

1 Why collect waste and recycling data?

This guidance note forms part of a series of resources to assist local governments with the collection and reporting of waste and recycling data. The remaining guidance notes and case studies can be downloaded from www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/publications/lg-resources.



Good data collection means collecting data that is relevant, credible and informative. Most local governments will want to collect waste and recycling data primarily to monitor and evaluate local waste management services and initiatives. Enough data of sufficient quality will need to be collected to be reliable for decision making and evaluation.

Some common rationales for why organisations collect, monitor and evaluate waste and recycling data are listed here. In addition to these, the standard data that local governments (LGs) are required to collect and submit to a range of Government agencies is presented overleaf to provide a comprehensive overview of the destinations and purposes for waste data provision.

Waste and recycling data can help to:

Measure performance	Waste and recycling data is required to measure progress against specific waste management objectives and targets.
Troubleshoot	Data can identify both successful waste management processes as well as highlight problem areas. If nothing is being monitored then these areas will remain undiscovered. For example, data monitoring may identify whether disposal and recycling processes are working effectively, whether there are unseen liabilities and ensure that rebates are being received and correct charges applied.
Communicate	Data can help to inform stakeholders including Councillors, the community, customers and management about significant achievements in waste services and initiatives.
Inform	Western Australia is working to establish a clearer picture of waste disposal and recycling across the State. When the National Waste Policy or other national comparisons of waste and recycling data have been compiled, the figures for WA have been extrapolated from levy data for the Perth metropolitan area. The better the information available across the State, the more realistic a picture can be provided for WA and for comparison with other states. At a State Government level, the Waste Authority can currently only broadly estimate levels of activity and therefore only broadly estimate the future requirements of LGs in metropolitan Perth and across the rest of WA.
Plan	By understanding current performance in each operational area, it is possible to identify the best way to streamline systems or increase recycling services. Good data will enable business cases to be established to justify funding for a new recycling scheme when funding opportunities arise. When LG decides to apply for specific funding (to establish a new recycling system or to set up new infrastructure) the waste information provided by a good data management system will be critical to establishing the business case.

How is LG waste data used by government agencies?

At all levels of government, agencies use waste and recycling data to inform policy development, including to make decisions about funding programs for improvement and providing transparency and credibility to performance on a regional and national basis.

Agencies that use local government waste data from Western Australia include:

- Waste Authority
- Commonwealth Department of the Environment,
- Department of Environment Regulation(WA)
- Department of Planning (WA)
- WA Local Government Association (WALGA)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

WA Local Governments' waste data are also used to inform future policy through the Western Australian Local Government Association's (WALGA) research and policy development projects. Examples of two projects that relied upon data from the Local Government Census are discussed below.

For both of these projects it was vital that WALGA had good information on what LGs are currently collecting through both kerbside and vergeside systems. Evaluation of the project outcomes will require future datasets from the Census.

1. Improving outcomes from kerbside recycling systems (2013/14)

The aims of this project were to increase recovery of recyclables and to decrease contamination. The project implementation took the form of a communications campaign.

WALGA compared the contamination rates of the various systems in use and the yields from different LG areas. The areas for the campaign could then be prioritised. The Census information also provided an understanding of the challenges of increasing the recycling rate for LG.

2. Better practice approaches for vergeside collections (2013/14)

For its vergeside collection project, WALGA used the data to identify the varying yields associated with different approaches to vergeside collections. Historic and future LG data will need to be compared to provide an important measure of success. The data will identify which vergeside collection systems have higher contamination and which systems have better recovery.

Most data information is made publicly available through relevant websites. The Waste Authority is provided with relevant data from other organisations eg landfill levy data from DER.

Reporting requirement	Description	Data type	Submitted to	Submission frequency	Data use	Compulsory	Links
Annual LG Census on waste and recycling	Annual census of LG in WA on waste and recycling services	Municipal solid waste and recyclables	Waste Authority	Annual Due every September	To collect quality data in consistent format for reporting, identification of trends, opportunities, risks for local and State governments, track issues and priorities, to inform policy, programs and allocate funding	Consequence of non-completion is ineligibility to access funding from the WARR Account	www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/programs/data/ www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/programs/data/tools-for-local-government-data/
Annual survey of LG recycling - National Environmental Protection Measure (NEPM) for Used Packaging Material	DER is a signatory to the Australian Packaging Covenant (APC)	Recycling rates of consumer packaging from residences	National Environment Protection Council	Annual	To facilitate initiatives for resource conservation and recovery of consumer packaging and paper in households and away-from-home premises Consequence of non-completion could result in increased monitoring / reporting under the NEPM-UPM	Yes for LGs operating a kerbside recycling collection service NOTE: Census will report on behalf of LG	www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/programs/funded-programs/australian-packaging-covenant www.der.wa.gov.au/your-environment/waste
Survey for WA Recycling Activity Review	Annual review of recycling activity across WA (focus on commercial reprocessors)	Quantities, sector and source of recycled materials and activities	Waste Authority	Annual Due every August	To collect quality data for reporting, identification of trends, opportunities and risks for local and State governments, and industry; to inform policy, programs, education campaigns, development of regulations and standards	Consequence of non-completion is ineligibility to access funding from the WARR Account	http://www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au/publications/category/data

Reporting requirement	Description	Data type	Submitted to	Submission frequency	Data use	Compulsory	Links
Landfill levy data	Information reported from landfills receiving metropolitan waste	Tonnes or volume of waste to landfill from metro area for MSW, C&I, C&D	DER	Quarterly each year	To enable DER to issue invoices for payment of the landfill levy (legal requirement) To fulfil requirements for data reporting to Australian Government	Yes for all LGs operating landfills that receive metropolitan waste. Legislated requirement	www.der.wa.gov.au/your-environment/waste
Waste to landfill reports (rural LGs)	Data provided by local governments in rural / regional areas on waste to landfill under licence conditions	Dependent on landfill licence conditions, usually waste to landfill (categorised where possible)	DER	As per licence conditions Generally annual	To ensure licence conditions being met To collect quality data in consistent format for reporting, identification of trends, opportunities and risks for local and State governments, and industry To provide data for reporting when requested by Australian Government departments on waste to landfill	Yes where stated in licence conditions for LGs operating rural / regional landfills Consequence of non-completion is breach of licence conditions	
Contributions to the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program	Data from the HHW Program whereby local governments manage and provide locations for residents to drop off hazardous chemicals for recycling / disposal	Household hazardous waste collected from 14 drop-off facilities across the State Note: the LG Census on waste and recycling captures this information and is reported by DER to WALGA	WA Local Government Association (WALGA)	WALGA submits report to Waste Authority annually. Data collected from LGs quarterly Annual within 3 months following financial year	To report to Waste Authority on funding costs, outcomes and administration of HHW program	Yes for LGs with permanent drop off facilities Consequence of non-completion is ineligibility for funding for subsequent rounds of HHW collections	walga.asn.au/ProductsServices.aspx?CategoryId=168 www.wastenet.net.au/programs/hhwprog
National Litter Index	Australia's national, annual, quantitative measure of what litter occurs where and in what volume	Littering incidences DER will report if Census is completed from LG Rangers records	Keep Australia Beautiful	Annual Due every September	To gauge effectiveness of KABC litter campaigns To identify how to develop better partnerships with the community, government and industry to further tackle the litter issue	No but recommended if available	kab.org.au/litter-research/national-litter-index-2/
National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Scheme (NGERS)	Provision of data and accounting on direct/indirect greenhouse gas emissions	Data on emissions from waste to landfill e.g. methane	Australian Government Department of the Environment	Annual	To underpin the carbon price mechanism To inform policy-making and the Australian public To meet international reporting obligations To provide a single national reporting framework for energy and emissions	Yes for landfills accepting in excess of 25,000 tonnes of waste	www.climatechange.gov.au/climate-change/greenhouse-gas-measurement/national-greenhouse-and-energy-reporting
Controlled Waste Tracking System (CWTS)	Tracks disposal of controlled waste to LG landfills and private operators licensed to accept and dispose of / treat controlled wastes	Location of disposal, area on site of disposal, type and amount of controlled waste disposed of	DER	Each disposal reported by LGs (and industry); input to CWTS by DER	To track the location and amount of controlled waste disposed of for environmental protection	Yes for LGs (and industry) licensed to accept controlled wastes Consequence of non-completion is breach of licence conditions	cwts.der.wa.gov.au/main/cwps.cfm?MODULE=main&MESSAGE=0&stmp=1383646670252
National Pollution Inventory (NPI)	Applies to large landfills and Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) if emitting stated substances	Emission estimates for 93 toxic substances and the source and location of these emissions	NPI section of DER Data forwarded to the Australian Government	Annual Due every March	To track the emissions of toxic substances To provide data for reporting at a federal level under the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions	Yes for LGs operating large landfills and MRFs Consequence of non-completion are fines issued by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities	www.npi.gov.au/resource/national-pollutant-inventory-guide

