

Kerbside Contamination Management Policy

Waste management

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1. Background

Banyule City Council (Council) currently provides three kerbside waste services: rubbish, recycling and food organics garden organics (FOGO). By 2027, a fourth kerbside service (and bin) for recyclable glass will be introduced.

Each waste stream caters for different types of waste items, and items that are not permitted within the bin are considered contaminants. These items not accepted by processors for a range of reason such as:

- It cannot be processed at the facility i.e. general waste sent to a recycling processor or e-waste sent to a FOGO processor
- Hazardous to health e.g., syringes – risk of needle stick injuries to waste workers sorting materials
- Hazardous to collect e.g., lithium batteries or hot embers can cause a fire in the collection truck or processors facility
- Is not domestic household waste e.g. building or construction products, or paint
- Is illegal to place in a bin (e.g. asbestos, batteries).

Contamination, even by a small number of householders can have a major impact on the quality and acceptability of a recycled product. Contamination items must be manually removed by the processors employees and sent to landfill resulting adverse environmental impact and cost penalties to Council and by extension to residents through the kerbside waste rate. Between 2019 and 2022 the cost of FOGO contamination in Banyule was approximately \$1.5 million. This avoidable \$1.5 million expense is estimated to have been caused by less than 3% of Banyule households.

While Council currently provides waste education to the community regarding contamination and waste management, Council does not currently have a Kerbside Contamination Management Policy. This has limited the options available to Council officers to address persistent contamination.

It is thought that the majority of households that are contaminating bins are doing so unintentionally, therefore this policy aims to achieve behaviour change through awareness, education, support and engagement through a six – step process.

2. Policy Context

This Policy links with the following Banyule City Council, Victorian State Government and Australian Government waste policies and strategies as listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1 List of Related Policies, Plans and Strategies

Policy or Strategy	Owner	Website
Zero Waste Management Plan 2019-2023	Banyule City Council	https://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/About-us/Policies-plans-strategies/Council-plans-and-strategies/Zero-waste-plan
Inclusive Banyule 2022 - 2026	Banyule City Council	https://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/About-us/Policies-plans-strategies/Council-plans-and-strategies/Inclusive-Banyule

Policy or Strategy	Owner	Website
Victoria's Plan for a circular economy	Victorian Department Energy Environment Climate Action (DEECA)	https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-plan-circular-economy
National Waste Policy	Australian Government Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water	https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/protction/waste/how-we-manage-waste/national-waste-policy
National Waste Action Plan	Australian Government Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water	https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/protction/waste/publications/national-waste-policy-action-plan

3. Objective of Policy

The Policy seeks to reduce contamination in all kerbside bins (currently rubbish, recycling, and FOGO) through a 6-step process of awareness, education, and support for residents. By including multiple touch points in the form of steps, it allows many opportunities for residents and officers to engage with each other, and for officers to assist residents to improve how they use the waste service.

However, where residents continue contaminating kerbside bins and despite being provided with education and support to change behaviour, that property will be moved to a Contaminated Waste Service (i.e. the waste from all bins will be disposed off via landfill) and will incur an additional fee as the cost of landfill is higher than recycling or composting.

The Policy aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Behaviour change through awareness, education, support and engagement strategies e.g. ensure residents have a clear understanding of what can and cannot be placed in each of Councils kerbside bins
2. Support households to understand the importance of separating their waste correctly and the consequences of contamination.
3. Ensure the majority of residents are not incurring additional costs through contamination caused by a small proportion of households
4. Reduce safety risk to for workers in the waste industry that collect / process / sort / handle collected materials.

4. The 6 Step Contamination Management Process

The Banyule community is made up of diverse cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, sexualities, ages and genders. Council is committed to access, equity, participation and rights for everyone; principles which empower, foster harmony and increase the wellbeing of an inclusive community.

In recognition of the diverse needs of the community, and the likelihood that the majority of people do not contaminate intentionally this policy aims to address contamination through awareness, education, support and engagement. Educational support is intended to be on a 1:1 basis and can range from as simple as answering questions in a phone call, the provision of brochures in many languages, to a site visit.

As the intent of this process is to change behaviour, should contamination cease for a continuous period of 6 months, the service user is considered to have demonstrated sufficient behaviour change and any future contamination will then begin at Step 1.

Following Step 1, progression through each step requires additional contamination to have occurred within six months since the prior step.

Table 2 | 6 Step Kerbside Contamination Process Overview

Action	Purpose
Step 1 - Contamination label placed on bin	Notifying (awareness) of contamination Assist with education if contacted by household
Step 2 - 1st Notification Letter	Opportunity for 1:1 engagement Awareness, education and support strategies may include phone calls, site visit, education materials
Step 3 - 2nd Notification Letter	Opportunity for 1:1 engagement Awareness, education and support strategies may include phone calls, site visit, education materials
Step 4 - Final Notification Letter	Opportunity for 1:1 engagement Awareness, education and support strategies may include phone calls, site visit, education materials
Step 5 - Notification of intention to change waste service	Notify Council's intention to change their service to a Contaminated Waste Service. Offer and provide support to encourage behaviour change
Step 6 - Transfer to Contaminated Waste Service	Move to a contaminated waste service Provide ongoing support to assist with behaviour change

Should a property reach Step 6 the contents of **all** bins will be sent to landfill to prevent contamination of waste streams and will be required to pay the Contaminated Waste Charge (true cost of service) as per Council's Fees and Charges for that financial year.

The property will then have to demonstrate the capacity to sort their waste correctly for a period of six months in order to revert to Council's standard kerbside service.

The contamination management process does not include a step that entails loss of service from a residential premises as this can result in community health issues, conflict between neighbours (waste being placed in their bins) or an increase in dumped rubbish. Ensuring all households have access to a waste service is important for overall community health and resilience.

5. Responsibilities of Owners and Occupiers

The Kerbside Contamination Management Policy applies to all properties in Banyule receiving council kerbside collections (residential / commercial / community / special needs). Where the occupier is also the owner of a property they are behaviourally and financially responsible for their household waste. Where the owner and the occupier differ, the following principles apply:

- The ability to change waste behaviour lies with the property occupier, therefore, in situations of contamination Council engages with the occupier first.
- In instances where the occupants refuse to change their behaviour through the multistep process the property owner (i.e. ratepayer) is notified as they are ultimately financially responsible for the property waste service, and would therefore incur the cost of a contamination waste service via the rates notice.

- If the property is not occupied e.g., vacant, short-stay accommodation etc the responsibility rests solely with the property owner.
- The responsibility to manage contamination is applicable even if the owner of the property is not a natural person (e.g., a trust, or agency)

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.