

# Recycling Collection for Hard-to-Recycle Items

Tuesday, 5 April 2022

The Committee - Pre-Council Discussion Forum

Strategic Alignment - Environmental Leadership

**Program Contact:**

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Public

**Approving Officer:**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting on 8 February 2022, Council requested a report for its consideration at the April 2022 meeting which investigates a recycling drop off point at city businesses and our community centres for hard to recycle items including blister packs, batteries, polystyrene and small electronics. The report was to consider other waste or categories of waste that may be recycled in such a way noting the City of Adelaide's recent waste audit. This report provides a summary of the investigation.

The Council also resolved that the City of Adelaide formally recognises and thanks Morag Horton for her community spirit and values in providing a blister pack recycling service. A letter from the Lord Mayor was sent to Morag Horton on 8 March 2022.

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The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 12 April 2022 for consideration

That Council

1. Notes the Administration will complete assessments of recycling station(s) for hard to recycle items such as batteries, eye glasses, bubble wrap, fluorescent tubes and light globes, mobile phones and tablets, plastic bread tags, printer cartridges, x-rays and small electronics with the aim of being operational by end of August 2022.
  2. Notes the Administration will write to pharmaceutical and recovery industries Green Industries SA, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association, and the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation, advocating for changes to blister packaging to improve the ability to recover these items.
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# IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

<p>City of Adelaide 2020-2024 Strategic Plan</p>	<p><b>Strategic Alignment – Environmental Leadership</b></p> <p>4.2 Implement improvements to city-wide waste and recycling services to support the transition to a circular economy.</p> <p>4.3 Educate and support our community to zero-waste, water sensitive, energy efficient and adaptive to climate change.</p> <p>4.4 Support our community to transition to a low carbon economy through education, incentives and appropriate infrastructure</p> <p><i>Resource Recovery (Organics, Recycling &amp; Waste) Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2028:</i></p> <p>3.1.4 Facilitate additional collection locations for hard-to-recycle items for residents to access (for example within City of Adelaide facilities and community centres).</p>
<p>Policy</p>	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
<p>Resource</p>	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
<p>Risk / Legal / Legislative</p>	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>The report presents the opportunity to offer additional recycling services for 'hard to recycle' items.</p>
<p>21/22 Budget Allocation</p>	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
<p>Proposed 22/23 Budget Allocation</p>	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
<p>Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset</p>	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
<p>21/22 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)</p>	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
<p>Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)</p>	<p>Not as a result of this report</p>
<p>Other Funding Sources</p>	<p>Funding could be sought from various organisations aligned to the delivery of a circular economy (eg Green Industries SA) for this initiative as a pilot for other metropolitan councils.</p>

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# DISCUSSION

## Background

1. The City of Adelaide's (CoA's) Resource Recovery (Organics, Recycling and Waste) Strategy and Action Plan 2020–2028 was adopted by Council on 10 November 2020.
2. CoA's Resource Recovery Vision is to be the first city in Australia to achieve 'zero avoidable waste to landfill' ('zero-waste').
3. Aligning with the State Government's target, this equates to: 'the diversion of all waste from landfill where it is technologically, environmentally and economically practicable to do so. 'Unavoidable' waste therefore refers to wastes for which no other current treatment is available including (but not limited to) asbestos, toxic and quarantine waste.'
4. Action Item 3.1.4 of the Resource Recovery (Organics, Recycling & Waste) Action Plan 2020-2028 is to: 'Facilitate additional collection locations for hard-to-recycle items for residents to access (for example within City of Adelaide facilities and community centres)'.
5. Hard-to-recycle items are those that may be recyclable but cannot be collected via kerbside recycling services. This may be because of health and safety risks during collection/processing (eg fire), or due to the physical nature of the item (size, composite material) making it difficult for standard recycling processes.
6. City of Adelaide currently offers services for some 'hard to recycle items':
  - 6.1. E-waste collection via our Hard Waste service for residents.
  - 6.2. Battery bins at our Libraries, Community Centres and Customer Service Centre, some of which are located in staff only areas to reduce the amount of non-battery waste items which have historically been deposited.
  - 6.3. Mobile phone recycling envelopes at our Customer Service Centre.
7. A range of non-government organisations, including businesses and charities, within Council's boundaries accept a range of 'hard to recycle items' [Link 1 view [here](#)].
8. The City of Adelaide (CoA) also provides a regular kerbside collection as follows:
  - 8.1. For residents:
    - 8.1.1. General waste collected weekly
    - 8.1.2. Recyclable items collected fortnightly
    - 8.1.3. Organic waste collected fortnightly
    - 8.1.4. Hard waste – at call
    - 8.1.5. Free supportive tools like kitchen caddies/compostable liner bags
  - 8.2. For businesses (that produce similar volumes to that as a residential premise)
    - 8.2.1. Waste bin – collected weekly 140-litre (red lidded bin)
    - 8.2.2. Recycling bin – collected fortnightly 240-litre (yellow lidded bin)
    - 8.2.3. Commercial cardboard - collected weekly.
9. The CoA 2019 waste bin audits showed that 'hard to recycle items' are being placed in CoA's kerbside bins. Recorded items include batteries, mobile phones, chargers and cables, remote controls, DVD players, light globes, textiles and footwear.
10. Collection (drop-off) locations for 'hard to recycle items' was supported by the community in the Resource Recovery Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2028 Your Say Community Engagement. Respondents wanted support with 'getting rid of waste that doesn't belong in either of the red, yellow and green bin' [sic] with participants highlighting batteries, coffee pods, paint, chemicals, light bulbs and e-waste. Multiple respondents expressed a desire for more convenient collection options for these items.

## Recycling stations

11. CoA is working to provide collection (drop off) points for more 'hard to recycle items' through a centralised 'recycling station' as a customer-centric approach to community diversion of materials from landfill. See Link 2 view [here](#) for examples of recycling stations offered by councils interstate.

12. There is merit in providing a consolidated collection location and collections currently offered by the CoA (eg batteries) could be incorporated into a new station for ease of use and logistics.
13. Items for possible inclusion in a 'recycling station' will be determined to reduce contamination in kerbside collection, achieve space requirements in CoA facilities and where there is local industry capability to provide a transparent and accountable process for recycling.

#### **Possible items for a recycling station**

14. Council requested investigation into four 'hard to recycle items' (blister packs, batteries, polystyrene and small electronics) and other recyclable items which may be suitable for city collection (drop off) points.
15. A summary of items considered suitable for inclusion in a 'recycling station' due to mature collection and processing facilities are included below. See Link 2 view [here](#) for examples of items collected by other councils in South Australia.
  - 15.1. Batteries – CoA can become a member of the B-cycle battery stewardship scheme supported by the Commonwealth and all State and Territory Governments, authorised by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, and funded by the Federal government and the battery industry.
  - 15.2. Eye glasses – can be reused by people in less economically developed countries when processed and presented by Lions Club. Some optometrists also provide a collection service. CoA is aware of an opportunity for these items to be collected and posted to Queensland.
  - 15.3. Bubble wrap – can be recycled through soft plastic recycling which is already in place in several CoA facilities.
  - 15.4. Fluorescent tubes and light globes – CoA recycles these items at London Road Depot and Adelaide Central Market. Boxes for transportation are provided by Ecocycle with items processed in Gillman, South Australia. The glass, aluminium, mercury and other materials are fully recyclable.
  - 15.5. Mobile phones and tablets - Zoos SA provide a recycling program through PhoneCycle, who manage the collection and processing of the mobile phones and devices.
  - 15.6. Plastic bread tags - a South Australian based company called Transmutation recycles bread tags into items such as bowls and serving boards with a proportion of sales going to the Aussie Bread Tags for Wheelchairs charity. The items would need to be posted but considering the lightweight nature the cost is not considered a barrier to implementation.
  - 15.7. Printer cartridges - Close the Loop has provided the collection, recycling and resource recovery operations for the Cartridges 4 Planet Ark program since its conception in 2003. This service is in place in most CoA facility printer rooms.
  - 15.8. Small electronics - items such as hair dryers and straighteners, kettles, toasters, shavers, coffee grinders and milk frothers, gaming devices and small heaters do not currently have a collection point in the city. MakerSpace did provide an Electronic Recycling Australia cage open to the public and it is hoped this will be available again in the near future. Collection of these items from a quantity and size of materials perspective is considered manageable.
  - 15.9. X-rays - films are processed in a refinery to extract the silver which is then converted into a purer silver form. There are two South Australia based companies that collect X-rays for recycling and safely and confidentially destroy any accompanying records.

#### **Other 'hard to recycle items'**

16. Other 'hard to recycle items' were investigated and deemed unsuitable for inclusion in a 'recycling station' at this time. Investigation for suitability and additional items to recover will continue in line with the Resource Recovery (Organics, Recycling and Waste) Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2028:
  - 16.1. Blister packs - 100% aluminium blister packs can be placed in yellow kerbside recycling bins if balled together with other aluminium items. It is much more difficult to recycle composite material items such as plastic and aluminium blister packs, further investigation is required to understand recycling industry processes and outcomes.
  - 16.2. Polystyrene - Clean, white and dry packaging polystyrene with no sticker or tape can be de-expanded, via heat or compression, for export and recycling into items such as photo frames, cornicing and coat hangers. The Adelaide Central Market reuses polystyrene boxes for their Market Online deliveries. The site currently has a compression machine in operation for non-reusable polystyrene. Due to the potential quantities and size of polystyrene it is not suitable for inclusion in the 'recycling station' at this time. Further investigation into pilot programs for polystyrene will continue.
  - 16.3. CDs and DVDs - No viable recycling option is known to be available in Australia at this time.

- 16.4. Shoes and textiles - New product stewardship schemes are being developed for both shoes and textiles. Investigations have commenced as to how CoA could partner with organisations such as TreadLightly, Red Cross and Vinnies, through potential pilot programs to support residents in multi-unit dwellings recover high-volume, hard-to-recycle items.

#### **Potential locations for a 'recycling station'**

17. Subject to further investigation, the Customer Service Centre and City Library may provide suitable locations for a future 'recycling station' for hard to recycle items, for the following reasons:
  - 17.1. Staff on site throughout business hours which may facilitate correct use of the 'recycling stations'
  - 17.2. Weekend access for residents is available at City Library
  - 17.3. Based on initial review sufficient space exists for a 'recycling station'
  - 17.4. System support already exists in terms of back-of-house recycling bins and some collections (ie for soft plastics and printer cartridges).

#### **Advocacy**

18. The CoA also plays an advocacy role to support improved recovery of 'hard to recycle items' including submissions to:
  - 18.1. Improving South Australia's Container Deposit Scheme
  - 18.2. Proposed Single-use Plastic Products Bans in South Australia
  - 18.3. Green Industries SA's Waste Strategy and Food Waste Strategy consultation
  - 18.4. Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's Waste and Recycling Industries 2020
  - 18.5. Parliament of SA Inquiry into the Recycling Industry.
19. Further advocacy regarding stewardship schemes, extended producer responsibility programs, take-back programs etc will continue aligned with the delivery of the Resource Recovery (Organics, Recycling & Waste) Action Plan 2020-2028:
  - 19.1. '5.1.1 Advocate for the development and improvement of policies and guidelines that support the consumer enact the circular economy, product stewardship, and waste avoidance/reduction/diversion'.
  - 19.2. '5.1.2 Advocate for changes to legislation that prioritises material recovery services over waste services.'
  - 19.3. '5.3.2 Advocate for improvements in legislation surrounding accountability in material use/design, lifecycle which supports a circular economy'.
20. The CoA is working to educate the community about the circular economy through social media posts about community collection locations and tips on how the community can act higher in the waste hierarchy.
21. The CoA can write to pharmaceutical and recovery industries advocating to improve the ability to recover blister pack recycling. This can include Green Industries SA, Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association, and the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation.
22. Work is currently underway on the CoA's website to expand educational information on recovery and diversion of materials, including hard-to-recycle collection locations. This is anticipated to be completed in the financial year (2021/2022).

#### **Next steps**

23. The opportunity to establish a 'recycling station' in a CoA facility will continue to be investigated in accordance with Council's endorsed waste strategy.
24. Next steps include:
  - 24.1. Reviewing partnership and external funding opportunities.
  - 24.2. Identifying an appropriate location(s) for a 'recycling station'.
  - 24.3. Completing due diligence on industry capability to recycle 'hard to recycle' items, then organise collection or transportation for each with the best available options in accordance with procurement requirements.
  - 24.4. Commissioning an external agency to design and construct a 'recycling station' for installation.

- 24.5. Planning and implementing a communication and education plan including providing details of the items that can be collected (dropped off) at the 'recycling station', how each item will be recycled and where.
  - 24.6. It is envisaged that required investigations will be completed by May 2022 and we aim to have the recycling station(s) operational by end of August 2022.
  - 24.7. Finalising investigations into a trial polystyrene collection and pilot program for bulk bin collection of textiles, clothing, shoes, fashion accessories and homewares in 2022/2023.
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## DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

**Link 1** - Drop-off locations for 'hard-to-recycle' items within the City of Adelaide

**Link 2** - Review of additional recycling services offered by

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## ATTACHMENTS

Nil