



Recycling Waste Service Community Update

5 February 2018

You may have heard recent reports of pressures impacting the recycling industry. We have put together some information to help our communities understand the issue and how this may affect waste management services.

Background

While much of Australia's recyclable material is processed in Australia, significant quantities are also exported to China.

China's recent 'National Sword Policy' means there are tighter restrictions on the importation of unsorted, dirty or contaminated household recyclables. This, combined with an increased focus on stockpiling practices at Victorian recycling processing sites, has created unique pressures on the industry.

We are now seeing the industry directly respond to this issue. Recycling processor Visy, who has existing contracts with several Victorian Councils, has begun to refuse accepting recyclable material from waste management contractors.

Does China's waste export ban affect Baw Baw Shire?

At present, this does not impact Baw Baw Shire Council operations.

Our kerbside waste and recycling collections are managed by Solo Resource Recovery. In turn, Solo Resource Recovery has an existing contract with Polytrade Recycling to process all the Shire's recycling material.

Polytrade Recycling have direct and indirect contracts with several Victorian Councils, and similarly to Visy, exports processed recycling material to China.

At this stage, Polytrade Recycling is continuing to accept and process recycling waste as usual. We ask our residents to continue recycling as normal as collection services will remain unchanged.

We are working with the Victorian Government and industry as a matter of urgency to ensure this matter will not impact our residents.

Where to from here?

This issue is not unique to Victoria, or even Australia. Many other countries also have a heavy reliance on the China export market and are equally impacted.

While China's import restrictions will impact the global recycling market over the short-term, ultimately it provides an opportunity to reset the way our recycling system operates to ensure it is sustainable in the long term.

With a growing population, this is also a good time to renew our focus on minimising the waste we generate and maximising use of recycled materials in our manufacturing and purchases.

As we continue to keep in contact with the Victorian Government, Local Government and industry, we will provide information to our community as it comes to hand.