

The City of Newcastle (CN) undertakes a community survey on a quarterly (every three months) basis to better understand key issues, community needs and priorities regarding the services and facilities provided by the City.

The September 2019 spring edition is the fifth survey in this program and covered a range of topics relating to waste services and initiatives.

A total of 561 people took part.

Overall satisfaction with City of Newcastle waste service



Participants were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with waste services offered by City of Newcastle. A mean score of 4.0 out of 5 in terms of their satisfaction level toward CN's performance, with

89% saying that they are “satisfied/very satisfied”

with the services

8% have said that they were “dissatisfied/very dissatisfied”.

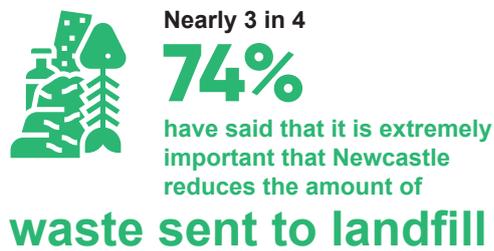
Results

Property ownership and household dwelling types

To build context for service assessments and to route respondents according to their level of experiences towards CN waste services, survey participants were first asked about their property ownership within City of Newcastle LGA, the composition of their households, the types of dwelling they live in and if they shared waste/ recycling bins with others.

General attitude towards waste reduction and recycling

Respondents were then asked to indicate their general attitude or aspiration towards landfill waste reduction for Newcastle. Principal observations:



suggesting a broad high consciousness towards reducing waste for the area



even if it incurs a slight inconvenience to them



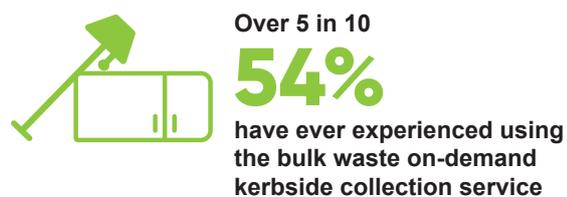
Just over 6 in 10
62%
claiming they would be “very likely” to do so

Compared to
75%
saying they would be very likely in managing waste better at home in general.

Types of CN waste services used

In order to ask participants their level of satisfaction towards CN waste services, they were first asked to indicate all the services they have ever used in the area. Key usage results:

Over 9 in 10 said they have used the kerbside bins



36% have accessed the bulk waste self-haul voucher service



Satisfaction ratings towards CN waste services used

Participants were then asked to provide their satisfaction rating for each of the specific services that they have used.

Satisfaction level is high at a broad level, with most aspects rated above a mean score of '4' point out of '5' on the satisfaction scale (score of 5 denoting "very satisfied" while score of 4 denotes "satisfied"):

Kerbside red lid bin (general waste)



85% rated that they are "satisfied/ very satisfied"

with this service, with a mean score of 4.1 out of 5 overall

Kerbside yellow lid bin (recycling)



88% rated that they are "satisfied/ very satisfied"

with this service, with a mean score of 4.2 out of 5 overall

Kerbside green lid bin (garden waste)



85% rated that they are "satisfied/ very satisfied"

with this service, with a mean score of 4.2 out of 5 overall

Upsized kerbside yellow lid bin (360-litre)



83% rated that they are "satisfied/ very satisfied"

with this service, with a mean score of 4.2 out of 5 overall

Household Chemical CleanOut drop off days (twice a year)



79% rated that they are "satisfied/ very satisfied"

with this service, with a mean score of 4.3 out of 5 overall

(please note though, the score rating is derived from a statistically small user base on n=14 only)

Free drop-off of scrap metal at Summerhill Waste Management Centre



85% rated that they are "satisfied/ very satisfied"

with this service, with a mean score of 4.2 out of 5 overall

Free e-waste drop-off at Summerhill Waste Management Centre



83% rated that they are "satisfied/ very satisfied"

with this service, with a mean score of 4.2 out of 5 overall

Free drop-off of household problem wastes at the Summerhill Community Recycling Centre



84% rated that they are "satisfied/ very satisfied"

with this service, with a mean score of 4.1 out of 5 overall

Free household battery, light globe and mobile phone recycling at selected Council buildings and libraries



85% rated that they are "satisfied/ very satisfied"

with this service, with a mean score of 4.3 out of 5 overall

The following services were rated with mean scores below 4 point out of 5:

240-litre upsized red lid bin



Nearly
30%

have said that they are “very dissatisfied”

with this service, bringing the average score down to 3.0 out of the 5-point scale) though it is important to note the score is made out of a statistically small user base for this service (n=19 only)

Bulk waste kerbside collection and waste drop-off at the Summerhill facility



also indicated rooms for improvement

(mean score of 3.7 and 3.6 respectively).

Awareness towards waste services not used

For every type of services participants have yet to experience so far, they were asked on awareness and whether they would consider using those relevant services offered by CN in the future:

1/3

have said they would likely not access the second bin option, indicating current bin provision is **sufficient for their household needs**



Relatively lower awareness towards free drop-offs for e-waste, problem waste and small electrical/ electrical items compared to other services offered.

There is opportunity to promote these more regularly as potential uptake is also comparatively higher with at least

40%

or more saying they would consider using such services in the future.

Kerbside collection services

Service contact



Nearly 6 in 10

59%

have said that they have not contacted CN for any additional request in the past year.

Those who have contacted CN for additional requests were (top three reasons):

29%

Due to accidental missed collection

To request for damaged bin replacements **13%**

6%

Due to obstacle preventing collection

Satisfaction levels towards response time

Participants were then asked to rate their satisfaction in terms of response time for every service(s) they contacted CN for:

A satisfaction mean score of 3.7 out of 5 were given towards response time for accidental missed collection with

15%

of participants saying they were **“very dissatisfied/ dissatisfied”**

with the response time

While nearly 8 in 10 have said that they are **“very satisfied/ satisfied”** with their bin replacement requests,

10%

were **“very dissatisfied”**, bringing the overall mean score to 3.8 out of 5

Aspects that are working well for kerbside collection

Participants were asked to provide open comments around what they felt to be working well with CN kerbside collection currently:



Over 1 in 2

54%

have said that they are happy/ satisfied with current services and that their needs are met (views are mainly based on basic the red/green/ yellow bin collection services)

Nearly

1/3

felt that the current service level is reliable/ regular – they can expect the service to take place at collection day (even if collection day happens to fall on a public holiday).

What should improve for kerbside collection

Participants were also asked to provide suggestions around CN kerbside collection services (3 bin service and bulk waste kerbside collections), if any. Suggestions raised through open comments were processed and categorised into key topics or themes, with main takeaways as follows:



14%

suggested a shorter wait time for

bulk waste collection

between booking and actual collection (most have raised concerns around mess and potential illegal dumping by others at site during the wait period)

Other suggestions are around reverting to the previous scheduled,

8%

twice yearly bulk waste kerbside collection

calling for more transparency around what happens to items collected **7%**

6%

and more initiatives around managing soft plastic/plastic items



Nearly 1 in 10

9%

would like to see

food/organic & composting initiatives

(similar to “Lake Macquarie council area”) though it is important to also highlight that there was a small cohort who suggest against any plans in reducing red bin collection (as a result of) hence any plans for such shifts would require effective community engagement strategies in place to manage polarised views within the community

City of Newcastle Community Recycling Centre



Slightly less than half (49%) of participants surveyed have said that they have experienced using CN Community Recycling Centre. Among those who have used the service:

72%

have said that they “agree/ strongly agree” that the staff at the centre were helpful and friendly

72%

are in agreement that the service is easy to use

26%

If anything, the main issue to users appears to be around the location(s) of the centres whereby 26% have said that they disagree/ strongly disagree to the “centres are conveniently located” statement.



Among the 51% of participants who said that they have not used the recycling centre, these were the top reasons given for their non-use:

38%

They did not have any chemical or hazardous waste to be sent to the centre

37%

They have not heard of the centre prior to the survey

24%

They are unsure of what items should be sent to such centres

17%
+7%

Location is an issue

Opening times are an issue

Waste and recycling education services

When asked on their awareness around CN's current waste and recycling program and services, participants have said the following:



Majority

77%

are aware of the waste services calendar



57%

are aware that waste and recycling information can be found on Council's website



Among other initiatives

43%

have seen printed information on waste/ recycling and 34% have heard of Clean Up Australia Day

10%

have said that they were not aware of any of these activities/ initiatives at all prior to the survey.

Participants were asked to indicate if it is important for CN to offer various waste/ recycling initiatives or programs to the community, even if they have not heard about the programs before the survey:



97%

thought that it is important for CN website to provide information on waste and recycling, effectively indicating that Council website is the main touchpoint for majority of residents for such topics



93%

of participants support recycling program at schools

87%

felt that waste service guides are key and so is Clean Up Australia Day.

Participants also had the opportunity to provide suggestions for education programs that Council could offer in the future. Top suggestions submitted include:



Food or organic waste and composting initiatives were proposed by

15%

of those who have submitted suggestion(s)



13%

would like to see greater efforts in educating the community around the appropriate types of wastes meant for the red, yellow and green bins

(including more advanced information or best practices around recyclable items e.g. plastic bottle caps, different types of plastic items etc.)

There are

7%

who are interested to know what happens to waste post-pickup or how waste is processed

8%

are calling for more effective touchpoints for promoting awareness and services to reach various cross-sections of the community

Preferred touchpoints for CN waste services

When asked about their preferred way of contacting Council for waste service requests,



Nearly half

48%

select phone which is the top preferred method



30%

followed by email

As to their preferred methods to receive information about waste services and programs, participants have said the following:



59%

chose the existing waste services guide, which is the top favourite



53%

preferred email while

47%

would turn to Council website – both methods making up the top three most popular channels of choice.