The Policy also includes a commitment to advocacy and educating and promoting voluntary adoption of the Policy in the community. The community survey undertaken as part of the development of this background report and accompanying strategy asked as question to gauge the visibility and effectiveness of implementation of the Plasticwise Policy. The result, depicted in Figure 2 indicates that two-thirds of the community have either never heard of the Policy or have not noticed a change. While it is positive that 18% are actively engaged in the Policy, and a further 16% have noticed a difference, these results suggest further work is needed to increase the profile and effectiveness of the Policy.

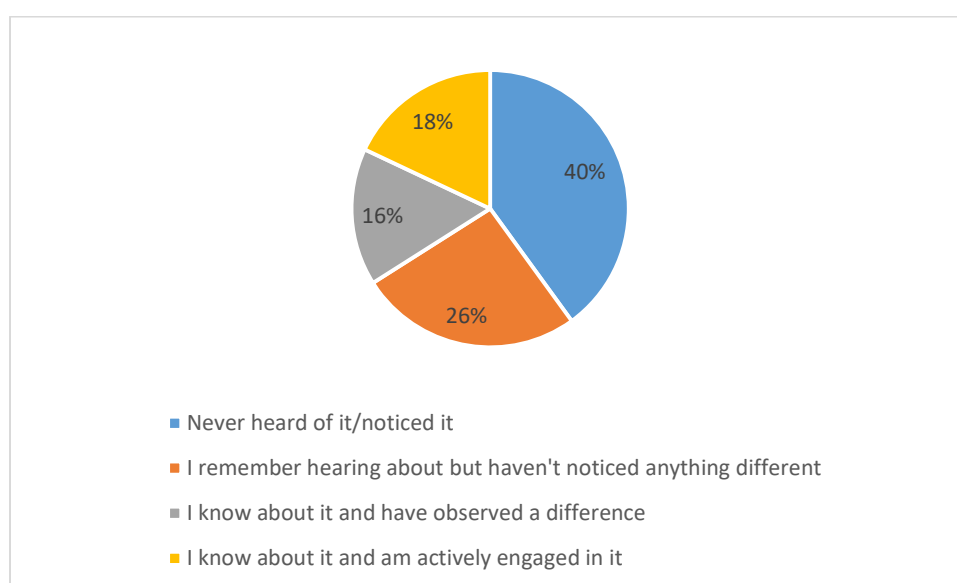


FIGURE 2: COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF THE INDIGO SHIRE PLASTICWISE POLICY

ISC also has a Climate Change Policy, which commits ISC to reducing emissions from its own operations, as well as supporting the community to reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate. Waste management has large implications for climate change. Waste decomposing in landfill generates methane which is a greenhouse gas with 21 times the warming effect of carbon dioxide. Transport and processing of waste also creates emissions. Operating higher up on the waste hierarchy (Figure 3), not only reduces waste but also reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

3.4 Waste management hierarchy

The waste management hierarchy is the underlying principle of waste management policies in Australia and is included in the *Environment Protection Act 1970*. The hierarchy establishes the order of preference for waste management, where avoidance is the most preferred option and disposal the least preferred option as shown in Figure 3. The hierarchy shows that while recycling is a good outcome, it is not the most preferred, and greater focus should be placed on avoidance and reuse. Not only is this a better outcome for the environment, but it also has financial benefits. Appropriate

market signals are already in place, with the costs of landfilling being the highest per tonne, recycling and composting are cheaper than landfilling per tonne, but still incur a significant cost.

Waste avoidance and minimisation is the most important element of the Waste Hierarchy and also the one that presents some of the toughest challenges. Unfortunately, in spite of growing awareness in the community about the need to reduce waste, waste generation rates have continued to rise (beyond linearly with population growth) and improvements in standards of living. Additionally, recycling of items collection is largely within control of local governments, and there is an established history of attempting to educate and influence the community's behaviour and practices regarding recycling. Avoidance and reuse, by contrast, is largely out of local government's control, and the community is less accustomed to education and influence regarding these behaviours.

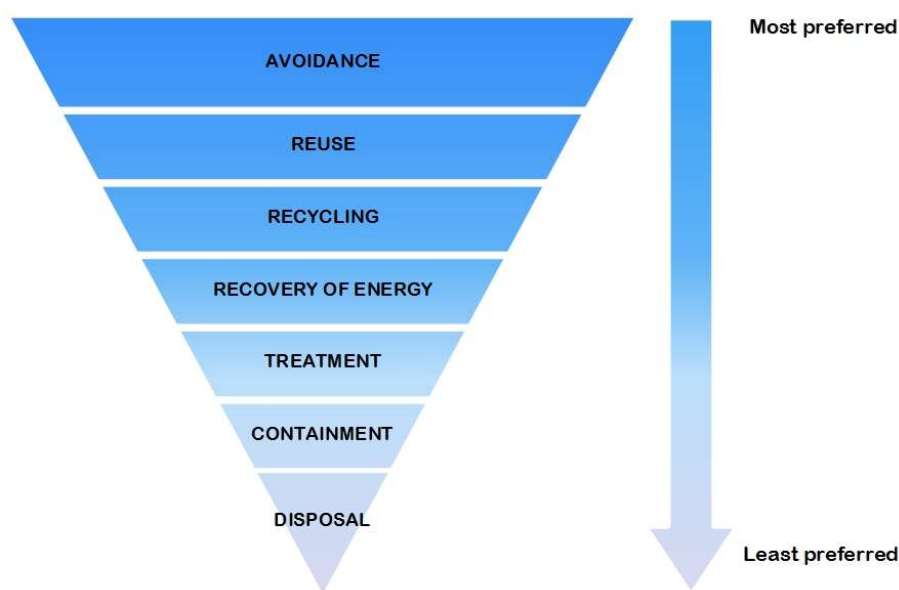


FIGURE 3: WASTE MANAGEMENT HIERARCHY

3.5 Industry trends

In recent years, environment protection measures for landfills have increased in line with knowledge of the impacts. Improved engineering and management practices come at a cost and it is more efficient to provide such expensive infrastructure as a regional asset. There is a trend towards rationalising landfills, with closure of small landfills and replacement with transfer stations (or resource recovery centres).

There is an industry trend towards establishing advanced waste treatment technologies as an alternative to landfill disposal. This includes technologies such as gasification, pyrolysis, anaerobic digestion and other waste to energy technologies. The technologies suited to municipal solid waste require large volumes of waste (at least 100,000 tonnes per year depending on the technology) to justify the large capital outlay involved (over \$30 million for most systems).

4. Current situation

This section reviews the current status of waste management within Indigo Shire including data on waste and recyclable generation, collection services and waste and resource recovery facilities.

4.1 Indigo Shire waste management performance

The below charts show trends in Indigo Shire's kerbside collection performance, and benchmarks this against other similar councils, as well as all councils in Victoria. This data is taken from the Know your Council website.

Figures 4 and 5 show the number of requests/complaints for missed bin collections. The rate in Indigo Shire has reduced from 2016, and is lower than the state council average, however there is still room for improvement as the rate is higher than that for other similar councils. Two comments submitted in the community survey expressed frustration at missed bins, with one respondent unsure of what they should do if a bin is missed. When a bin is missed, the customer should report it to ISC, so we can notify Cleanaway and log the complaint. The bin should be left out and it will be collected the next time the truck is in the area. The contract with the kerbside collection contractor includes performance measures for number of missed bins.

Figure 6 shows the cost of garbage collection is lower than other similar councils, as well as the State average. The cost of recycling collection (Figure 7) is also lower than other similar councils, but higher than the state average. The costs to council of providing the recycling service are increasing as a result of the recycling processing fee instated in 2018 (\$42/tonne) as a result of the China Sword policy which reduced the markets available for selling of recyclables.

The communities of Indigo Shire are leaders when it comes to diverting waste from landfill, as seen in Figure 8. Due to the introduction of the FOGO (food organics garden organics) third bin in 2015, the diversion rate from landfill has almost doubled, and remained consistent since then. Indigo Shire ranked third in the state for percentage diversion in 2017-18. Opportunities to further improve the diversion rate could be via expansion of the FOGO service area. Only properties within a defined organics collection zone (largely urban) in Indigo Shire currently receive this service.



FIGURE 4: NUMBER OF BIN COLLECTION REQUESTS PER 1,000 HOUSEHOLDS – COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS

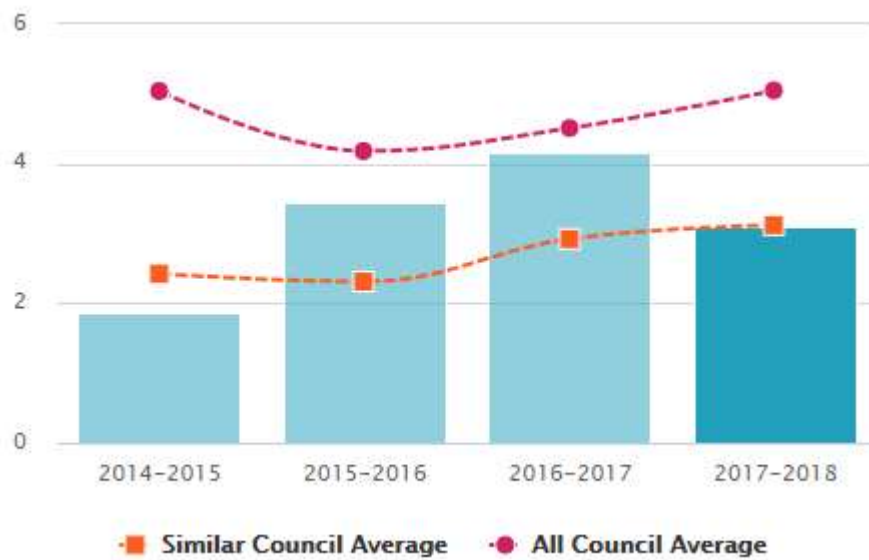


FIGURE 5: NUMBER OF BINS MISSED PER 10,000 HOUSEHOLDS – COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS

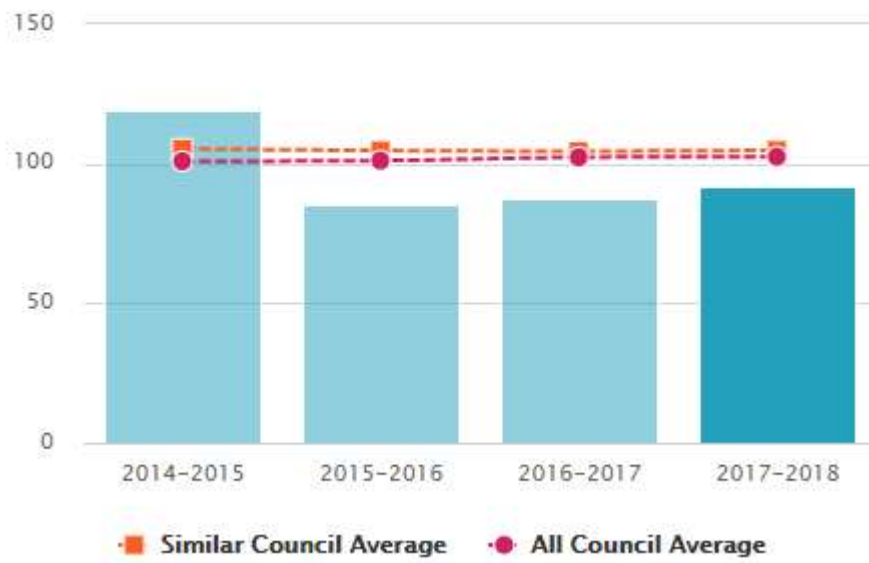


FIGURE 6: COST OF GARBAGE COLLECTION PER BIN – COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS

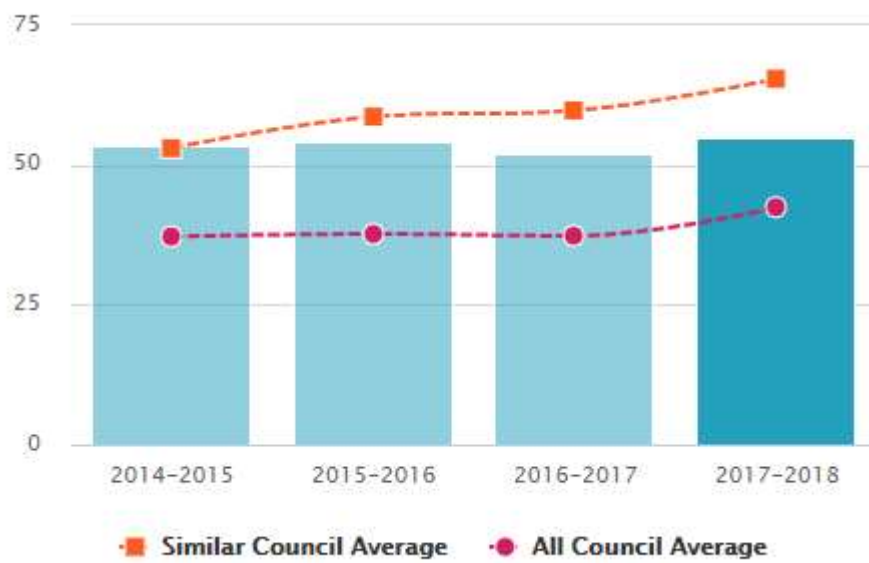


FIGURE 7: COST OF RECYCLING COLLECTION PER BIN – COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS

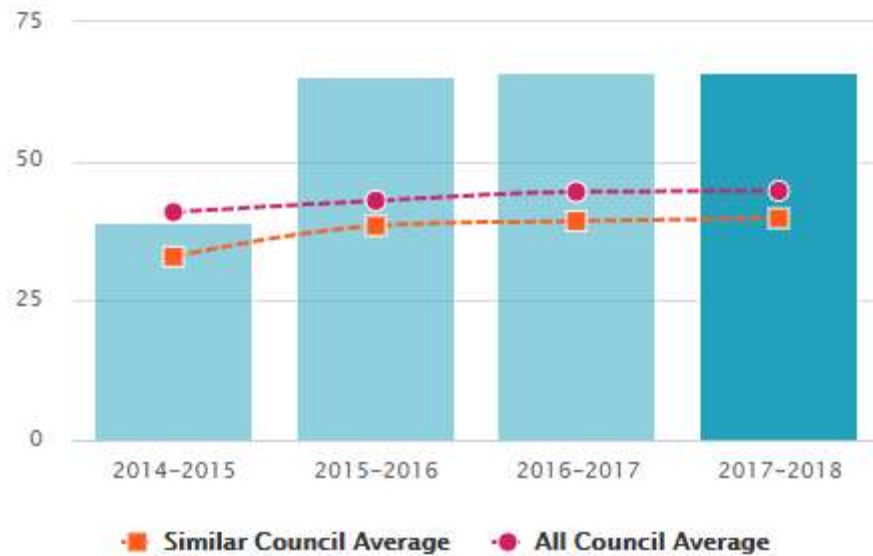


FIGURE 8: DIVERSION OF WASTE FROM LANDFILL – COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS

4.2 Materials generated

Waste generated and materials recovered

Figure 9 shows the volumes of waste, recycling and organics collected through the kerbside service over the last four years. An organics collection service was introduced in 2015, which has clearly caused a significant diversion from landfill. The diversion rate from landfill has been consistent over the last three years at 66%. Recycling and landfill volumes remain consistent.

Garbage is collected and taken directly to the landfill at AWMC, with volumes calculated by a weighbridge. Recyclables are taken to Cleanaway’s Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Albury, sorted, processed and bailed, before on-selling to dynamic (largely overseas) markets. Contaminants in the recycling bin are manually removed by operators at the MRF, as well as throughout the conveyer process.

Organic waste collected from the kerbside bins is taken to Albury Waste Management Centre, where Cleanaway operate an initial screening system for organics, before it is transported to Biomix, in Stanhope Victoria, for industrial composting. Some respondents in the community survey expressed concern that the FOGO waste is taken so far away for processing, and would prefer it to be processed locally. Cleanaway have tried for several years to establish an organics processing facility within the region, but this has been met with local community opposition and they have not been able to progress this project. Cleanaway continue to pursue more local opportunities, with an Expression of Interest (EOI) issued in late 2018. The greenhouse gas emissions benefits of transporting the FOGO so it can be composted, compared with travelling less distance to be landfilled, are very favourable. The trucks would have to travel all the way around Australia to generate the same emissions as landfilling would create compared with composting. Therefore, the composting in Stanhope is still a beneficial environmental outcome.

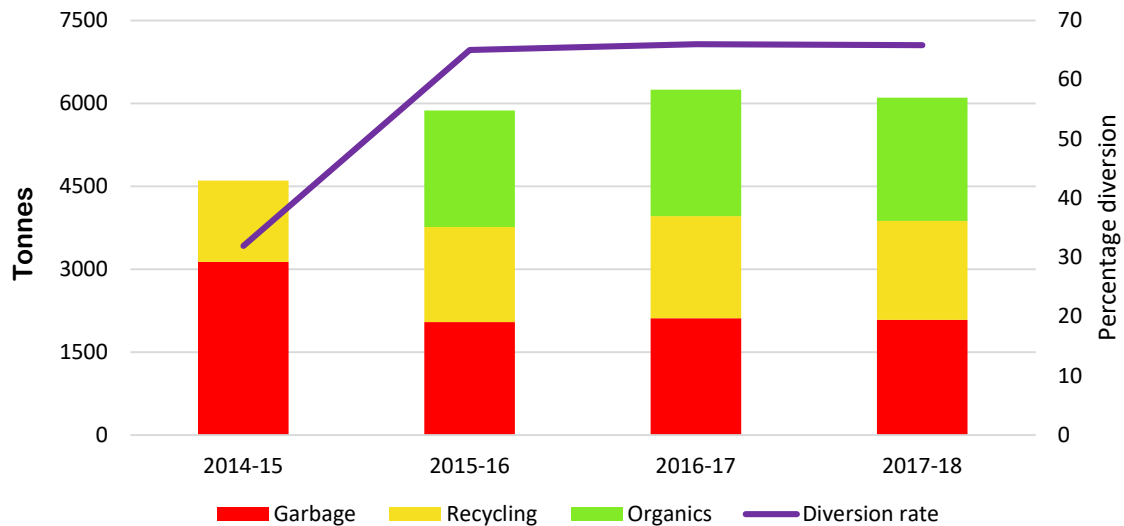


FIGURE 9: KERBSIDE WASTE, RECYCLING AND ORGANICS GENERATION 2015-2018

Figure 10 shows the breakdown of the recycling stream over three years, which remains relatively consistent. This chart does not include contaminants, data is available of the percentage volume of the recycling waste stream that is removed as contaminants, but this is not further categorised into types of material. The contamination rate of the recycling stream averages around 10%, which a minor improvement (0.2-0.3%) recorded each year over the last three years. Feedback from Cleanaway indicates one of the primary contaminants was soft plastics, and increasing consumer awareness of soft plastics and alternative recycling options has improved this over the last two years. Comments in the waste survey regarding confusion about what to put in which bin mainly centred around plastics, including recyclables that have food waste on them, soft plastics, meat trays and plastics that don't have a recycling number on them. Contamination in the organics bin is much lower, at 1.3% in 2015-16 and since reducing even further to 0.78%.

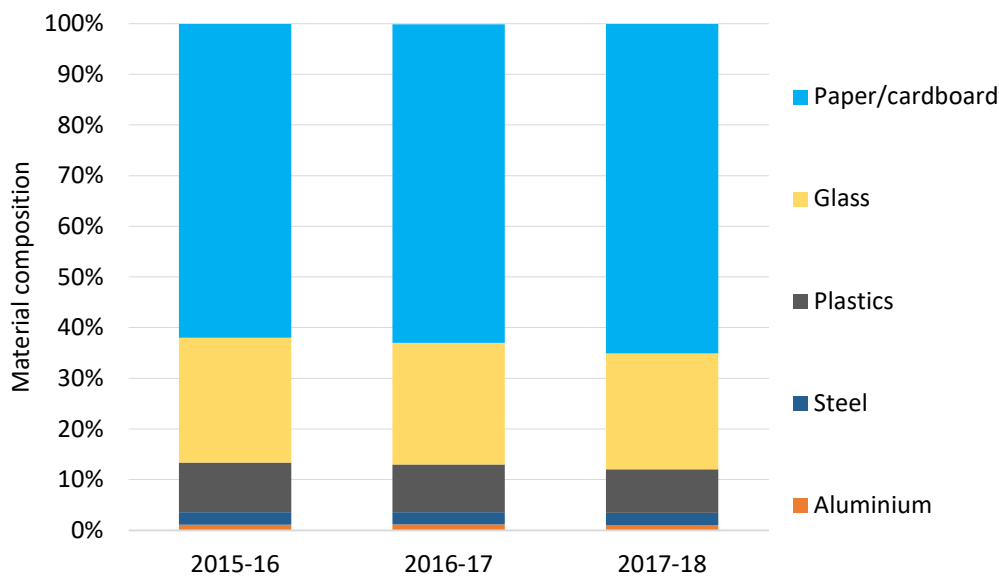


FIGURE 10: MATERIALS GENERATED FROM KERBSIDE 2016-2018

In addition to the kerbside service, various waste streams are collected at Indigo Shire's two transfer stations. Figure 11 shows the landfill volumes from Beechworth and Rutherglen transfer stations, which is trending slightly downwards, mainly due to a decrease at Rutherglen. Figure 12 shows the other (non-landfill) items collected at the waste transfer stations for recycling, and their volumes in 2017-18. Table 2 lists all items accepted and their collection arrangement. The community survey indicated that some customers are concerned that items collected at the WTS aren't recycled. In fact, most items are recycled, only the household (hard) waste collected in the skip bin is not.

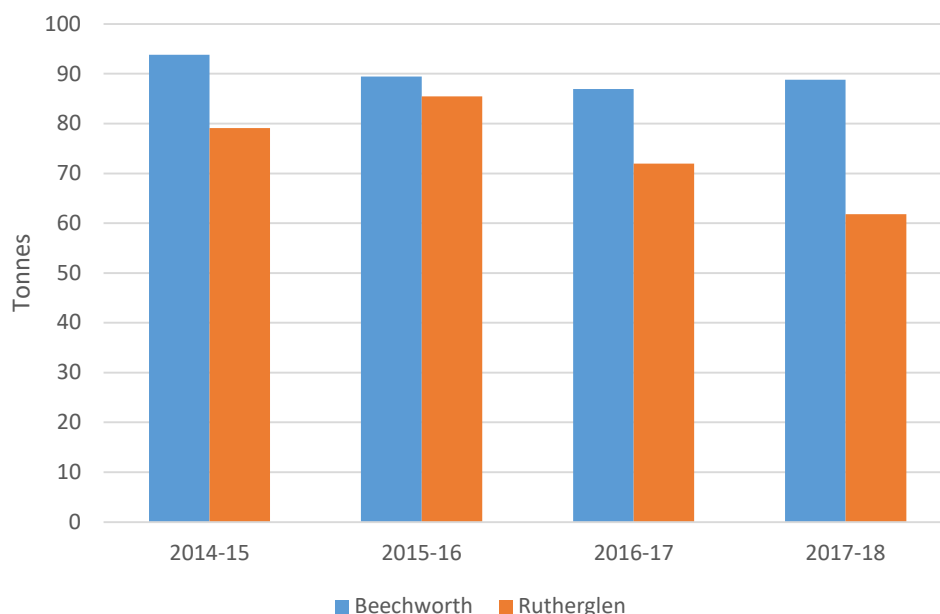


FIGURE 11: LANDFILL VOLUMES COLLECTED AT TRANSFER STATIONS.

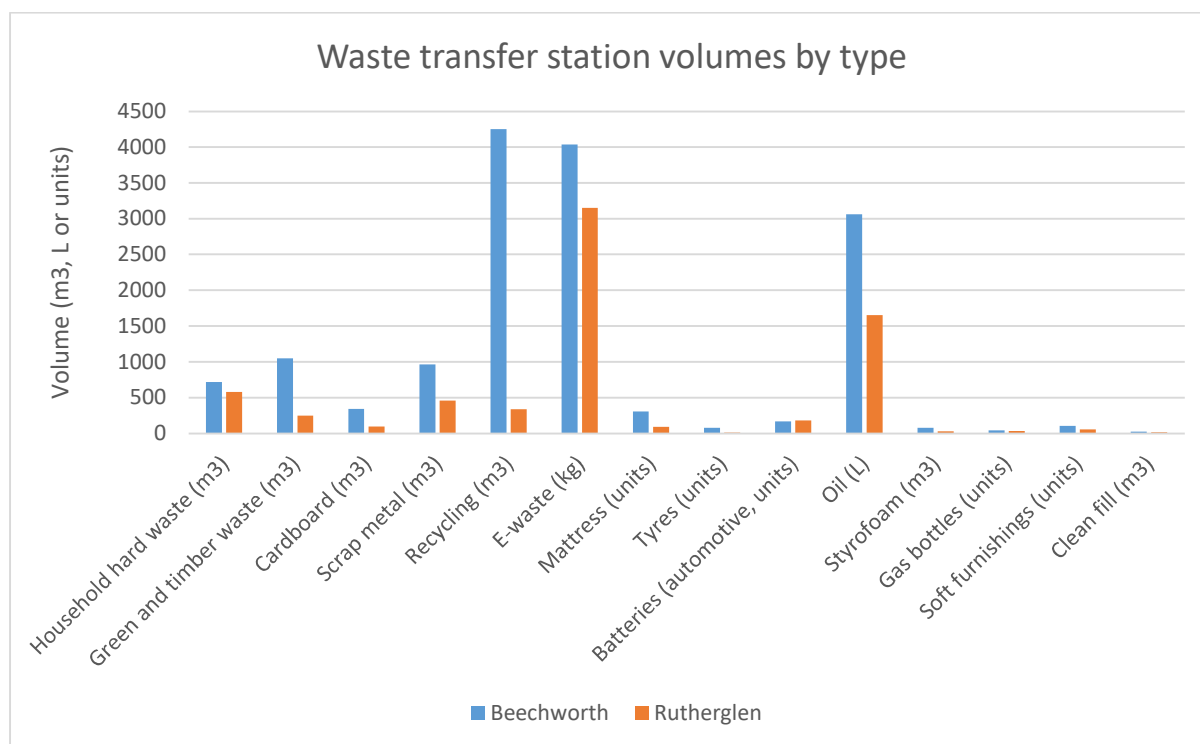


FIGURE 12: ITEMS COLLECTED AT TRANSFER STATIONS (2017-18)

In 2018-19, polystyrene volumes have increased significantly. The polystyrene is processed at AWMC (compressed via hot extruder) and sent overseas where it is used in picture frames and some building materials. Being a high volume, light-weight item, is costly to transport for recycling, and takes up significant landfill space if not recycled. Polystyrene is free for customers to drop off at the WTS, and ISC is required to pay a bin hire and transport fee to AWMC when the skips bins are full. Halve Waste offer an annual subsidy of \$3,000 per year to assist with polystyrene recycling, and based on current volumes, the remaining cost to ISC is around \$10,000 per year. WTS staff are conscientious with optimising the packing of polystyrene into the skips bin the enable fewer collections. It is not feasible for ISC to purchase and operate their own hot extruder for polystyrene due to the volumes presented (the machine has to have a constant feed stock to operate correctly), as well the fact that we have two transfer stations that are staffed by one person at a time only, meaning there is no one available to safely operate the machine.

E-waste is another fast growing recycling stream that is likely to increase further at state-wide publicity of the e-waste ban to landfill progresses. E-waste is free for customers to drop off at the WTS, and incurs a cost for ISC to store and transport. Scrap metal is the only recyclable that ISC is able to derive an income from, which is why it is free for customers to drop off.

TABLE 2: WASTE ACCEPTED AT RUTHERGLEN AND BEECHWORTH WTSS

Material accepted	t/year	What happens to it?
Car batteries	<10	Collected by Sims Metal Management as part of the regional contract.
Comingled recyclables	<10	Collected by Cleanaway and is taken to the Cleanaway MRF in Lavington.
drumMUSTER	<10	Collected by VIP Packaging from Rutherglen TS.
e-waste	20	Collected by Sims Recycling Services as part of the regional contract.
Garbage	240	Collected by Cleanaway and is taken to the Albury Waste Management Centre.
Garden and timber	1,400	Mulched onsite and made available to the public for reuse, remaining mulch is used as fill.
Gas bottles	<10	Previously went to Elgas, new contractor to be confirmed.
Household batteries	n/a	Stockpiled onsite.
Mattresses	10	Collected by WM Waste Management Services under the regional contract.
Metals	840	Collected by Sims Metal Management as part of the regional contract.
Oil	<10	Collected by Nationwide Oil.
Oil containers	n/a	Collected by VIP Packaging.
Paper/cardboard	50	Sent to the Cleanaway MRF in Lavington.
Polystyrene	n/a	Sent to Albury Waste Management Centre.
Silage wrap	n/a	Stockpiled onsite.
Tyres	<10	Collected by Tyrecycle as part of the regional contract.
Total tonnes	2,600	-

Total tonnes may not add up due to rounding.

Commercial and industrial waste

Local government's waste responsibilities in Australia generally is limited to municipal waste. Local government has little or no regulatory control over waste generated from commercial and industry sources. The vast majority of commercial and industrial waste is managed by private operators. Some smaller businesses in the Shire have opted in to ISC's kerbside service.

Businesses are not required to report any waste information to governments at any level. This makes it difficult for councils to influence commercial waste generation and reduction or to even collect information about waste generation from the commercial sector. The community waste survey was open to businesses as well, and seven of the respondents were businesses.

In 2017, Halve Waste conducted a waste information survey that 130 businesses across Indigo Shire responded to. The main objective of that study was to ascertain the volumes and types of waste being generated by businesses, the results are shown in Figure 13.

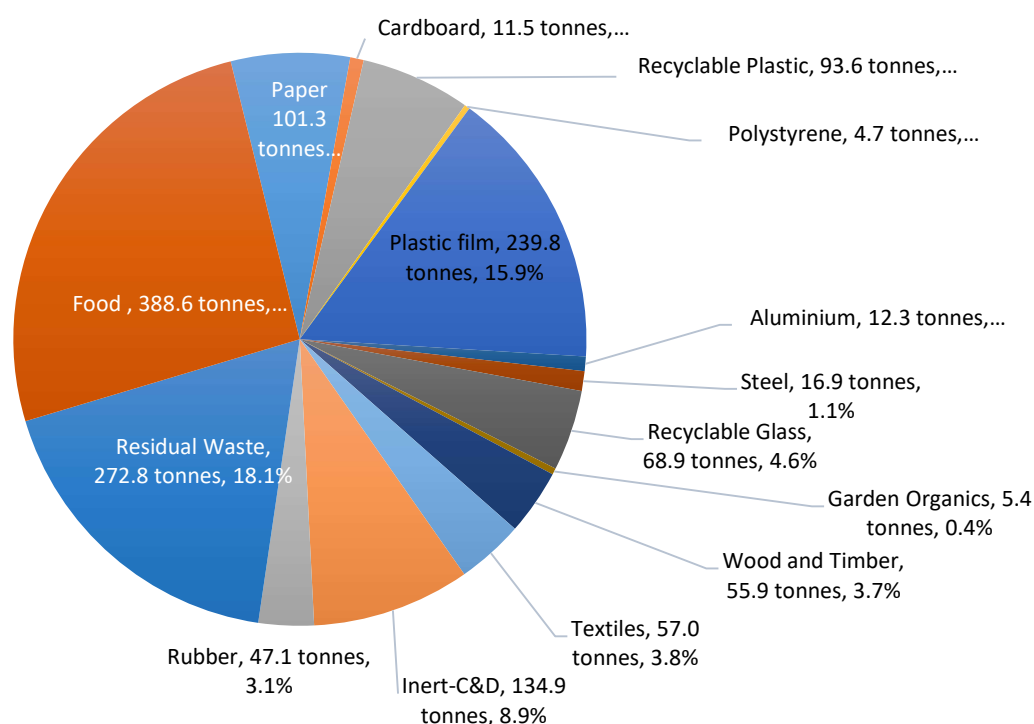


FIGURE 13: BUSINESS WASTE SURVEY RESULTS

It is recognised that given the tourism industry in Indigo Shire, there are many businesses that likely produce a significant amount of food waste that would most likely be going to landfill. The 2017 survey by Halve Waste supported this with data, showing food waste is the main diversion opportunity in this sector. Halve Waste (through AlburyCity) are endeavouring to establish a commercial food waste collection service by an external contractor in Indigo Shire towns (as well as other towns and cities involved in the Halve Waste program). This is due to commence in 2019, subject to contractor response to the EOI process.

4.3 Community satisfaction survey

ISC ran a community survey on our waste services as part of the development of this RRWMS. The survey was open from March 15- April 15 2019, and available in electronic and hard copy formats. 151 responses were received within the timeframe, from a range of Indigo Shire localities (Figure 14). The survey questions, results and comments are included in full as Appendix A, with relevant results summarised and discussed throughout this report.

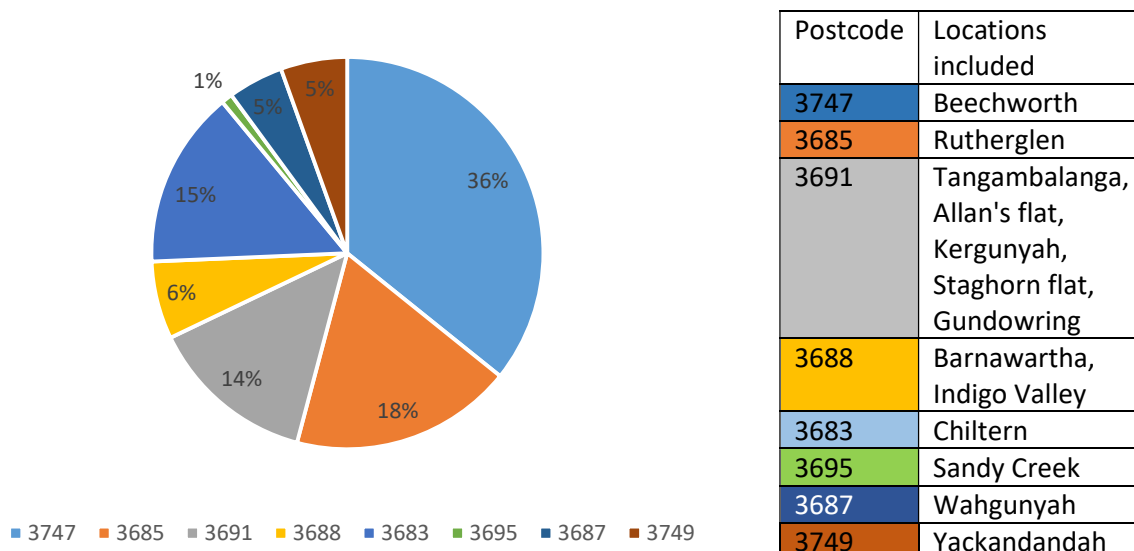


FIGURE 14: SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY POSTCODE

4.4 Indigo Shire corporate and operational waste

Indigo Shire Council is a generator of waste in its corporate offices, as well as through its outdoor operations and projects. Indigo Shire has two main offices (Beechworth and Yackandandah) as well as smaller separate customer service centres and libraries at Beechworth, Chiltern and Rutherglen. Waste, recycling and organics is segregated at these facilities and collected via the kerbside service. Volumes are not available for the Indigo Shire office contribution to the kerbside volumes. Soft plastics are segregated in the offices and taken to the volunteer-run soft plastics collection sites.

A personal waste and recycling bin is provided under desk in the office. Most council offices have moved away from this practice because it doesn't allow for full segregation of the four waste streams, and there are health and wellbeing benefits of staff taking their waste to central waste segregation areas.

Outdoor operations and capital projects have the opportunity to positively contribute to reduced waste by purchasing items that are recycled, as well as applying sound waste management practices on site.

The Plasticwise Policy applies in its entirety to council offices and outdoor operations, meaning that all suppliers should be requested to avoid or minimise single use plastic packaging when supplying items to Indigo Shire.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – ISC corporate/operational waste

- Remove personal waste bins under desks, which would be replaced with one set of bins per pod including an organics caddy.
- Run an education session/morning tea for staff on improved waste segregation – delivered by Halve Waste or Cleanaway’s education officer. Include all offices and regular refreshers.
- Promote the use of the Plasticwise supplier letter templates when purchase orders are sent by staff.
- Capital projects to apply the waste clauses of the ISC Environmental Specification to applicable projects.
- Continue to implement the Plasticwise Policy implementation plan, and work with Plasticwise community groups to increase the visibility of actions.

4.5 Indigo Shire waste management resourcing

Resourcing for waste management in Indigo Shire includes office staff and transfer station staff. Indigo Shire’s full time employee equivalent for waste management in 2019-20 is shown below in Table 3. Benchmarking waste management resourcing with other similar councils is difficult, because the services vary, including the number of transfer stations and landfills, in-house or third party collection services, and customer service support provided to dedicated waste staff. The exercise can be somewhat normalised if only office-based waste management staff are considered (excluding customer service support), as shown in Table 4.

Additionally, at times there is difficulty in covering leave for waste transfer operators. There is one casual available that can cover for the permanent part time WTS operators, but this system is fragile if both operators require leave at the same, or the casual takes leave at the same time. Shared service resourcing for waste transfer station attendants could be an option to reduce this risk.

TABLE 3: INDIGO SHIRE WASTE RESOURCING

Position	EFT (Equivalent full-time) coverage for waste
Waste officer	0.42
Waste transfer station attendant - Beechworth	0.43
Waste transfer station attendant - Rutherglen	0.33
Civil administrator – customer service for waste	0.33
Coordinator environment and sustainability	0.11
Total EFT for waste management	1.62

TABLE 4: BENCHMARKING WASTE MANAGEMENT RESOURCING (OFFICE STAFF)

Council	EFT
Wodonga City	1.2
Indigo Shire	0.6
Rural City of Benalla	1.25
Rural City of Wangaratta	2.25
Alpine Shire	1
Towong Shire	0.6
Campaspe Shire	1.0

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – ISC waste management resourcing

- Increase coverage of waste officer to full time, in line with the resourcing that other similar councils apply to waste – to provide quicker response to customer queries, and implement actions from this strategy that will reduce waste to landfill and save costs.
- Explore shared services with other nearby councils for casual waste transfer station attendants.

5. Waste services

This section discusses council's existing waste services, including description, costs, volumes and community survey feedback. The current waste services are:



- Kerbside collection – waste, recycling and organics
- Public place (street and park) waste and recycling bins
- Transfer station operations- Beechworth and Rutherglen
- Hard waste weekends
- Green waste weekends
- Illegal dumping collections/enforcement
- Litter
- Dog waste bags
- Event waste management

5.1 Kerbside collection services

Council provides a kerbside collection service, which is outsourced to a contractor. All properties receive a waste and recycling service, and properties within a defined organics zone also receive a food organics and garden organics (FOGO) service. The FOGO service was introduced in 2015 due to both a recognition of the high volume of organic waste going to landfill, contribution to greenhouse gas emissions instead of beneficial reuse, and advance planning for limited landfill space.

Table 5 shows the current kerbside service offering. There is an option to upgrade the recycling and garbage bin, however the survey results indicated that there may not be high awareness in the community of this option, with several respondents commenting that they would prefer a larger bin.

TABLE 5: COUNCIL KERBSIDE COLLECTION SERVICES

Service	Bin size	Charge (2019/20)		Number of bins	Collection frequency
		Urban	Rural		
 Garbage	140L urban/240L rural or optional urban upgrade	\$111.80 \$188.15 (240L)	\$188.15	7318	Fortnightly
 Recycling	240L Option to upgrade to 360L	\$85.85 \$103.90	\$85.85	7318	Fortnightly

 Garden waste	240L	\$157.95	-	5219	Weekly (no rural service)
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A regional group of councils (AlburyCity, Wodonga, Federation, Greater Hume, Wodonga and Indigo) collaborate on the kerbside contract which optimises procurement and contract management processes, as well as leverages our collective buying power. An individual contract exists between the provider and each involved council. The current contract with Cleanaway continues throughout the term of this the RRWMS, until 2024. Indigo Shire does not provide commercial collection services. Some small businesses and schools in the Shire have opted-in to the kerbside service.

The waste survey asked several question on the kerbside waste service, including a general satisfaction question (Figure 15). 58% of respondents stated they found the service very suitable or mainly suitable.

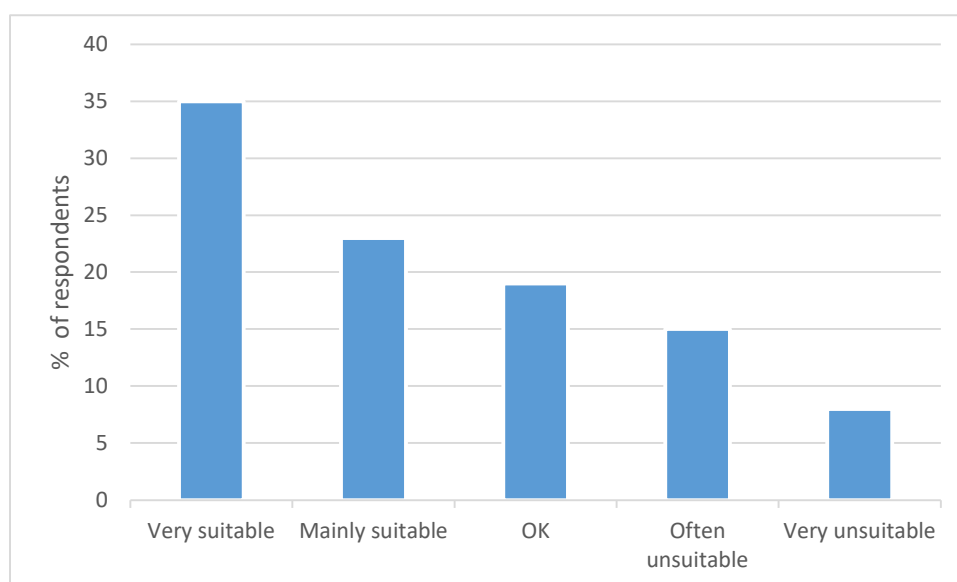


FIGURE 15: SURVEY RESULTS – HOW SUITABLE DO YOU FIND THE KERBSIDE WASTE SERVICE?

Free text comments were invited to this question, 65 were received. Comment have been grouped into themes, with the most common responses shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6: KERBSIDE WASTE SERVICE COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Comment type	Frequency
Would prefer a weekly pick up of red bin	12
Make the green bin optional (remove it and the fee)	7
Make red bin bigger	5
Make the red bin smaller	4
More frequent pick-ups - recycling	4
Nappy issues in red bin (size and odour problems)	3
Want a local soft plastics collection	3

Want to be able to get the organics bin (not living in current service area)	3
Rebate for unused pick up service as incentive for avoiding waste	2

Survey respondents were asked to report on how full their bins usually are on collection day. The results are presented in Figure 16. This indicates that bin size is only an issue for the red bin (57% of respondents) and the yellow bin (85% of respondents). The survey comments indicated that people may not be aware of the option to upgrade the bin size, which can be actioned by contacting ISC. Having applicable customers upgrade their bin when needed is a more effective solution than changing everyone's bin size. The suggestions for weekly pick-ups are not able to be actioned at this time due to the existing contract between Cleanaway and ISC. It could be considered when the contract is re-tendered in 2024, however increasing pick-ups to weekly would likely lead to nearly doubled waste charges, which is unlikely to be supported by the community. Other options to address this include requesting a larger bin size, storing the bin in the shade in the summer months, and freezing odorous food waste before putting in the bin just prior to collection.

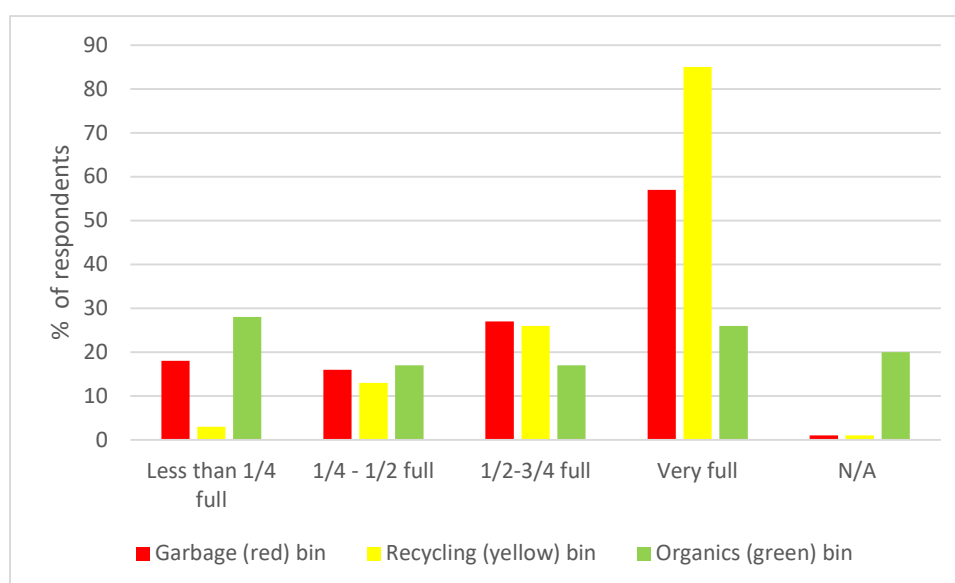


FIGURE 16: SURVEY RESPONSES TO HOW FULL BINS ARE ON COLLECTION DAY

Indigo Shire communities have a good understanding of source segregation of waste. 57% of survey respondents said they were *“very confident – I know a lot about what should go in each bin”* and 42% answering *“most of the time I know what bin to put something in”*. Only one respondent stated they felt confused about what to put in each bin. When asked *“where do you seek information on what items go into which bin”*, the most common response was the Halve Waste website (accessible via ISC website), then hard copy guides, then ISC, followed by friends/family/colleagues. 7% of respondents don't seek further information if they are unsure. Free text comments to this question highlighted that many people think a sticker on the bins would be helpful, and/or a poster on the fridge, and that Plasticwise Beechworth and Facebook are useful sources of information on segregation. A-Z guides of what can go in each bin are available for download and printing on the Halve Waste website, and hard copies are available in customer service centres. A bulk distribution to every residence has not occurred (due to cost and resource consumption involved), but ISC could increase awareness of the availability of these materials.

In 2017, NEWRRG commissioned an audit of kerbside bins, comprising 600 households over the NEWRRG area (EC Sustainable, 2017). This audit revealed:

- Average weight of the waste bins was 5.7kg/hh/week (111L) with 14.5% of that by weight being unrecovered recyclables. This indicates that there are still recyclable items that people are incorrectly disposing of in the waste bin.
- The recovery rate for recyclables was 83%. This was an improvement since the previous audit in 2013 but demonstrates 17% of recyclables are not being put into the recycling bin. These items were most commonly glass, plastic containers, cardboard and steel.
- The average waste bin weight of households with a FOGO service was less than half that of household without the FOGO service – this demonstrates the amount of food and garden organics that end up being landfilled without the option of a FOGO service.
- FOGO bins consisted of approximately 79% garden waste, 17% food waste and 3% contamination (although the Indigo Shire rate for FOGO contamination is less than this).
- The average household used 76% of their waste bin capacity, 71% of the recycling bin capacity and 55% of their FOGO bin capacity.
- The main contaminants found in recycling bins was hazardous materials (chemicals, light bulbs, batteries, e-waste including kitchen appliances and phone/computer accessories), non-recyclable plastics (soft film and hard plastics), steel, compostable paper and food.
- The main contaminants found in the FOGO bins was non-compliant bags – plastic bags and non-compostable liners.

This report recommended that councils:

- Increase the collection area of the FOGO bins to rural towns
- Continue education programs on the correct segregation of materials into each bin
- Work on avoiding and diverting soft plastics, textiles, earth based materials (ceramics, dust, dirt, rock, ash) and e-waste from the waste bins.

The FOGO collection area has expanded incrementally since it was introduced, mainly when new residential sub-divisions are created. The community survey aimed to gather opinions from rural residents regarding support and need for an expansion of the organics service. Only 7 (5%) of respondents that didn't already have the FOGO service said they would like to receive it. Therefore, further expanding the FOGO areas is not likely not be supported by the community. There are challenges with including ad hoc properties compared with all properties on that street for the service expansion. Customers seeking an organics collection should get into contact with council, who will assess their address, collection route and discuss the possibility with Cleanaway.

The survey results also included several complaints from respondents that already had the FOGO bin regarding its additional charge and low usage, in their case. This is one of the most frequent complaints/queries received by council's waste staff. Council has a policy position of "no exclusions" from the organic waste zone. This is due to:

- Conditions of the contract with Cleanaway, comprising an organics zone. It becomes operationally complex (and more expensive) for Cleanaway to collect ad hoc FOGO bins in the collection area.
- Not all FOGO waste can be composted or added to a worm farm, so even for avid composters, there is still likely to be some FOGO waste that would end up in landfill if a FOGO bin wasn't provided.
- Recognition that rates are paid by all residents for a variety of services, although individual's uptake of some of the services varies, e.g. not all residents use the libraries, playgrounds or maternal and child health services.

The survey also aimed to gauge general community support for the organics bin. When asked, “do you support use of the green organics bins to divert waste from landfill?” 93% of residents said yes, with 4.6% stating they did not support it. The remaining small percentage selected “don’t know”. This indicates that the overwhelming majority realise the benefits of the FOGO bin, even if they don’t use it themselves.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – KERBSIDE WASTE, RECYCLING AND FOGO COLLECTION

- Increase community awareness of the option to upgrade bins.
- Increase the provision of educational materials to households regarding what items should go in each bin.
- Prepare a documented policy on the FOGO service to communicate the no-exemptions position and the reasons for this.
- Continue to assess new areas to be added to the FOGO collection area.

5.2 Public place waste and recycling bins

Indigo Shire also provides rubbish and recycling bins in town streets and parks. Emptying of these bins are included as part of the kerbside waste collection contract, as is monthly cleaning of town bin surrounds (not park bins). The locations of bins and emptying frequencies as at 2019 is included in Table 7 below. Additional bins and collections are provided in some areas during peak tourist times. Collection frequencies vary between one and three times per week. The cost of the street and park bin service over the last several years is shown in Table 8.

TABLE 7: STREET AND PARK BINS – CURRENT

Township	# street bins	# park bins	Empties per Year	Empties per Week
Beechworth	40	15	5,029	99.5
Barnawartha	6	1	338	6.5
Chiltern	9	7	1066	20.5
Kergunyah	2		78	1.5
Kiewa/Tangambalanga	5	4	416	8
Rutherglen	17	5	1,820	35
Wahgunyah	3	2	442	8.5
Yackandandah	10	7	1,378	26.5
Total	92	41	10567	206

TABLE 8: STREET AND PARK BIN EXPENDITURE

Financial year:	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19 (Jul-Dec)
Street and park bin actual expenditure:	\$55,744	\$50,180	\$51,169	\$55,749	\$58,626	\$27,589

The community survey included a question on street and park bins, asking both how important the service is, as well as how satisfied the respondent is with the current service (Figure 17). The most frequent (grouped) free text comments to this question are shown in Figure 18. More bins and/or

more frequent emptying were the primary comments. This will incur additional charges, i.e. if the bins are increased by even 25%, the annual costs for this service are estimated to be \$70,000.

The ISC waste officer has observed that bins located near shops or cafes with footpath dining are often filled with waste almost exclusively from those businesses. This means that council and rate payers are subsidising the waste cost for businesses that have not arranged their own waste service, or utilise the street bins in addition to their own waste service. Another impact of this is skewing of collection frequencies, i.e. most bins in a town may be quite empty, but all bins are emptied (attracting a fee) to cater for one or a couple of bins that have increased use.

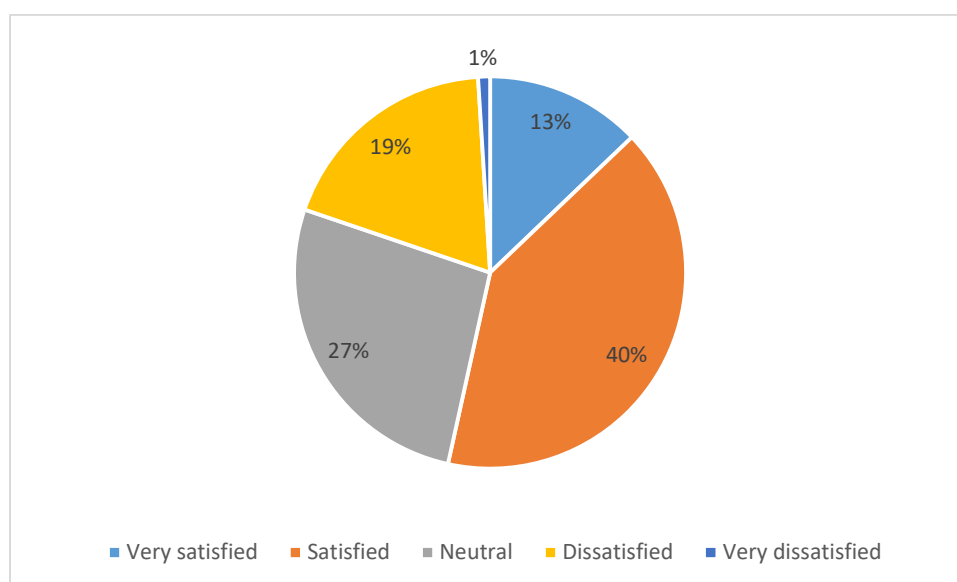


FIGURE 17: STREET AND PARK BIN SATISFACTION LEVELS

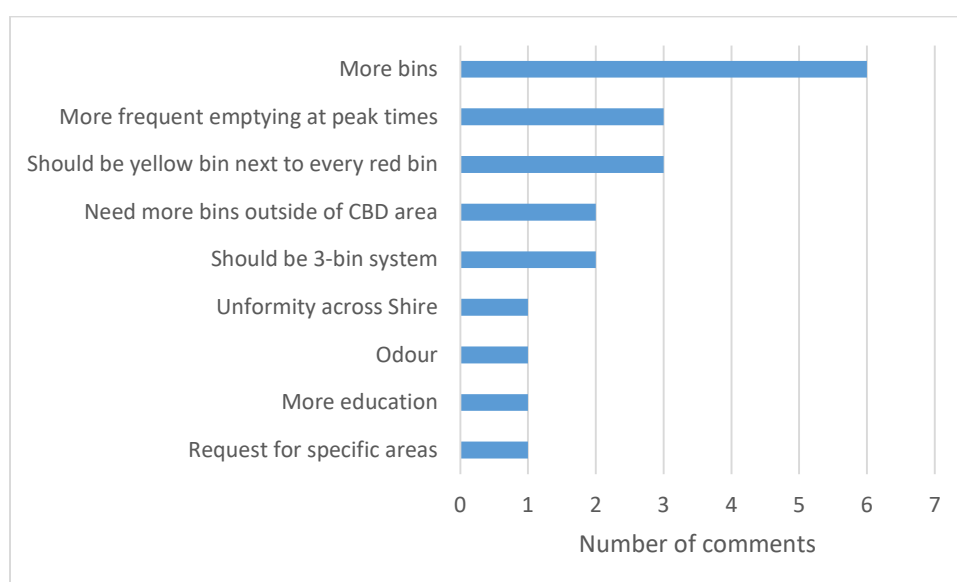


FIGURE 18: COMMUNITY COMMENTS REGARDING STREET AND PARK BINS

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – STREET AND PARK BINS

- Modify location of some bins to ensure pairing – including a recycling bin next to every waste bin. In some cases, bins are not paired. The result of this may be contamination in a recycling bin, and missed opportunity for recycling.

- Review the location of all street and park bins, identifying key gaps in all towns that additional bins are required.
- Include consistent stickers/signage/surrounds on bins to improve segregation and user experience.
- Discuss available waste services with sports park committees of management.
- The external surrounds of some bins looks unclean and in some cases vandalised. This may deter people from using the bins. Further monitor and enforce Cleanaway's contract requirements to clean the bins.
- Discuss the use of street bins, and alternative options, with adjacent businesses.
- Trial a stick-on sensor in street and park bins to rationalise the number of collections.
- Assess public areas suitable for a trial of an organics bins.

5.3 Transfer station operations

ISC operates two waste transfer stations (WTS), at Beechworth and Rutherglen. We also have reciprocal arrangements in place with Wodonga WTS and Tallangatta WTS for Indigo Shire residents that live closer to either of those facilities. This section focuses on the services and level of service provided at the WTS. Section 8 discusses the WTS facilities and infrastructure.

During the customer survey phase for this report, a quicker option was made available at the WTSs to gain some quick satisfaction data from WTS customers who did not want to complete the entire survey. Just one question from the survey was asked, "How satisfied are you with the service at the WTS?". The results are shown below in Figure 19 (combining results from this question on the survey, as well as when the question was asked in isolation). Indicating there is a high level of satisfaction from customers that use the WTS, with 72% stating they are either satisfied or very satisfied.

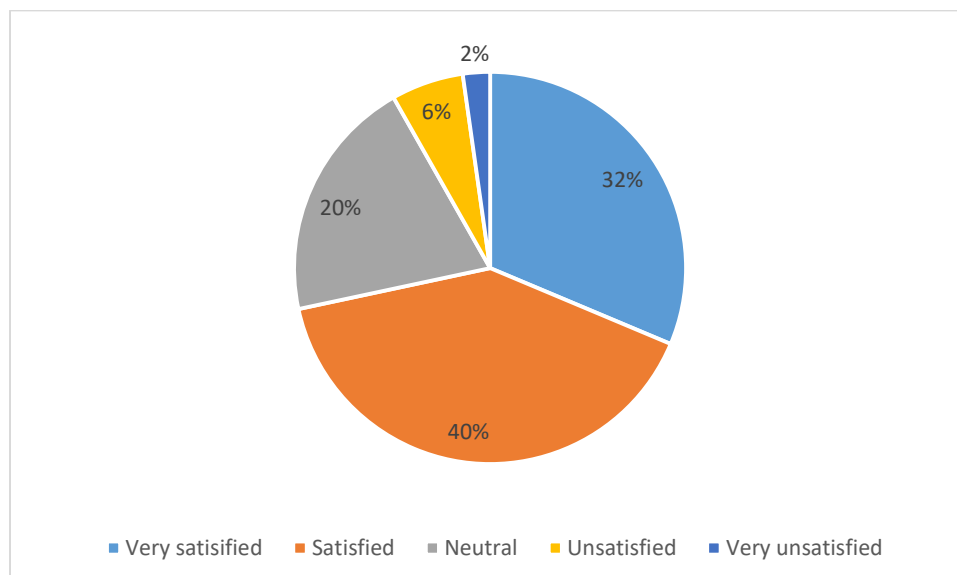


FIGURE 19: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH THE WASTE TRANSFER STATIONS

The survey also asked which of the WTSs had been used by that respondent, or if no transfer stations had been used what the reason for this was (Figure 20). Most survey respondents used Rutherglen transfer station, then Beechworth, then Wodonga (although actual visitation numbers are slightly

higher per day at Beechworth than Rutherglen). Tallangatta transfer station is not often used by Indigo Shire residents. For people that haven't used the WTSs, the main reason is they haven't had the need, i.e. no larger items to dispose of/recycle. A minority of respondents (6 and 7% respectively) have not used the WTSs because the locations or times aren't convenient. One survey respondent suggested that the opening hours could be varied to include one morning. All of the opening hours are currently in the afternoon, which is particularly an issue in summer as both the customers and WTS staff are exposed to high heat.

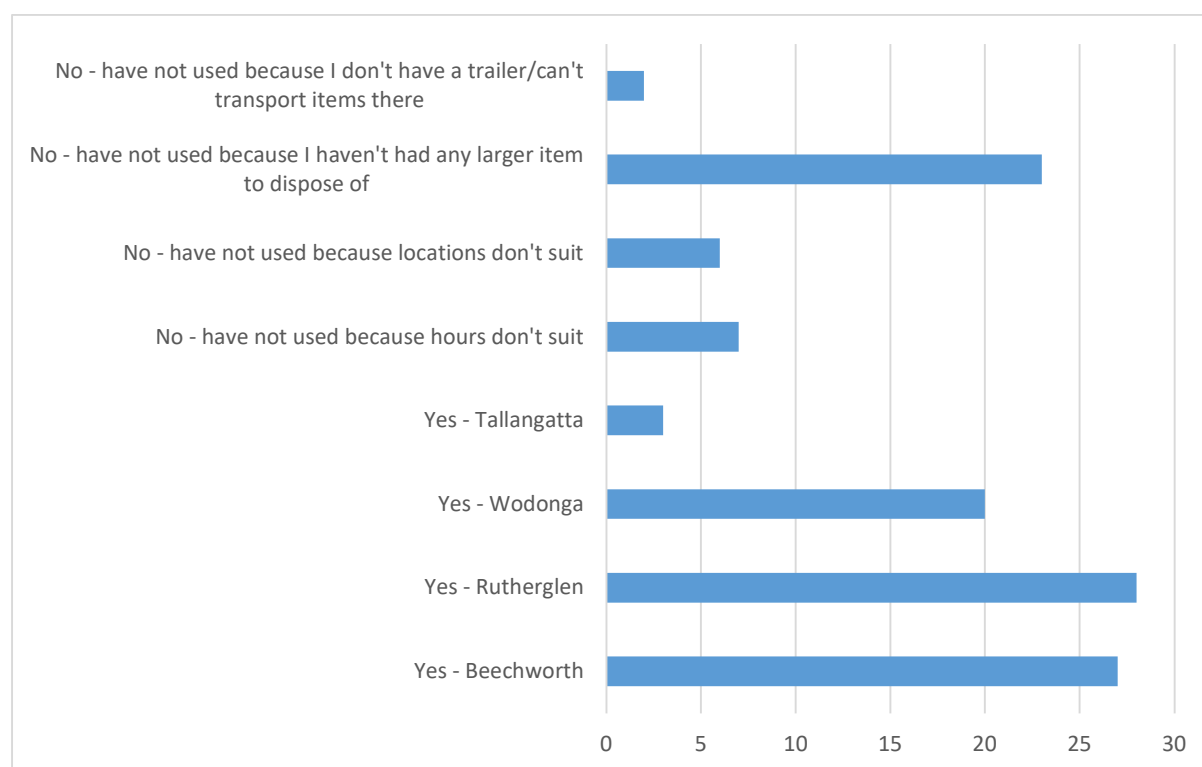


FIGURE 20: WASTE TRANSFER STATION USE AND REASONS FOR LACK OF USE

The survey also asked respondents to rate the importance and satisfaction of each service/waste type at the WTS. The results are presented in Table 9. Lower rates of satisfaction were generally noted for items that attract a fee. The services that are most important to WTS customers are:

1. Hard waste disposal with the rates voucher
2. Mixed recycling
3. Scrap metal

DrumMUSTER, tyres and mattresses/soft furnishing drop off were the least important services to respondents. The services attracting the highest rates of dissatisfaction were green waste and hard waste.

TABLE 9: IMPORTANCE AND SATISFACTION RATINGS OF WTS SERVICES

WTS services <i>*fee charged</i>	Not important (%)	Somewhat important (%)	Very important (%)	Not satisfied (%)	Somewhat satisfied (%)	Very satisfied (%)	N/A - have not used this
Mixed recycling	15	19	40	2	11	22	39
Scrap metal	9	26	34	1	11	26	38
Green waste*	18	23	23	18	13	8	45
General household (hard) waste*	10	28	28	15	19	10	37
Furniture - couches, mattresses*	11	34	16	12	17	7	46
Household batteries	19	21	24	1	10	12	55
Car batteries	22	16	23	1	9	11	58
Gas bottles	25	15	21	1	5	11	62
White goods	13	27	26	1	9	21	47
Cardboard	19	22	29	1	7	23	47
Tyres*	24	19	16	6	9	7	60
DrumMUSTER	25	13	15	1	5	6	72
E-waste	11	21	31	1	11	24	44
Hard waste rates voucher	6	9	55	11	12	24	33
Free mulch collection	17	19	23	2	11	11	61
Waste oil disposal	23	12	21	1	7	8	66

The free text comments to this question aimed to ascertain reasons for dissatisfaction. The most frequent comments (grouped) are shown in Figure 21. The primary reason is fees, with green waste fees being specifically called out as too high. The comments suggest that there is a lack of understanding in the community about the fee structure at the WTS. Fees are only charged to recover processing costs, even though some items are recyclable, e.g. green waste and soft furnishings, this still incurs a high cost to ISC to have processed. Other items that are recycled from the WTS at a cost to ISC have remained free for ISC residents, e.g. polystyrene and e-waste.

The survey asked for the community's opinions on potential fee structures at the WTS, with the results presented in Figure 22. The majority of respondents felt that all recyclables should be free to drop off at the WTS, but items to landfill should incur a charge. This is a market mechanism to incentivise recycling and discourage landfill. The result however would be reduced cost recovery at the WTS (which already run at a loss) because ISC would still be required to pay for collection and processing of those recyclable items. The cost impact of such a change to fee structure is calculated to be approximately \$50,000 per year.

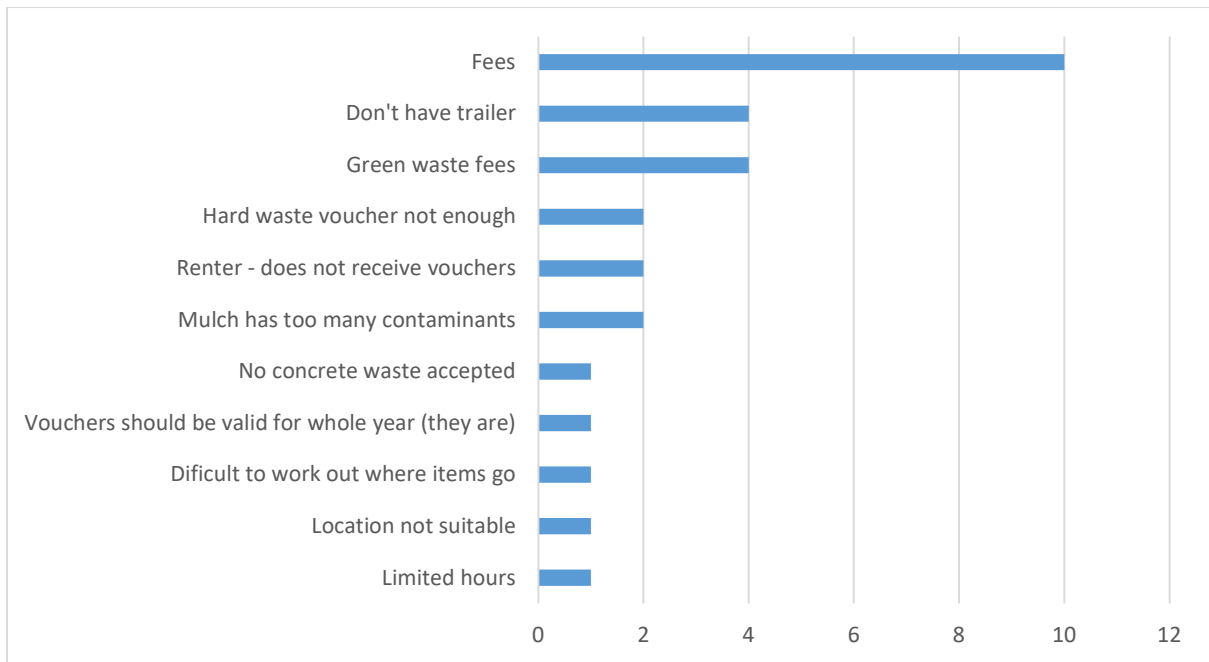


FIGURE 21: REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH WTS

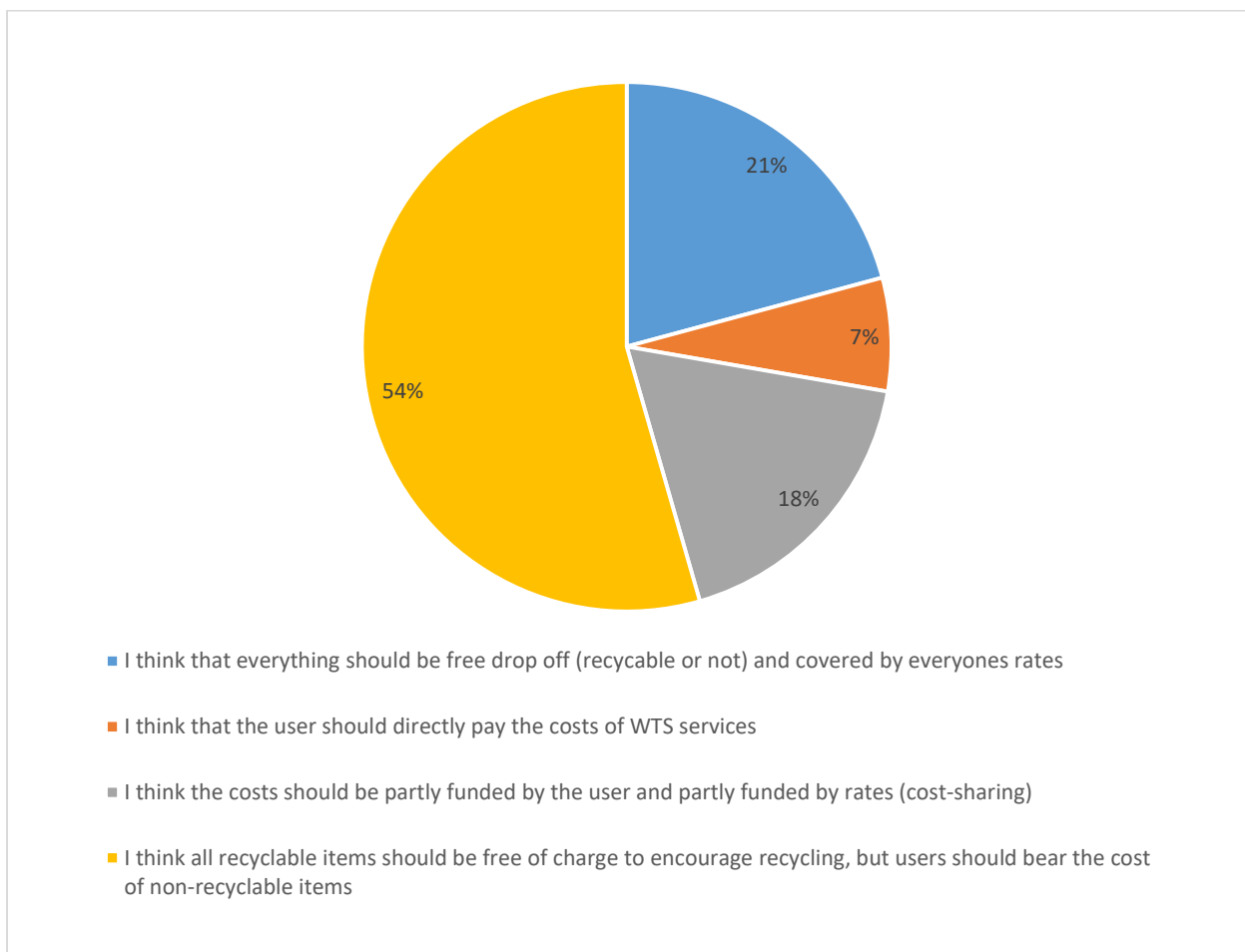


FIGURE 22: PREFERRED FEE STRUCTURE OPTIONS AT WTS

Beechworth waste transfer station

The Beechworth transfer station is open Friday to Monday inclusive 1pm – 5pm. It is attended by one staff member working 18 hours per week. The transfer station operates on public holidays, except for Christmas day, Good Friday and Anzac Day. The facility is also closed on CFA declared code red days, but operates irrespective of any other weather conditions. The site operates over the top of the former landfill, which has been progressively covered with clean fill. The site is not connected to electricity, water or sewer services. Both cash and EFTPOS are accepted. The facility does not accept commercial and industrial waste, including plaster board, paint, concrete, tiles, insulation, cleaning solvents, dead animals, herbicides, pesticides, infectious waste, liquid waste, chemicals, asbestos. Items the facility accepts are shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10: ITEMS ACCEPTED AT WTS

At a charge:	For free:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General household (hard) waste• Mattresses• Soft furnishings – lounge chairs, couches etc• Timber waste• Garden waste• Car tyres• Heavy vehicle tyres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• E-waste (unwanted electronic items)• Household recyclables• Cardboard• Scrap metal• White goods• Car bodies• Polystyrene• Car batteries• Domestic gas bottles• Waste oil and containers• Clean fill (subject to prior arrangement and provision of testing results).

Rutherglen waste transfer station

As at 2019, the Rutherglen transfer station is open Friday to Sunday inclusive 1pm – 5pm. It is attended by one staff member working 13.5 hours per week. This facility accepts the same materials as Beechworth, as well as empty chemical drums under the DrumMUSTER program. The transfer station operates on public holidays, except for Christmas day, Good Friday and Anzac Day. The facility is also closed on CFA declared code red days, but operates irrespective of any other weather conditions. The site is powered, and accepts cash and EFTPOS payments. The site operates over the top of the former landfill, which has been progressively capped with clean fill.

Both WTSs allow not-for-profits running op-shops to dispose of their unwanted items at no cost. Op-shops are an important service in the community, and provide diversion of waste from landfill. However, the unwanted items that some of the shops drop off at the WTs is increasing, at a cost to council (and thereby rate payers).

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – WASTE TRANSFER STATIONS

- Rebrand waste transfer stations as Resource Recovery Centres – to improve the focus on recovery rather than disposal.
- Work with op-shop operators and social enterprises (e.g. AWARE) to take advantage of recovery opportunities for furniture that isn't sold, to reduce the items taken to the WTS.
- Explore modifying some of the opening hours to include a morning.
- Improve communication of fee structure and what happens to materials collected.

5.4 Hard waste

Hard waste is an umbrella term given to household items are too large to dispose of via the kerbside garbage bins. Increasingly, a significant volume of the hard waste disposed of is plastic garden furniture, which is not recycled. Plastic toys are not recycled and also end up as hard waste to landfill. Soft furnishings such as mattresses and couches are recycled, but council pays for the recycling service, which is passed on to the customer.

Council operates a hard waste service that involves:

- Customers may take hard waste to the WTSs during opening hours any time throughout the year, with a charge applied (except for e-waste, white goods or scrap metal).
- Provision of a free hard waste disposal voucher annual in the rates notice. This voucher goes to all rate payers and allows up to 1m³ of hard waste disposal no charge. This voucher can be used at the Beechworth and Rutherglen WTS at any time during opening hours throughout the year, as well as at the Wodonga and Tallangatta WTSs.
- Additional hard waste drop-off points have been offered in towns that don't have a WTS (Yackandandah, Chiltern and Tangambalanga). These sites have been opened over two weekends per year, staffed by council operations personnel.

In the late 1990's to mid-2000's Council provided a free nature strip domestic hard waste pick service to all residents in the urban areas. This was initially twice per year spread over two weeks but due to cost increases was reduced to one collection per year. Council also provided a voucher that could be used at the transfer stations. In the mid 2000's Council decided to discontinue both the kerbside collection and the provision of vouchers. This was due primarily to the increasing costs, OH&S concerns for staff involved in the pick-up and residents placing inappropriate items out for collection. In 2009, Council decided to reintroduce a free domestic hard waste disposal service to residents. The service provided the opportunity to dispose of domestic hard waste at the permanent Transfer Stations in Beechworth and Rutherglen and temporary sites that are opened at the former Chiltern Transfer Station, the Works Depot at Yackandandah and a parcel of (at the time) Council owned land at Tangambalanga, over two consecutive weekends, generally in February/March each year.

Comments in the waste survey related to hard waste included:

- Preference for a kerbside collection of hard waste
- Need for greater than 1m³ allowed by the voucher
- Renters not able to access the hard waste voucher

Given ISC already has data and lessons learned on why the kerbside pick-up wasn't viable, this won't be reconsidered in the RRWMS. The suggestion for greater than 1m³ of free hard waste disposal is not supported because it incentivises increased disposal of waste to landfill, and does not appear to be an issue for the vast majority of the community. Even during the hard waste weekends, almost all disposals were around or under the 1m³ volume. The comment regarding renters not being able to access the hard waste voucher is valid, and requires further exploration in the interest of equity.

Data, including visitation, volumes and costs of the hard waste weekends over the past several years is shown in Table 11. The data shows that many people have disposed of hard waste without presenting a voucher. There has been ongoing confusion over the years regarding if a voucher is required, and what items are accepted. The published information promoting the 2018/19 hard waste weekends stated that the voucher was required, however to avoid putting lone worker staff in a compromised position with customers who may have previously accessed the service without a voucher, this requirement was not enforced. Failure to provide a voucher also means that there is no

verification of the customer's residency in the Shire, and there is a possibility that this service was provided free of charge to non-Indigo Shire residents. Utilisation numbers were down in 2018/19, compared with previous years. The promotion of the event was equal to that provided in previous years, so it is unknown what the reason for this was. There was some confusion about dates and the dates were changed early in 2019, which may have caused some lack of attendance, although the revised dates were advertised weekly in the CEO's weekly update, on Facebook, in the Indigo Informer, the community connection newspaper advertisements, the website and hard copy signage at each location.

TABLE 11: HARD WASTE WEEKEND DATA

Year	Actual Cost	No. Visits	Hard Waste m ³	E-waste m ³	Mattresses (#)	Metal m ³	Vouchers Presented
2012/2013	\$31,508	1079	346	141	382	299	Nil
2013/2014	\$26,139	538	265	54	237	194	Nil
2014/2015	\$46,695	781	360	206	337	302	Nil
2015/2016	\$51,071	495	244	38	121	118	121
2016/2017	\$49,893	523	215	71	166	195	187
2017/2018	\$41,150	692	296	44	95	338	221
2018/19*	\$30,000	322	295	4	25	36	144

**Some gaps in volume data for 2018/19, and not all expenditure had been reconciled at the time of preparing this background report, i.e. asbestos clean ups and hygienist inspections.*

The average number, per year, of residents using the designated free hard waste weekends over the last seven years is 632. This equates to approximately 7% of the rate-able properties in the Shire. Residents also have the option to use their hard waste voucher at the transfer stations at any time during the year at their convenience (outside of the hard waste weekends). The uptake of this over the last few years is shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12: HARD WASTE VOUCHER USAGE

Year	No. Vouchers Presented - Beechworth	No. Vouchers Presented Rutherglen	No. Vouchers Presented Wodonga	No. Vouchers presented Tallangatta	Equivalent Cost (lost fees)	Volume Disposed of m ³
2015/16	216	240	72	0	\$15,702.6	227
2016/17	217	251	76	0	\$21,087.8	230
2017/18	237	291	77	0	\$20,946.5	234.30

The community survey asked both how important are the hard waste weekends to you, and how satisfied are you with the service. 34% of respondents said they had not used the service. The results are presented in Table 13.

TABLE 13: HARD WASTE WEEKENDS – COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE AND SATISFACTION

Satisfaction rating	%	Importance rating	%
Very satisfied	26	Extremely important	32
Mainly satisfied	18	Very important	25
Neutral	21	Somewhat important	15
Mainly unsatisfied	10	Not so important	4
Very unsatisfied	7	Not at all important	8

Over the years Indigo Shire Council has offered hard waste weekends, a number of issues have consistently arisen, including:

- Misalignment with the waste management hierarchy - The hard waste weekends not only don't support this minimisation of waste to landfill, but they incentivise increased disposal to landfill, which has a financial and environmental cost.
- High actual costs – from paying overtime to operations staff to work the weekends, skip bin hire, fencing hire (Tangambalanga), transport of the various waste streams collected back to the WTS, asbestos clean ups, and tipping/processing costs.
- High in-kind staff costs to organise and facilitate the weekends. Given limited resourcing in the environment and sustainability team, in-kind time could be better spent on projects that are more aligned with the objective of reducing waste to landfill (saving costs and creating an environmental benefit). In-kind staff time to facilitate the hard waste weekends in 2019 was an estimated 160 hours.
- Council has sold the Tangambalanga site, there is not suitable location for this service to continue in Kiewa-Tangambalanga beyond 2018/19.
- Health and safety risks to staff, caused by instances of illegal disposal of asbestos and other hazardous materials, as well as manual handling and lone work. During the 2019 hard waste program, asbestos was identified at all sites. This resulted in potential Industrial Relations activities from involved staff, staff exposure to asbestos, and increased staff time and cost to engage and supervise specialist asbestos removal contractors.
- Unauthorised entry/theft from the locations following the drop off days.
- Utilisation of the service is by a relatively small percentage of the Shire population (7% of rateable properties), and the service is available at four other locations at any time throughout the year. Although most people like to have services available in their own towns, the reality of living in a rural Shire is that travel outside of one's town is often required in order to access some services.

For these reasons, most other similar councils have discontinued a hard waste service. Table 14 shows benchmarking results for the hard waste service for other north-east councils. This demonstrates that the hard waste service Indigo Shire is providing far exceeds what other similar councils are doing.

TABLE 14: BENCHMARKING OF THE HARD WASTE SERVICE AMONG OTHER SIMILAR COUNCILS:

Council	Hard waste service description
Alpine Shire	No vouchers or free hard waste disposal service provided
Rural city of Benalla	No vouchers or free hard waste disposal service provided
Mansfield Shire	No vouchers or free hard waste disposal service provided
Towong Shire	Rates voucher for single trailer load to be disposed of at WTSs. No additional pick up or collection points offered.

Rural city of Wangaratta	Provide 1 voucher to dispose of up to 1m ³ at a cost of \$5 excluding mattresses and tyres
City of Wodonga	2 vouchers for each resident for 1 single 6 x 4 trailer load each and a booking and collection service for pensioners who use their vouchers for this service.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – HARD WASTE

- Continue the free 1m³ hard waste voucher in the rates notice.
- Work with real-estate agents to explore options for renters (that don't receive a rates notice) to receive the hard waste voucher.
- Discontinue the hard waste weekends program due to high costs, significant staff time, asbestos risks and mis-alignment with the overarching objectives of the waste hierarchy and waste strategy.
- Work with Wodonga City Council and/or Rural City of Wangaratta to ascertain costs and feasibility of hard plastics getting recycled through their existing arrangements.

5.5 Green waste

Council offers green waste disposal via the following options:

- Items that can fit can be placed in the FOGO bin (for properties that receive this service).
- Larger items/volumes of green and timber waste can be taken to the Beechworth or Rutherglen WTSs during any operating days throughout the year, at a fee depending on the volume.
- Free green waste disposal weekends (two consecutive weekends) are offered annually in spring. There is no voucher or volume limits currently related to this service, and the disposal can occur for free on the designated weekends at the Rutherglen and Beechworth WTSs, as well as additional sites in Yackandandah and Chiltern.

The intention of the free green waste weekends in spring is to support residents to clean up their gardens which contributes to the visual amenity standards of the Shire, and also reduces perceived fire risk for some properties. The community survey asked both how important are the green waste weekends to you, and how satisfied are you with the service. The results are presented in Table 15.

TABLE 15: GREEN WASTE WEEKENDS – COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE AND SATISFACTION

Satisfaction rating	%	Importance rating	%
Very satisfied	15	Extremely important	17
Mainly satisfied	21	Very important	14
Neutral	25	Somewhat important	20
Mainly unsatisfied	3	Not so important	8
Very unsatisfied	5	Not at all important	14

46% of respondents had not used the green waste service. The free text results to this question most commonly indicated that people weren't really aware of the service, or didn't understand the service. Two respondents noted that they can't utilise the service because they don't have a trailer, and two respondents noted that the dates of the green waste weekends don't always suit and a more flexible voucher would be preferred. One survey respondent suggested that the weekends should be non-consecutive, with one occurring later in summer.

Figure 23 shows the number of loads (visits) in green waste weekends at the various locations offered over the last five years. It is unknown why the numbers dropped significantly from 2014, but in 2018 there was a significant increase, which is likely due to additional promotion of the weekends undertaken in that year. Signage was placed at town entrance points around the Shire in the few weeks leading up to the weekends. This likely increased the visibility for people that were not aware of the opportunity. The Beechworth WTS has consistently received the highest uptake of the green waste disposal by far. Rutherglen is the next most used site for green waste disposal. This data does not include the green waste that is dropped off throughout the year, only during the free weekends. This indicates that most customers are happy to attend the permanent WTSs for this service.

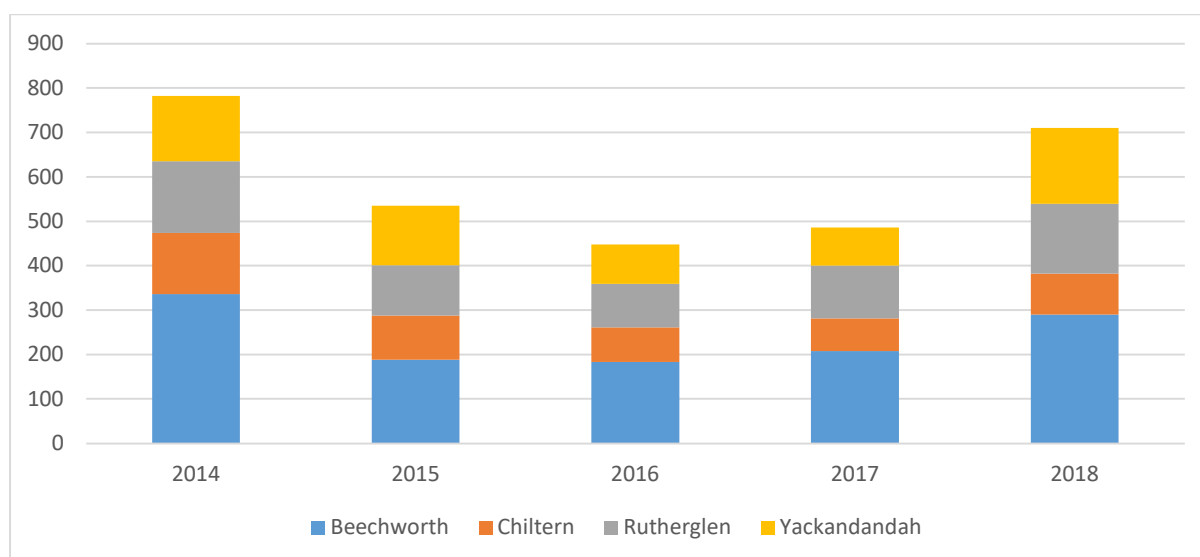


FIGURE 23: GREEN WASTE WEEKEND UPTAKE BY YEAR AND LOCATION

In terms of volumes of green waste dropped off in the free weekends, there was a significant decrease in 2016 and 2017, and 2018 saw an upwards trend. There could be a variety of reasons for this, including fire season predictions, amount of rainfall received, other weather conditions and level of promotion of the green waste weekends. If all customers had been charged for the green waste disposal, this would amount to \$66,693 over the five years (Table 16). This could be considered lost revenue, but it is unlikely that all of those customers would have paid to take their green waste to the WTS if the free disposal weekends had not been offered. It is likely that a lot of the green waste would have been burned instead.

TABLE 16: GREEN WASTE VOLUMES AND POTENTIAL LOST REVENUE

Year	Volume of green waste received (m3, all sites)	Potential lost revenue
2014	1099.5	\$20,670.6
2015	707	\$13,291.6
2016	511	\$9,606.8
2017	491	\$9,230.8
2018	739	\$13,893.2
Total:	3547.5	\$66,693

There are other costs however of offering the free green waste weekends, apart from lost revenue. To date, there has not been a separate budget line for green waste, so it is difficult to quantify the

actual costs. Green waste shredding/mulching costs have been about \$20,000 per year, but this includes shredding green and timber waste collected at the WTS throughout the year (with a fee paid by the customer). There are minor advertising/promotional costs. There are two additional locations that are open for a total of 16 hours each over the two weekends. This equates to approximately \$1,600 in labour costs. There is also staff in-kind costs to coordinate the free green waste weekends. No additional staff are provided at Rutherglen and Beechworth WTSs on the free green waste weekends, but these locations do become very busy on the free green waste weekends, which can put the attendants under pressure and reduce the service level given to all customers. By providing vouchers that can be used any time throughout the year, the additional traffic would be levelled out and easier to manage. This would also provide the customers with more flexibility to use this service at a date that suits them.

The green waste collected at the WTS (and additional locations) is shredded by an external contractor once a sufficient volume is reached. This contract is a collaborative regional contract facilitated by NEWRRG. There is a cost per m³ for the shredding, which is why there is a cost for customers to dispose of green waste (outside of the free green waste weekends). The shredded material is made available as free mulch to anyone in the Shire (from Beechworth and Rutherglen WTSs), but there is low uptake of this option due to:

1. Contamination/low quality product. Customers are advised the mulch may contain weeds. It also may contain treated timbers and other contaminants given different categories of green and timber wastes have, to date, not been separated. For this reason, the mulch is not used by ISC for council projects.
2. Requirement to manually self-load. No external plant and machinery is permitted in the WTS for safety reasons.

Most of the mulch/shredded green and timber waste is used as fill on site at the WTSs, to add to the capping of the previous landfills, as well on embankments.

In 2018, NEWRRG commissioned a study into Green and Timber Waste (GTW) management in the region. This review highlighted that Indigo Shire's transfer stations were the only WTSs in the region that do not segregate garden waste from raw and treated timbers. These items have been stockpiled and shredded together, creating a low value, contaminated mulch-like product.

End markets for mixed timber do not currently exist due to the contamination associated with treated and processed timbers, this material is only suitable for landfill. However, there are opportunities for raw (clean) timber in the manufacture of particleboard, a fuel source, or for creating raw timber mulch products. This could be via D&R Henderson in Benalla (a particle board manufacturer), or Alpine MDF in Wangaratta. Alpine MDF pay \$30-40/t for raw timber, and D&R Henderson do not pay a fee, and the cost of transport would likely need to be covered by ISC. Raw timber must be shredded before acceptance by Alpine MDF (increased cost) but not for D&R Henderson. Alternatively, the raw timber could be offered to local men's sheds or similar organisations for repurposing.

The report further recommended that treated timber should go to landfill, because it contaminates the shredded mulch product. This will incur an additional cost for ISC at both transfer stations, including \$25/week skip bin hire and \$450 per each full skip collection (2018/19 indicative costs). A primary source of treated timber currently is unsold furniture from op-shops (or unwanted furniture), therefore the additional costs can be reduced if alternative arrangements to recover this furniture are established (refer section 5.3).

Shredded garden waste begins to compost after a few days and if wet (due to rain), can cause significant odour. This may cause amenity issues for WTS neighbours (more likely in Beechworth). Mulch stockpiles also create a fire risk, with several fires occurring at Rutherglen WTS over its years

of operation, including in early 2019. For these reasons, it is in ISC's best interest to move the shredded material. Options for this include:

- Greater use of mulch by ISC operations – for tree planting projects and capital works (need to provide assurance of low/no contamination and weed-free).
- Use for Landcare projects and/or tree planting activities.
- Have a mulch open day (on a day that the transfer station is not operating), which would be staffed with a loader to load the mulch onto trailers that customers bring. This could be subject to an annual rates voucher, or an EOI process which will be more flexible in case volumes can't cater for everyone wanting to uptake the rates voucher option, or a first come first serve basis. Costs would include in-kind staff time to organise the event, internal plant hire costs, operations staff costs to operate the load, promotion and marketing. Some of the costs could be recovered by customers paying a small fee for the mulch they receive, but ISC would have to provide assurance that the mulch was weed free in order to charge a fee. This is difficult to achieve, because the WTS operators have limited visibility of all green waste that might be in a trailer, and are not trained to recognise the diverse amount of weed species in the region.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – GREEN AND TIMBER WASTE

- Discontinue free green waste weekends, instead providing a voucher in the annual rates notice that can be used at Beechworth or Rutherglen WTS during any opening hours throughout the year. This reduces the costs, in-kind staff time, levels out the visitation at the WTS and provides the customer with more flexibility to use the voucher when the time suits them. Having a rates voucher would also increase awareness of the service.
- Work with real-estate agents to establish a process whereby renters can also receive a green waste voucher.
- Commence segregation of various GTW – i.e. add a skip bin for treated timbers, and segregate raw timber from garden waste. Add signage and train operators on new system.
- Assess cost and feasibility of options for reusing raw timber, e.g. transport to Alpine MDF or D&R Henderson; or collection by men's sheds or similar groups.
- Assess cost and feasibility of a mulch collection day(s), whereby mulch is loaded by council staff and plant into customer trailers and/or delivered to Landcare, Landmates or tree planting projects.

5.6 Illegal dumping

Illegal dumping is reported from time to time to council, via a request for collection from an observer. It is also likely that there are instances of illegal dumping that do not get reported to, or observed, by ISC. In the event of an illegal dumping case, Council's environmental health officers investigate to determine if there are any hazardous materials, and/or any items that can identify the responsible person for follow up enforcement action. Operations staff then collect the waste and take it to an Indigo Shire transfer station (or arrange alternative collection in the case of hazardous waste). This practice incurs a cost to council via staff conducting the investigation and undertaking the collection and transport, as well as costs to dispose of or recycle the items if applicable, that would normally be paid by the customer if those items had been taken to a waste transfer station.

No specific illegal dumping education programs have been undertaken in recent years. In the event of repeat reports of illegal dumping at a particular location, surveillance cameras may be installed.

Data is available on council's work order system for requested collections of illegal dumping. The data set available is July 2016 – January 2019. There were a total of 49 reported cases of illegal dumping during that time, with no significant increase or decrease between years. The locations for the illegal

dumping are show in Figure 24. In a minority of cases, the location and even the waste type was the same, indicating a repeat, individual offender. Additional surveillance was undertaken at some of these locations and there has been no-recurrence since. There is no separate budget line for illegal dumping so costs for this service can't be accurately reported.

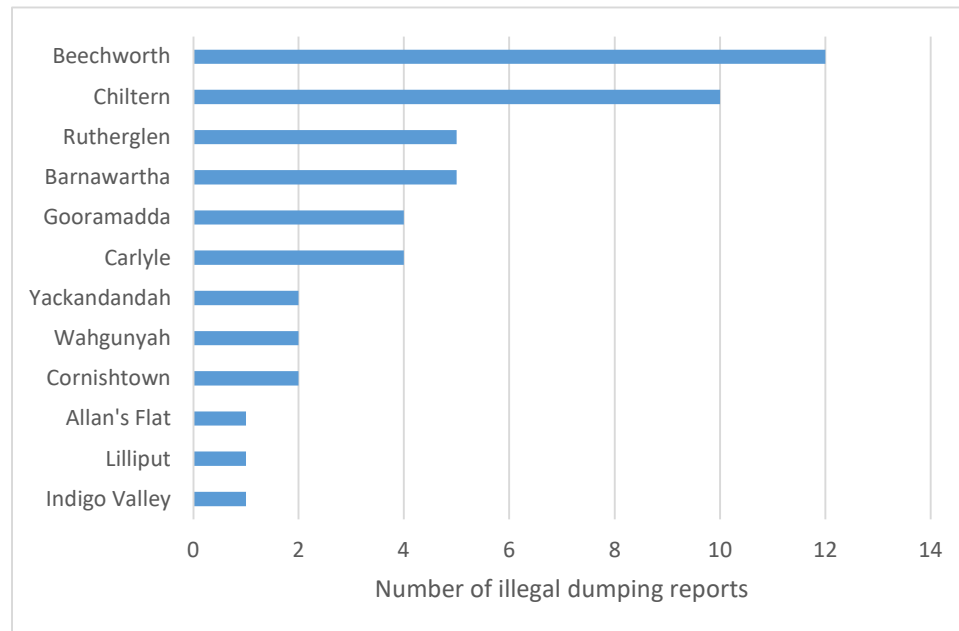


FIGURE 24: NUMBER OF ILLEGAL DUMPING EVENTS BY LOCATION, JULY 2016- JANUARY 2019.

Figure 25 shows the type of items that were illegally dumped, noting that some cases of illegal dumping included a combination of items. Twelve of the reports don't include the waste type. The most frequently dumped items are hard waste, furniture, mattresses and household mixed waste. These items costs Council to dispose of or recycle. As such, these items usually attract a fee for residents to dispose of at the waste transfer stations, although an annual free hard waste voucher is provided to all rate payers. Interestingly, some of the items illegally dumped can be disposed of free of charge at the waste transfer stations, including cars, white goods, e-waste, car batteries and bicycles.

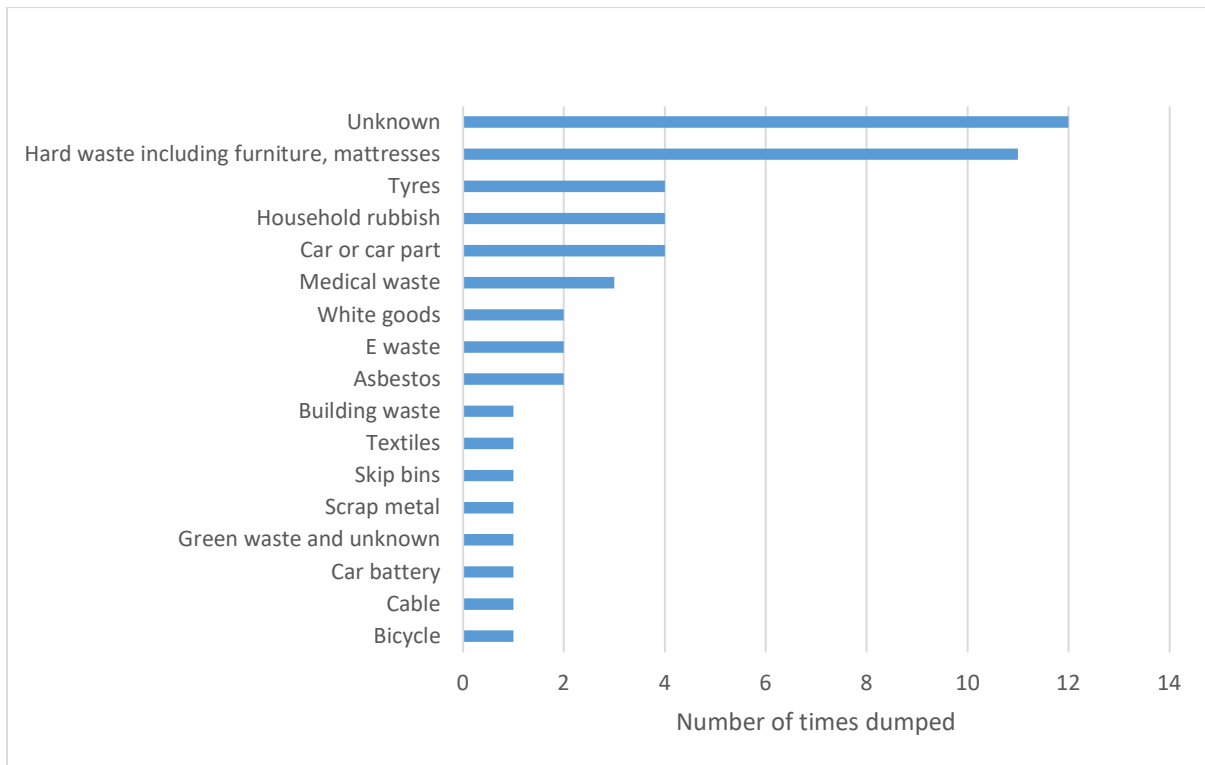


FIGURE 25: TYPES OF ITEMS ILLEGALLY DUMPED

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – ILLEGAL DUMPING

- Increase communication and awareness about which items can be taken to the WTS at no charge.
- Continue to monitor illegal dumping cases to inform which sites require additional surveillance.

5.7 Litter

Indigo Shire does not have any specific litter campaigns or programs. Street sweeping occurs annually in the towns, and is largely focused on collection of fallen leaves from deciduous trees. Litter bins are provided in town centres and parks. Operational town teams collect litter as observed. The community survey indicated that the majority of the community think there is not much litter around the Shire (Figure 26). Free text comments elaborated on reasons for dissatisfaction and included: people failing to pick up dog waste (2), litter outside of towns (4), construction waste (1) and overflowing red bins (1).

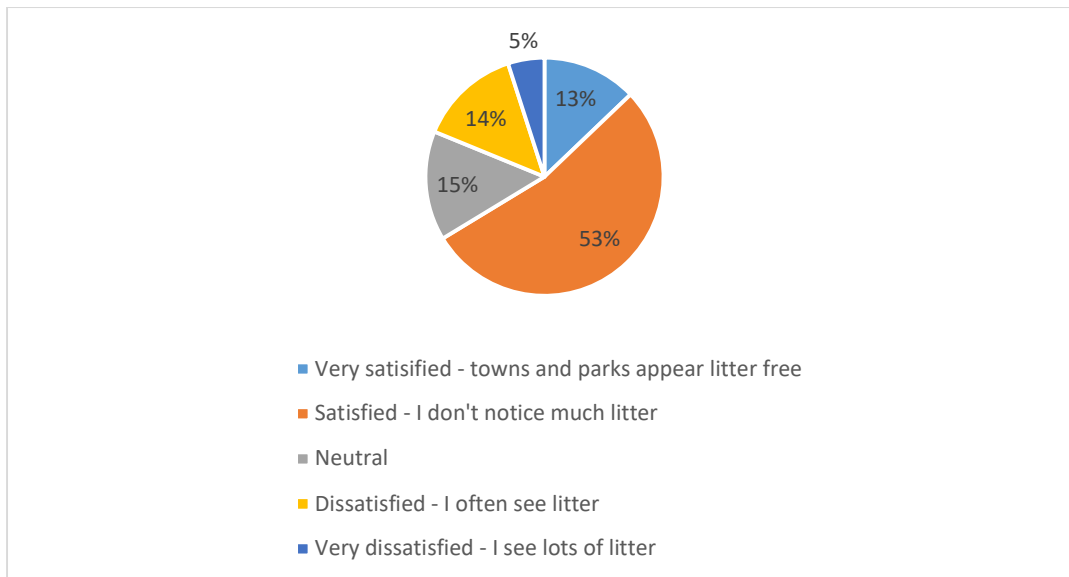


FIGURE 26: COMMUNITY SATISFACTION WITH LITTER LEVELS

Street sweeping occurs annually, and focuses on autumn leaves. Cigarette butts are anecdotally the main item of litter observed. Butt bins are available in town centres, but in some cases these are in a state of disrepair, and there are no robust arrangements for emptying and servicing the butt bins.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – LITTER

- Conduct audit of butt bins in towns – replace broken ones with new; add butt bins in areas where they are absent and cigarette litter is observed.
- Formalise an operational arrangement to regularly empty and check function of butt bins.
- Review placement and number of street and park bins (repeat from section 5.2).

5.8 Dog waste bags

In 2018, ISC initiated a trial of dog waste collection bags, and bins, in some of the public parks that are frequented by dog walkers, as well as at Baarmutha Park (the Beechworth Golf Club). The annual cost of this service cannot currently be reported due to the fact it is a new service, without a dedicated cost centre. The waste survey asked how important this service is to the community, and how satisfied they are with it (Table 15). 40% respondents hadn't used/noticed the bags – which is not unexpected because this service mainly applies to dog owners and people who frequent parks. Common free text comments (grouped) relating to this question are presented in Figure 27. The most common comment is concern that the bags aren't compostable. The bags selected for the dog waste dispensers are compostable, in accordance with ISC's Plasticwise Policy. At this stage, a dedicated green bin just for the dog waste bags has not been provided due to:

- Trial phase/recent introduction of the program
- Volume of waste and collection times – there is currently not a sufficient volume of waste (of all streams) at these collection points to warrant a 3-bin system. Having more bins at one location could lead to less frequent pick-ups, which is likely to exacerbate any odour issues.
- Costs – adding a green and yellow bin at each existing red bin location on a regular pick up would cost an additional approximately \$240/year – at each location. To date, no specific budget for dog waste bags and bins has been allocated.

TABLE 17: DOG WASTE BAGS AND BINS – COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE AND SATISFACTION

Importance rating	%	Satisfaction rating	%
Not at all important	11	Very unsatisfied	5
Somewhat important	22	Usually satisfied	15
Very important	28	Very satisfied	7
		Not applicable/haven't used this service	40

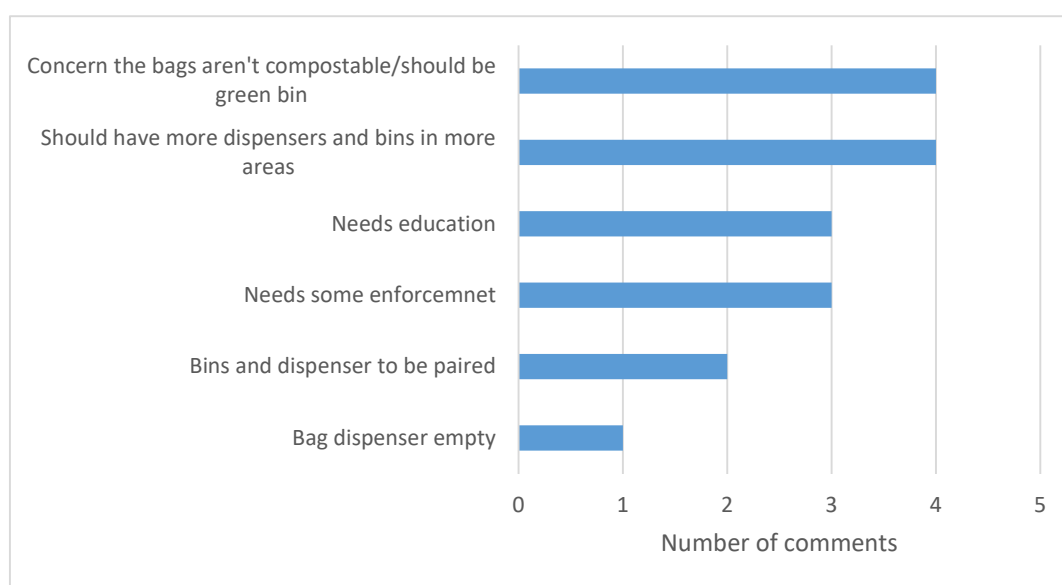


FIGURE 27: DOG WASTE BAGS AND BINS – COMMUNITY COMMENTS

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – DOG WASTE

- Review additional areas for the provision of dog waste bags and bins. Develop a plan for phased roll out of additional bins, and a schedule for collections and replacement of bags.

5.9 Event waste management

Indigo Shire's tourism officer (industry and events) provides support to event holders to manage their waste. If the event is successful in obtaining an IEDTAC (Indigo Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee) event grant, waste services may be provided or subsidised at council's cost. If the event is privately run or not subject to a grant, the event holder is responsible for paying for the waste service, but the organisation of which is facilitated by council staff. An events waste management plan template and guide is also provided to help events reduce their waste. The survey asked the community if waste management at events was important to them, and how satisfied they are with it (Table 16). The majority of respondents stated that good waste management at events is important to them, and the satisfaction ratings indicate there is room for improvement in performance to meet the communities' expectations. Free text comments to this question commended the Yackandandah Folk Festival, the Beechworth music festival and the Off-grid living festival at Eldorado (not associated with ISC). Other suggestions included always having the suite of three bins at each event waste station, and including more visible signage to show what items should go in which bin.

TABLE 18: COMMUNITY VIEWS – EVENT WASTE MANAGEMENT

Importance rating	%	Satisfaction rating	%
Very important to me	49	Very satisfied	10
Somewhat important to me	11	Usually satisfied	31
Not at all important to me	3	Very unsatisfied	18
N/A - haven't gone to events or haven't noticed	31		

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – EVENT WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Share learnings from Yackandandah Folk Festival with other events to assist all events improve their waste management practices
- Formalise the IEDTAC grants process to require any events receiving waste management support from ISC to implement an approved waste management plan.
- Increase the use/provision of organics bins at events (3-bin system).
- Provide bin signage/stickers with event bins to aid source segregation.
- Support Plasticwise Yackandandah's Dish Pig proposal (mobile industrial washing-up trailer), including promoting hire of the Dish Pig by external events, and use of the Dish Pig at council-run events.

6. Other arrangements and programs

6.1 Garage sale trail

Indigo Shire participates, via Halve Waste, in the Garage Sale Trail. Some towns in Indigo Shire have a regular annual garage sale weekend unrelated to the Garage Sale Trail. These initiatives promote diversion of waste from landfill, and reuse before recycling via the transfer stations. All such programs therefore are aligned with the waste hierarchy, reduce ISC costs of landfill tipping fees, and have an environmental benefit.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – GARAGE SALE TRAIL

- Discuss Garage Sale Trail program with groups/towns that currently organise a town-wide garage sale outside of this program, with a view to transitioning to the Garage Sale Trail program to reduce the volunteer workload in organising parallel events.

6.2 Sustainability Victoria Detox your Home

The Detox your Home program has been operating for 25 years and is a free program that allows residents to dispose of hazardous waste that is not accepted at the Indigo Shire WTS. This includes household and garden chemicals, paint and other items detailed on the Sustainability Victoria (SV) website.

The program involves permanent collection sites, as well as annual roaming events. Permanent drop-off sites collect: paint, batteries and fluorescent lights which are typically located at council depots and transfer stations that accept other items like gas bottles, car batteries, motor oil etc.

The North East region has two permanent Detox sites located at: Wangaratta and Wodonga. Previously, some Councils were collecting materials on behalf of their residents and transporting them

to permanent sites. Sustainability Victoria's policy position is that householders are solely responsible for transporting potentially hazardous household chemicals to mobile collections. Community awareness of the need to keep such items out of landfill has driven community expectations that these services should be offered within Indigo Shire. Customer service centres and the Beechworth and Rutherglen WTSs are currently accepting household batteries, but the transport and recycling of them from these locations is not supported/subsidised by Sustainability Victoria, and remains challenging for Indigo Shire to complete in a cost effective and compliant way.

An annual roaming program for more hazardous materials such as poisons, herbicides, vehicle fluids, occurs at a variety of locations around the state each year. Indigo Shire residents are notified (via Facebook, Indigo Informer, the website) of these events when they are scheduled in the region. SV is reviewing this program in 2019. An Indigo Shire location is being included in 2019.

The community waste survey undertaken as part of this strategy development included a question to gauge awareness and uptake of the Detox your Home program by ISC residents. 59% of respondents were not aware of the service, while 37% were aware of the service but hadn't use it. Only 4% were aware of, and had used the service.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – SV detox your home

- Continue to lobby SV to include rural shire locations as permanent detox your home locations.
- Increase the promotion and awareness of the programs.
- Promote the 2019 household chemical collection day in the Shire.
- Participate in the strategic review of these programs (2019).
- Continue to pursue an economically feasible recycling provider for household batteries.

6.3 Repair Café

Repair Cafés are free meeting places for people to learn repair skills from experienced volunteers. Visitors bring in a broken household item and are shown how to fix it. The item often gets repaired in exchange for a gold coin donation, which avoids the item being disposed of. Repair Café's therefore work at the higher end of the waste management hierarchy by avoiding waste, and the purchase of new items. Repair Café's also foster community connection and upskilling. Repair Café's are usually community-led and run and increasing in popularity in Australia, with north-east Victoria being a hot spot. There is one repair café operating in Indigo Shire at the time of writing this background report (Beechworth), with a Rutherglen repair café in the establishment/planning phase.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – Repair Cafe

- Liaise with existing repair cafes in the Shire to determine support mechanisms ISC can provide, including increased promotion.
- Support and facilitate Repair Cafes to become established in the other Shire towns.

6.4 Toy libraries

Similar to Repair Café's, Toy libraries are community run initiatives that reduce waste. Toy libraries allow parents and carers to access a wide range of kid's toys for loan in exchange for a modest annual membership fee. This means that less toys have to be purchased (and then disposed of). Many people in the community may not be aware of the fact that plastic toys are not recycled in Indigo Shire, and

end up in landfill. At the time of writing this document, two toy libraries are registered in Indigo Shire, at Beechworth and Yackandandah.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – Toy library

- Liaise with existing toy libraries in the Shire to determine support mechanisms ISC can provide, including increased promotion.
- Support and facilitate toy libraries to become established in the other Shire towns.

6.5 Community soft plastics collection

Community knowledge and interest in soft plastics has been increasing. Soft plastics used to be one of the main contaminants in the kerbside recycle bin. Many Indigo Shire residents are now aware that soft plastics are not recycled in the kerbside service. Options to recycle soft plastics include separating and collecting them to take to a RedCycle collection point in major supermarkets (outside of the Shire), or at the Chiltern Post Office, or taking them to an unofficial, community-run soft plastics collection, which currently exist at the Beechworth Food Co-op and the Beechworth service station. These collection points are entirely volunteer run, by members of Plasticwise. Due to increasing awareness, popularity of the service is growing and it is at risk of becoming too large for volunteers to manage. Some members of the community have an expectation that a convenient soft plastic service should be offered by council. RedCycle's business model is to partner with major supermarkets only, so additional collection points in the Shire are not supported. A key challenge for soft plastics recycling is securing an off take agreement and end market for the product. To date, ISC has not been able to gain agreement from a soft plastics recycler to take the soft plastics that are collected – including silage wrap as well as household soft plastics. This is being worked on collaboratively via NEWRRG.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – Soft plastics collection

- Continue to meet regularly with Plasticwise community groups to discuss support that ISC could provide.
- Continue to work with NEWRRG and partners to establish an end market for soft plastics, enabling collection at the ISC transfer stations.
- Explore opportunities to combine soft plastics transport to processors with Benalla and/or Rural City of Wangaratta.
- Increase purchasing of materials made out of recycled soft plastics, to contribute to the demand for the product.

6.6 Waste Education

Indigo Shire contributes financially to regional waste education programs as part of its collaborative kerbside contract as well as via NEWRRG membership. The kerbside contract has an arm called Halve Waste, which employs dedicated waste education officers that address schools, businesses and community group, as well as implementing multi-media education campaigns. Halve Waste provide free waste assessments for businesses in Indigo Shire. This process results in a tailored action plan to help businesses better manage their waste, save on costs and increase recycling rates. Three businesses in Indigo Shire have made use of this service since 2014, all in Beechworth. Therefore, it is likely that many businesses do not know about the service. It is advertised via Facebook and the Halve Waste website, and there are opportunities for more tailored promotion to businesses in Indigo Shire. The Halve Waste website is accessed directly from the ISC website, and contains A-Z guides of which items can go in which bin, as well as various other fact sheets and videos.

Via NEWRRG, Indigo Shire participates in Resource Smart Schools, and the Student Environmental Education Days (SEED) program. These education programs are focused on schools and linkage to the curriculum, and other annual programs by NEWRRG may focus on broader education.

Indigo Shire does not have an in-house waste education officer, and primarily relies on the partnership programs to deliver education. Some education is provided via the ISC website, our Facebook page, Indigo Informer newsletter and (part-time) waste officer.

Volunteer community groups focused on waste in Indigo Shire play a significant role in waste education. Plasticwise groups operate in several towns and have run many successful campaigns, engaging businesses and the community directly, i.e. Proud to be Plasticwise campaign.

The community survey aimed to gauge current levels of knowledge and attitudes in the community about waste. The results showed that Indigo Shire communities are generally very engaged with waste management, have a high level of knowledge about segregation (refer section 5.1), and undertake many additional voluntary waste minimisation behaviours (Figure 28).

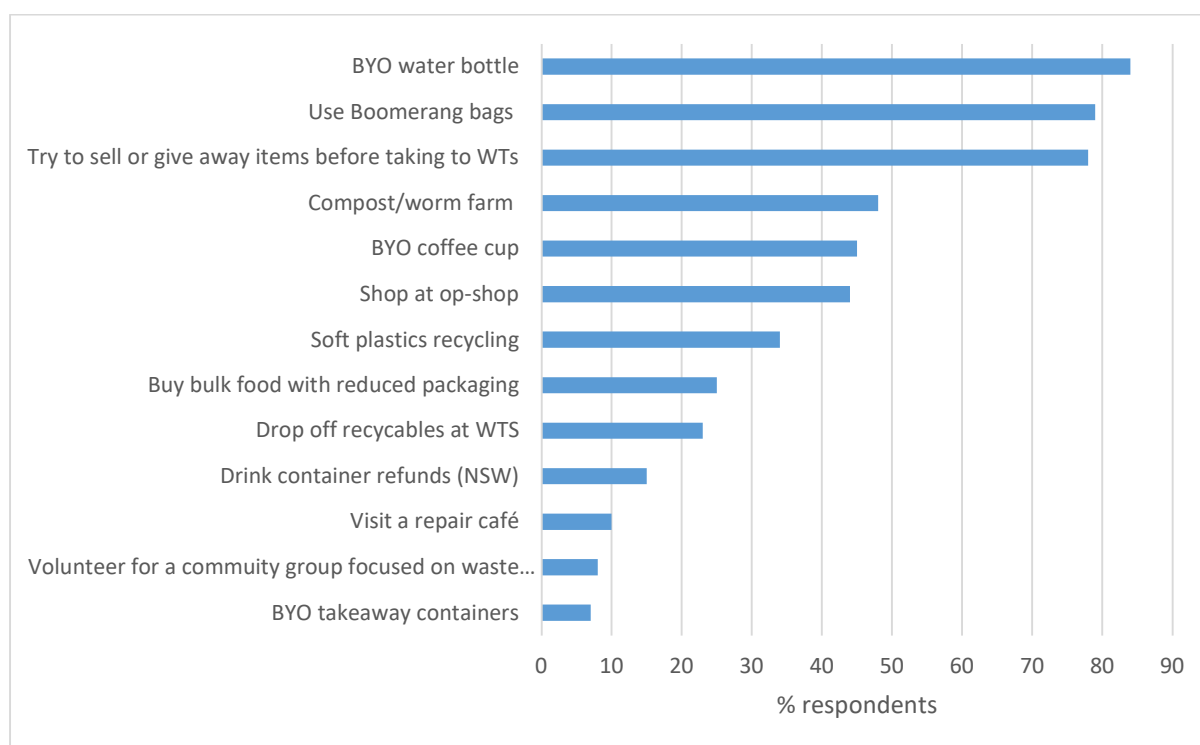


FIGURE 28: VOLUNTARY WASTE-WISE BEHAVIOURS UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMMUNITY

Tourism has many benefits to Indigo Shire, but also presents waste challenges to ISC. Visitors to the region may not be familiar with the three bin system, and other community practices such as boomerang bags. Indigo Shire has a large number of holiday accommodations (air bnb's and similar) that have guests from other municipalities, states and countries that all have different waste systems. It can't be expected that such guests know how to use ISC's three-bin system. Further guidance materials could be provided in short term accommodation properties to help with this.

Indigo Shire communities are strongly supportive of waste management and resource recovery initiatives such as kerbside recycling and food and garden organics collection. However, Council faces many ongoing and new challenges such as reducing waste to landfill, decreasing contamination, guiding residents through changes such as the e-waste ban to landfill and the plastic bag ban. Education on contamination (via what should go in each bin) will become increasingly important

if/when the model waste contract clauses take effect in the new contracts, which would impose financial penalties on councils if contamination and compaction rates were exceeded (refer section 3.2). Irrespective of the potential changes in the waste contracts, investment in education and initiatives around the waste hierarchy can provide long term cost savings council as landfill tipping fees exceed the costs of recycling and organics processing.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – Waste education

- Resource and commence an ISC waste education program.
- Continue to meet regularly with Plasticwise community groups to support their community education efforts.
- Promote the free services offered by Halve Waste – particularly to the business community.
- Increase education for some of the lesser-practices waste-wise behaviours, e.g. BYO takeaway containers, repair café and purchasing of bulk food without packaging.
- Run events/campaigns associated with Plastic-free July.
- Work with accommodation providers (via the Visitor Information Centre) to include A-Z guides for waste and/or bin stickers in short-term rental properties.

7. Waste services not currently offered

As well as analysing the waste services that Indigo Shire Council provides, this report also examines other possible waste services that are not currently offered, and explores the merits of adding these services.

7.1 Aggregates, soil and masonry collection at transfer stations

Aggregates, masonry and soil comprise approximately 38% of the waste generated in the north-east region, and high recovery rates are possible for these items. At the time of writing, ISC is the only council in the region that does not accept concrete and rubble at the transfer stations. The primary reason for this historic decision is likely to be the fact that quantities collected would not be economically feasible to transport or process. However, there appears to be increasing customer expectations that these items are accepted, with this being a common question at the waste transfer stations, and the fact that all other transfer stations in the north-east region accept these materials. Two comments in the survey focused on the desire for concrete to be accepted at the WTS. Concrete and brick are accepted at most transfer stations in the north-east region, and generally stored together on an open hard stand. Once crushed, the aggregate could be used by ISC on haul roads, hardstands or as pavement base. Alternatively, the material can be sent to a commercial processor which can generate revenue for the processor. The risks of collecting and storing these materials is that they have a high risk factor for asbestos contamination, and may cause alkaline runoff.

Since aggregates are considered to be a regional priority material, a regional processing concrete could potentially be established in future. This would involve either building appropriate infrastructure on site to ensure storage safe storage and prevention of contamination (from soil/capping layer), or transport to another facility in the region for crushing. The costs of these options have not been estimated.

Soil or clean fill will only be used a landfill cover or gully fill. Given the inherent risks from visible and non-visible contamination in the soil, the customer is required to provide proof (including analytical testing) that classifies the soil as clean fill in accordance with EPA requirements. This requires pre-discussion with ISC staff.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – Aggregate, Soil and Masonry collection

- Explore options and costs for concrete, brick and masonry acceptance and recycling at the ISC WTSs (including construction of hard stands to prevent contamination of stored materials).

7.2 Reuse shop

A reuse shop diverts items from landfill and sells them at a low price to the community via a social enterprise arrangement. The closest reuse shop is at Wodonga transfer station and operated by AWARE Industries. AWARE Industries are a not-for-profit organisation providing training and employment for people with disabilities. AWARE industries also operate the reuse shop at the Albury Waste Management Centre.

From time to time, ISC has received customer suggestions that a reuse shop should be established in conjunction with one or both of the transfer stations in the Shire. The survey results included one suggestion to this effect. The response has been that the volume of resale-able material and likely customer volume at the ISC transfer stations would not make this viable. ISC staff have been actively exploring alternative arrangements, including a partnership with a social enterprise/reuse shop to undertake regular collections of items suitable for resale from ISC transfer stations. This process was trialled with AWARE Industries immediately following the 2019 hard waste weekends, and resulted in many items being diverted from landfill (and saving ISC the associated fees). Going forward, it is proposed this arrangement is formalised via an EOI process, and then a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which would allow a social enterprise to visit the WTSs on a regular basis (outside of operating hours) to collect items suitable for reuse, and sell them at the Wodonga or Albury reuse shops.

An alternative model, being trialled by Towong Shire, is to have a small area set aside at the WTSs for customers to place items for reuse, and other customers may choose to purchase those items when they visit the WTS during operating hours. This model relies on the sole WTS operator both selling items (including determining the price) and catering to customers dropping off items at the WTS. Some challenges with this model are:

- Additional workload and reduced service level given by the WTS operator.
- Complaints/potential for inconsistency in prices charged to different individuals.
- The need for a designated, under-cover storage area for the reuse items.
- The need for WTS staff to regularly “clean out” the reuse area for items that haven’t been sold, incurring manual handling risk and increased staff time costs.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – Reuse shop

- Run an EOI process for potential re-use partner organisations to divert sale-able items from the WTS.

7.3 Commercial collections

ISC does not provide commercial collection services. Some small businesses and schools in the Shire have opted-in to the kerbside service. Local government's waste responsibilities in Australia is generally limited to municipal waste. A commercial FOGO collection is being explored by Halve Waste.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – Commercial collections

- Communicate the Cleanaway kerbside service options to businesses.
- Support the FOGO collection EOI.

7.4 Recycling of problematic materials

“Problematic materials” is a term given to items that are difficult to recycle, particularly in a rural context. This could be because end markets aren't available, a processor is not available or willing to accept the items, or the costs of transport to a processor make recycling unfeasible. Other items are problematic because there are health and safety risks and/or regulations regarding their collection and storage which are difficult for ISC to manage, particularly with one operator on site at a time only, with limited supervision of customer activities. The problematic materials for ISC are:

- Hard plastics – there are increasing volumes of broken plastic garden furniture and toys that are a primary contributor to landfill from the WTS.
- Soft plastics including silage wrap – ISC does not have an arrangement in place currently with a processor who will accept domestic soft plastic or silage wrap. Domestic soft plastics are collected via RedCycle collection points and processed into park furniture etc at REPLAS. One RedCycle collection point operates in the Shire (Chiltern post office), but RedCycle's business model now is to have collection points in major supermarkets only.
- Paint – a national product stewardship arrangement, Paintback, is in place, but does not operate rurally. The closest collection centre is AWMC.
- Household batteries – refer to section 6.2 for further background. ISC is currently collecting household batteries without a transport and recycling provider in place. A national battery product stewardship program is under development, which may provide an option in 2020-2021.
- Fluorescent lighting tubes.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – Problematic materials

- Explore options with Rural City of Wangaratta and/or Wodonga City Council to establish a joint collection or consolidation arrangement for hard plastics recycling.
- Explore options with Rural City of Wangaratta and/or Rural City of Benalla to establish a joint collection or consolidation arrangement for soft plastics recycling.
- Batteries – continue to pursue an economically feasible transport and recycling option.
- Paint - continue to pursue an economically feasible transport and recycling option.
- Fluorescent lighting tubes – explore a milk run or co-ownership system for a “Tube Terminator” destruction system, or similar.

8. Recycling and waste disposal facilities

Indigo Shire does not operate a landfill, but has several former landfills that were unlicensed at the time of use due to the volumes taken and population serviced, in accordance with the regulations. The environmental risks posed by a landfill site continue to be evident for a long time after waste has ceased to be accepted. There are five closed unlicensed landfills that Indigo Shire is legislatively responsible for under the EP Act 1970. All of the former landfills are situated on DELWP land, for which ISC pays an annual licence for. Licence fees have increased significantly over the past two years, in some cases doubling. Table 18 summarises the status and actions required at these facilities. The EPA recently updated the guidelines for closed unlicensed former landfills, which includes some vagaries about rehabilitation expectations. As described in section 3.1, the entire EP Act has undergone review and the EPAs approach to regulation is changing significantly. Therefore, this is a time of uncertainty for ISC in managing former landfills.

ISC does not operate a landfill or MRF. There are no privately owned and operated landfills, MRFs or composting facilities in Indigo Shire. These facilities are centralised as part of the collaborative kerbside contract. Currently, garbage from Indigo Shire, both collected at the resource recovery centres and from the kerbside and street and park services, is taken to the Albury Waste Management Centre (AWMC) landfill. The MRF currently used is operated by Cleanaway and located in Lavington. The organics are taken to AWMC for initial screening, and then transported to Biomix in Stanhope, VIC, for the composting process.

TABLE 19: WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE STATUS AND ACTION PLAN

Facility	Current status	Actions required
Beechworth Waste Transfer Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlicensed landfill closing in 1999 • No lining or leachate collection system • Currently operating as waste transfer station. • DELWP land, licensed to Indigo Shire, annual licence costs have doubled over the past two years. • Assessed as medium risk to surface and groundwater. • Adjacent council-owned block on Radcliffe road has been ear-marked as alternative site (in the event that EPA mandated that the existing site be fully rehabilitated). • Estimated cost to rehabilitate: \$1.07-1.4M (2014) • New e-waste shed and associated site improvements to be constructed in 2019 (State grant funding). • No power at the site, causing staff OHS risks (cooling and water), as well as no ability to charge the EFTPOS terminal on site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to add fill opportunistically • Continue regular inspections • Continue bi-annual groundwater and landfill gas monitoring. • Construct e-waste shed • Seed suitable areas of capping with native grass species. • Continue weed management. • Submit capital works proposal for a standalone power system.
Rutherglen Waste Transfer Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlicensed landfill closing in 1999. • DELWP land, licensed to Indigo Shire • Assessed as low risk to surface and groundwater. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to add fill opportunistically • Continue regular inspections

Facility	Current status	Actions required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimated cost to rehabilitate: \$0.87M Low fire response capability New e-waste shed and associated site improvements to be constructed in 2019 (State grant funding). Serviced by electricity and water, but limited fire-fighting response capability due to low water pressure and limited storage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue bi-annual groundwater and landfill gas monitoring. Construct e-waste shed
Former landfill – Yackandandah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlicensed landfill closing in 1999, has been rehabilitated to EPA standards. Geosynthetic clay liner and compacted clay layer (2007), in response to PAN (pollution abatement notice). DELWP land, licensed to Indigo Shire Leachate trench Used for temporary storage of green waste by operations Subject to landfill gas and groundwater testing every second year Subject to regular visual inspections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue regular inspections Continue bi-annual groundwater and landfill gas monitoring.
Former landfill – Chiltern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlicensed landfill closing in 1999. Owned by DELWP, leased to Indigo Shire. Adjacent block to the north owned by Indigo Shire and being considered for other complementary uses, such as biodiversity offsets or a solar farm. No leachate collection systems or engineered cap/liner. Used for temporary storage of green waste, satellite collection site during free green (and other) waste weekends. Subject to landfill gas and groundwater testing every second year Assessed as low risk to surface and groundwater. Estimated cost to rehabilitate: \$0.82-1.15M (2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue regular inspections Continue bi-annual groundwater and landfill gas monitoring.
Former landfill – Wahgunyah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DELWP land, licensed to Indigo Shire Unlicensed landfill closing in 1999. No leachate collection systems or engineered cap/liner. Assessed as medium risk to surface and groundwater Estimated cost to rehabilitate: \$0.46M 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue regular visual inspections Drill monitoring bores Commence bi-annual groundwater and landfill gas monitoring.

Daily traffic sheets are kept at both WTS, recording the number of visitors, type and volume of materials received, and fees taken. This data was analysed to assess if any efficiency opportunities are available. Minimum costs to staff each waste transfer station per day is \$157.50 (and the fees taken also need to cover processing and transport of the waste). It can be seen that Fridays at Rutherglen have not recovered this cost, and Saturdays at both locations only marginally exceed the staff costs, therefore, the WTS usually operate at a loss. Sunday is the busiest/most profitable day at both

locations. There are slightly less visitors on Friday and Saturday at Rutherglen WTS compared with Beechworth, and correspondingly, revenue at Rutherglen is slightly lower (Figures 29 and 30). Both transfer stations are less visited in the winter months compared with summer (Figure 31). Mondays is the least busy day at Beechworth WTS, and ISC could consider closing the site on this day. However, that would create only marginal savings as the majority of costs associated with operating the WTS are not staff time (site licence fees, bin rental and collection fees).

Figure 32 illustrates the gap between income and expense at both the Beechworth and Rutherglen WTSs. The fees charged aim to recover costs for ISC for transport and processing of recyclable items, but do not recover the full costs of operating the facilities. This demonstrates why it is not economically feasible to operate more transfer stations across the Shire, or remove fees for recyclable items.

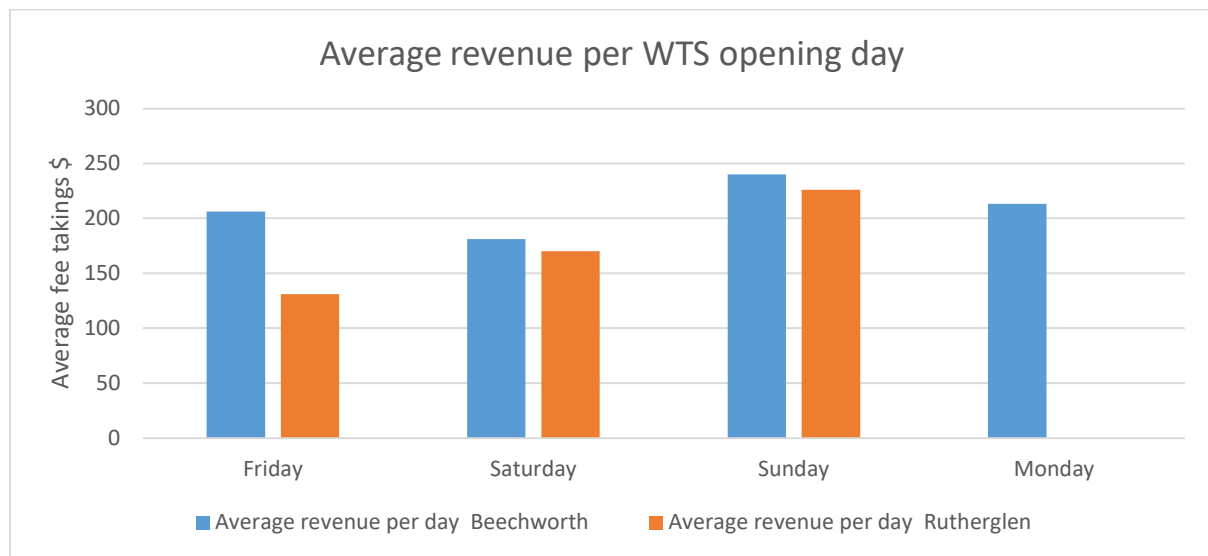


FIGURE 29: AVERAGE DAILY REVENUE AT WTSS

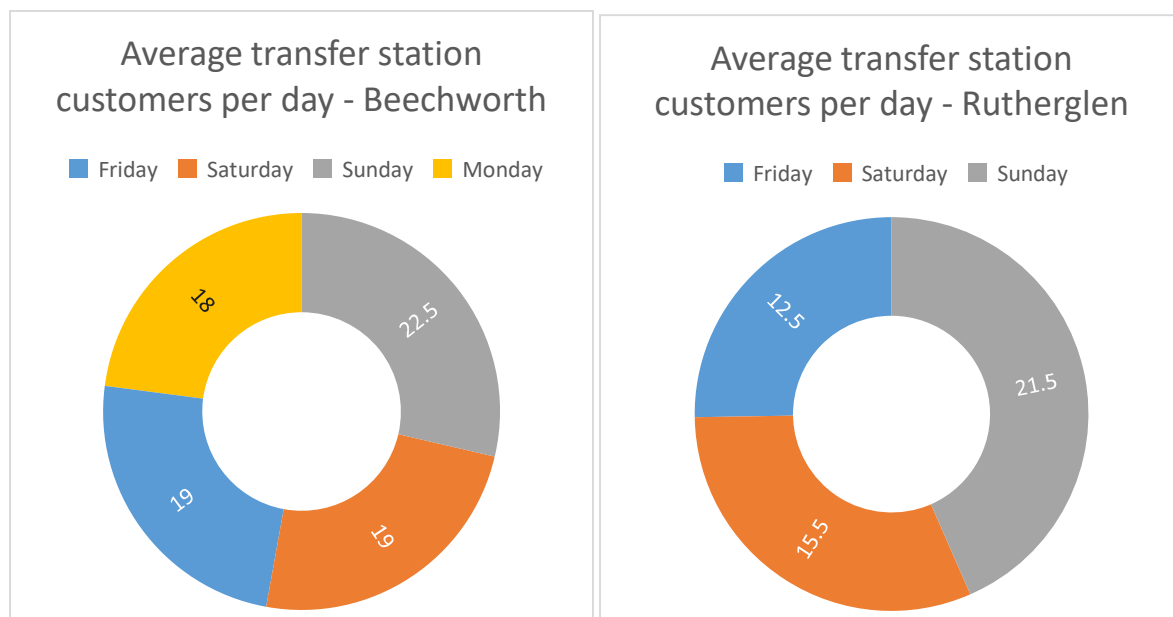


FIGURE 30: AVERAGE CUSTOMERS PER DAY – BEECHWORTH AND RUTHERGLEN WTS

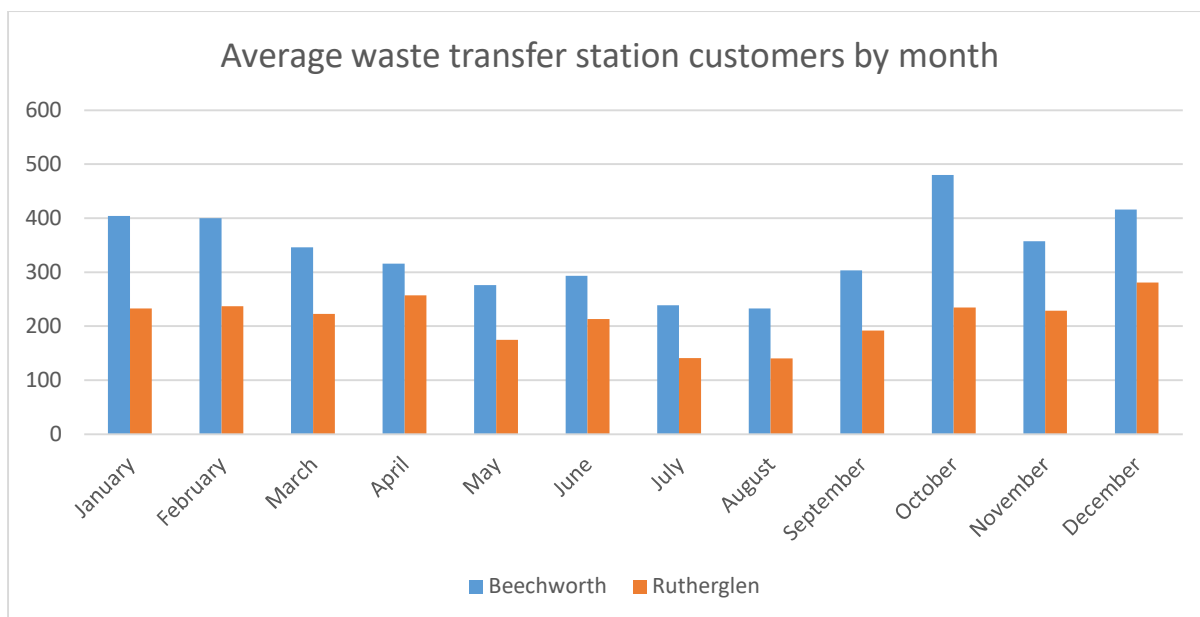


FIGURE 31: WTS VISITATION BY MONTH

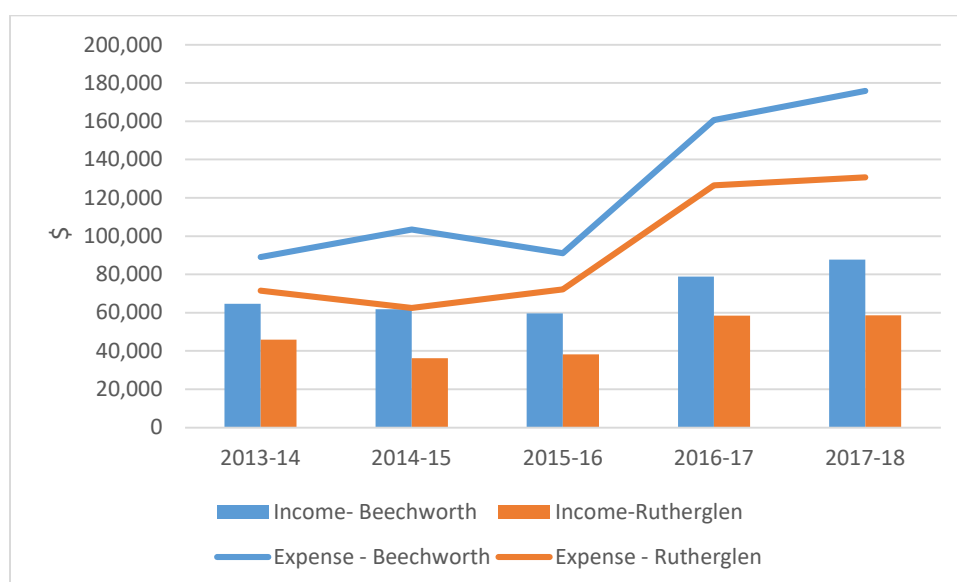


FIGURE 32: INCOME VS EXPENSE AT THE WTS

Both transfer stations, but particularly Rutherglen, are subject to break-ins and theft. The items most commonly stolen are those that have a value in the recycling market: automotive batteries, copper wire (in whitegoods), e-waste, and scrap metal. Batteries are stored in locked cages. It is not feasible to lock scrap metal, white-goods or e-waste due to the size. Security cameras are in place at both transfer stations. All theft events are reported to the police. Rutherglen is likely subject to more theft than Beechworth due to its location and fencing. The location is more remote than the Beechworth transfer station, with less potential for neighbour or drive-by sightings, additionally the gates and fences are lower.

The transfer stations have a manual hard copy recording system for volumes and types of incoming materials. Volume estimates are made visually, there is no weighbridge. Hard copy daily traffic sheets

are then manually transcribed into an excel database by office staff. This system is inefficient, and does not link to any other waste data or systems. A collaborative project to create a data reporting platform for transfer stations will be undertaken by NEWRRG in 2019/20. This will involve real-time recording of information via a tablet at the WTSs that link with the broader waste database, creating efficiencies for both transfer station and office staff. This will also improve the availability and accuracy of waste data. This project is being funded by NEWRRG.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS – Waste facilities

- Install a stand-alone power system at Beechworth WTS to improve the health and safety of the operator, as well as the service delivery to customers.
- Gain further information from EPA about application of the closed landfill guideline and rehabilitation expectations.
- Review and improve the fire response capability at the Rutherglen WTS.
- Develop and aftercare management plan for each of the former landfills.
- Collaborate on the NEWRRG waste data platform project, and implement the related tablet system at the WTSs.

9. Assessment of options

This section assesses the feasibility of potential actions identified in the previous sections (orange and blue bullet points), using a ‘triple bottom line’ (TBL) approach that analyses the environmental, social and financial impacts.

9.1 Financial analysis

Many of the potential options identified in this report have negligible or no cost, beyond staff time. Some of the potential options however do have a cost (or saving) impact- these are estimated in Table 20.

TABLE 20: REVENUE AND EXPENSE OF PROPOSED INITIATIVES – SIGNIFICANT COST IMPACTS ONLY

Proposed initiatives (revenue and expense)	2018-19 (BAU budget)	FY 2019-20*	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23
<u>Waste education</u> Commence a waste education program delivered by ISC staff. This would address many opportunities identified in this strategy, contributing to the overall goal of reducing waste to landfill (which will be a cost saving if achieved). An in-house, Indigo Shire specific education program is a new service that can't be absorbed with existing resources. However, if the target of 0.1t/per capita/year reduced waste to landfill is met, ISC will save ~\$22,500/yr on tipping fees. This potential saving has <u>not</u> been included in this financial table.	\$0	\$20,000	\$20,500	\$21,000	\$21,500
<u>Hard waste service</u>	\$56,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000

Discontinue hard waste weekends (while still offering the free hard waste disposal vouchers)					
<u>Street and Park bin service</u> Implement additional street and park bins (based on staged priorities arising from the gap analysis/audit action), including a recycling bin next to every waste bin, organics bins in suitable areas, consistent stickers/sign	\$55,000	\$70,000	\$90,000	\$95,000	\$100,000
<u>Green waste storage and treatment at transfer stations</u> Commence segregation of green and timber wastes WTSs– i.e. add a skip bin for treated timbers, and segregate raw timber from garden waste. Mulch garden waste only. (Signage, procedures and operator training is covered by NEWRRG; reduced mulching will also save costs)	-	\$5,000	\$5,500	\$6,000	\$6,500
Net	\$111,000	\$105,000	\$126,000	\$132,000	\$138,000

**revised figures based on proposed initiatives in this report and the RRWMS. If endorsed, changes can be made to the adopted budget at the mid-year review.*

The impact of the potential options on Council's operating costs (including existing waste management and resource recovery services and infrastructure) over the next five years has been estimated in Table 21. This table includes services (income and expense) for which there is an existing budget line item. This report has demonstrated that some waste services have an expense that are not accounted for, because it isn't a separate budget line item, most commonly because costs are shared across various departments and budgets in council. This management view of the budget does not include corporate overhead expenses that contribute to delivering the waste management services.

TABLE 21: PROJECTED WASTE BUDGET OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS – ESTIMATES ONLY

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Income					
Waste management charge - organics	(\$797,671)	(\$800,304)	(\$805,00)	(\$810,00)	(\$815,00)
Waste management charge - garbage	(\$948,538)	(\$957,953)	(\$965,000)	(\$975,000)	(\$985,000)
Waste management charge - recycling	(\$608,695)	(\$595,476)	(\$600,000)	(\$605,000)	(\$610,000)
Environmental management contribution	(\$587,890)	(\$587,890)	(\$590,00)	(\$595,000)	(\$600,000)
Transfer station gate fees and scrap metal sales	(\$94,080)	(\$83,992)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)	(\$80,000)
Bin maintenance for Cleanaway	(\$21,912)	(\$21,996)	(\$22,500)	(\$23,000)	(\$23,500)
Total income	(\$2,470,896)	(\$2,459,721)	(\$2,472,500)	(\$2,493,000)	(\$2,513,500)
Expense - Provision of services					
Kerbside garbage service	\$714,040	\$724,080	\$734,00	\$745,000	\$755,000
Kerbside recycling service* <i>*Challenging to estimate expense beyond current contract variation (June 2020)</i>	\$504,172	\$495,924	\$500,00	\$505,000	\$510,00

Kerbside organics service	\$804,595	\$886,832	\$900,000	\$920,000	\$940,000
Transfer station operations	\$301,055	\$286,204	\$295,000	\$300,000	\$305,000
Education/strategy development and implementation	\$11,500	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Hard waste	\$55,899	\$68,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Public place waste and recycling	\$54,912	\$54,148	\$70,000	\$90,000	\$95,000
NEWRRG membership	\$17,110	\$17,600	\$18,100	\$18,700	\$19,500
Litter and illegal dumping	No budget line item				
Bin maintenance for Cleanaway	\$19,920	\$18,000	\$19,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Total services	\$2,483,203	\$2,555,788	\$1,821,272	\$2,604,624	\$2,149,500
Infrastructure					
Bi-annual landfill monitoring	\$12,700	-	\$13,000	-	\$15,000
Landfill licence fees	\$15,029	\$20,000	\$27,000	\$29,000	\$31,000
Maintenance and rehabilitation reserve for former landfills	\$86,236	\$89,000	\$92,000	\$96,000	\$100,000
Total infrastructure	\$113,965	\$109,000	\$132,000	\$125,000	\$146,000
Total					
TOTAL operating cost	\$2,597,168	\$2,664,788	\$1,953,272	\$2,729,624	\$2,295,500
NET operating cost	\$126,272	\$205,067	\$519,228	\$236,624	\$218,000

9.2 Sustainability assessment

The following issues were considered in assessing the environmental, social and economic impacts of each option:

- **Environmental:**
 - En1: waste and litter reduction (including avoidance and minimisation)
 - En2: resource recovery
 - En3: contamination of recovered resources
 - En4: resource consumption in implementing the strategy
 - En5: impact on surrounding environment.
- **Social:**
 - S1: level of service to the community (including equity of access)
 - S2: community acceptance
 - S3: impact on amenity
 - S4: awareness and compliance with waste management systems and policies
 - S5: health and safety.
- **Economic:**
 - Ec1: financial cost of implementation and operation
 - Ec2: regional economic development
 - Ec3: local employment.

A score of 1 (positive impact), -1 (negative impact) or 0 (no impact) was assigned to each action. Outcomes of the unweighted scoring is shown in Table 18.

TABLE 22: TBL ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL OPTIONS

Criteria:
Environmental:
- En1: waste and litter reduction (including avoidance and minimisation)
- En2: resource recovery
- En3: contamination of recovered resources
- En4: resource consumption in implementing the strategy
- En5: impact on surrounding environment.
Social:
- S1: level of service to the community (including equity of access)
- S2: community acceptance
- S3: impact on amenity
- S4: awareness and compliance with waste management systems and policies
- S5: health and safety.
Economic:
- Ec1: financial cost of implementation and operation
- Ec2: regional economic development
- Ec3: local employment.

A score of 1 (positive impact), -1 (negative impact) or 0 (no impact) was assigned to each action, for each criteria.

Total score rating	Priority
0-4	Low (L)
5-8	Medium (M)
9-13	High (H)

No.	Action	En1	En2	En3	En4	En5	Score	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	Score2	Ec1	Ec2	Ec3	Score3	Total	Priority
ISC corporate/operational waste																			
1	Remove personal waste bins under desks, which would be replaced with one set of bins per pod including an organics caddy.	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	6	M
2	Run an education session/morning tea for staff on improved waste segregation – delivered by Halve Waste or Cleanaway's education officer. Include all offices and regular refreshers.	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	4	L
3	Promote the use of the Plasticwise supplier letter templates when purchase orders are sent by staff.	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	L

No.	Action	En1	En2	En3	En4	En5	Score	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	Score2	Ec1	Ec2	Ec3	Score3	Total	Priority
4	Capital projects to apply the waste clauses of the ISC Environmental Specification to applicable projects.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	M
5	Continue to implement the Plasticwise Policy implementation plan, and work with Plasticwise community groups to increase the visibility of actions.	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	-1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	L
ISC waste management resourcing																			
6	Increase coverage of waste office to full time, in line with the resourcing that other similar councils apply to waste – to provide quicker response to customer queries, and implement actions from this strategy that will reduce waste to landfill and save costs.	1	1	1	0	1	4	1	0	1	1	0	3	-1	0	1	0	7	M
7	Explore shared services with other nearby councils for casual waste transfer station attendants.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	2	4	L
Kerbside collection services																			
8	Increase community awareness of the option to upgrade bins.	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	5	M
9	Increase the provision of educational materials to households regarding what items should go in each bin.	0	1	1	-1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	3	-1	0	0	-1	3	L
10	Prepare a documented policy on the FOGO service to communicate the no-exemptions position and the reasons for this.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	-1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	L
11	Continue to assess new areas to be added to the FOGO collection area.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	L
Street and park bins																			
12	Modify location of some bins to ensure pairing – including a recycling bin next to every waste bin. In some cases, bins are not paired. The result of this may be contamination in a recycling bin, and missed opportunity for recycling.	1	1	1	0	1	4	1	1	1	1	0	4	-1	0	0	-1	7	M
13	Review the location of all street and park bins, identifying key gaps in all towns that additional bins are required.	1	1	1	0	1	4	1	1	1	1	0	4	-1	0	0	-1	7	M

No.	Action	En1	En2	En3	En4	En5	Score	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	Score2	Ec1	Ec2	Ec3	Score3	Total	Priority
14	Include consistent stickering/signage/surrounds on bins to improve segregation and user experience.	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	5	M
15	Discuss available waste services with sports park committees of management.	1	1	0	0	1	3	1	-1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	L
16	Further monitor and enforce Cleanaway's contract requirements to clean the bin surrounds.	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	3	-1	0	0	-1	5	M
17	Discuss the use of street bins, and alternative options, with adjacent businesses.	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	L
18	Trial a stick-on sensor in street and park bins to rationalise the number of collections.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	L
19	Assess public areas suitable for a trial of an organics bins.	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	2	-1	0	0	-1	4	L
WTS operations																			
20	Rebrand waste transfer stations as Resource Recovery Centres – to improve the focus on recovery rather than disposal.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	L
21	Work with op-shop operators and social enterprises to take advantage of recovery opportunities for furniture that isn't sold, to reduce the items taken to the WTS.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	6	M
22	Explore modifying some of the opening hours to include a morning.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	L
23	Improve communication of fee structure and what happens to materials collected.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	L
Hard waste																			
24	Discontinue the hard waste weekends program due to high costs, significant staff time, asbestos risks and mis-alignment with the overarching objectives of the waste hierarchy and waste strategy.	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	-1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	5	M

No.	Action	En1	En2	En3	En4	En5	Score	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	Score2	Ec1	Ec2	Ec3	Score3	Total	Priority
25	Continue the hard waste voucher in the rates notice.	-1	0	0	-1	0	-2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	L
26	Work with real-estate agents to explore options for renters (that don't receive a rates notice) to receive the hard waste voucher.	-1	0	0	0	0	-1	1	1	0	0	0	2	-1	0	0	-1	0	L
27	Work with Wodonga City Council and/or Rural City of Wangaratta to ascertain costs and feasibility of hard plastics getting recycled through their existing arrangements.	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	L
Green waste																			
28	Discontinue free green waste weekends, instead providing a voucher in the annual rates notice that can be used at Beechworth or Rutherglen WTS during any opening hours throughout the year.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	3	L
29	Work with real-estate agents to establish a process whereby renters can also receive a green waste voucher.	-1	0	0	0	0	-1	1	1	0	0	0	2	-1	0	0	-1	0	L
30	Commence segregation of various green and timber wastes i.e. add a skip bin for treated timbers, and segregate raw timber from garden waste. Add signage and train operators on new system.	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	-1	0	0	-1	2	L
31	Assess cost and feasibility of options for reusing raw timber, e.g. transport to Alpine MDF or D&R Henderson; or collection by men's sheds or similar groups.	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	1	0	0	1	L
32	Assess cost and feasibility of a mulch collection day(s), whereby mulch is loaded by council staff and plant into customer trailers and/or delivered to Landcare, Landmates or tree planting projects.	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	-1	0	0	-1	2	L
Illegal dumping																			
33	Increase communication and awareness about which items can be taken to the WTS at no charge	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	5	M
34	Continue to monitor illegal dumping cases to inform which sites require additional surveillance	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	L
Litter & Dog waste																			

No.	Action	En1	En2	En3	En4	En5	Score	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	Score2	Ec1	Ec2	Ec3	Score3	Total	Priority
35	Conduct audit of butt bins in towns – replace broken ones with new; add butt bins in areas where they are absent and cigarette litter is observed.	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	3	-1	0	0	-1	4	L
36	Formalise an operational arrangement to regularly empty and check function of butt bins.	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	-1	0	0	-1	1	L
37	Review additional areas for the provision of dog waste bags and bins. Develop a plan for phased roll out of additional bins, and a schedule for collections and replacement of bags.	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	-1	0	0	-1	2	L
Event waste management																			
38	Share learnings from Yackandandah Folk Festival with other events to assist all events improve their waste management practices	1	1	1	0	0	5	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	7	M
39	Formalise the IEDTAC grants process to require any events receiving waste management support from ISC to implement an approved waste management plan.	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	M
40	Increase the use/provision of organics bins at events (3-bin system).	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	M
41	Provide bin signage/stickers with event bins to aid source segregation	1	1	1	0	0	6	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	9	H
42	Support Plasticwise Yackandandah's Dish Pig proposal (mobile industrial washing-up trailer), including promoting hire of the Dish Pig by external events, and use of the Dish Pig at council-run events.	1	1	1	-1	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	-1	0	0	-1	3	L
Other arrangements and programs																			
43	Discuss Garage Sale Trail program with groups/towns that currently organise a town-wide garage sale outside of this program, with a view to transitioning to the Garage Sale Trail program to reduce the volunteer workload in organising parallel events.	1	1	0	0	0	7	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	8	M
44	Continue to lobby SV to include rural shire locations as permanent detox your home locations.	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	4	L
45	Increase the promotion and awareness of the SV detox your home and HCC programs.	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	L

No.	Action	En1	En2	En3	En4	En5	Score	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	Score2	Ec1	Ec2	Ec3	Score3	Total	Priority
46	Lobby SV to hold a household chemical collection day in the Shire.	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	L
47	Participate in the strategic review of the Detox your home and HCC program	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	L
48	Continue to pursue an economically feasible recycling provider for household batteries.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	-1	0	0	-1	3	L
49	Liaise with existing repair cafes in the Shire to determine support mechanisms ISC can provide, including increased promotion.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	5	M
50	Support and facilitate Repair Cafes to become established in the other Shire towns.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	5	M
51	Liaise with existing toy libraries in the Shire to determine support mechanisms ISC can provide, including increased promotion.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	5	M
52	Support and facilitate toy libraries to become established in the other Shire towns.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	5	M
53	Continue to meet regularly with Plasticwise community groups to discuss support that ISC could provide to their community education efforts and plastic programs.	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	L
54	Continue to work with NEWRRG and partners to establish an end market for soft plastics, enabling collection at the ISC transfer stations.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	-1	1	0	0	3	L
55	Explore opportunities to combine soft plastics transport to processors with Benalla and/or Rural City of Wangaratta.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	-1	0	0	-1	2	L
56	Increase purchasing of materials made out of recycled soft plastics, to contribute to the demand for the product, resulting in companies being more willing/open to taking soft plastics collected in Indigo Shire.	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	L
57	Promote the free services offered by Halve Waste – particularly to the business community.	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	6	M

No.	Action	En1	En2	En3	En4	En5	Score	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	Score2	Ec1	Ec2	Ec3	Score3	Total	Priority
58	Increase education for some of the lesser-practiced waste-wise behaviours, e.g. BYO takeaway containers, repair café and bulk food.	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	L
59	Run events/campaigns associated with Plastic-free July.	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	L
60	Work with accommodation providers to include A-Z guides for waste and/or bin stickers in short-term rental properties.	0	1	1	-1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	L
Waste services currently not offered																			
61	Explore options and costs for concrete acceptance and recycling at the ISC WTSs.	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	-1	0	0	-1	2	L
62	Run an EOI process for potential re-use partner organisations to divert sale-able items from the WTS.	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	-1	0	1	0	1	2	4	L
63	Communicate the Cleanaway kerbside service options to businesses.	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	L
64	Support the FOGO collection EOI.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	5	M
65	Explore options with Rural City of Wangaratta and/or Wodonga City Council to establish a joint collection or consolidation arrangement for hard plastics recycling.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	L
66	Paint - continue to pursue an economically feasible transport and recycling option.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	-1	0	0	-1	2	L
67	Fluorescent lighting tubes – explore a milk run or co-ownership system for a “Tube Terminator” destruction system.	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	-1	0	0	-1	2	L
Waste facilities																			
68	Install a stand-alone power system at Beechworth WTS to improve the health and safety of the operator, as well as the service delivery to customers.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	-1	0	0	-1	1	L

No.	Action	En1	En2	En3	En4	En5	Score	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	Score2	Ec1	Ec2	Ec3	Score3	Total	Priority
69	Gain further information from EPA about application of the closed landfill guideline and rehabilitation expectations.	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	L
70	Review and improve the fire response capability at the Rutherglen WTS.	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	2	-1	0	0	-1	3	L
71	Develop and aftercare management plan for each of the former landfills.	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	L
72	Collaborate on the NEWRRG waste data platform project, and implement the related tablet system at the WTSS.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	L

10. Conclusions

10.1 Current situation

Indigo Shire has historically performed well in waste, with achievements including having the third highest landfill diversion rate in the State (at 66%). We are fortunate to have strong partnerships via NEWRRGG, and an engaged community. This positions us well to meet the future challenges. For all waste services currently offered, there are opportunities for improvement. Additionally, there are a variety of waste services that ISC has not traditionally provided, and to do so would meet community and industry expectations. Some services continue to be delivered despite high cost and misalignment with the waste hierarchy. It is very timely to review all services in line with the waste hierarchy to ensure investment is targeted at the right actions, which not only has environmental benefits but also save costs longer term via reduction of tipping, transport and processing fees.

10.2 Future direction

Indigo Shire will face multiple challenges in the waste sector in coming years, including rising costs, increasing regulatory pressure and new or changed laws, increasing community expectations, growing waste generation (per capita), and external factors such as the international recycling market. This report has attempted to plan for and respond to these challenges. Our future direction is based firmly on the waste hierarchy, in the context of a resource-constrained financial environment. Potential options have been assessed, and where viable, and have been included in the implementation action plan, which is a live document, separate to this background report. The implementation plan also includes monitoring and review actions for the strategy.

11. References

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Appendix A: Community Waste Survey Results