



**The National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations endorsed criteria for the use and operation of charity recycling donation bins for used clothing and household items.**

Every day and in every State of Australia charities assist tens of thousands of people through home visitation, migrant and refugee assistance, hospital and health services, prison visitation, aged care services, supported employment services for people with an intellectual disability, education for disadvantaged children, welfare assistance, hostels for the homeless, overseas relief, disaster recovery, budget counselling and youth programs and suicide prevention counselling.

We feed and clothe Australian men, women and children overwhelmed by life's hardships. A significant number of these community programs are funded by the income derived from charity recycling donation bins. Programs, that if not funded from these income sources, would require public funding through State and Federal tax and Local Government rate sources.

Members of NACRO advocate strongly for councils to consider adopting this code of practice developed and practiced by members of the National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations. The attached appendix provides further information on NACRO and the business of charitable recycling.

## 1 Recycling donation bins Code of Practice - recommended planning principles

Members of NACRO advocate that a prominently located recycling donation bin is currently the most cost effective method of collecting post consumer recyclable domestic materials. To facilitate this, the major factors influencing the councils are:

- The need to ensure recycling donation bins are located appropriately and/or sensitively so as not to detract from the amenity and appearance of sites
- All recycling collection bins are clearly marked to differentiate charity donation bins from commercial operator collection bins to enable members of the public to make informed choices about to whom they make their donations,
- The need to ensure recycling donation bins are regularly emptied, cleaned and maintained in an orderly and proper manner;
  - To ensure the location of recycling donation bins does not cause any obstruction to footpaths and roadways
  - To ensure the recycling donation bins are adequately fixed so as to not cause injury to any person or damage to property, to the satisfaction of Council.

The following principles apply to the location and placement of recycling donation bins:

- 1.1 Only recycling donation bins from charities that are members of the National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisation (NACRO) shall be permitted to be located on land owned or vested in the given Council and any Public Place. Preference should be given to charities that directly, collect, sort and sell the clothing.

- 1.2 The location of recycling donation bins shall generally be restricted to commercial zones that are contained in a given council's planning scheme.
- 1.3 The location of the recycling donation bins shall comply with the provisions of the given Local Government Act.
- 1.4 Subsequent to permit approval, the recycling donation bins shall:
  - 1.4.1 be of a design that would ensure people are not able to climb into them
  - 1.4.2 not be located on driveways/accessways, car parking areas, landscape areas or be located to cause undue obstruction to footpaths and thoroughfares subject to inspection by an Authorised Officer
  - 1.4.2 not present a threat to surrounding infrastructure in the event of a fire in a bin
  - 1.4.3 display the name and contact telephone number of the charity
  - 1.4.3 be maintained and presented within its environs in a condition to the satisfaction of the given Council;
  - 1.4.4 be emptied and maintained in a manner sufficient to ensure materials do not accumulate outside the recycling donation bins, eg on the foot path.
  - 1.4.5 provide a 24hour emergency contact number to be used by council officers regarding out-of-hours recycling donation bin issues.
- 1.5 Recycling donation bins shall be subject to removal for non compliance to the Code at Council's discretion.
- 1.6 The owner of the recycling donation bin and/or the agency with responsibility for the control of a bin shall provide to Council satisfactory evidence of a copy of a public liability insurance policy to a minimum value of \$20 million.
- 1.7 Unless there is sufficient space and visual amenity, only one recycling donation bin should be located on a site and subject to inspection by an Authorised Officer.
- 1.8 The location of the recycling donation bins shall be subject to annual review.
- 1.9 The recycling donation bin/bins shall be removed from Council land or public place within the time indicated on a written notice to comply.
- 1.10 The recycling donation bin shall have NACRO signage attached.
- 1.11 Recycling donation bin clearance (for normal circumstances) be scheduled by the charitable recycling organisation and the council during the application process. Note: Most contractors undertake clearance early morning.

Members of NACRO advocate strongly for councils to consider the above code of practice developed and practised by members of the National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations.

## APPENDIX

### 2 Purpose of this code of practice

The purpose of this code of practice is to provide councils with guidelines for the placement and location of recycling donation bins on land owned, controlled and/or vested in a given council and to provide them with established criteria for the responsible use and operation of these donation bins.

In recent times a number of private commercial entities have entered the market. These are for-profit companies that do not redistribute any financial returns from the collection of post-consumer waste. Collectively, these companies do not adhere to this code of practice. NACRO advises councils to confine the use and operation of recycling donation bins within their precincts to **charitable recycling organisations**.

### 3 About NACRO

The National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations (NACRO) is the peak body representing charitable recycling organisations throughout Australia.

The business of NACRO members is to generate social capital to fund welfare programs through recycling and reuse activities. Indeed, millions of individuals benefit from the products, operations, and programs that are delivered to the community as a result of the funds generated from NACRO members' recycling operations.

NACRO members range from the largest national charities to individual shops. Collectively, they operate thousands of shops around Australia. Donations of new and second-hand goods are made by deposits into charity recycling donation bins, neighbourhood household collection and drop-offs directly to charity op shops.

NACRO advocates educating the community to donate goods responsibly to provide maximum support for the charity's community service programs, reduce landfill demand through thoughtless waste and to minimise cost to the environment.

#### 3.1 Charitable Recycling Organisations are not private companies!

In Australia the organised recovery of post-consumer waste (mainly used clothing and household goods) by way of recycling donation bins is principally undertaken by charities. By world standards, it is a unique system through which tonnes of post consumer waste is diverted from landfill and redistributed to men, women and children overwhelmed by life's hardships, or sold to assist in the charitable works of the organisations that have invested in the recycling infrastructure. It is a valuable service to all Australian councils.

As public benevolent institution/organisations, Charitable Recycling Organisations receive "Deductible Gift Recipient" (DGR) status from the Australian Taxation office which allows them to receive income tax deductible gifts and deductible contributions. Membership of NACRO is only available to organisations that have DGR status.

Membership of NACRO is restricted to organisations that:

- are constituted in accordance with the appropriate charity legislation in states and territories and have obtained Deductible Gift Recipient status from the Australian Taxation Office; and
- are involved in and operates recycling programmes for the purpose of emergency assistance and/or the supply of low cost clothing and/or the support of the charitable purpose of the particular charity or Public Benevolent institution; or
- are an incorporated body of charitable recycling organisations whose membership criteria shall not be less than that required by the Association and which shall conform to the conditions imposed by clause 5 (a) (i & ii) of this Constitution and whose activities shall be restricted to a State or Territory of Australia.

Membership is not available to charities that:

- Sell or otherwise allow their brand/name to be used by another organisation to solicit donations of used clothing or associated products.
- Are not actively involved via their own staff or volunteers or under the name of the charity in one or more of the following, collection, sorting, retailing, exporting of used clothing and associated products or providing clothing to the public for charitable purposes.
- Have not been actively involved within the industry as described above for a minimum of twelve months prior to seeking membership of NACRO.

There is no doubt that without the recycling activities of the charitable recycling organisations (the proceeds from which fund welfare programs), both State and Federal governments would have significantly higher social costs in addition to a marked increase in volume of landfill, the management of which would be funded through increased taxes and a commensurate bureaucracy.

## 4 About the Charitable Recycling Industry

The multi-billion dollar worldwide recycling industry performs a vital social and environmental function. The industry has no peer in terms of conserving the world's resources while the various stages of the recycling process provide significant employment around the world.

It is estimated that Australian charity recyclers divert two billion items (more than 300,000 tonnes) of clothing from landfill each year through recycling donation bins, household collections and in-store donations. These are collected at no cost to councils or government. Some 75 percent is able to be recirculated through charity op shop, donated to those in need, reprocessed into functional textiles or sent to developing nations.

There is increasing recognition by informed councils of the contribution charity op shops make in reducing the volume of items that go to landfill and a number of local authorities are now counting the volume of second-hand goods sent for reuse and recycling that can be measured towards their recycling targets. Without charity shops and processing facilities providing for large-scale reuse and recycling, these unwanted items would inevitably find their way into the waste stream to be treated by local authorities as household waste.

Recycling of second hand goods is by means of community donations deposited into charity recycling donation bins, thousands of which are located across Australia, direct household collections and drop-offs directly to charity op shops.

Depending on size, logistics and location, each charitable recycling organisation has developed its own system for dealing with donated product. People who are keen to donate clothes to charity are advised to call the charity and ask advice and/or for locations of drop off centres. In some cases they can go straight to the shop. Some charities will pick up furniture and larger items. Overall, clothes are carefully evaluated and sorted for quality and marketability.

The final destination of an op shop quality item is determined using demographic understanding and marketing aimed to maximise income for the charity. In some suburbs, clothes can command a higher price, as they are more likely to appeal to the local market. Certain op shops quickly move surf and youth wear; others specialise in retro; others have attracted a loyal following by selling high-end designer label products; and some stores are amply stocked with plus-sizes and children's wear.

## 5 Donation practices

Giving clothes and furniture is a great way of helping out the community. Whether it is personal clothes, furniture and household items or items from a workplace, these donations can make a great difference to an individual or organisation.

The fact remains that we live in a consumer society and there will always be a need for councils to manage the issues surrounding post-consumer waste. A short-term fix of banning recycling donation bins is not the answer! The challenge is to change community attitudes and behaviour in support of sustainability, through education for responsible donating practices.

Charity recycling donation bin sites are often used as a dumping site for rubbish and soiled items. The cost of recycling and disposal of this material is a serious financial burden to the charitable institutions, effectively diverting funds away from welfare programs into waste disposal costs. The members of NACRO advocate for responsible donating.

#### 5.1 Community awareness - an ill-advised community

Australians' attitudes toward waste issues are complex and constitute a barrier to improved resource recovery. The increased use of recycled materials in products and the increased recovery of material for recycling can be achieved with an educated public.

The introduction of "pay-as-you-throw" charges for the use of a local dump or transfer station a few years ago coupled with a level of community laziness, increased the amount of unusable donations to the charities as households attempt to avoid these costs. One large charity alone spends (annually – nationwide) approximately \$5 million on cleaning up waste which is mainly dumped on it, in one form or another. Of that amount, it estimates that approximately \$2 million goes towards landfill expenses, which is obviously only part of the overall waste-cost it faces. On top of this, drivers are paid to remove rubbish from around collections bins and when received, the charities have the additional cost of sorting and sending and paying for landfill fees. It is estimated that the real cost to the charitable recycling organisations (including wages) is close to \$20 million per annum. There is no doubt that the cost of an ill-advised community is a cost to the charitable recycling organisations. Any efforts to lessen this objectionable impost would be an intelligent and worthy undertaking.

Members of NACRO believe that a prominently located recycling donation bin is currently the most effective method of collecting post consumer waste. The advantages of regulating the industry under a council policy framework include:

- Convenience of location and out of hours access for residents reducing illegal dumping
- Reduced material placed out for hard rubbish collection
- Reduced landfill demand
- Meet the requirements of councils to recycle more of residents unneeded goods
- Relative ease of policing sites and compliance with local bylaws
- Supports the environment through providing avenues for recycling useful products
  - Reduces the use of scarce resources, especially energy and water, by giving many of the donated goods a second life
  - Provides the community with an opportunity to support the work of charities through donating their unneeded goods
  - Assists local councils to meet their target of reduced landfill
- Provides opportunities for volunteering and employment

Indeed, there are thousands of recycling donation bins located across Australia on council, school and church grounds. Recycling donation bins are usually dispatched from a collection depot that services a designated region. Once full, the recycling donation bins are emptied and the contents transported to a depot where they are sorted and graded before being sent to various charity shops (or exported overseas) according to quality and the need of the community. Some bin collection depots are large facilities employing drivers specifically to service the bin collection.

This policy was revised in August 2013 by NACRO for councils to consider adopting. NACRO reserves the right to change this policy as it sees fit and is not liable for any loss or expenses incurred as a result of any changes.

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