

Circular Surf Coast

A Circular Economy Action Plan

2024-2027



“A circular economy is restorative and regenerative by design, avoids waste and keeps materials in use at their highest utility and value at all times...”

- Ellen MacArthur Foundation



Acknowledgement of Country

Surf Coast Shire Council Acknowledges the Wadawurrung People, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Eastern Maar, their Elders and leaders past, present and emerging as the Traditional Owners of the skies, land, waters and sea country across our municipality.

We acknowledge their care and custodianship for more than 60,000 years, which continues today.

We walk with them as we respectfully care for and tread lightly on these lands. We also extend that respect to all First Nations people who are part of the community.

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Executive summary

It's time to change the way we think about the production and consumption of materials and the concept of 'waste'. After all, waste is just a misplaced resource. If we reconsider the concept of waste, we can see the valuable materials that could have an extended life elsewhere.

We are looking to make the shift away from the traditional unsustainable linear system of 'take-make-use-waste', and transition to a more sustainable circular system that focuses on avoiding waste and keeping valuable resources in use for as long as possible.

This is known as the 'circular economy' and there is worldwide momentum towards this new way of defining traditional waste systems. A circular economy has a range of social, economic and environmental benefits including reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, reducing costs, and protecting and regenerating our natural environment.

While a circular economy will deliver a range of benefits to our region, there are other factors driving our waste transformation including our climate emergency response, Australian and Victorian government waste reforms, increasing costs, closing landfills, population growth and our commitments to protect the environment.

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to increasing the circularity of the shire; avoiding waste, keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible and regenerating nature.

This three-year Circular Economy Action Plan outlines our priority circular economy areas, actions and key targets, which will drive change within Council, and across the community. Actions and targets in this plan are in line with those of the Australian and Victorian governments.

Our key priorities for transitioning to a circular economy over the next three years include:

- Priority 1: Increasing resource recovery
- Priority 2: Maximising reuse
- Priority 3: Innovation and collaboration
- Priority 4: Driving systems change
- Priority 5: Advocacy

While we have taken some steps to reduce waste to landfill, maximise resource recovery and transition to circular systems, this action plan outlines a clear pathway towards our circular economy transition. To be successful, we need all sectors of the community to take action, from all levels of government through to businesses, residents, visitors and industry.

This plan will help protect our people, our place and our environment, in line with the Surf Coast Community Vision:

"From the hinterland to the coast, from the first peoples to the children of the future, we are an active, diverse community that lives creatively to value, protect and enhance the natural environment and our unique neighbourhoods. We will leave the Surf Coast better than we found it."

– Surf Coast Shire Council Plan 2021-25 - Community Vision

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to working with Traditional Owners and other First Nations people in our community. We are inspired by the fundamental principles of keeping Country healthy by actively caring for Country and sustainably managing natural resources. This is set out in the Country Plans of the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation's Meerreengeeye Ngakeepoorryeeyt (Our Country, Far Seeing) and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation's Paleert Tjaara Dja (Let's Make Country Good Together).

Supporting local farmers
producers

Section 1: Introduction



One of Council's key responsibilities is to manage waste and support resource recovery for our community. The ways in which we do this have changed over time – no longer do we just collect waste and send it to landfill. Instead, we are increasingly focusing on recovering resources that can be used again and again.

Council also has a key role to play in supporting circular economy through its own operations. As a large consumer of goods, materials and services, Council can help drive the transition to a circular economy through purchasing decisions supporting markets for recycled materials.

Background

In 2010, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation started a global circularity movement, which has flowed through into Australia.

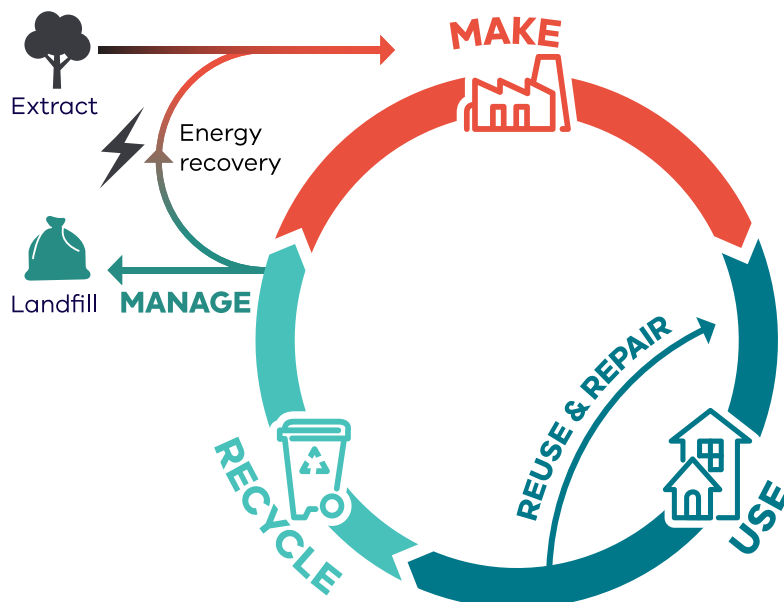
The Ellen MacArthur Foundation describes the circular economy as a system where materials are kept in use for as long as possible, avoiding waste and regenerating nature. Waste and pollution are avoided through smart design. And through processes of maintenance, reuse, repair, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling, and composting, valuable resources are kept in use for

as long as possible at their highest value. Waste does not exist in a circular economy. Materials once considered 'waste' become recognised as resources and are retained in the system.

The traditional unsustainable 'take-make-use-waste' linear economy is focussed on producing high volumes of stuff, at low prices, with little attention to product design and assembly methods. This model tends to drive high consumption levels and often leads to products being thrown away quickly after use.

A circular economy helps people manage materials responsibly, reusing materials more effectively rather than simply 'consuming' them, whilst still enabling sustainable economic growth. Transitioning to a circular economy is about managing materials and assets so that they last longer.

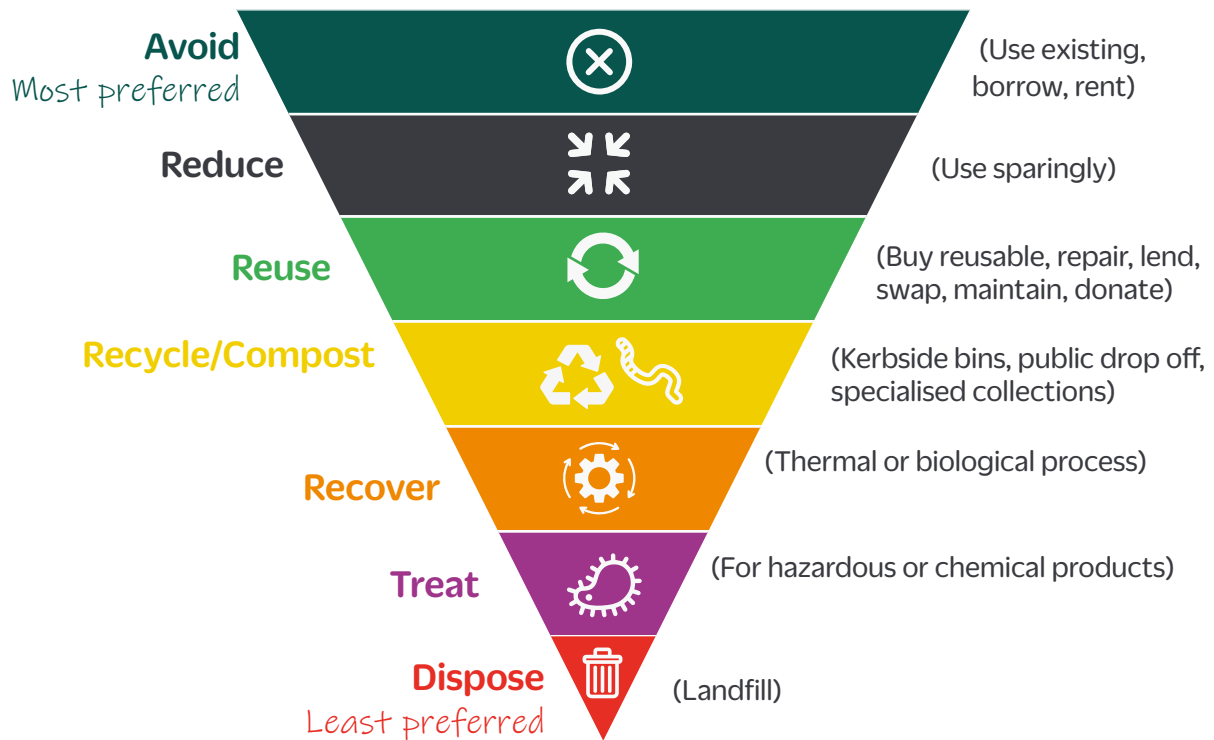
Circular Economy Model



The circular economy model is informed by the established waste hierarchy which has long been adopted by the global community to guide waste management decisions, outlining a preferential order of waste management options based on environmental benefit. The circular economy model is focussed in the top two hierarchy tiers of avoid/reduce and reuse.

Source: *Regional circular Economy Plan Barwon South West, 2022*

The priorities and actions in this action plan align with the waste hierarchy: avoidance first followed by reduction and reuse, then recycling, treatment and finally disposal.



Benefits of a circular economy

Transitioning to a circular economy provides a range of environmental, social and economic benefits including:

- Avoiding the extraction of raw materials
- Reducing the need for landfills
- Avoiding and reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions associated with material extraction, production and manufacturing, waste treatment and waste disposal

- Protecting biodiversity
- Financial savings
- Creating and supporting skilled jobs
- Strengthening localised supply chain networks
- Connecting community and enhancing community resilience

Overall, a circular economy is a resilient and environmentally sustainable system that brings triple bottom line benefits for businesses, the community and the environment.



Strategic context

National approach

The Australian Government has adopted a range of policies, strategies and initiatives supporting transition to a circular economy including:

- *National Waste Policy 2018*
- *National Waste Action Plan 2019*
- National Waste Export Bans – such as for glass, tyres and plastic
- *National Food Waste Strategy*
- *National Plastics Plan*
- Product Stewardship Priority List – this includes clothing/textiles, tyres, plastics in healthcare products in hospitals, mattresses, and child car seats

Product stewardship schemes support the management of products and materials over their life, including at the end of their 'useful' lives. This supports a circular economy by diverting materials from landfill, whilst protecting human health and safety. Stewardship arrangements can be voluntary, mandatory or shared with industry. The government works with industry to develop these schemes for problematic waste streams, with examples including for batteries, TVs and computers, tyres, and paint.

In 2021 the CSIRO released a *Circular Economy Roadmap for Plastics, Glass, Paper and Tyres*, which has been adopted by Australian Government. This roadmap outlined the challenges of poor design, low processing capacity, lack of end markets, and national program inconsistencies. It also highlighted an urgent need for a national culture that values the reuse of materials.

Victorian Government

The Victorian Government's *Recycling Victoria – A New Economy Policy* was released in 2020.

This 10-year action plan outlines systematic changes across all areas of the waste and recycling sector supporting transition to a circular economy.

The four goals of the policy are:

- Make: Design to last, repair and recycle
- Use: Reuse products to create more value
- Recycle: Increasing recycling of resources
- Manage: Harm from waste and pollution

Key actions within the policy include household kerbside bin reforms via a standardised four-bin system including glass, food and garden organics (FOGO), comingled recycling, and landfill, with Australian standard bin lid colours; implementation of a Container Deposit Scheme (CDS); and a framework outlining the planned industry transition from linear economy to circular economy.

The *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Bill 2021* provides the regulatory framework to enable more and better recycling and less waste to landfill, including creation and regulation of a container deposit scheme, standards for household bins, four-stream waste system, mandatory reporting from all waste providers and the establishment of Recycling Victoria.

The Victorian Government also implemented in 2019 a range of bans on problematic materials such as electronic waste (e-waste) from landfill due to the hazardous nature of these items and the associated loss of valuable resources. A ban on single-use plastic items started with shopping bags in 2019, and expanded to a range of takeaway food and drinks convenience and packaging items in 2023.

The Victorian Government is implementing a range of additional measures that will impact local governments, including:

- Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) will help divert single-use plastic and glass drinks containers from litter and landfill to be recycled.
- Annual waste levy increases aiming to drive reduction in waste going to landfill, but at significant added cost for councils.
- State-wide Service Standards outlining accepted materials lists for all four kerbside bins across the state with rollout expected in 2024.
- A Victorian Waste to Energy Framework that will help establish Waste to Energy facilities to help divert waste from landfill.
- Focus on industry to ensure no more failures. Following many waste sector failures in recent years such as the collapse of the major recycler SKM, the Victorian Government is working to have tighter regulations and better contingency plans in place.



Surf Coast Shire Council

The community vision for Surf Coast Shire is:

From the hinterland to the coast, from the first peoples to the children of the future, we are an active, diverse community that lives creatively to value, protect and enhance the natural environment and our unique neighbourhoods. We will leave the Surf Coast better than we found it.

The Surf Coast Shire Council Plan 2021–2025 and Climate Emergency Response Plan 2021–2031 clearly outline our commitment to strong action to avoid and reduce waste, and reuse and recover resources. This action plan provides a detailed outline of our steps to achieve a circular economy and a low waste future.

Drivers for change

A wide range of policies, strategies and initiatives are driving the transition to a circular economy and waste reform in Australia. In Surf Coast Shire a number of key factors are driving this transition, including the increasing costs of managing waste, the impending closure of the Anglesea landfill, our growing population, strong commitments by Council on climate action and environmental protection, as well as several challenges regarding specific materials and locations.

Increasing costs

Council currently spends approximately \$11 million each year on waste management services, including kerbside waste collections and disposal, managing public litter and recycling bins, running Anglesea landfill and waste transfer stations, as well as waste education and engagement.

The costs of sending waste to landfill are significantly higher than the costs of mixed and glass recycling and composting of food organics and green organics (FOGO), particularly with Victorian waste levy increases. The levy, paid for all wastes received at licensed landfills, rose from \$33.03 per tonne in 2019/20 to \$62.95 per tonne by 2022/23, an increase of more than 90 per cent. The levy will continue to increase to better align with neighbouring states and avoid Victoria becoming a cheaper option for the disposing of waste from New South Wales and South Australia. Recovering resources and avoiding sending waste to landfill will play significant roles in reducing waste management costs for Council and therefore the charges paid by the community.

Waste processing, collection, recycling and disposal costs all continue to increase each year. Inflation added up to 8 per cent to waste contractor costs in 2022/23 and these costs are expected to continue to rise.

Council will also face a number of significant costs during coming years, including for rehabilitation of Anglesea landfill when it reaches the end of its life, as well as costs for delivery of waste projects to help futureproof other waste facilities to meet community needs and cater for a growing population.

Council has also experienced additional costs to deliver on the Victorian Government's Recycling Victoria policy, including rolling out a four-bin kerbside service and educating and engaging the community on the changes. Local governments have also supported the implementation of a number of other Victorian Government initiatives through education and engagement, including the Container Deposit Scheme and the single-use plastics ban.

Implementing the actions outlined in this plan will play a significant role in reducing waste management costs and ensure best value waste management for Surf Coast Shire Council and the community.

Anglesea landfill closure

Council is responsible for operation of Anglesea landfill, which receives waste from within the shire. Based on its current EPA licence, there is only one remaining cell at the landfill that can be developed for waste disposal. This cell (section where waste is deposited) is under construction in 2023/2024 and will extend the landfill life through to about 2027. After this point the landfill will reach maximum waste capacity and will have to close.

The other landfill site in the Barwon South West region, located at Drysdale, is also estimated to be close to capacity and scheduled for closure in 2030. This would leave limited suitable and affordable landfill options remaining in the region.

The life of the Anglesea landfill can be extended by reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill, however there is still a need to determine options for waste management following the landfill closure. A key action in this plan will be the development of an Anglesea Landfill Transition Plan (ALTP).

The ALTP will consider alternative landfill options and potential Advanced Waste Processing (AWP) options, which enable heat, electricity, and other fuels to be generated from waste rather than the waste going to landfill. An example of this is Waste to Energy (WtE) where waste is subjected to heat treatment, such as combustion, gasification and pyrolysis, to turn waste into useful energy resources. The Victorian Government has supported the introduction of these solutions through the Victorian Waste to Energy Framework (2021).



Population growth

Surf Coast Shire's population in 2021 was 37,623, with 20,563 dwellings. By 2041 the population is predicted to rise by about 50% to 56,232, with an estimated 31,294 dwellings. A growing population means more waste, placing pressure on our waste services and infrastructure.

The population of the shire lives largely around Torquay, which has limited waste infrastructure for maximising resource recovery. A key action in this plan is to investigate the feasibility of waste infrastructure in Torquay to cater for the growing population.

Prioritising waste avoidance, waste reduction and crucial infrastructure development will reduce service and infrastructure pressures and protect valuable resources to help meet the needs of a growing community.

Collaboration

Council is committed to collaborating with others to drive and deliver successful circular economy initiatives, recognising that working together can help to extend our reach, maximise impact and share problems and solutions.

We have worked with a range of partners to support low-waste and circular economy projects, including collaborative procurement for waste services with other councils and the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA), supporting Barwon Water's Regional Renewable Organics Network (RRON) and working with a number of other councils on Victorian Government grant funded projects.

Collaboration will continue to be a key feature of our work transitioning to a circular economy, building on existing partnerships and creating new connections.

Climate change and environmental protection

In 2019, Surf Coast Shire Council declared a climate emergency and later released its *Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) 2021-2031*, which includes the following targets:

- Zero Scope 1 and 2 corporate greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (excluding Anglesea landfill). These are direct emissions from local activities and indirect emissions from using electricity generated in another region.

- Reduce Council's Scope 3 corporate greenhouse gas emissions. These are indirect emissions that are related to consumption and production.
- Send zero recoverable waste to landfill by 2030.

To meet these targets, we must review our consumption and procurement choices. Through actions outlined in this plan, we can take steps to reduce the Scope 3 upstream emissions created outside the shire by the production of goods, and the downstream emissions associated with their disposal.

Council has also made strong commitments to protect and enhance our natural environment. Nature has been regenerating itself forever – there is no concept of waste in nature. Significant environmental impacts and carbon emissions are direct results of over-consumption in our linear ‘take-make-use-waste’ system, which uses raw materials to create products, which are often sent to landfill.

A circular economy uses fewer resources and less energy, while regenerating nature and avoiding waste, pollution and habitat and biodiversity loss. Actions undertaken through this plan will help to protect our natural environment.

Local waste challenges



BATTERIES

Fires caused by incorrect disposal of batteries and other e-waste items regularly ignite in trucks and at waste facilities, placing human life and infrastructure at risk. This also results in loss of valuable materials contained within e-waste.

A key focus for Council is to raise awareness and shift behaviour to ensure that batteries and other e-waste is disposed of correctly.

SOFT PLASTICS

Following the cessation of soft plastics collection and recycling through supermarkets, soft plastics are a mounting issue. Soft plastics fill kerbside bins and are also incorrectly disposed of in recycling and FOGO bins, causing problematic contamination and processing challenges.

Avoiding soft plastics in the first place and investigating options for collection and disposal form key actions within this plan.

DISPOSABLE NAPPIES

Disposable nappies account for about 10% of landfill bin contents by weight, and are contaminants in FOGO and recycling bins. Use of reusable nappies can help to avoid and reduce this waste stream. This plan includes an action to investigate options to support reusable nappy use within the shire.



PET POO

Pet poo accounts for around 13% of landfill bin contents by weight, however small amounts of pet poo (no bags or kitty litter) is allowed in FOGO bins. Pet poo in landfill bins could be avoided or reduced through educating the community on accepted materials in the FOGO bin or an alternative is to use pet poo home composters.

TEXTILES

Textiles account for around 6% combined total by weight of the landfill bin and recycling bin contents and are a problematic contaminant in recycling bins as they can wrap around machinery. This waste stream could be avoided through increased education of available collection schemes such as UPPAREL and drop-off options such as charity shops. This plan includes an action to investigate options to support textile collection and recycling for households.





SCRRApp app being used to determine collection day.

PFAS

PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are synthetic chemicals that are used in a wide range of consumer products to provide protective coating, for example to help keep food or drinks from sticking to takeaway food containers. Studies have shown that non-certified compostable takeaway food packaging or coffee cups contain PFAS that can end up as dangerous contaminants in compost through FOGO collections. This compost is then used to grow more food. PFAS are long-lasting and therefore it persists in the environment, with studies showing that exposure to PFAS is harmful to humans and animals. This plan includes an action to educate the community about this issue.

SEASONAL NATURE OF REGION'S POPULATION AND WASTE PRODUCTION

High-season holiday/summer periods along the Surf Coast leads to very high waste production, which becomes lower during off-season months. Council's waste services need to be flexible to cope with the flux.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION OF NON-PERMANENT RESIDENTS

With over 50% of properties in the region used as second homes, it is challenging to communicate

with property owners, and for communications to have impact. There can also be limited consistency between different councils on waste management as visitors' 'home' councils may have different bins, bin lid colours or accepted materials. Use of online communications and engagement tools, including the SCRRApp and online workshops, have helped with this. The Victorian Government's new Service Standards will also help ensure consistency around accepted materials in bins. Council will continue to explore options to ensure wide-reaching messaging for both residents and visitors.

COCKATOOS

Cockatoos are intelligent animals and have learnt how to open kerbside landfill bins in Lorne and other communities in search of food. This poses a significant challenge and litter burden. Residents are encouraged to avoid overfilling bins, keep the bin lids closed/locked, put bins out only on the collection days and not to feed cockatoos. Managing this issue requires action from Council, residents, visitors, local businesses and the Victorian Government. While Council can help to manage the issues associated with cockatoos and waste, the Victorian Government is responsible for managing wildlife.

Section 2: Surf Coast waste overview



FOGO bin with food waste in green accepted certified compostable corn starch liner (not plastic)

Surf Coast Shire Council waste management operations and services including: Kerbside and public place waste collection, processing and disposal; Anglesea landfill; transfer stations in Anglesea, Lorne and Winchelsea; waste drop off sites; waste vouchers; litter and illegal dumping education and enforcement, and waste education and engagement.

Council's kerbside collection services about 20,625 households (18,777 urban and 1,848 rural) and 34 businesses, out of a total of 24,699 properties in the municipality. The population is predicted to rise by about 50% to 56,232, equating to 31,294 dwellings by 2041, which will have an increased waste implication.

In 2022/23, a total of 19,117 tonnes of household waste and resources were collected across Surf Coast Shire through kerbside collections, and hard waste drop off at Anglesea landfill, waste transfer stations, and public litter bins. Our kerbside landfill diversion rate is approximately 74% recovered.

Overall, the total amount of waste sent to landfill in 2022/23 was 24,627 tonnes (comprising 16,308 tonnes general waste and 8,319 tonnes of dirt for landfill cover). This includes kerbside, business and industrial waste.

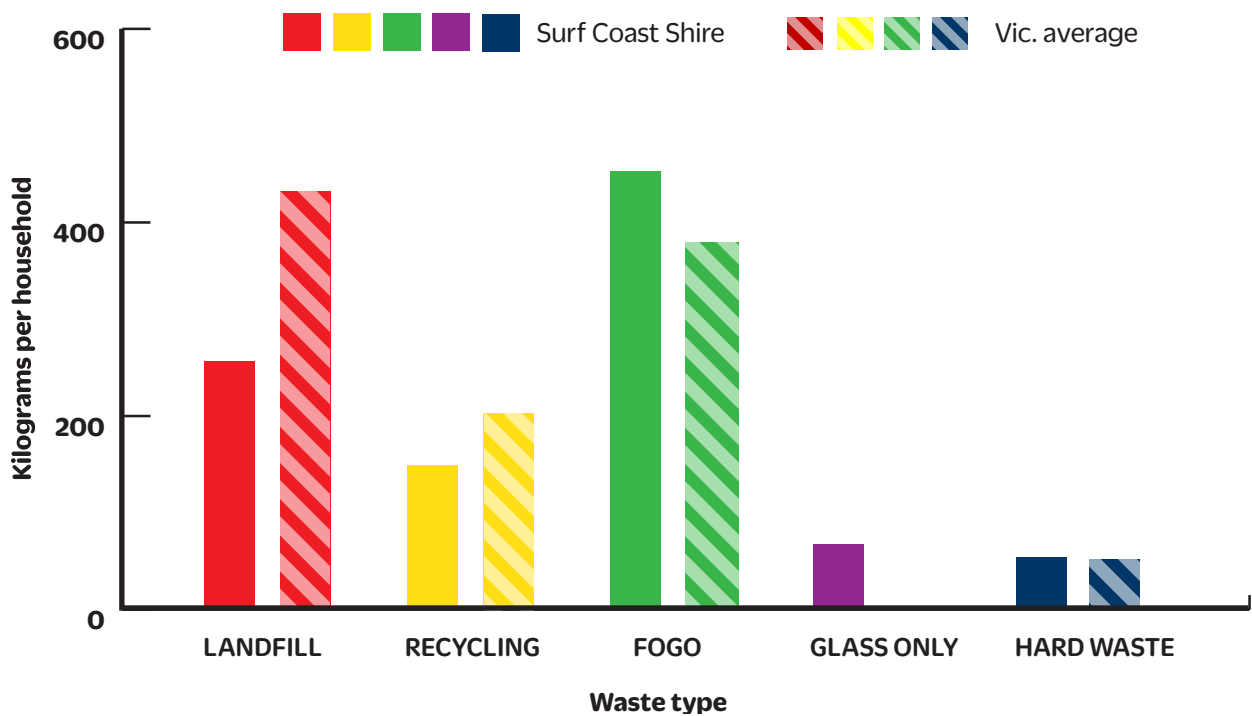
During 2022/23, examples of additional materials recovered through waste services included:

- 423kg of toxic materials such as chemicals through the Detox Your Home program
- 83 tonnes of e-waste
- 2221 mattresses
- 546 tonnes of waste from public litter bins

Our household waste services

Service type	Landfill bins	Recycling bins	Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) bins	Glass only bins	Hard waste drop off
Collection frequency	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Weekly (urban) Fortnightly (rural)	Every four weeks	Drop off only
Where it goes	Anglesea landfill	Cleanaway Materials Recovery Facility - Laverton	Western Composting - Shepparton	Cleanaway - Laverton	Combination of recycling and landfill
Amount collected in 2022/23	4515 tonnes	2924 tonnes	8350 tonnes	1362 tonnes	1420 tonnes

Comparison with other Victorian councils:



*2022/23 data available from Surf Coast Shire only due to being a new service

Data source: Recycling Victoria Victorian Local Government Annual Waste Services Survey, 2021-22.

Compared with Victorian council averages, Surf Coast Shire residents produce significantly less landfill and less recycling, and significantly more FOGO. This is also the case that we produce less landfill and less recycling, and more FOGO, when compared with similar coastal/holiday destination council regions such as Bass Coast, Mornington Peninsula, and Queenscliffe. This may be due to having environmentally conscious residents, a high proportion of holiday homes that may only be seasonally occupied, landfill bins priced to reflect the disposal cost leading to higher uptake of 120/140L landfill bins, providing a weekly 240L FOGO service, and high levels of garden pruning for fire preparedness.

Residents do not have access to a kerbside hard waste collection, but produce equivalent to the Victorian council average. Residents are supplied with one hard waste voucher per household, but there is a low redemption rate, in 2021-22 only 18% of waste vouchers were redeemed.

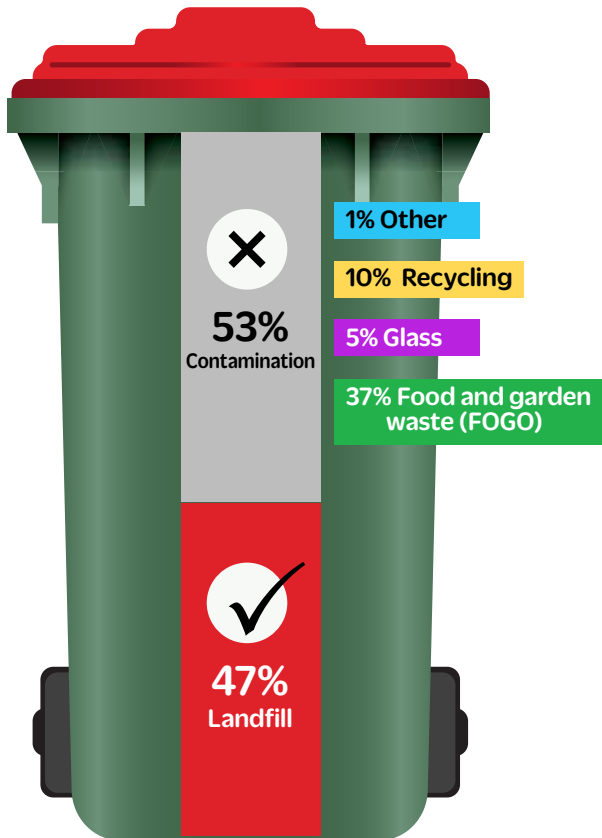


Surf Coast Shire waste services

We have a four-bin service in Surf Coast Shire, in line with *Recycling Victoria: A new economy 2020* and comply with standard bin colours as outlined in the Australian bin lid standards. Additional bins for all services are available for an annual fee.

Kerbside bin collections

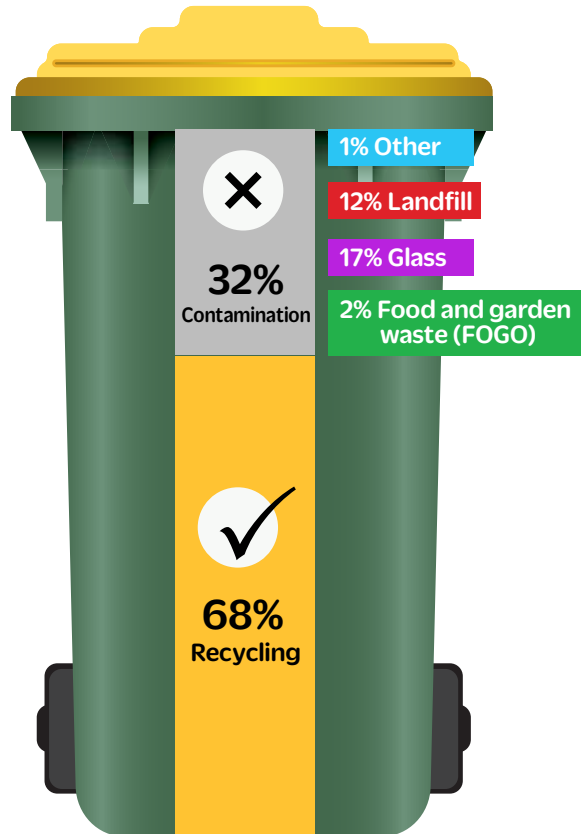
LANDFILL



The red-lidded landfill bin is for all remaining general household waste that is not accepted in any of the other three kerbside bins. This bin is collected every fortnight. Bin size options: 140L, 240L and 360L.

There is 53% contamination (resource loss) in landfill bins meaning more than half of the waste placed in the bin does not need to go to landfill and could be recovered through other kerbside bins. This content is made up largely of food waste. Ensuring these materials are placed in the correct bin provides a significant opportunity to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.

RECYCLING



The yellow-lidded co-mingled recycling bin accepts rigid plastic bottles and containers (types 1, 2 or 5), tins, cans, foil, paper and cardboard. This bin is collected every fortnight. Bin size options: 140L, 240L and 360L.

Glass is the main contaminant found in recycling bins, followed by bagged waste. Supporting households to make the most of their glass only bin will help to increase resource recovery.

FOOD ORGANICS GARDEN ORGANICS (FOGO)



The lime-green lidded FOGO bin accepts all food waste and garden organic/green waste. FOGO collected is composted and reused by Victorian farmers to produce food – a great example of the circular economy in action.

Kitchen caddies are provided to households and certified compostable caddy liners are available for collection. This bin is collected weekly in urban areas, and fortnightly in rural areas. Bin size options: 140L, 240L and 360L.

Key contaminants in FOGO bins are bags, including liners that are not accepted as they are made out of plastic or not certified compostable, and food packaging. Educating households on FOGO contaminants, especially accepted liners, will be a key focus of our education program.

GLASS-ONLY



The purple-lidded bin accepts glass bottles and jars. This bin is collected every four weeks. Bin size options: 140L and 240L.

The glass bins have very little contamination therefore a key focus will be on ensuring that households divert glass from the recycling bin into the glass-only bin.



Anglesea Resale Shed

Annual waste vouchers

Ratepayers are sent three annual waste vouchers each financial year in July, along with their first rates notice. This includes:

- Green waste: Drop off up to one cubic metre of green waste at any transfer station free of charge.
- General waste: Drop off up to one cubic metre of general waste at any transfer station free of charge.
- Mulch: Pick up one cubic metre of mulch, subject to availability, from Council's transfer stations.

Council also sends ratepayers three garden waste vouchers to remove vegetation around properties for fire prevention. Each voucher is for free disposal of one cubic metre of garden waste at Council's transfer stations. The vouchers are sent out in October each year and are valid until 31 January the following year.

Anglesea Landfill

Anglesea Landfill is the only operational landfill in the shire and accepts household and commercial waste. It is estimated it will reach capacity about 2027, so a key action within this plan is to develop an Anglesea Landfill Transition Plan to address three key areas:

- Waste management post-landfill closure
- Site rehabilitation
- Future site planning

Resource Recovery Centres (transfer stations)

The Anglesea Resource Recovery Centre is the shire's main transfer station, located at the Anglesea Landfill. It accepts a broad range of waste, from residential and commercial waste through to green waste, e-waste, metals, recyclables, polystyrene, tyres, cleanfill, plaster, concrete/bricks, and construction and demolition waste.

There are additional smaller resource recovery centres in Lorne and Winchelsea.

Drop-off facilities

When the resource recovery centres are closed, residents can drop off loose household recyclables and small amounts of general household waste for free at the after-hours collection points just outside the transfer stations in Lorne and Anglesea. Torquay has a small household waste and recycling drop-off facility.

Litter and dumped rubbish

In line with our *Community Amenity Local Law 2021* (Part 7 Waste Management) and Environment Protection Authority regulations, it is illegal to dump, bury or burn any kind of waste at a location that is not licensed to accept it. This includes all roadsides, Council-owned parks, reserves, and buildings, and privately-owned land. Putting rubbish from households or businesses in street litter bins, or into skip bins on building sites is also considered illegal dumping. Council's Litter Prevention Officer plays a key role in managing this issue.

Barwon Water Regional Renewable Organics Network (RRON)

Barwon Water is developing an advanced waste processing facility for organics processing at the Black Rock Water Reclamation Plant in Connewarre. The facility will divert FOGO, local commercial and industrial organic waste and organic materials from wastewater treatment from landfill, to create biochar and renewable energy. This facility will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and capture carbon to reverse the cycle of burning fossil fuels. From early 2026, Surf Coast Shire Council will send FOGO and green waste to this facility, supporting a local circular economy.

Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) collection sites

This new state-wide recycling program aims to reduce Victoria's public litter by up to half. Through a network of reverse vending machines, drink cans, glass stubby bottles and small juice cartons can be deposited for a 10c refund per item. This can be redeemed or donated.

TOMRA Cleanaway is the network operator and manages a number of collection sites in Surf Coast Shire. The CDS will also lead to diversion of items from household recycling and glass-only bins, less contamination in bins, and may affect collection and processing costs.

Public place litter and recycling bins

There are two authorities in the shire that manage public bins – Surf Coast Shire Council and the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA). GORCAPA manages bins in coastal reserves and public camping sites and Council manages all the other locations.

Dog waste bags

Council provides free dog waste bags at a range of popular public reserves across the shire. In accordance with Council's *Community Amenity Local Law 2021* (Part 7 Waste Management), it is the responsibility of dog owners to always have in their possession a bag or container which can be used for collecting dog waste. Dog owners should not rely on dispensers as their primary sources of bags and can face fines for failing to carry pick-up bags, or failing to pick up after their dogs. The bag

refill schedule is set up so that bags are available for dog owners who forget to bring their own.

Waste service charge

A garbage charge is applied to all Surf Coast properties with a kerbside bin collection service. The garbage charge covers kerbside service collections, bin supply, collection of public litter and recycling bins, operation of the landfill, operation of resource recovery centres, waste vouchers, waste events, public sharps and sanitary bins, and waste education and engagement.

Waste education and engagement

Council has a dedicated Waste Education Officer and utilises a range of engagement methods and communications channels to support our community to reduce waste and maximise resource recovery including: workshops, a regular online Good Sort newsletter, the highly rated SCRRApp app, waste calendar, direct letters, Facebook and Instagram, and Council's website.

Community circular economy in action

The Surf Coast Shire community is passionate and actively engaged in activities to reduce waste, maximise resource recovery and protect the environment. There are many local examples of circular economy projects and community groups including:

- Anglesea Transfer Station Resale Shed
- Surf Coast Repair Café
- Lorne Goes Plastic Free
- Plastic Wise Torquay
- Plastic Wise Winchelsea
- Rubbish Rangers
- Feed Me Surf Coast
- Surf Coast Energy Group
- Various community battery drop-off collection points
- Toy libraries in Anglesea, Lorne, Torquay and Winchelsea
- Bulk food stores across the region
- Online marketplaces such as Facebook Marketplace
- Various local businesses focused on making the most of recycled materials e.g. Patagonia



Surf Coast Shire Council actions towards a more circular economy

Council has been actively working over time to reduce waste to landfill, maximise resource recovery and transition to a more circular economy. Key achievements of the past five years includes:

- Roll out of a kerbside four-bin system to improve recycling and reduce waste.
- Resource Recovery Centres across the shire maximise resource recovery, offering collection for a wide range of materials including e-waste, metals, plaster and polystyrene.
- Food and garden waste collected through FOGO kerbside bin service is turned into compost to help Victorian farmers produce food.
- Use of recycled materials in a range of Council projects for elements such as decking, seating and street furniture, and in many other applications across the shire.
- Reducing and replacing single use plastic items with reusable alternatives through our Plastic Wise Program.
- Development of the SCRRApp app providing waste collection information for residents and visitors, including details on how to correctly use the four-bin service and dispose of a range of items.
- Committed to sending our kerbside FOGO material to the new local Barwon Water RRON facility – a great circular initiative for turning organic wastes into renewable energy and biochar for use in agriculture.
- Implemented a Responsible Cafes program to support local cafes to reduce their plastic waste.
- Received Sustainability Victoria grant funding to enhance education and engagement on our four-bin service, upgrade the Lorne Resource Recovery Centre and collaborate with other Victorian councils to develop and deliver a Circular Economy Leadership Development Program.

Section 3: Circular Economy Action Plan 2024-2027



Circular economy targets

This action plan establishes a series of targets to drive our direction and monitor our progress towards our circular economy goals. Targets will be assessed against a 2020 baseline and have been developed to align with Australian and Victorian government targets. In some instances we are exceeding national and state targets and have increased these targets accordingly.

Target	National	State	Surf Coast Shire Council	Baseline (2020)	Current status (2023)
Reduce waste to landfill per household	10% by 2030	15% by 2030	40% by 2027 (209 kg) 50% by 2030 (175 kg)	349kg /hh	223 kg /hh
Recovery of waste	80% by 2030	72% by 2025 80% by 2030	75% by 2025 82% by 2030	49%	74%
Reduce organics in landfill	50% by 2030	20% by 2025 50% by 2030	50% by 2030	24%	37%



Additional Surf Coast Shire Council Targets

We have also set additional targets to help to drive our transition towards a circular economy:

Target	Bin / Project type	By 2027	By 2030	Baseline (2023)
Reduce overall contamination level to:	Recycling bin	=/<20%	=/<10%	32%*
	FOGO bin	=/<5%	=/<3%	9%
	Glass bin	=/<1%	=/<1%	<1%
Increase use of recycled materials in Council projects	Roads - new and renewals	=/>15%	=/>25%	N/A
	Kerb and footpaths – new and renewals	=/>15%	=/>25%	N/A
	Stormwater pipes - new and renewals	=/>15%	=/>20%	N/A
	Internal procurement items recycled content such as office paper, toilet paper	=/>20%	=/>30%	N/A
	Increase minimum standards of recycled content in new builds via the Environmentally Sustainable Council Facilities Policy	15%	25%	All new facilities/ renewals/ upgrades to include at least one recycled material.
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Non-landfill emissions such as via contractors, materials	10%	0%	
Embodied carbon reduction due to increased use of recycled content	Asphalt, bitumen and cement	=/>15%	=/>25%	Asphalt & bitumen - 454 tonnes Cement - 120 tonnes

* Recycling bin contamination of 32% includes 17% glass bottles and jars, which were previously accepted, however should now be deposited in the glass only bin instead.



This action plan outlines Council’s pathway towards a circular economy. It outlines actions that we will focus on during the next three years across five key priorities:

Priority 1: Avoiding waste and increasing resource recovery

Priority 2: Maximising reuse

Priority 3: Innovation and collaboration

Priority 4: Creating systems change

Priority 5: Advocacy

A number of these actions are already underway and there are some actions that will require additional budget. Where this is the case, budget approval will be sought through the Annual Budget process.

Priority 1: Avoiding waste and increasing resource recovery

This priority is focused on the first step of the waste hierarchy and a key principle of a circular economy – to avoid waste in the first place. While this is an important first step, we also want to make sure that waste that is disposed of is going in the right place. Kerbside bin audits have shown that there is a significant volume of material that is not being disposed of properly. Targeted community education, engagement and behaviour change programs will play key roles in avoiding waste being sent to landfill and ensuring recovery of valuable resources so that they can be kept in use.

Actions	Resources	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
<p>1.1 Develop and deliver targeted education and behaviour change programs to drive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste avoidance • Increased resource recovery • Reduced contamination • Awareness of alternative recycling and disposal services for items not collected through Council services • Less consumption • Smarter consumption, for example buying recycled, borrowing and sharing 	Existing resources and external funding (via Sustainability Victoria)	✓	✓	✓
<p>1.2 Develop community understanding and knowledge of key problematic materials, issues and solutions, to help reduce bin contamination, maximise resource recovery and protect our environment for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Compostable packaging’ • PFAS • FOGO liners • E-waste – including batteries • Soft plastics • Rigid plastics and types • Disposable nappies • Alternative Waste Treatment options eg. Waste to Energy 	Existing resources and external funding (via Sustainability Victoria)	✓	✓	✓
<p>1.3 Implement a kerbside bin contamination monitoring program to reduce contamination rates in household recycling bins – with community feedback and associated education via waste audits and bin inspections.</p>	Existing resources and external funding (via Sustainability Victoria)		✓	
<p>1.4 Prevent and reduce litter and illegal dumping through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and encouraging use of the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) • Ensuring a network of CDS collection stations throughout the shire • Anti-litter and illegal dumping campaign • More signage at locations such as shire entry points, top tourist locations and key dumping areas • Cameras in hot spot locations • Supporting litter clean-up events such as Clean Up Australia Day 	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓
<p>1.5 Trial new initiatives to recover key materials lost in recycling and landfill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textiles • Soft plastics • Polystyrene • E-waste • Wood • Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste 	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓

Actions	Resources	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
1.6 Review accepted materials streams at resource recovery centres to identify gaps and new processor options	Existing resources		✓	
1.7 Document and trial initiatives to avoid problematic waste items in landfill: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern cloth reusable nappies • Pet poo home composters • Home composting / worm farms 	Existing resources Additional funding will boost impact	✓	✓	
1.8 Undertake a feasibility study to assess the viability and requirements of a Torquay Transfer Station.	Existing resources	✓		



Playground bench made with recycled plastic..

Priority 2: Maximising reuse

This priority is focused on another key principle of a circular economy – keeping materials in use for as long as possible, making the most of what we already have. This can be applied to both Council operations, such as using recycled materials in Council projects, as well as supporting community initiatives to reuse, repair, share and borrow.

Actions	Resources	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
2.1 Increase the use of recycled materials in Council projects, asset renewal and maintenance in areas such as roads.	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓
2.2 Document options for Council to participate in share economy services such as leasing schemes to prevent the need to unnecessarily purchase items, which will help reduce waste.	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓
2.3 Specify a preference of use of products and materials that contain recycled content for new projects, asset renewal, and maintenance in the following priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steel • Bitumen • Concrete • Rock/gravel • Stormwater pipes • Timber (structural) • Bollards • Fencing • Boardwalks • Signage 	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓
2.4 Support existing and new community-led circular economy initiatives through networks, education, communications support and funding, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair Café • Toy libraries • Share libraries 	Existing resources Additional funding will boost impact	✓	✓	



Repair Cafe Surf Coast



Recycled asphalt.

Priority 3: Innovation and collaboration

Innovation will be key to driving our circular economy transition. It will help us better understand the issues, come up with solutions and inspire positive action by others in our community. Working together with key partners will help share the issues, work through solutions and ensure our successful transition.

Actions	Resources	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
3.1 Document long-term alternatives to landfill for residual waste: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Anglesea Landfill Transition Plan to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waste management post landfill closure - Site rehabilitation - Future site plan • Explore collaboration options for alternative waste treatment with other local governments 	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓
3.2 Undertake a regional material flow analysis study to understand how and where materials are used, in order to identify opportunities to reduce resource use, create jobs and keep materials in use at their highest value.	Existing resources Additional funding will boost impact	✓	✓	
3.3 Continue to explore options for a regional circular economy hub with local government partners.	Existing resources Additional funding will boost impact	✓	✓	✓
3.4 Partner with Council's waste contractors to improve service delivery through innovation and smart technology.	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓
3.5 Work with leading local businesses to create case studies to help drive more circular economy actions and innovations across the business community.	Existing resources Additional funding will boost impact	✓	✓	✓
3.6 Drive innovation in major Council projects and help build local market capacity e.g. investigate trialling the City of Greater Geelong's Procurement for Innovation (PforI) training and options for use in major Council projects.	Existing resources	✓		



Priority 4: Creating systems change

This priority is focused on embedding circular economy principles in strategic Council documents and improving data collection to better understand our current state, identify future opportunities, and track progress.

Actions	Resources	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
4.1 Ensure data on key procurement items is captured on Council's top 10 spend items, that could be replaced by alternative recycled content options across new projects, asset renewals and maintenance.	Existing resources Additional funding will boost impact	✓		
4.2 Document opportunities to improve data collection for all Council waste streams to improve data quality, track and drive change.	Existing resources	✓		
4.4 Review strategic Council documents and processes to embed circular economy principles for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic Wise Policy • Procurement Planning document • Procurement Policy • Environmentally Sustainable Council Facilities Policy • Planning - waste provisions • Internal events – catering and suppliers • Waste collection and disposal management procedures including contract management and service delivery compliance, specifications, contractual arrangements, partnerships, driving innovation. 	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓
4.5 Review options to enhance the financial sustainability of Council's waste services.	Existing resources	✓		
4.6 Build organisational knowledge, awareness and action to drive a circular economy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build internal capacity of leaders through education and skill building opportunities such as Sustainability Victoria-funded Circular Economy Leadership Program, a joint project with other Victorian local councils. • Increase general staff capacity to support the transition. 	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓



Priority 5: Advocacy

While Council plays a key role in driving action and change at a local level, there are many areas outside of our control, such as packaging, managing problematic waste materials, industry reforms and mandating use of recycled content. The advocacy items listed below will help to improve resource recovery outcomes, as well as support transition to a circular economy.

Actions	Resources	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
5.1 Empower community to actively drive a circular economy through community advocacy including to government and businesses	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓
5.2 Advocate to Australian and Victorian governments, relevant agencies and stakeholders to support the drive to a more circular economy through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing mandatory product stewardship and extended producer responsibility for problematic materials and packaging, including PFAS, soft plastics and textiles. And to align Australian product regulations, policies, programs, labels and standards to global best practice. • Engagement along supply chains to support systems change. • Investment in extending the life of products and supply chain innovation. • Expanded CDS through increasing the range of eligible containers. • Expanded items banned under the Single-Use Plastics Ban. • Appropriate investment of the waste levy to support local governments shift to a circular economy. • State-wide illegal dumping campaigns. • National and state behaviour change programs to activate the community. • Funding support for major local government waste infrastructure initiatives. 	Existing resources	✓	✓	✓



An action plan to benefit our whole community

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to ensuring this action plan, including all services, programs and actions within it, benefit everyone within our community, regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, race, Aboriginality, ethnicity, age, disability or religion.

Gender equality is achieved when all people in the community, regardless of differences, can equally access and benefit from the offerings from council.

Research shows that waste has a gender bias that can unfairly burden women¹. For example tasks in the home relating to waste generation and management as part of household labour, are usually the responsibility of women². Further, men tend to know less about waste and therefore make more errors when recycling³.

Women are also more likely to be engaged in sustainability issues and have more positive environmental attitudes, indicating that they are more likely to engage with waste information, programs and services⁴.

The community education and engagement actions in this action plan will be designed to meet the different needs of all community members, to create equitable and fair outcomes for all. Some examples of this will include: Ensuring messaging promotes sorting waste and recycling as everyone's responsibility; targeting men to encourage their active participation; and collecting gender-based data from engagement to inform future work.

Monitoring and evaluation

There are some data gaps in the baseline data available. Baseline data has been added to this plan where available, however as this is Council's first Circular Economy Action Plan, there are new data streams required to enable us to better track and measure progress. Therefore, an important aspect of this plan is setting up systems to collect data.

Council will report its progress against the priorities, actions and targets outlined in this plan through the annual Council Plan reporting process.



1 Organo, V., Head, L., & Waitt, G., (2013). Who does the work in sustainable households? A time and gender analysis in New South Wales, Australia, *Gender, Place & Culture*, 20:5, 559-577, DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2012.716401

2. The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey [HILDA] (2019). *The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 17*. Melbourne: Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

3. Kantar Public. (2021). *Final Report for Part 3 Survey. Know your Recycling*. Prepared by David Spicer for Kantar Public and Sustainability Victoria.

4 Brough, A. R., Wilkie, J. E., Ma, J., Isaac, M. S., & Gal, D. (2016). Is eco-friendly unmanly? The green-feminine stereotype and its effect on sustainable consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43(4), 567-582.



e. info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au
p. 03 5261 0600

surfcoast.vic.gov.au

1 Merrijig Drive (PO Box 350)
Torquay Victoria Australia 3228

Wadawurrung Country

