

Bin Tagging Education Program – FAQs



Bin Tagging Education Program – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the program about?

The Town of Cottesloe is implementing a bin audit and education program with support from the Western Metropolitan Regional Council (WMRC), as part of the State Government's Better Bin program. The program is aimed at educating residents about how to use the 3 bin system and provides individual feedback to improve residents' efforts at home.

The bin audit and education program is modelled on the South Australian program and has also been successfully carried out in a number of WA councils. The process of bin auditing is about educating households through direct feedback, without intending to invade the privacy of the properties involved in the program.

How will it work?

Community Waste Education Officers will make a quick visual inspection of the contents of the top of the recycling and refuse bins presented for collection on bin day.

Following this visual inspection, Officers will place a 'happy' or 'sad' tag on the handle of the bin, providing feedback and more detailed information about the use of the bins or what can be improved.

Why is the program being undertaken?

Recycling is a shared responsibility, and by everyone working together to ensure they put the right thing in the right bin we can send less waste to landfill, recycle more and reduce processing costs.

By providing feedback to residents we can help to clarify any misconceptions or confusion residents may have about the 3 bin system, while also offering positive reinforcement to households sorting their waste correctly.

Results from an audit of Cottesloe household bins in May 2017 found residents have a good understanding of their Greens bin (green lid) which had very little contamination, the Recycling (yellow lid) and General Waste (red lid) bins recorded higher levels of contamination indicating there is room for improvement through this education program.

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What do you look for when you inspect the bins?

Community Waste Education Officers will check each bin presented for collection for contamination (wrong items in the bin), such as recyclables in the red-topped General Waste bin, or contamination in the yellow-topped Recycling bins.

Officers will not be 'rummaging' through the bins, rather they will be aiming to gain a general overview of how the household is sorting their waste. Bins are only inspected to the point of determining the kind of items in the bin and Officers will not be looking at any resident's personal information.

If you are concerned about placing personal information in your kerbside bins at any time we recommend shredding or tearing up sensitive documents before placing into the appropriate bin.

What kind of feedback will I receive?

The tags are designed with 'happy' and 'sad' faces to indicate whether the bins are being used correctly or incorrectly, and will be in line with the bin lid colours – yellow for the Recycling bin and red for the General Waste bin. For example, if the Recycling bin is inspected and is free of contamination, you will receive a yellow tag with a happy face thanking you for doing the right thing.

If items are placed into the wrong bin, a sad face tag will be attached to your bin with details of which items were placed into the wrong bin and how to put the right thing in the right bin.

What information is recorded, and how is it used?

For each inspection, Officers record details of any contamination present in each bin and the level of contamination. After data is collected from each round of auditing it will be analysed as a whole by the WA Local Government Association (WALGA). Community results will be reported, rather than individual households.

Information about what is being placed in each bin is important for us to understand the key issues that need to be addressed when educating the community.

What happens if households keep putting the wrong things in the bin?

The program will focus on education rather than enforcement, and similar programs in other Local Government areas have shown most residents are interested in doing the right thing when it comes to separating their waste if given the correct information.

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In a small number of cases where residents' bins show repeated high contamination following several visits, the bin will not be collected. A tag informing the resident the bin was not able to be collected will be attached to the bin, listing the contaminants and requesting they be removed before contacting the Town to have the bin collected. The bin will also be taped shut to let waste truck drivers know not to empty it.

The program is focused on education however the Town may follow up any serious ongoing issues.

NOTE – if your bin is taped shut you will need to remove any contaminants and contact the Town to arrange collection.

How are the areas selected for the program?

Areas have been chosen to ensure a representative sample of Cottesloe's dwelling types. This is important to understand the key issues to focus on when educating the community.

Not all households in Cottesloe will be involved in the program.

How is the program funded?

The program is funded by the State Government through the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account, and administered by the Waste Authority WA (www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au).

Further information?

If you would like further information please contact the Town of Cottesloe on 9285 5000 or email council@cottesloe.wa.gov.au.