



MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

2026 - 2030

Waste to Resources Action Plan



Acknowledgement of Country

Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands of the Mount Barker District. We respect the First Nations people and their spiritual relationship with their country and their cultural and heritage beliefs.



Table of Contents

OUR 2044 VISION	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	7
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	9
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK	10
CURRENT SNAPSHOT	12
OBJECTIVE	14
ACTIONS	15
IMPLEMENTATION	19
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING	20
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	21

Revision	Issue Date	Distribution	Notes
1	01/06/26	Elected Members	Draft for endorsement
2	27/07/26	Public	Waste data included in the endorsed Strategy and Waste to Resources Plan was incorrect and has been updated in this verison. The 20% waste reduction target will be measured against the waste data in this document.

Prepared by Climate Cavalry

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Our 2044 vision To be the most liveable region in South Australia.

Which means...

“A liveable place is somewhere that is: safe, attractive, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable; with affordable and diverse types of housing, public open space, local shops, health and community services, leisure and cultural opportunities; with opportunities for employment and education all accessible by convenient public transport, walking and cycling.”

— Australian Urban Observatory, 2024

Our five pillars to achieve this are...



Executive Summary

Waste generation and resource use present a growing challenge for the Mount Barker District, driven by rapid population growth, ongoing urban development and changing consumption patterns. As the district grows, Council's role in service design, procurement, education and partnerships becomes increasingly important to recover more value from materials, reduce waste to landfill and minimise emissions associated with waste generation and disposal. A stronger circular economy approach can also reduce costs over time, support local enterprise and contribute to a more liveable district.

The Waste to Resources Action Plan 2026–2030 is Council's four-year implementation plan to deliver on the Environment and Sustainability Strategy objective to use resources carefully and efficiently, minimise waste and support the growth of the circular economy.

Key priorities

- Recover more, waste less
- Promote waste minimisation
- Reduce contamination
- Foster the circular economy
- Strengthen development and construction waste management

This Waste to Resources Action Plan is one of five interlinked action plans nested under Council's Environment and Sustainability Strategy. Many actions in this Plan are closely connected to priorities in the other action plans, recognising that waste reduction, emissions reduction, greening, water management and biodiversity outcomes are interdependent.

The Plan has been developed building on established evidence, previous Council strategies, service performance data and the Adelaide Hills Region Waste Management Authority. Detailed background information is referenced separately, allowing this Action Plan to remain focused on actions and delivery.

The actions in this Plan contribute to Council's 2035 waste and resource recovery targets, including:

- reducing waste to landfill by 20% per capita by 2035
- maintaining community satisfaction with waste services above industry average
- improving recycling quality and reducing contamination over time

A summary of the priority actions is provided overpage. Over the next four years, this Plan will guide practical, coordinated action to improve waste services, reduce emissions from waste, and transition Mount Barker towards a more circular and resource-efficient future.



Waste to Resources Action Plan

Summary of Actions and Strategic Alignment

REF	ACTION	CONTRIBUTE TO ESS PRIORITIES				
		RECOVER MORE, WASTE LESS	PROMOTE WASTE MINIMISATION	REDUCE CONTAMINATION	FOSTER CIRCULAR ECONOMY	STRENGTHEN CONSTRUCTION WASTE MANAGEMENT
Governance, policy and processes						
R1	Strengthen circular approach to Council purchasing	X	X		X	
R2	Improve Council Events and Grants Policy	X	X	X	X	
Track, plan and manage						
R3	Improve waste data and performance tracking	X	X	X		
R4	Future kerbside waste management service review	X		X	X	
R5	Monitor hard waste service	X		X		
R6	Review Windmill Hill Transfer Station controls	X		X		X
Educate, inspire and involve						
R7	Deliver coordinated education	X	X	X	X	X
Protect and maintain						
R8	Strengthen illegal dumping deterrence	X				X
R9	Improve internal waste reduction measures	X				
Establish, expand or restore						
R10	Trial weekly FOGO	X		X	X	
R11	Business case for construction resource recovery shop	X			X	X
Partnerships and advocacy						
C12	Continue to work with AHRWMA	X	X	X	X	X
C13	Advocate for shared economy initiatives		X		X	

Introduction

The Waste to Resources Action Plan 2026–2030 sets out Council’s priority actions to reduce waste, improve resource recovery and support the transition to a more circular economy over the next four years.

It focuses on practical measures to reduce waste to landfill, improve the quality of recycling and organics streams, and strengthen community and industry participation, in line with Council’s Environment and Sustainability Strategy and State waste policy settings. The Plan identifies where Council will lead by example through its own operations and purchasing and where it will seek to influence community outcomes through service design, regulation and education.

The Plan includes the following key areas of waste and resource recovery action, which may be new or unfamiliar to some readers:

Circular economy - valuing waste as a resource

A circular economy approach seeks to reduce waste by keeping materials in use for as long as possible, ideally recurring in a regenerative cycle. Composting and borrowing books through libraries are two simple examples. Applying circular economy principles to Council purchasing and project planning to better consider and design waste streams as resources can reduce waste to landfill.

Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) – diverting the heaviest waste stream

Food waste is typically the largest component of landfill waste by weight. Improving the capture and processing of food and garden organics presents one of the biggest circular economy opportunities to reduce landfill disposal and costs, lower greenhouse gas emissions and increase resource capture through creation of compost.



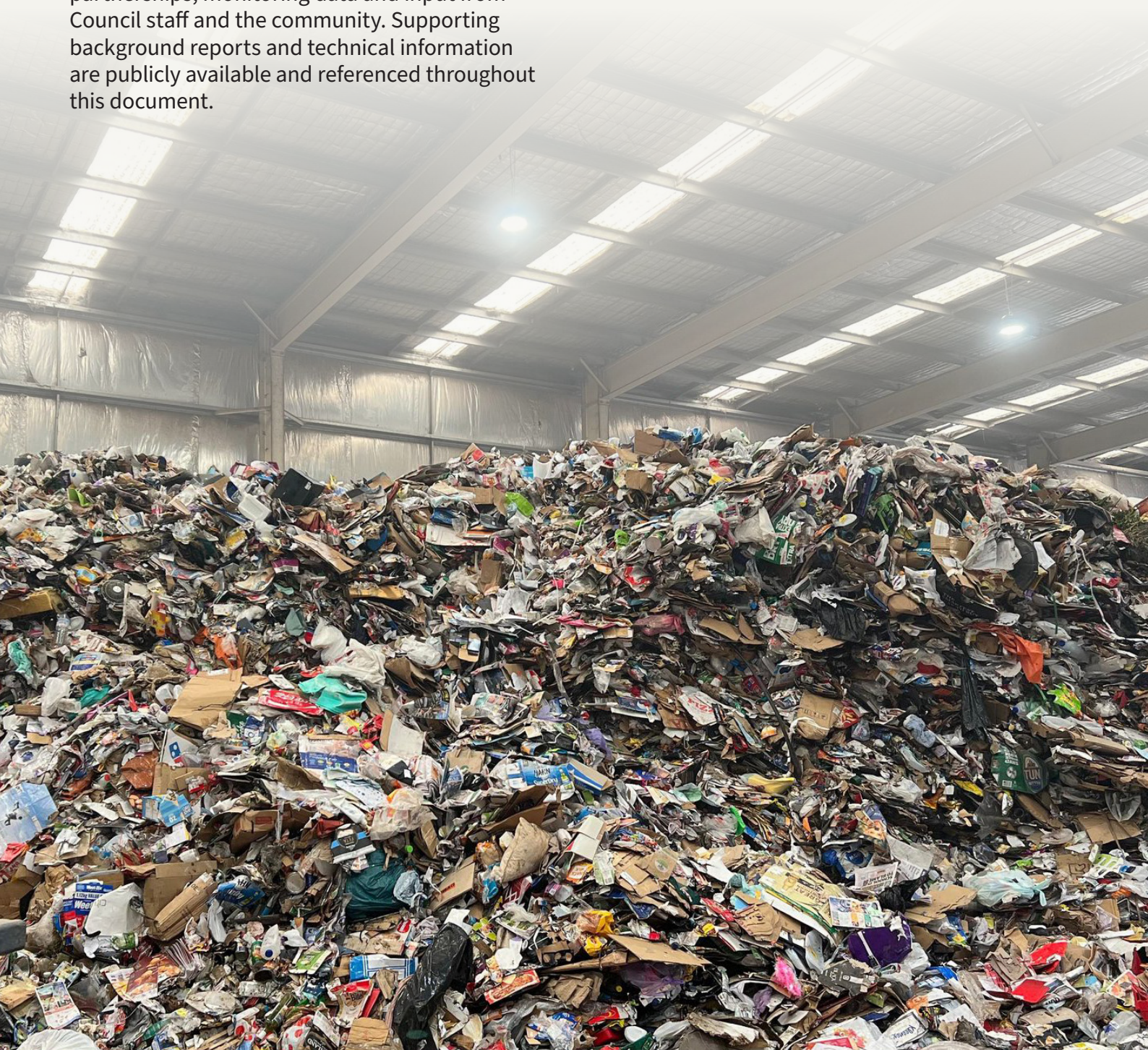
Waste and emissions – reducing climate impacts

Waste sent to landfill generates greenhouse gas emissions, particularly methane from decomposing organic material. Reducing waste to landfill and improving resource recovery contributes directly to climate change emissions reduction outcomes. Waste avoidance and smarter purchasing also help reduce emissions embedded in products and materials before they even enter the waste stream.

This Waste to Resources Action Plan 2026–2030 replaces Council’s Waste to Resources Management Plan adopted in 2018 and builds on progress to date, updated evidence and current priorities. It has been developed drawing on previous Council strategies, regional waste partnerships, monitoring data and input from Council staff and the community. Supporting background reports and technical information are publicly available and referenced throughout this document.

Council and community roles are central to this Plan. Council delivers and manages waste services, regulates aspects of waste and development, and influences outcomes through policy, procurement and education. At the same time, household behaviour, packaging choices, market settings and industry practices play a major role in waste generation and recovery, reinforcing the need for shared responsibility, partnerships and advocacy.

The Waste to Resources Action Plan covers the period 2026–2030. Actions will be implemented, monitored and reviewed through Council’s existing planning, reporting and governance processes, with progress informing future updates to Council strategies and action plans.



Guiding Principles

Our District's environment supports a liveable, resilient, thriving and creative community. That's why we value it so highly. These endorsed principles from the Environment and Sustainability Strategy establish the foundation for Council's approach, actions and decision-making.

A better future together

Council will work proactively with First Nations, community groups, developers, landholders, the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board (HFLB) and other partners – and embed action across Council – to amplify shared efforts and outcomes.

Celebrate, empower and inspire

We seek to inspire a love of nature and sustainable living by telling stories, celebrating our assets and achievements, connecting people and nature, sharing knowledge, and empowering people to act.

Protect and prioritise nature

We will protect and connect wildlife habitats and grow protected areas, prioritising planting indigenous species where practical, because healthy ecosystems are vital to a thriving community.

Take urgent climate action

Council will take immediate and ambitious action on the climate emergency, working with the community to reduce our impact and adapt to increased storms, heat, bushfires, flood and drought.

Be bold yet practical

Council will take bold action on immediate priorities, learning and improving along the way. Our efforts will be practical, evidence-based and achievable, with clear pathways to success. Council will lead by example, pursue best practice, and advocate for positive change.

Strategic Framework

Council's strategic framework

The Waste to Resources Action Plan 2026–2030 is a four-year action plan nested under Council's Environment and Sustainability Strategy and supports delivery of Council's Community Plan vision and priorities.

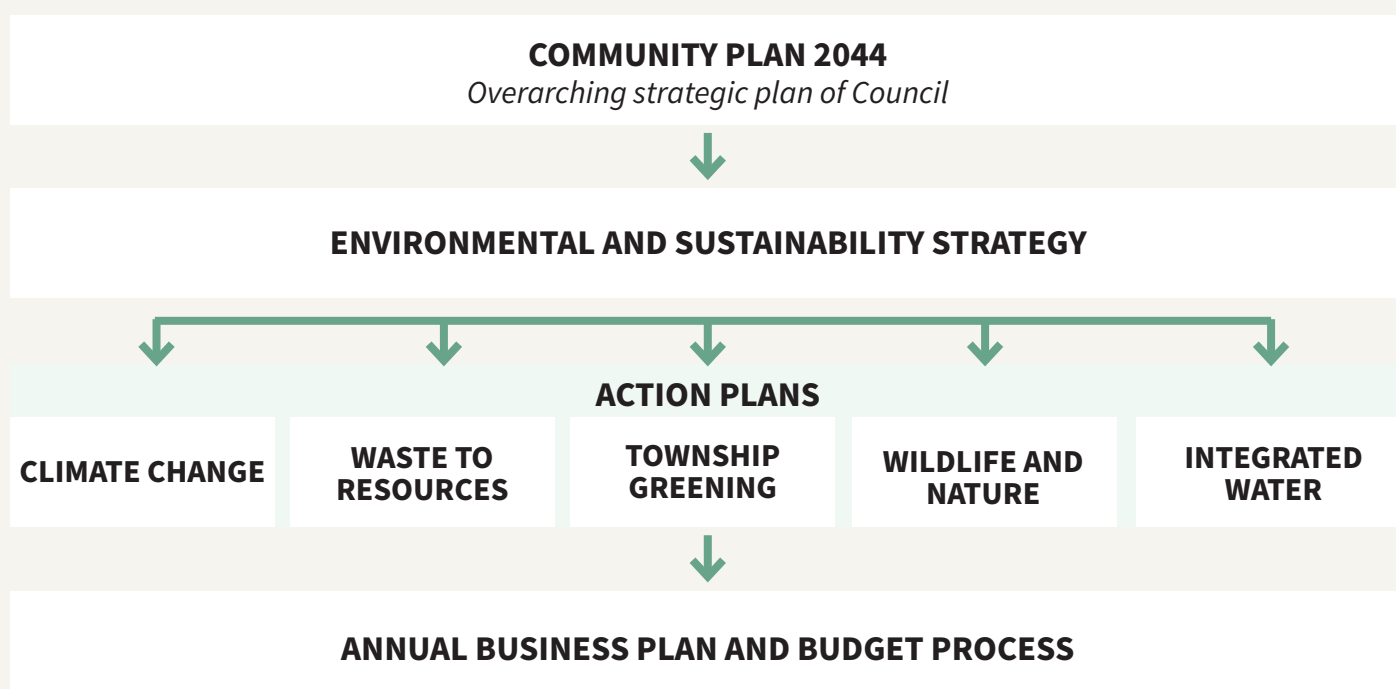
This Action Plan forms part of a suite of five interlinked four-year action plans under the Environment and Sustainability Strategy, alongside:

- Climate Change
- Township Greening
- Nature and Wildlife
- Integrated Water Management

Together, these action plans provide an integrated approach to improving environmental outcomes, reducing risk and enhancing liveability. Many actions in this Plan align with and reinforce actions in the other plans, recognising that climate resilience, emissions reduction, greening, water management and biodiversity outcomes are interdependent.

This Plan also connects with and supports implementation of other Council strategies and plans, including (but not limited to):

- Strategic Asset Management Plan
- Procurement Framework
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Emergency Management Plan
- Public Health and Wellbeing planning
- Advocacy Plan





Waste to Resources Action Plan Summary of Actions and Strategic Alignment

The Waste to Resources Action Plan aligns with South Australian and Australian Government waste and circular economy policy and legislative frameworks, including landfill diversion targets, product stewardship initiatives and increasing expectations around resource efficiency and waste avoidance. This alignment helps ensure Council's actions are consistent with broader government direction, responsive to emerging regulatory requirements and well positioned to access funding opportunities and partnership programs over time.

Waste policy settings increasingly emphasise waste avoidance, improved resource recovery and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste generation, transport and disposal.

Regional collaboration

Council delivers kerbside waste services and progresses waste reduction initiatives through the Adelaide Hills Region Waste Management Authority (AHRWMA), including access to shared infrastructure, education programs and regional planning. Actions in this Plan complement regional waste priorities and initiatives progressed through AHRWMA, while remaining focused on Council's local service responsibilities, community context and growth pressures.

Further reading

For more detail, please refer to the following resources available at www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au

- *Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2025*
Sets Council's long-term vision, objectives, guiding principles and priority focus areas for environment and sustainability, and provides the strategic framework.
- *State of the Environment Report 2024*
A detailed evidence base including the strategic and policy context, community values, benefits, emerging trends, status and review of progress since 2018 across key environmental themes.
- *AHRWMA Strategic Plan 2024-34*
Sustainable waste management through shared services

Current Snapshot

Waste generation and resource recovery present a growing challenge for the Mount Barker District, driven by rapid population growth, ongoing urban development and changing consumption patterns. While Council continues to deliver reliable kerbside waste services during a period of sustained growth, total waste volumes and per-capita waste to landfill have increased over time.

Between 2018/19 and 2024/25, total kerbside waste collected increased steadily in line with population growth (see figure 2). Waste generated per person has remained relatively stable in recent years but has not declined at the rate required to meet previous per-capita landfill reduction targets. Diversion rates have improved modestly, however overall waste generation has continued to rise faster than diversion efforts.

YEARLY DATA OF KERBSIDE WASTE TO LANDFILL							
YEAR	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total Tonnes to Landfill	6852.38	7195.62	7675.57	7853.12	7998.90	8338.86	8567.91
Landfill Waste (KG/person/year)	189.83	192.16	197.44	194.93	192.10	194.36	193.67

Council currently provides a three-bin kerbside service across townships, with green organics and recycling collected fortnightly, and landfill waste collected weekly. Rural properties receive landfill waste and yellow recycling services only. Food waste remains a significant component of landfill waste by weight, indicating substantial opportunity for improved diversion through future service changes.

Community satisfaction with waste services remains generally positive, with 77% of respondents rating services as okay, good or excellent. However, the overall performance index score remains slightly below the industry average, highlighting both the pressure placed on services by growth and the opportunity for improvement.

Waste management also has direct implications for Council’s own operations and emissions. Waste generated through Council facilities, construction and maintenance activities and events contributes to landfill volumes and greenhouse gas emissions. Choices made at the design, purchasing and delivery stages play a critical role in waste avoidance and resource recovery outcomes.

While Council can shape service design, education, incentives, procurement practices and regulatory settings, household consumption patterns, packaging design and broader market conditions also play a major role. This reinforces the need for a coordinated approach that combines service improvements, waste avoidance, circular economy principles, emissions reduction, partnerships and advocacy.

Waste management operates within an increasingly complex policy and regulatory environment, including state waste strategies, landfill levies and growing expectations around circular economy leadership and emissions reduction. Together, these pressures highlight the importance of a refreshed Waste to Resources Action Plan that moves beyond service provision alone and focuses on reducing waste generation at source, improving diversion, lowering emissions and making better use of resources across both Council operations and the wider community.

This Action Plan recognises that maintaining current approaches will not be sufficient to reverse these trends and that more targeted, system-wide change is required.

The Waste to Resources Action Plan therefore focuses on the next phase: strengthening data and decision-making, improving service design (including FOGO trial), supporting behaviour change, and accelerating the shift toward a more circular, resource-efficient system.

Since 2018, Council has focused on maintaining reliable waste services during a period of rapid growth, while laying the groundwork for future improvements in diversion and resource recovery. Key areas of progress include:

- **Service continuity during rapid growth**
Council has successfully scaled kerbside waste, recycling and organics services to meet increasing demand, ensuring consistent service delivery as population and housing numbers have grown.
- **Incremental improvements in diversion**
Recycling and green organics tonnages have increased over time, contributing to a gradual improvement in overall diversion rates, even as total waste generation has increased.
- **Regional collaboration**
Ongoing partnership with the Adelaide Hills Region Waste Management Authority has supported shared infrastructure, education initiatives and access to regional expertise. Involvement in initiatives such as the Hills and Fleurieu Local Food Futures project helps progress a more regenerative, lower waste economy.
- **Targeted trials and learning**
Council has undertaken targeted trials and pilots, including food and organics initiatives in activity centres and public spaces, building an evidence base for future service changes. A user pays at-call hard waste collection service has commenced and is available to residential properties.



Objective

Use resources carefully and efficiently, minimise waste and support the growth of the circular economy.

Why this matters

Waste impacts the environment, contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, and places pressure on natural resources. By treating waste as a resource, we can reduce emissions, conserve materials, create economic opportunities and support a more regenerative and circular economy.

Council oversees a wide range of services, including kerbside collection for general waste, recycling, and organics. It also manages operational waste, hard waste, and tricky items like e-waste while addressing construction and demolition waste generated by rapid development. As the population grows, efficient waste management is crucial. Council is committed to high-quality services, sustainable resource use, and community awareness about reducing waste and recycling right.

Related priorities and integration

Waste to resources priorities are closely linked to emissions reduction, flood hazard management and sustainable procurement, and support broader outcomes across Council's work, including planning, community education and behaviour change, and sustainable development.

Key priorities

Recover more, waste less

Quality service provision that encourages less to landfill and more resource recovery including food organics and garden organics (FOGO) through education and data collection.

Promote waste minimisation

Support waste reduction by encouraging responsible consumption, advocating for extended producer responsibility, and fostering a culture of sustainability through education and engagement.

Reduce contamination

Improve recycling quality through education, feedback programs, increased compliance efforts and regular bin audits to ensure higher quality resource recovery.

Foster the circular economy

Advance local circular economy initiatives and better integrate sustainability into Council purchasing decisions to maximise environmental and economic benefits for the community.

Strengthen development and construction waste management

Encourage better waste management practices within the building industry, increase compliance effort with waste disposal requirements.

Actions

This section sets out the actions Council will deliver between 2026 and 2030.

Actions are organised into functional areas that reflect how Council operates, from strategy and decision-making, through to service delivery, partnerships and on-ground outcomes. Using a consistent functional structure across all action plans helps embed priorities into core business and supports coordinated implementation, monitoring and reporting. It also helps ensure responsibility, timing and budget allocations are aligned to the appropriate stage of work.

The actions listed are not intended to be exhaustive. They represent a prioritised set of actions where focused effort over the next four years will have the greatest impact in progressing Council's objectives and 'moving the needle' on outcomes, alongside the continued delivery of core services and existing programs.

Each action may contribute to multiple strategic priorities and may also support outcomes across other action plans, reflecting the interconnected nature of Council's work.

Governance, policy and processes

Establishing or updating the policies, frameworks and internal processes that guide Council decision-making and enable improved implementation.

Track, plan and manage

Building the evidence base, tools and systems needed to plan effectively, manage performance and support informed decisions over time.

Educate, inspire and involve

Supporting learning, engagement and participation to build capability, influence behaviour and enable action by Council and the community.

Protect and maintain

Managing risks, maintaining existing assets and services, and carrying out any relevant regulation roles.

Establish, expand or restore

Delivering new projects and on-ground actions that create or improve assets, services, systems or environments.

Partnerships and advocacy

Working with partners, stakeholders and other levels of government to align effort, leverage resources and influence outcomes beyond Council's direct control.

Waste to Resources Actions Table

ACTION	KPI	INDICATIVE RESOURCING*	TIMING				LEAD	PLAN LINKS			
			26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30		C	G	N	W
Governance, Policy and Processes											
R1. Strengthen circular approach to Council purchasing Update the Procurement Policy and project planning processes in Council’s purchasing across all areas to achieve an improved circular economy approach.	Policy updated	Existing staff time	X	X			Financial Services	X	X	X	X
R2. Improve Council Events and Grants Policy Improve Council Events Policy and Community Grant policy/process to consider biodiversity outcomes, reduce waste, improve recycling and reuse, and encourage low-emissions and climate-positive initiatives (e.g. Solar Slice–style support for events).	Policies reviewed	Staff time			X	X	Economy and Activation	X			
Track, Plan and Manage											
R3. Improve waste data and performance tracking Strengthen waste data collection, analysis and reporting to track customer satisfaction, waste diversion, contamination and illegal dumping trends.	Annual dashboard published	Existing staff time	X	X	X	X	Operations	X			
R4. Future Kerbside Waste Management Service Review Review future kerbside waste management service needs based on population growth and the required infrastructure and resources required to maintain service levels and considering FOGO post-trial.	Service review completed/ presented	Existing staff time / expert input \$11-\$50K			X	X	Operations				
R5. Monitor Waste Services Monitor hard waste services and free green waste drop off days to better understand customer experience, uptake and awareness, and identify opportunities for improvement over time.	Options report	Existing staff time / expert input \$5-\$10K			X	X	Operations				
R6. Review Windmill Hill Transfer Station controls Review plan improvements and upgrades to operational, environmental and waste stream management at Windmill Hill Transfer Station.	Updated plan	Existing staff time/ \$50-\$100K			X	X	Operations				

ACTION	KPI	INDICATIVE RESOURCING*	TIMING				LEAD	PLAN LINKS			
			26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30		C	G	N	W
Educate, Inspire and Involve											
R7. Coordinated Education Deliver an annual program on waste avoidance, recycling right, and organics management, using AHRWMA, GISA and KESAB materials and support. Including sharing stories about local circular economy initiatives to build community and business confidence and participation.	At least 6 activities or resources delivered per year	Existing operational	X	X	X	X	AHRWMA	X			
Protect and Maintain											
R8. Strengthen Illegal Dumping Deterrence Utilise technology and upskill Council Rangers to reduce illegal dumping through improved surveillance, deterrence, investigation and enforcement.	4 rangers trained / # enforcement actions	Project \$11-\$50K for equipment and training	X	X			Health and Public Safety	X	X	X	X
R9. Improve Internal Waste Reduction Measures Ensure all Council facilities have up-to-date Waste Management Plans and implement internal waste reduction measures.	Plans completed / updated	Existing staff time	X	X	X	X	Property	X			
Establish, Expand or Restore											
R10. Trial Weekly FOGO Trial weekly Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) collection and monitor outcomes.	Trial delivered and outcomes report presented	Existing staff time + Grant >\$100K	X	X			Operations	X			
R11. Business Case for Construction Resource Recovery Shop Trial Investigate a future construction resource recovery shop, enabling builders to divert surplus materials for reuse and incentivising participation through cost offsets to improve development waste (similar to UK case study tip shop).	Investigation and Business Case Developed	New project \$5-\$10K			X	X	Operations	X			

ACTION	KPI	INDICATIVE RESOURCING*	TIMING				LEAD	PLAN LINKS			
			26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30		C	G	N	W
Partnerships and Advocacy											
R12. Continue to work with AHRWMA Identify and deliver shared resource recovery projects, grant applications, regional infrastructure opportunities and advocacy work (including push for better waste and recycling requirements for new residential and commercial developments, particularly truck service access).	Joint projects progressed	Part of existing contract	X	X	X	X	Operations	X			
R13. Advocate for Shared Economy Initiatives Promote and enable where practical community led initiatives such as sharing toolboxes, repair café or other shared economy initiatives	At least 1 shared economy initiative supported or enabled every 2 years	Existing staff time	X	X				X			

*Resourcing is indicative only and subject to annual budget processes. Existing staff time = action can be delivered within existing roles and workloads | Additional staff time = action is not currently resourced but may be delivered through reprioritisation or existing workloads | FTE establishment = delivery of action is expected to require new staff capacity, subject to future Council consideration and approval.

Implementation

The Waste to Resources Action Plan 2026–2030 will be implemented through Council’s existing governance, planning and delivery processes. Actions will be led by nominated business units, with delivery supported through collaboration across Council where required.

Implementation will be staged over the four-year period, recognising that some actions focus on developing or updating policies, plans or tools, while others relate to delivery or on-ground outcomes. Where actions require additional resourcing, these will be considered through Council’s annual business planning and budget processes.

Council will actively seek to leverage external funding, partnerships and collaborative delivery opportunities to support implementation. This includes pursuing grants and joint initiatives with regional partners, State Government, research organisations and industry, particularly where shared challenges or economies of scale exist.

Delivery of this Plan will be coordinated alongside Council’s other Environment and Sustainability Strategy action plans to maximise alignment, manage dependencies and avoid duplication. Where appropriate, Council will adapt and build on existing tools, guidelines, policies and resources developed by Council or partner organisations, rather than duplicating effort. For example, shared templates, regional guidance or co-developed programs may be tailored to local needs.



Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Progress against actions will be monitored internally on a regular basis, using the success measures identified for each action.

Key indicators, including waste generation, diversion, contamination and service performance, will be tracked over time and reported through existing corporate reporting mechanisms. This includes public reporting where appropriate, such as inclusion in Council's Annual Report and other relevant publications.

Waste policy settings, market conditions, service models and community behaviour continue to evolve. Actions and delivery approaches may be refined over time in response to new data, regulatory changes, emerging technologies, service performance reviews and organisational learning.

Contribute towards 2035 targets

The actions in this Plan contribute to Council's longer-term waste and resource recovery targets to 2035 in the Environment and Sustainability Strategy:

4. A reduction of waste to landfill by 20% per capita by 2035.

(In 2022/23, 192.1kg of waste was disposed to landfill per person. This will be tracked annually using landfill tonnage and population data.)

5. Community satisfaction with waste services is above industry average by 2035.

(In 2024, the weighted community satisfaction score for waste management was 54, compared to an industry average of 60. Source: Markyt Community Scorecard, Catalyse, 2024.)

Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION
Adaptation	Actions that help people, infrastructure, services and ecosystems adjust to climate impacts that are already occurring or locked in, to reduce harm and take advantage of emerging opportunities as the climate changes.
Circular economy	A closed-loop approach to designing products and systems that minimises waste and keeps materials in use through reuse, repair, recycling and recovery.
Climate change	Long-term changes in temperature, rainfall patterns and the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, driven primarily by greenhouse gas emissions from human activities.
Contamination (waste)	Non-accepted materials placed in recycling or organics bins that reduce the quality of recovered resources and increase processing costs.
Construction and demolition waste	Materials generated from building, renovation and demolition activities, including concrete, timber, bricks, tiles, asphalt and soils.
Emissions	The release of gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere from activities like burning fossil fuels
Emissions reduction (mitigation)	Actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations and support emissions reduction across the community, contributing to state and federal targets and net zero pathways.
FOGO (Food Organics and Garden Organics)	Food scraps and garden waste collected separately and processed into compost for reuse.
Infrastructure	Human-engineered structures like roads, buildings, footpaths and carparks.
Net zero emissions	A state where the amount of greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere is balanced by the amount removed or offset, resulting in no net increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases.
Resilient / resilience	Able to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks are experienced.
Resource recovery	The process of obtaining materials or energy from discarded materials.
Sustainable / sustainability	Responsibly managing our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This includes social, financial and environmental resources.
Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)	Planning that manages the water cycle sustainably, promoting rainwater reuse, reducing runoff and incorporating green infrastructure.



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