Theme 3:

Waste reduction and circular economy

Background

Waste is a critical environmental sustainability issue, with waste volumes exponentially increasing as resource consumption continues to grow, fuelled by short-lived products.

We have a key role to play in waste management and increasingly in waste reduction, both in the community and in council operations.

With a municipal waste diversion rate of 54%, surpassing the state average of 51%, we are making progress in reducing waste to landfill. However, only 15% of food waste is currently being diverted to the green organics bin and this remains a strategic priority for council.

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Waste hierarchies

Our operations and services are guided by two key frameworks, the waste hierarchy and the circular economy. The waste management hierarchy underpins waste management policy and practice across Australia and is illustrated below.

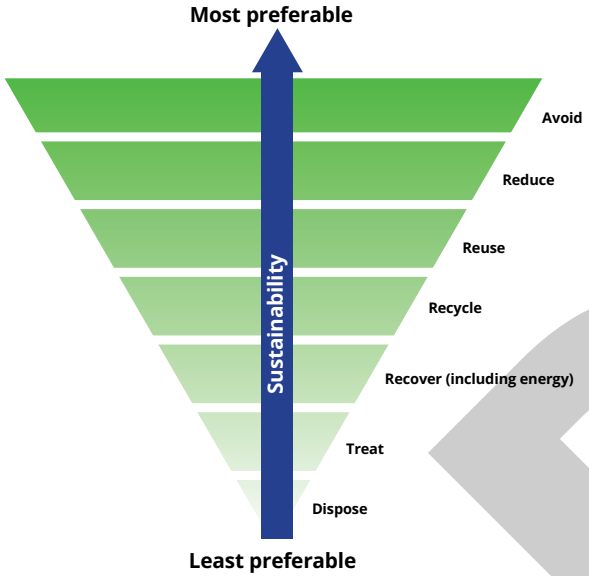


Image credit: Environmental Protection Authority

The circular economy is a model for rethinking the approach to products and services and shifting the way that materials in products are extracted, made, consumed and repurposed to ensure emissions are reduced, less natural and raw materials are needed, products are kept in use longer and product design eliminates waste and pollution.

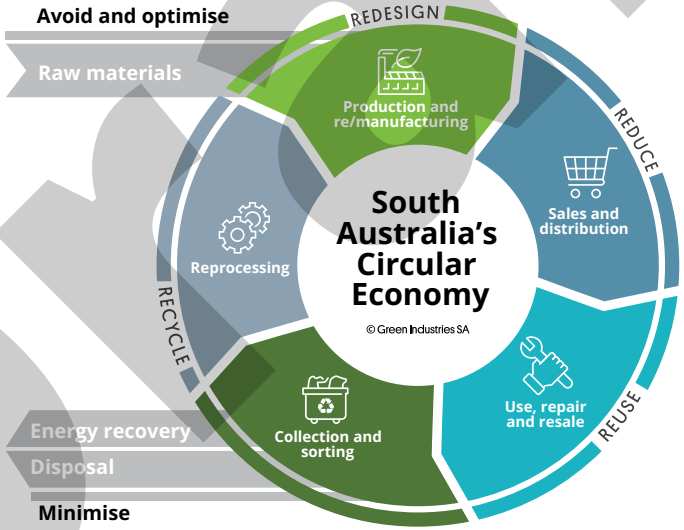


Image credit: Green Industries SA

Problematic waste streams

Problematic waste streams lacking recycling pathways, which will present increasing challenges over the next 5-10 years, include:

- Food waste.
- Electronic waste - any item with a power cord or battery.
- Batteries - including e-cigarettes and embedded batteries.
- Solar panels.
- Mattresses.
- Hard-to-recycle plastic packaging - including soft plastics and single-use.
- Clothing and textiles.

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Waste reduction and circular economy

Our role

We play a vital role in waste management by providing kerbside bin collections, hard waste collection and recycling drop-off services to the community. We have a strong history of collaborating with stakeholders to minimise waste and promote resource recovery, supporting the broader shift towards a circular economy.

We govern the Southern Region Waste Resource Authority (SRWRA) along with the Cities of Holdfast Bay, and Onkaparinga. We work with these partners to drive innovation in waste and recycling, including the industry-leading Southern Materials Recovery Facility (SMRF).

Additionally, the council provides waste and recycling education to the community to encourage the adoption of sustainable behaviours at home to increase recycling and minimise waste.

We support a circular economy through:

- Reusing materials and purchasing recycled materials and products.
- Supporting sustainable business practices that contribute to a circular economy.
- Supporting resource sharing in our community.
- Advocating to State and Federal Government for waste-related regulatory and policy reforms.

Our vision is for a city free of waste where there is no pollution impacting local ecosystems or public health.





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Strategic alignment and targets

This theme aligns with the following priorities in our Strategic Plan:

L4.1 Advocate to the community on the benefits of environmentally sustainable design in buildings.

S1.5 Minimise waste, maximise resource recovery and build circular economy, through our services and support to organisations and the community.



Alignment with state and national targets

We support these targets that have been set by the South Australian and the Australian Government.

- Zero avoidable waste to landfill by 2030[26]
- Halve food waste going to red general waste bins by 2030 (from 2024 baseline)[27]
- 70% of kerbside waste diverted from landfill by 2025[25]
- Double circularity by 2035[28]
- Reduce the average waste generation per person by 10% by 2030[29]

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Waste reduction and circular economy

Targets for council operations

These targets will help us track our progress in reducing waste and supporting a circular economy by 2030.

1. Divert at least **60%** of waste generated by council-run facilities from landfill by 2029/30

2. Achieve average resource recovery over **80%** at council-run events

Stretch target for council operations

1. Divert at least **70%** of waste generated by council-run facilities from landfill by 2029/30

2. Achieve average resource recovery over **90%** at council-run events (per event)

Community and environmental indicators and goals

These indicators, industry trends and community aspirations are outside of council control, however they will be monitored to help inform our future programs and funding priorities. Each indicator is accompanied by a preferred trend direction and data sources. The trend direction is based on past community feedback or existing government directions. These indicators are measured through audits of kerbside collection bins and other data from waste service providers.

- Reduce the percentage of contamination in the yellow co-mingled recycling bin by weight.
- Reduce the percentage of hazardous waste in the kerbside collection bins - including electronic waste - by weight.
- Reduce the percentage of soft plastics in the kerbside collection bins by weight.
- Reduce the percentage of textiles in the kerbside collection bins by weight.
- Reduce the percentage of food waste in the green organics and red general waste bins by weight.
- Reduce the percentage of nappies and sanitary products in red general waste bins.

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Waste reduction and circular economy

Current activities

✓ Southern Regional Waste Resource Authority (SRWRA)
We drive innovation in waste management services incorporating the landfill and SMRF.

✓ Partnering with waste service providers
In collaboration with SRWRA, waste service providers and government stakeholders, we work to maximise resource recovery and circular economy inputs and minimise contamination of recyclable materials.

✓ Managing waste through a comprehensive kerbside collection system
Our kerbside 3-bin system separates general waste, co-mingled recycling, and organics, with each waste type collected for disposal, recycling, or composting at dedicated facilities.

✓ Waste education and behaviour change
Delivering strategic programs and projects which encourage residents and visitors to reduce and recycle waste in our city, including food waste recycling incentives (e.g. kitchen caddies), waste minimisation at major council events, and provision of community education resources.

✓ Reduce waste across council operations
Encouraging waste avoidance at council events, offices, and community facilities by improving waste separation, reduce packaging, prioritising purchasing of recycled content materials, and engaging contractors, tenants and suppliers in Council's waste reduction efforts.

✓ Hard waste collection and responding to illegal dumping
Providing a hard waste collection service that aims to recycle at least 50% of hard waste and respond to illegal dumping with education and enforcement.

✓ Supporting pollution prevention
Providing bins and infrastructure in key reserves to reduce litter and dog faeces; respond to spills or notifications of contamination on council land and promote public hazardous waste drop-off services.



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✓ Promote litter reduction activities

Providing support for community-led activities such as Clean Up Australia Day and other clean-up activities at litter hotspots such as Lower Field River outlet.

✓ Advocacy for improved waste-related legislation

Advocating for waste-related legislative changes at state and federal levels including legislation impacting waste collection service delivery, soft plastic recycling and mandatory product stewardship arrangements.

✓ Supporting circular economy in council operations

We are standardising three-bin systems to optimise recycling at our facilities, prioritising the use of recycled materials in civil infrastructure, such as roads and footpaths, and converting green waste from council operations into mulch.

✓ Collaborate for greater impact

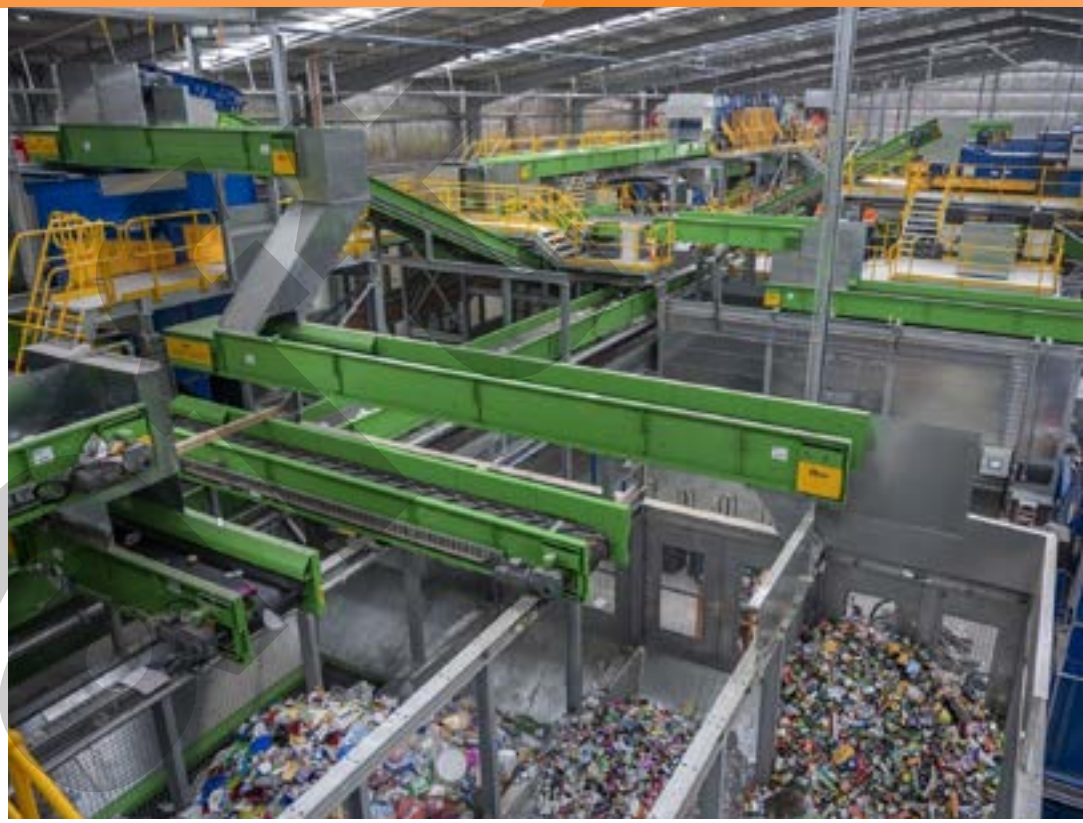
Exploring joint procurement partnerships with other councils to strengthen buying power for sustainable, circular procurement.

✓ Strengthening partnerships for a circular economy

Partnering with local businesses and community champions to drive circular economy solutions.

✓ Support businesses in adopting circular economy principles

Assisting local businesses to identify opportunities for circular economy practices, improved waste management, and connection with Green Industries SA for tailored advice and resources.



✓ Promote specialised recycling services

Encouraging the use of drop-off locations for specialised recycling, including batteries, electronic waste, chemicals, paint, and inform the community about fire risks from batteries in bins and encourage safe disposal alternatives.

✓ Support for waste reduction campaigns

Promoting national and international waste reduction initiatives, such as Plastic Free July and National Recycling Week, to raise awareness and inspire action.

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Priority WR1

Develop circular council operations



Objectives

- **WR1a** Establish procurement practices that support sustainable markets for material circularity.
- **WR2b** Reduce waste and resource consumption from corporate operations.
- **WR3c** Lead by example through sustainable procurement practices.
- **WR3d** Measure progress toward circular economy goals and report on effectiveness of policies and programs.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

WR1.1 Embed circular economy into council procurement: Integrate circular economy principles into scheduled review of procurement policies to increase recycled material use and set targets for recycled content in purchases.

WR1.2 Purchase recycled content in infrastructure: Identify new priority materials to advance circular economy goals and integrate requirements into tenders and specifications.

WR1.3 Support reuse and resource recovery: Review asset disposal and resource recovery practices at council depots and stores to identify opportunities to better align with circular economy principles.

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Priority WR2

Encourage our community to reduce waste

Objectives

- **WR2a** Build community capacity to repair, reuse and share resources.
- **WR2b** Increase recovery of food waste and recyclable resources from landfill to the circular economy.[30]
- **WR2c** Develop community education campaigns and behaviour change initiatives to reduce waste and increase recycling in households.
- **WR2d** Educate the community about appropriate recycling practices to reduce contamination.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

WR1.1 Promoting sharing, repair and reuse in the community: Find new ways to encourage the sharing economy by supporting repair cafes, swap events and maker spaces, where the community can access items that reduce waste.

WR1.2 Foster a reduction of textiles to landfill: Raising community awareness about the impacts of excessive clothing and textile consumption and disposal while promoting sustainable alternatives, supporting textile recycling drop-off days and promoting the implementation of the 'Seamless' product stewardship program for clothing.

WR1.3 Advocating for a sustainable weekly green bin collection service: Continuing to advocate for and investigate options for a sustainable weekly green bin collection service.

WR1.4 Electronic waste recycling education and promotion: Providing additional community education about electronic waste types and disposal options and promote drop-off days.

WR1.5 Raising awareness and improving recycling: Expand online campaigns and partner with SRWRA, Green Industries SA and our waste service providers to educate residents and businesses on correct recycling practices, reduce contamination, and promote waste reduction.

WR1.6 Enabling community action and collaboration: Provide resources and support for community groups and event organisers to facilitate community education and engagement - such as performance or visual art - to reduce waste at local events and foster sustainable waste management practices.

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Priority WR3

Support circular businesses and product stewardship



Objectives

- **WR3a** Partner with waste service providers to improve materials recovery and appropriate disposal.
- **WR3b** Advocate for improved recycling facilities and local processing of soft plastic products and materials.
- **WR3c** Support local businesses with waste reduction and circular economy practices.
- **WR3d** Advocate for Federal and State Government leadership on mandatory product stewardship schemes for handling problematic waste streams.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

WR3.1 Repurposing hard waste: Investigate options and partnerships for recycling and repurposing good quality products and materials from hard waste e.g. tip shop, collection service.

WR3.2 Supporting solutions to hazardous waste, batteries and electronic waste: New focus on advocating for all electronic waste and solar panels to be included in the mandatory product stewardship scheme for televisions and computers and further develop partnerships with the State Government and private providers to support improved access to recycling and disposal options for hazardous wastes and electronic waste.

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Priority WR4

Prevention of litter and pollution



Objectives

- **WR4a** Promote pollution prevention and cleanup in the community.
- **WR4b** Minimise and manage illegal dumping and public place littering.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

WR4.1 Trial waste separation in public places: Explore and implement trials for separating waste and recyclables in public spaces.

WR4.2 Support phasing out single-use plastics: Focus on advocacy to support State and Federal Government policies and bans to reduce unnecessary single-use plastic packaging from entering the environment as litter and microplastics and to remove non-recyclable waste items from circulation.

WR4.3 Support regulation to phase out Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS): Support the national regulatory approach to phase out PFAS from packaging - particularly compostable packaging - due to the potential contamination in council green waste streams and potential impacts on human health and the environment.

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