

# Case Study: Lachlan Shire Waste Services Rationalisation

## COUNCIL NAME

Lachlan Shire  
Council

## WEB ADDRESS

[www.lachlan.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lachlan.nsw.gov.au)

## SIZE

14,965 square  
kilometres

## POPULATION

6,767

## Overview

Prior to rationalisation, Council had eight waste facilities, spread out over 15,000 km<sup>2</sup>, seven of which were unmanned and open 24/7. This represented a significant risk to the environment and a significant Work Health and Safety (WHS) risk for Council. In response, Council developed a Waste Action Plan which resulted in the closure of two facilities, introduced a kerbside collection service in some villages for the first time and constructed bin banks for rural residents. This has resulted in a significant reduction in waste being brought in from outside the Shire and significantly minimised Council's WHS exposure. Council has also introduced fees and charges for the disposal of waste, prompting residents to consider the waste they generate and alternatives to disposal.

## Background

Council's isolated waste facilities were in very bad shape. On a number of occasions trucks loads of troublesome wastes, such as used tyres, were dumped in Council's facilities in the dark of night. Fires at Council's landfills were a regular occurrence. The areas surrounding the waste facilities were also in poor environmental condition.

Council's Community Strategic Plan highlights the need for Council to have a modern waste management system and facility rationalisation goes a long way toward achieving this outcome.

Works associated with the rationalisation project were funded by the EPA's Waste Less Recycle More grants. Without these funds it would have been very difficult for Council to undertake the works.

The project has achieved three main objectives:

1. *Provide a more efficient service for less and reduce the number of facilities managed by Council without reducing the level of service to the community.* Although waste facilities in three villages were closed, Council was able to provide an efficient waste service by providing residents with a kerbside collection service.
2. *Reduce Impacts on the environment.* By closing three waste facilities and diverting this waste to larger waste facilities that are now controlled by Council staff, impacts on the environment are minimised. Fires in waste facilities are now a very rare occurrence.
3. *Reduce WHS risk for the Council.* Council staff now provide supervision for waste facilities meaning that access to waste cells is now precluded and potential risks are quickly addressed.



Waste cells before makeover



Tullibigeal Waste Facility after makeover

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## Implementation

1. A consultant was engaged to draft the Waste Action Plan.
2. Public Exhibition of Plan - a series of meetings were held in towns and villages in the shire to explain the Plan and to encourage submissions in the exhibition period.
3. Information about the implementation of the Plan was disseminated over an extended period of 18 months by letterbox drops, newsletters, newspaper advertisements, radio news stories and signage at waste facilities.

The project occurred over a two year period and cost Council approximately \$290,000.

## Outcomes

- Closure of Albert, Derriwong and Fifield waste facilities, with kerbside collection services introduced in those villages.
- Bin banks were also installed in the above villages as a disposal option for rural residents.
- The remaining waste facilities are locked when not supervised by Council staff.
- Installation of air-conditioned site facilities (office and bathroom) at each supervised site.
- Installation of CCTV cameras at supervised sites - images sent back to the Condobolin office via mobile phone network.
- An unanticipated outcome was minimal illegal dumping.

Long term outcomes are many, including:

- Ratepayers now minimise their waste in order to reduce disposal costs.
- Local businesses such as supermarkets now pay to have boxes and other recyclables collected and taken to other towns for recycling. This has significantly reduced the amount of waste landfilled.

## Key Learnings

Other councils have indicated that they will emulate the efforts of Council in the rationalisation of their own facilities. This has numerous ongoing benefits for the environment in the region. Council has freely shared its Waste Action Plan and has spent time helping other councils with their own journey. Council also spoke at the Waste 2016 Conference (Coffs Harbour) and a number of councils have followed up in relation to the project.

Council will continue to manage the supervised sites. There is also an added advantage of Council staff educating waste facility users. Council will now turn its efforts to developing recycling strategies for the Shire, which have to date not happened due to isolation and distance from reprocessors and markets.

## Contact

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**This project was the 2016 winner of the Waste Education and Communication Award at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards**