

Case Study: Northern Sydney community recycling centre

COUNCIL NAME

Northern Sydney
Regional Organisation
of Councils (NSROC)

WEB ADDRESS

www.nsroc.com.au

Overview

Five councils in northern Sydney have partnered to establish a Community Recycling Centre (CRC) on commercial premises. No council had available operational land suitable to establish a facility, so Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils arranged a lease of a suitable commercial premises. Working together has allowed resource sharing between councils, increased the efficiency of problem waste collection and helps to reduce the illegal dumping of problem wastes.

Background

Northern Sydney Regional Waste Strategy aims to manage problem wastes through establishing three CRCs in the region by 2021. Hornsby Shire Council is setting up a CRC at the northern end of the region. Another site was sought to cater for residents on the lower north shore. Artarmon was considered suitable as it is centrally located and the zoning permits waste facilities.

Four councils were already supporting Chemical Clean Out events in conjunction with the EPA, and the events were increasing in popularity. The one council which no longer ran such events was regularly asked by residents to restore the service. The key objective of this project was to provide accessible and affordable problem waste disposal facilities for the region.

Implementation

A governance framework provided a transparent process which enabled the five partner councils and NSROC to work collectively to set the project objectives and oversee implementation. A Deed of Agreement was established to clarify each partner's responsibilities and roles. Signing the deed demonstrated each party's acceptance of its obligations and ensured that each partner could budget for its own resource contributions in the knowledge that the remaining funds were guaranteed. A Committee of Management was established to provide oversight for the site acquisition and development as well as the ongoing operation of the CRC.

As project manager, NSROC investigated potential sites, undertook negotiations with owners of potential sites, engaged consultants to prepare the development application documentation, engaged contractors to undertake the building works, worked with North Sydney Council in establishing the operational procedures and facilitated meetings of the Committee of Management.

The CRC primarily targets residents of the project partners (Hunter's Hill, Lane Cove, North Sydney, Ryde and Willoughby councils) but the service is offered to anyone bringing domestic quantities of the relevant wastes.

REFERENCES

[www.nsroc.com.au/
recyclingcentre](http://www.nsroc.com.au/recyclingcentre)

The EPA provided funding assistance of \$150,000 towards the full establishment costs of \$190,000. Site rental costs are \$260,000/year and staffing and operational costs are \$300,000/year.

Outcomes

This project delivered a shared CRC facility that the partnering councils could not have resourced independently. Successful partnerships have been formed between the five councils at Councillor, General Manager and staff levels to plan and deliver the new facility and service to residents.

The lease arrangements and agreements with the NSW EPA ensures that the CRC itself will continue for at least another 4-5 years provided it continues to be valued by the community. The partners will continue to promote the CRC with ongoing assistance from the NSW EPA.

Apart from providing a service to residents for their problem wastes, the CRC also provides a facility where the five councils can safely drop off problem wastes illegally dumped within their LGA, as well as wastes (eg phones, household batteries) dropped off for recycling at libraries and other community facilities.

In the longer term the CRC is expected to become more and more popular as more residents become aware of it. It is also anticipated that a wider range of wastes could be accepted, provided that it does not cause a detrimental impact on the capacity to handle the core wastes in the agreement with the NSW EPA.

Key Learnings

The CRC partnership across five councils builds on the success of the recent Regional Waste Processing and Disposal Contract in demonstrating that cross-council cooperation can be beneficial and cost effective, even for complex projects. Systems and processes developed for these projects can be applied or adapted to meet future opportunities. The involvement of General Managers in the process increases the likelihood that elements of the project can be transferred to other areas of the councils.

The next steps are to promote the CRC within the five LGAs and monitor usage to better understand the community's requirements and the capacity of the site to accept a broader range of wastes. This project will also inform the development of the CRC in Hornsby Shire Council area.

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