

The National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations endorsed criteria for the use and operation of recycling and household items clothing recycling collection bins.

Every day and in every State of Australia charities assist tens of thousands of people through home visitation, migrant and refugee assistance, hospital and health services, prison visitation, aged care services, supported employment services for people with an intellectual disability, education for disadvantaged children, welfare assistance, hostels for the homeless, overseas relief, disaster recovery, budget counselling and youth programs and suicide prevention counselling.

We feed and clothe Australian men, women and children overwhelmed by life's hardships. A significant number of these community programs are funded by the income derived from clothing recycling collection bins. Programs, that if not funded from these income sources, would require public funding through State and Federal tax and Local Government Association rate sources.

Members of NACRO advocate strongly for councils to consider adopting this code of practice developed and practiced by members of the National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations. The attached appendix provides further information on NACRO and the business of charitable recycling.

1 Clothing recycling collection bins Code of Practice - recommended planning principles

Members of NACRO advocate that a prominently located recycling collection bin is currently the most cost effective method of collecting post consumer recyclable domestic materials. To facilitate this, the major factors influencing the councils are:

- The need to ensure recycling collection bins are located appropriately and/or sensitively so as not to detract from the amenity and appearance of sites,
- All recycling bins are clearly marked to differentiate charity bins from commercial operator bins to enable members of the public to make informed choices about to whom they make their donations,
- The need to ensure clothing recycling collection bins are regularly emptied, cleaned and maintained in an orderly and proper manner;
 - To ensure the location of clothing recycling collection bins does not cause any obstruction to footpaths and roadways
 - To ensure the clothing recycling collection bins are adequately fixed so as to not cause injury to any person or damage to property, to the satisfaction of Council.

The following principles apply to the location and placement of recycling collection bins:

- 1.1 Only clothing recycling collection bins from charities that are members of the National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisation (NACRO) shall be permitted to be located on land owned or vested in the given Council and any Public Place. Preference should be given to charities that directly, collect, sort

and sell the clothing.

- 1.2 The location of clothing recycling collection bins shall generally be restricted to commercial zones that are contained in a given council's planning scheme.
- 1.3 The location of the clothing recycling collection bins shall comply with the provisions of the given Local Government Act.
- 1.4 Subsequent to permit approval, the clothing recycling collection bins shall:
 - 1.4.1 be of a design that would ensure people are not able to climb into them;
 - 1.4.2 not be located on driveways/accessways, car parking areas, landscape areas or be located to cause undue obstruction to footpaths and thoroughfares subject to inspection by an Authorised Officer;
 - 1.4.2 not present a threat to surrounding infrastructure in the event of a fire in a bin;
 - 1.4.3 contain the name and contact telephone number of the agency;
 - 1.4.3 be maintained and presented within its environs in a condition to the satisfaction of the given Council;
 - 1.4.4 be emptied and maintained in a manner sufficient to ensure materials do not accumulate outside the clothing recycling collection bins, eg on the foot path.
 - 1.4.5 provide a 24hour emergency contact number to be used by council officers regarding out-of-hours recycling collection bin issues.
- 1.5 Clothing recycling collection bins shall be subject to removal for non compliance to the Code at Council's discretion.
- 1.6 The owner of the recycling collection bin and/or agency with responsibility for the control of a bin shall provide to Council satisfactory evidence of a copy of a public liability insurance policy to a minimum value of \$20 million.
- 1.7 Unless there is sufficient space and visual amenity, only one recycling collection bin should be located on a site and subject to inspection by an Authorised Officer.
- 1.8 The location of the clothing recycling collection bins shall be subject to annual review.
- 1.9 The recycling collection bin/bins shall be removed from Council land or public place within the time indicated on a written notice to comply.
- 1.10 The recycling collection bin shall have NACRO signage attached.
- 1.11 Recycling collection bin clearance schedule (for normal circumstances) be scheduled by the charitable recycling organisation and the council during the application process. Note: Most contractors undertake clearance early morning.

Members of NACRO advocate strongly for councils to consider the above code of practice developed and practiced by members of the National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisation.

APPENDIX

2 Purpose of this code of practice

The purpose of this code of practice is to provide councils with guidelines for the placement and location of clothing recycling collection bins on land owned, controlled and/or vested in a given council and to provide them with the established criteria for the use and operation of these bins.

3 About NACRO

The National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations (NACRO) is the peak body representing charitable recycling organisations throughout Australia. NACRO represents its members and has collective influence at local, state and national level.

The business of NACRO members is to generate social capital to fund welfare programs through recycling and reuse activities. Indeed, millions of individuals benefit from the products, operations, and programs that are delivered to the community as a result of the funds generated from NACRO members' recycling operations.

NACRO members range from the largest national charities to individual shops. Collectively, they operate thousands of shops around Australia. Donations of first and second hand goods are made by deposits into clothing recycling collection bins, neighbourhood household collection, and/or drop-offs directly to charity shops.

NACRO advocates educating the community to donate goods responsibly to provide maximum profits for social welfare, reduce landfill demand through thoughtless waste and to minimise cost to the environment.

3.1 Charitable Recycling Organisations are not private companies!

In Australia the organised recovery of post-consumer waste (mainly used clothing and household goods) by way of clothing recycling collection bins is principally undertaken by charities. By world standards, it is a unique system through which tonnes of post consumer waste is diverted from landfill and redistributed to men, women and children overwhelmed by life's hardships, or sold to assist in the charitable works of the organisations that have invested in the recycling infrastructure. It is a valuable service to all Australian councils.

As public benevolent institution/organisations, Charitable Recycling Organisations receive "Deductible Gift Recipient" (DGR) status from the Australian Taxation office which allows them to receive income tax deductible gifts and deductible contributions. Membership of NACRO is only available to organisations that have DGR status.

In recent times a number of private commercial agencies have entered the market. These agencies are for-profit companies that do not redistribute any financial returns from the collection of post-consumer waste. Collectively, these agencies do not adhere to this code of practice. NACRO advises councils to restrict the use and operation of clothing recycling collection bins within their precincts to charitable recycling organisations.

There is no doubt that without the recycling activities of the charitable recycling organisations (the proceeds from which fund welfare programs), both State and Federal governments would have significantly higher social costs in addition to a marked increase in volume of landfill, the management of which would be funded through increased taxes and a commensurate bureaucracy.

4 About the Charitable Recycling industry

The multi-billion dollar worldwide recycling industry performs a vital social and environmental function. The industry has no peer in terms of conserving the world's resources while the various stages of the recycling process provide significant employment around the world.

It is estimated that between 80-100 million kilos of textile waste is collected by Australian charitable recyclers through clothing recycling collection bins and donations of material at no cost to councils or government. Much of this material can be reclaimed and recirculated through charity shops or reprocessed into functional textiles. Through the efforts of the charitable recycling organisations, approximately 75 percent of the collected post-consumer waste is diverted from our landfills and recycled domestically or forwarded to third world countries providing clothing to many of the poorest people in the World.

Recycling is a practice through which everyone can make a difference to the environment. Garments or household goods can effectively be recycled by sale or gifted to another user. Of the post consumer waste recovered by charities;

- 60 percent consists of items of clothing that can be reworn or reused
- 15 percent can be torn into industrial wiper cloths, and
- 25 percent is unusable and sent to landfill.

There is increasing recognition by informed councils of the contribution charity shops make in reducing the volume of items that go to landfill, and a number of local authorities are now counting the volume of second-hand goods sent for reuse and recycling that can be measured towards their recycling targets. Without charity shops and processing facilities providing for large-scale reuse and recycling, these unwanted items would inevitably find their way into the waste stream to be treated by local authorities as household waste.

Recycling of second hand goods is by means of community donations deposited into charity clothing recycling collection bins, thousands of which are located across Australia, and/or drop-offs directly to charity shops.

Depending on size, logistics and location, each charitable recycling organisation has developed its own system for dealing with donated product. People who are keen to donate clothes to charity are advised to call the charity and ask advice and/or for locations of drop off centres. In some cases they can go straight to the shop. Some charities will pick up furniture and larger items. Overall, clothes are carefully evaluated and sorted for quality and marketability.

A shop quality item's final destination is the result of demographic understanding and marketing aimed to maximise profits for the charity. In some suburbs, clothes can command a higher price, as they are more likely to appeal to the local market. Certain shops quickly move surf and youth wear; others specialise in retro; others have attracted a loyal following by selling high-end designer label product; and some stores are amply stocked with plus-sizes and children's wear.

5 Donation practices

Giving clothes and furniture is a great way of helping out the community. Whether it is personal clothes or furniture or items from a workplace, these donations can make a great difference to an individual or organisation.

The fact remains that we live in a consumer society and there will always be a need for councils to manage the issues surrounding post consumer waste. The short term fix of banning clothing recycling collection bins is not the answer! The challenge is to change community attitudes and behaviour in support of sustainability, through education for responsible donating practices.

Charity recycling bin sites are often used as a dumping site for rubbish and soiled items. The cost of recycling and disposal of material is a serious financial burden to the charitable institutions, effectively diverting funds away from welfare programs into waste disposal costs. The members of NACRO advocate for responsible donating.

5.1 Community awareness - an ill advised community

Australians' attitudes toward waste issues are complex and constitute a barrier to improved resource recovery. The increased use of recycled materials in products and the increased recovery of material for recycling can be achieved with an educated public.

The introduction of "pay-as-you-throw" charges for the use of a local dump or transfer station a few years ago coupled with a level of community laziness, increased the amount of unusable donations to the charities as households attempt to avoid these costs. One large charity alone spends (annually – nationwide) approximately \$5 million on cleaning up waste which is mainly dumped on it, in one form or another. Of that amount, it estimates that approx. \$2 million goes towards landfill expenses, which is obviously only part of the overall waste cost it faces. On top of this, drivers are paid to remove rubbish from around collections bins and when received, the charities have the additional cost of sorting and sending and paying for landfill fees. It is estimated that the real cost to the charitable recycling organisations (including wages) is close to \$20 million per annum. There is no doubt that the cost of an ill advised community is a cost to the charitable recycling organisations. Any efforts to lessen this objectionable impost would be an intelligent and worthy undertaking.

6 Code of practice influences

Members of NACRO believe that a prominently located recycling collection bin is currently the most effective method of collecting post consumer waste. The advantages include:

- Convenience of location and out of hours access for residents reducing illegal dumping
- Reduced material placed out for hard rubbish collection
- Reduced landfill demand
- Meet the requirements of councils to recycle more of residents unneeded goods
- Relative ease of policing sites and compliance with local bylaws.
- Supports the environment through providing avenues for recycling useful products
 - Reduces the use of scarce resources, especially energy and water, by giving many of the donated goods a second life
 - Provides the community with an opportunity to support the work of charities through donating their unneeded goods
 - Assists local councils to meet their target of reduced landfill
- Supports the growing recycling industry by providing employment in the recycling industry

Indeed, there are thousands of clothing recycling collection bins located across Australia on council, school and church grounds. Clothing recycling collection bins are usually dispatched from a collection depot that services a designated region. Once full, the clothing recycling collection bins are emptied and the contents transported to a depot where they are sorted and graded before being sent to various charity shops (or exported overseas) according to quality and the need of the community. Some bin collection depots are large facilities employing drivers specifically to service the bin collection.

6.1 Shortcomings of the recycling collection bin system

There are a number of acknowledged shortcomings to clothing recycling collection bins. They are often a subject of community complaints and thus have been the focus of council debates for a number of years. The main concern is the negative appearance and diminished aesthetics as a result of material n deposited around, rather than in, the clothing recycling collection bins located on public and private lands in public view. Other issues include:

- The bin is unable to accept all types of donations people want to make
- Some residents do not follow instructions as to what type of donation is acceptable, thereby often creating an untidy environment around the bin
- Bins not emptied frequently enough to prevent them overflowing and becoming unsightly

The facts about debris that sometimes surrounds clothing recycling collection bins:

- Dumping around bins is a seasonal issue, indeed most dumping is done during school holidays
- Dumping is less during weeks of hard rubbish collection.
- Illegal dumping is less when charity recycling shops are open on Sundays
- Banning clothing recycling collection bins is therefore not the answer.

This policy was developed in June 2009 by NACRO for councils to consider adopting. NACRO reserves the right to change this policy as it sees fit and is not liable for any loss or expenses incurred as a result of any changes.