

## Frequently Asked Questions

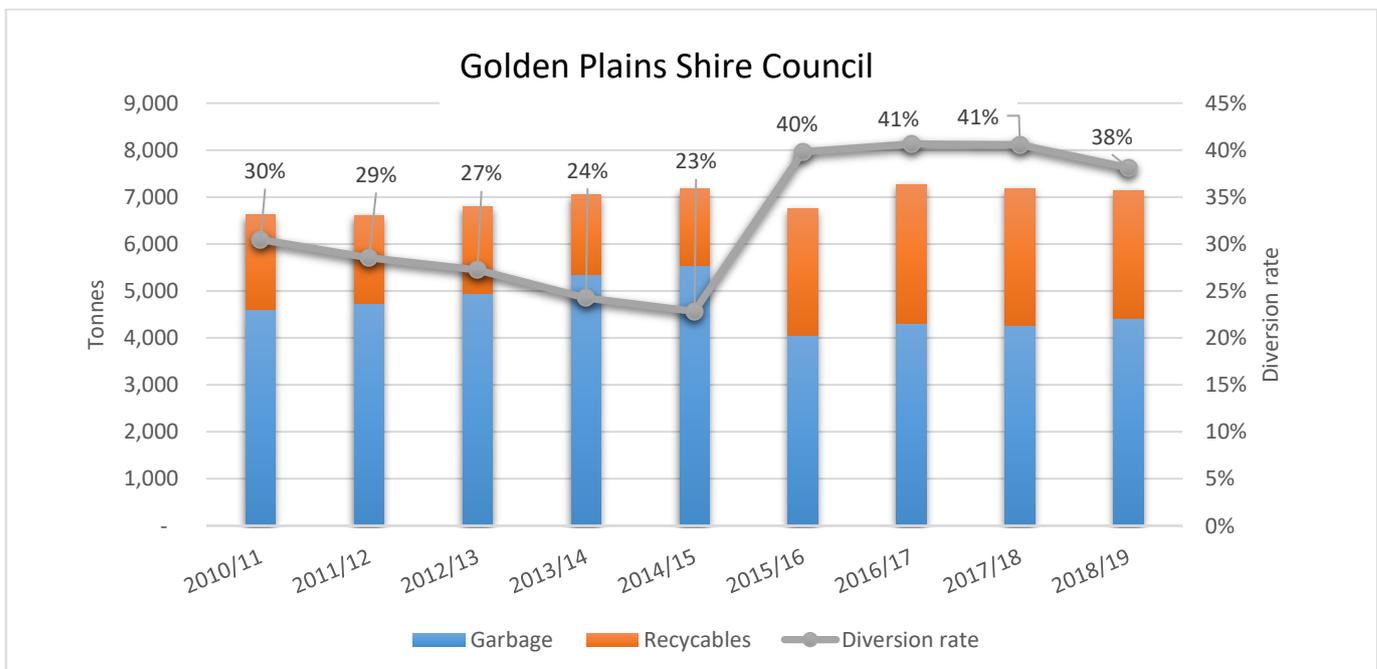
### What is a diversion rate and why is it important?

A diversion rate represents the amount of waste that is diverted from landfill and is processed by another means, such as recycling or composting. It is an important measure of the success of a waste management system, which allows for monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement. Waste diversion rates are benchmarked against other local government authorities, as well as state and national averages and targets. Golden Plains Shire Council’s current diversion rate is 38%, meaning we divert 38% of the total amount of waste generated in our municipality, from landfill. This is below the state average diversion rate of 46%. Council is working towards meeting the state average in the next five years, with the aspirational target of no recoverable material to landfill.

### Why wasn’t a weekly garbage collection considered?

A weekly 120L garbage service option was considered, however it results in residents having the same bin capacity as they currently have with a fortnightly 240L service and an increase in collection vehicle movements for very little net benefit. A weekly 240L garbage service would result in a significant increase of waste to landfill and negates all of the positive outcomes of changing to a fortnightly garbage service in 2015. A weekly garbage service does not promote reduction in waste generation rates, in fact it increases waste being sent to landfill and decreases Council’s current diversion rate.

The survey conducted in 2018 and Council’s bin inspection program show that the current bin sizes are appropriate for the current collection cycles, with both the garbage and recycling bins between half-full and full on collection days. Furthermore, records of collected waste and diversion rates show that the implementation of the current system in 2015 increased the waste diversion rate from landfill from 23% to 40% (see figure below). The amount of garbage collected also reduced, which translates to a reduction in waste to landfill.



### **Why wasn't a hard waste service considered?**

A hard waste collection service option was considered, however it would result in increased volumes of waste and reduced Council's diversion rate. This does not align with the Council and community objective to implement initiatives that reduce waste to landfill. The industry average of diversion from a hardwaste collection is 20%, meaning the remaining 80% is sent to landfill. When modelled, this could result in a 5% increase of waste sent to landfill.

### **Why weren't transfer station/tip vouchers considered?**

The option of providing transfer station vouchers was considered, however it would have resulted in increased volumes of waste and reduced Council's diversion rate. This does not align with the Council and community objective to implement initiatives that reduce waste to landfill. When modelled, this could result in a 14% increase of waste sent to landfill.

### **If implemented, when would a new service commence?**

It is envisaged that a new service would be introduced in July 2022 at the time Council's existing collection contracts expire. This would allow for a new service to be tendered as part of a package of kerbside collection services, ensuring best value for the community. It would also allow time for a comprehensive education campaign to be implemented to ensure residents are aware of the service changes and how to correctly use any new service.

### **If a new service is implemented, can I opt out of the service?**

The service would be compulsory for all habitable residential dwellings within the municipality or all seweraged dwellings (eg. not septic tank) in Bannockburn only, depending on the selected model. Therefore it would not be possible for a household to opt out.

### **Will the size of my garbage bin change?**

If a garden waste service is implemented, there will be no change to the size of your garbage bin. If a FOGO (Food Organics Green Organics) service is implemented, a new 120L bin will be supplied for garbage collection and your existing 240L (currently used for garbage collection) will have the lid changed to a lime green lid and will be used for FOGO collection.

### **What is Council doing to get the recycling out of people's garbage bins?**

Council is reviewing and improving its recycling education campaign to increase user understanding of how to recycle correctly and reduce contamination of the recycling stream. Council will implement a regular bin inspection/audit program to educate residents if they are incorrectly using their bins. Furthermore the collected information will be used to targeted education materials and campaigns to address commonly found contaminants.

### **Why hasn't Council done more to stop my recycling going to landfill when the recycling contractor closes?**

Council collects over 3,000 tonnes of recycling from households and businesses per year, which equates to over 2 truckloads of compacted recycling each day. There are a limited number of facilities that process recycling in Victoria. We have thoroughly investigated options and for a range of reasons, such as permit conditions, capacity and fire risk, other companies are not currently able to take on the extra materials. Council continues to work with neighbouring Councils, Municipal Association of Victoria and State Government agencies to develop potential solutions. All Victorian Councils contracted to SKM are in a similar situation, so we are working with the State and Federal Governments to come up with more sustainable long-term solutions for processing recycling locally.

### **Why are the service option prices subject to change?**

The service options have been modelled to the best of our ability, using current state government best practice guidelines, industry knowledge and local government experiences. Many factors that could impact the service option prices provided are outside of Council's control, such as state government fees and levies, private industry charges, availability of processing facilities and procurement processes.

**Why do I have to pay an additional fee for a garden or FOGO service if there is going to be diversion of waste from landfill resulting in associated cost savings?**

Council acknowledges that if a garden waste or FOGO service is implemented, there will be a cost saving as a result of diversion of waste from landfill. The associated landfill savings have been calculated and factored into the service cost of each proposed option.

**Why has Council presented service options that involve only Bannockburn?**

Almost one-third of the Shire's residents live in our largest and fastest-growing township Bannockburn and diverting this waste from landfill will have a significantly positive impact on the environment. Many new residents to Bannockburn have relocated from metropolitan areas and have previously had a garden and/or food waste collection.

Waste bins in our urban areas have significant amounts of garden waste that is not present in nearly the same quantities in rural bins. The bin audit results show that organic material in garbage bins differs quite substantially between urban and rural bins. They both contain on average 48% organic material, however rural bins contained predominately food waste (40%) with a very small amount of garden waste (8%). Urban bins had very similar proportions of food waste (21%) and garden waste (27%). These results may indicate that rural properties most likely manage garden waste on their property. Council wanted to be equitable and provide the same service options for both Bannockburn and the whole of shire to gauge the community's interest in receiving such services.

**What happens to garden and food waste after it is collected?**

Garden and food waste is collected from the kerbside by a collection vehicle and transported to a processing facility. After arriving onsite, the first step is to remove all plastic bags and non-organic material by hand, and it is usually mulched onsite. It is then processed by suitable composting methods to produce a nutrient rich soil additive, which is used by local farms, horticulture, vineyards and landscaping.