

Case Study: Albury Recycling Centre

COUNCIL NAME

Albury City Council

WEB ADDRESS

alburycity.nsw.gov.au

POPULATION

51,722

Overview

The Albury Recycling Centre is a state of the art recycling facility which aims to divert 14,000 tonnes of waste from landfill each year through improved access and onsite processing methods for recyclable material. The facility includes an area to separate recyclable materials from the general waste stream, a dismantling and processing area and a retail space for the sale of second hand goods.

Background

The life expectancy of Albury's putrescible landfill was estimated at around 15 years. To manage this limited landfill life, Albury City Council set an ambitious goal to halve waste going to landfill by 2020. To achieve this goal as well as established state targets, the Albury Recycling Centre was identified as a key deliverable.

Other than diverting waste from landfill, other benefits associated with the Recycling Centre included reduced waste/recycling transport costs, increased control over waste streams, safer access for the community, improved quality of recyclables, improved management of problem wastes and a recycling facility which will operate beyond the life of the landfill.

Council also saw the Recycling Centre as an opportunity to engage the community about recycling. As such, a comprehensive behaviour change program called *Halve Waste* was established to complement the facility and to shift the community from landfill dependent behaviour to a recycling culture.

Implementation

Council committed to the project by listing the Albury Recycling Centre in its operational plan and by establishing project funding. The project was funded through Council's general funds (overall budget \$2.4 million), with assistance from the *Waste Less, Recycle More* initiative for the Community Recycling Centre component of the project (\$214,000).

Project scoping commenced in 2014, when extensive research of existing facilities in NSW and Victoria was carried out. Many sites were visited and expertise sought from other organisations which had undertaken similar projects. This provided the project team with insights into what does and doesn't work in practice and led to a design which was fit for purpose.

A capital works schedule was then established for a two-staged process. Stage 1 included construction of the Recycling Centre and Stage 2 included an upgrade to the road infrastructure leading to and surrounding the facility. Stage 1 construction commenced in April 2016 and the facility was opened to the public in November 2016.



The facility includes three separate areas, with a total shed size of 4,200 square metres:

Shed 1: An area to separate materials from the general waste stream

Shed 2: An area for dismantling, loading and processing

Shed 3: A retail space for the sale of second hand goods

REFERENCES

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc1b5RXBLUY>

Materials accepted at the Albury Recycling Centre include cardboard, polystyrene, electronic waste, gas cylinders, paints, oils, lighting/fluoros, batteries, commingled recycling, hard and soft plastics, mattresses, clothing, reuseable furniture and goods suitable for resale. All items are removed from residents vehicles as they enter the Recycling Centre and prior to accessing the tipping area. Recyclable goods are then placed in open cages which are moved for baling or off site processing. Any goods found suitable for reuse are set aside for the not-for-profit organisation who manages the second hand goods shed.

Outcomes

In the 5 months following opening of the facility, 16,944 tonnes of material was received from small vehicles. In this time, the facility diverted 10,892 tonnes from landfill. This represents a 64% diversion rate from landfill.

An unforeseen outcome of the project was the level of community interest and support for the facility. Although the community need to load their trailers more carefully for the new facility, the increased ability to divert waste has been taken up. The community also supports the reuse shop which is an alliance with a not-for-profit organisation. Not only can community members find excellent second hand goods, this space provides employment opportunities for 8 local people with disability. These people work in the reuse area receiving goods, providing customer service, repairs and constructing pallet furniture.

A longer term outcome of the Albury Recycling Centre is the provision of a community facility for the long term, beyond the life of the landfill.

Key Learnings

Other, related projects have stemmed from the Albury Recycling Centre project. Waste staff are now working with the cultural department staff in Council to provide opportunities for artists to work onsite. They are also developing school programs for students to learn skills in customer service and other hands on skills associated within the reuse shop. The reuse shop also provides an avenue for employment for local people with disability.

Albury City Council will continue to construct the final stage of the project, which will remove public access to the tipping face and provide an undercover push pit facility and weighbridge.

Contact

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This project was the 2017 winner of the Resource Recovery Award at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards