



Waste Service Charge Policy

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to guide decision-making on how Council charges for waste and recycling services through a Waste Service Charge.

Council is to implement a Waste Service Charge under the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) in the 2023/24 financial year.

2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Waste Service Charge is to provide a fair and transparent way to charge for the cost of waste and recycling services that is consistent with providing incentives for reducing waste and increasing recycling.

The Waste Service Charge relates to the following strategies in the Council Plan 2021-2025:

- 5.3.1: Identify, promote and implement viable recycling and resource recovery opportunities.
- 8.2.2: Ensure responsible financial and resource management to maintain Council's long term financial sustainability within a rate capping environment.

The key Council strategic document relating to waste reduction and recycling is the Waste Management Strategy – Rubbish to Resource! 2018-2028.

3 SCOPE

The Policy applies to the Waste Service Charge. Further detail on Council's approach to revenue and rating is detailed in Council's Revenue and Rating Plan.

4 DEFINITIONS

Council – Whitehorse City Council

FOGO – Council's food and garden organics service

5 POLICY

5.1 Components of the Waste Service Charge

The Waste Service Charge includes the following components:

Kerbside Waste Service Charge

This charge recovers the full cost of providing Council's kerbside waste and recycling collection services including:

- collection of bins
- running and maintaining collection trucks
- waste disposal and processing fees
- the waste levy charged by the State Government
- new and replacement bins
- direct costs of administering the services

The Kerbside Waste Service Charge is charged to all properties eligible for Council's kerbside bin services.

Council will decide on an annual basis what bin configuration forms part of the Kerbside Waste Service Charge. This may change as Council implements the State Government's circular economy plan, 'Recycling Victoria: a new economy' and considers changes to the frequency of collection and the implementation of additional bin services.

For example, the Waste Service Charge was first implemented from 1 July 2023 for the standard service of one 80 litre garbage bin collected weekly and one recycling bin collected fortnightly.

When Council makes available the FOGO service to all properties, as required by the State Government's circular economy plan, the standard FOGO bin will be included in the Kerbside Waste Service Charge, and any additional or optional FOGO bins will be charged as a Supplementary Bin.

Public Waste Service Charge

This charge is for a wide range of waste services that Council provides that benefit all residents:

- public place litter and recycling bins
- street cleaning
- drain cleaning
- waste and environmental education
- pre-booked hard waste collection services
- direct costs of administering the services

A Public Waste Service Charge is charged to all properties in Whitehorse even if the property does not have access to the kerbside service or hard waste service, on the basis that all ratepayers benefit from public waste services. This excludes non-rateable properties without kerbside Council bin services.

Supplementary Bin Charges

This charge is for supplementary services:

- To upsize bins from the standard Kerbside Waste Service Charge service; and
- For optional and additional bins.

5.2 Application of Waste Service Charge summary

All components of the Waste Service Charge are applied on a service charge basis where ratepayers pay the same amount for the same service.

The following table summarises applicable charges:

	Kerbside Waste Service Charge – plus applicable supplementary bin charges	Public Waste Service Charge
Rateable property with Council kerbside bin services	Yes	Yes
Rateable property without Council kerbside bin services (private waste services or no collections)	No	Yes
Non-rateable property with Council kerbside bin services – (except Council managed properties where decision is subject to lease arrangements)	Yes	Yes
Non-rateable property without Council kerbside bin services	No	No

5.3 Application of Waste Service Charge for property types

Residential Properties

All residential properties eligible to receive Council’s kerbside collection services are required to pay the Kerbside Waste Service Charge, Public Waste Service Charge, and any applicable Supplementary Bin Charges.

Properties that are required under a Planning Permit to engage private waste and recycling services do not pay the Kerbside Waste Service Charge. These are properties where the type and size of waste is not suitable for the Council services or the site is inaccessible for Council's waste collection vehicles. These properties are required to pay the Public Waste Service Charge.

Vacant Land, Construction Sites and Demolished Dwellings

Vacant land blocks, construction sites and demolished dwellings are not permitted to have or retain Council bins. These properties are required to pay the Public Waste Service Charge.

Newly Created Properties (division or amalgamation)

Newly created properties from a supplementary valuation process will be levied the Public Waste Service Charge on a pro-rata basis from the supplementary valuation operative date. This is consistent with the application of supplementary rates and charges as a result of a division or amalgamation.

Non-Rateable Properties

Non-rateable properties that use Council bins are required to pay the Kerbside Waste Service Charge and the Public Waste Service Charge, and applicable Supplementary Bin Charges.

5.4 Shared bin services

Those that have access to a bin will be charged for the service. If there is a desire for an individual bin, one will be provided if requested. There is no discount for shared bin services.

5.5 Pension concession

Eligible pension concession card holders are entitled to a pension concession or rebate for their general property rates up to an annual maximum amount. This concession is funded by the State Government.

There is no Waste Service Charge pensioner rebate.

5.6 Supplementary Bin Charge exemptions

People who require additional bin capacity due to a medical condition or disability may apply for a supplementary bin charge exemption.

5.7 Frequency of bin collection

The implementation of a Waste Service Charge does not limit Council changing the frequency of bin collection or any other service. For any service change, the actual cost of waste services will be recovered through the Waste Service Charges.

5.8 Late or non-payment of Waste Service Charges

Late or non-payment of Waste Service Charges will be treated the same as late or non-payment of other Council rates, charges and levies.

5.9 Adjustment of Waste Service Charges

Changes to bin configuration

Where there is an approved change to a property's bin configuration, the Waste Service Charge will be amended on a pro-rata basis. Pro-rata means that there will only be a charge for the period the Council bin service is located at the property.

This may occur when an owner makes a change to their bin configuration (e.g. requests an additional bin or changes the bin size), or when a Council bin audit identifies a bin configuration that differs from Council's waste service records.

Undercharging

Where a property owner is being undercharged, Council will issue a letter to the ratepayer to advise of the discrepancy. A grace period of twenty one days will apply to allow the ratepayer to make an adjustment to services, for example, return an additional recycling bin. Any applicable charges will commence effective from the date of the letter.

Overcharging

If a property owner notifies Council of an overcharge and the overcharge is verified, Council will credit the overcharged amount from the date of notification. If Council identifies an overcharge, it will issue a credit to the ratepayer for the affected period.

5.10 Changes to waste and recycling services

Property owners may lodge a maximum of two requests per financial year regarding changes to their bin configuration. This includes new bins and changes to bin sizes.

Exceptions may be granted where there is a change in ownership, a change in tenant, or other exceptional circumstance.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Waste Service Charge is the responsibility of Council's Revenue and Rates team and Waste Reduction and Recycling team.

7 RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1989

Local Government Act 2020

Local Government Legislation Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Act 2022

Whitehorse Waste Management Strategy – Rubbish to Resource 2018 – 2028

Whitehorse Council Plan

Whitehorse Revenue and Rating Plan

Whitehorse Annual Budget