



Armidale City Council, 2013

## Case Study Armidale City Council

# Bin Trim – Waste solutions for a sustainable business

Armidale City Council is committed to enhancing the local area’s social, economic and environmental qualities and the Council’s own offices needed to reflect that.

### What’s in the bin?

Cardboard, office paper, plastics, paper towels and food waste are the main forms of waste for Armidale City Council and, although some of these items were already being recycled, a quick Bin Trim assessment found more than half of these recyclables were being thrown into office, bathroom and kitchen general waste bins. In fact, the Council had the potential to recycle 40 per cent more. The Council set about fast-tracking its City to Soil initiative designed to recycle food waste not only in Council offices, but also in the wider community.

Priority materials for recycling or reuse:

- Paper
- Food waste
- Plastic containers

### Actions to reduce waste and recycle more

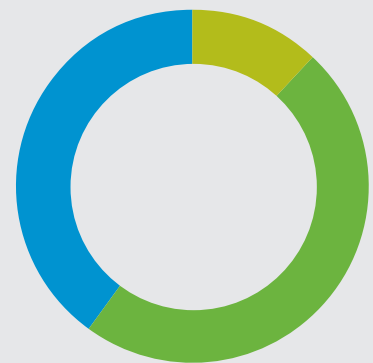
Although a worm farm already handled moderate amounts of the Council’s kitchen waste, the City to Soil initiative meant larger volumes of diverse waste could be diverted from general waste. City to Soil is a collection service of food waste, tea bags, meat, oil, paper towels and other organics. Waste is transformed into high quality compost with the goal of improving agricultural soil fertility on nearby farmland. The compost is sold to local growers on a cost recovery basis.

Raising awareness and making recycling easier was a simple and inexpensive way to engage staff to reduce waste. Providing paper-only bins in bathrooms alone diverted 62 kilograms a week from general waste. Most staff embraced the changes and worked with the program to separate waste at the new



### Potential recycling

Bin Trim identified that Armidale City Council had the potential to recycle 40 per cent more.



- 12% General waste
- 48% Currently recycled
- 40% Potential recycling

### Bin Trim savings

- 19.5 tonnes less general waste per year
- 13 tonnes more food waste composted per year
- \$7000 in savings from no longer buying desk bin liners and reducing caretaker hours



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recycling stations in the staff kitchens and across the floor. After three months, extra paper towel bins were installed in the kitchens to meet demand and to prevent the organics bins from filling up too quickly.

Actions implemented included:

- Changed bathroom bins to paper only
- Removed staff desk bins, initially on a voluntary basis to build support
- Installed/improved recycling stations in key locations
- Commenced City to Soil organics collection program
- Added paper towel bins in kitchens
- Educated and engaged staff through ongoing monitoring and communication of results to maintain positive recycling behaviours.

## Results and savings

Armidale City Council managed to increase its waste diversion rate from 48–68 per cent. These waste saving measures mean 38 per cent less waste is going to landfill. Eliminating desk bins mean 20,000 bin liners no longer have to be purchased and caretakers don't need to spend time emptying them – the Council has saved \$7000 as a result. The City to Soil initiative was particularly successful in saving more food scraps from the general waste, as well as large amounts of paper towels and tissues. "By introducing City to Soil we can support local growers, help the environment, reduce waste costs, improve soil fertility and keep organics out of landfill; the program has so much going for it," says Senior Engineer Utilities James Turnell. The City to Soil program has now been rolled out to 10,000 households in the Armidale area.



## For further information

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# What is your business really throwing away?

Download Bin Trim and see how you can save [epa.nsw.gov.au/bintrim](http://epa.nsw.gov.au/bintrim)

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