

MEDIA STATEMENT



Wednesday, 10 August 2016

Waste focus to be on education, not fines

Households that place the wrong rubbish in a residential bin will be the focus of an education campaign designed to prevent waste contamination in the City of Bunbury.

A new Waste Local Law adopted by Bunbury City Council last night contains minor amendments, approved by the Department of Environmental Regulation, that aim to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and to also ensure our streets are kept tidy during general refuse collections.

Bunbury Mayor Gary Brennan said the City would not be applying a “big stick” approach to anyone who was in breach of the law, instead looking at education as the key driver of change.

“A recent audit by our Waste Services team showed about 90 per cent of Bunbury residents were doing the right thing when it came to disposing of their household waste,” Mr Brennan said.

“This audit showed only 400 bins out of 5000 were contaminated, which is credit to the people of Bunbury.

“The majority of the contamination was a simple error such as newspapers being placed into a recycling bin inside a plastic shopping bag.”

If a bin is found to be contaminated, it is stickered and the resident is advised to call the Waste Department to find out how they can improve their waste disposal. The bin is only collected once the householder has contacted the Waste Department.

Mr Brennan said all the information required to advise people what could be placed in each of their three bins could be found on the bin lid and also on their annual waste calendar.

“People should not fear a fine if they make a simple mistake and place waste in the wrong bin,” he said.

The City will also continue to educate the community through its website and social media channels.

Contaminated bins can be costly for the City, which is charged a fee if a contaminated load of waste goes to a recycling facility. This could potentially lead to an increase in waste charges for ratepayers if contamination levels were high.

Mr Brennan said the City had already significantly reduced the amount of waste going to landfill through its three bin system. In 2015, 5993 tonnes of waste went to landfill compared to 12,000 tonnes in 2012.

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“The City of Bunbury has committed to reducing the amount of waste going to landfill to under 25 per cent by 2025 and figures show we are well on track to meet the target,” Mr Brennan said.

“The City has already reached the State Waste Authority recycling target of 30 per cent by 2015 for regional centres, and has also met the regional target for 2020 of 50 per cent.”

The amount of waste going to landfill has reduced significantly in the last three years to 40 per cent in 2014-15. In total, 18,288 tonnes of waste was collected, of which 11,053 tonnes was recycled and 7249 tonnes sent to landfill.

The City has shown a continual improvement over recent years with 46 per cent going to landfill in 2013-14, 71 per cent in 2012-13 and 74 per cent in 2008-09.

ENDS

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