



Bin Lid Standardisation Pilot City of Yarra

Waste separation project provides key learning

Why?

Colour coding has for decades been an essential part of effective waste management. With support from the Metropolitan Local Government Waste and Resource Recovery Fund, City of Yarra achieved standardisation of the coloured bin lids required for better waste separation on two busy commercial strips. This made waste separation easier for traders involved, while improving the City of Yarra's ability to ensure the right number of bins were provided for each property.

City of Yarra in 2011 conducted a general waste audit of 60 commercial properties. Results indicated a resource loss (recyclable items in general waste) of 28 per cent and a contamination rate (non-recyclables in recycle bins) of 11 per cent – both higher than household rates.

The Bin Lid Standardisation Pilot Project was developed in response and it aimed to reduce waste and contamination rates, increase recycling, educate traders about waste separation, and provide new red-lidded waste bins to accompany yellow-lidded recycling bins.

The new bins included high visibility signage identifying the property to which it belonged, reducing the possibility of waste being mistakenly placed in them – or users taking the wrong bin back to properties after waste and recycling collection.

When and where?

The project began in October 2012 and initially targeted 183 properties on Richmond's Bridge Road and Swan Street after they were found to have high resource loss and poor recycling habits. After the project's completion in January 2014 – and taking into account 90 new businesses opening in the pilot period – the result was an almost two per cent fall in the overall waste stream and an almost three and a half per cent rise in recovered recyclables.

**Do the right thing
and keep it separated**

Here's a list of some of the things that regularly get thrown out, and what you should do with them.

What goes in the bin with the Red Lid?	What goes in the bin with the Yellow Lid?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food scraps Tea bags Cellophane Plastic food wrap Plastic bags Polystyrene Broken light globes (wrapped) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All glass bottles and jars Milk and juice cartons All plastic bottles and containers with codes 1-7 All steel and aerosol cans All aluminium cans and clean foil Paper, newspapers, magazines, and cardboard




If you're not sure what bin an item should go in, you can find out quickly by visiting Council's website at www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/Services/Waste-Services/

Bins for Business is supported by the Victorian Government Metropolitan Local Government Waste and Resource Recovery Fund managed by the Metropolitan Waste Management Group.



While these percentages may appear small, if the project were scaled up to include all municipal commercial shopping strips, reduction in waste levels and increase in recovered recyclables would be significant.

Although the colour-coding bin standardisation was successful, the pilot project's benefits in providing understanding of businesses' waste management needs were of equal importance.

How?

To kick-start the project, City of Yarra officers met face-to-face with managers, owners and other representatives from the businesses involved. They offered hard copy illustrated information about waste separation and alternatives for food waste collection, while also auditing and assessing businesses' collection sites. Decisions were then made about the type and number of bins required.

The meetings were mostly positive and traders showed enthusiasm to improve their waste management behaviour. Officers found a general lack of knowledge about what could be recycled, so traders were given as much information as possible. For example, a universal problem for traders' was trying to recycle the amount of cardboard they received, so City of Yarra provided information about cardboard pick ups from mobile trailers and other drop off points.

City of Yarra conducted three further audits in order to assess the new bins' effectiveness along with the education campaign associated with their introduction. As part of the process, staff from contractor All Environment Concepts individually collected and hand-sorted the bins' contents, weighing, labelling and sorting it for classification.

What was the outcome?

The almost two per cent fall in the overall waste stream and an almost three and a half per cent rise in recovered recyclables were clear positives. But audits also showed no change in contamination rates and an increase in resource loss.

Owner-operators were shown to take care to separate waste effectively. Other businesses, however, expressed concerns about casual staff's commitment to recycling, and spoke of commercial realities placing waste management at the bottom of to-do lists.

The audit process was limited somewhat by the fact that not enough businesses put both their red-lidded and yellow-lidded bins out on required nights, meaning data was not as far-reaching as hoped.

Despite these challenges, City of Yarra took from the pilot project a significant amount of learning from which future projects will benefit.

The pilot project's hands-on approach to stakeholder engagement resulted in a much-improved understanding of the issues traders face regarding waste management. Key amongst these were limited storage areas for bin placement and the excess cardboard that caused recycling headaches. City of Yarra also learnt that casual and part-time staff affected attitudes to waste separation. For example, it was often found one contaminated bin was put kerbside rather than two separated bins because of the effort involved. Finally, it was found that most of these small businesses generally put waste management on the bottom of their to-do lists, regardless of their newly colour-coded bins.

The allocation of the new bins, the net reduction in the waste stream and the increased recycling all point to the project's success. But learning that City of Yarra is acting upon provides a significant plus and could offer a template for other councils.

City of Yarra is now implementing an improved range of options to deal with excess cardboard, including purchasing extra mobile cardboard trailers, and will supply extra recycling bins to businesses where appropriate.

The project has shown the to-do list is long when it comes to efficient waste management in municipal commercial shopping strips, but face-to-face education, improved infrastructure and effective targeted communication appears an excellent approach to create change over time.