



Balonne Shire Council

Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan - 2018

Executive Summary

The Queensland *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* (the Act) requires local governments to develop a Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan.

The aim of this plan is to fulfil Council's obligations under the Act through the implementation of efficient and effective waste management practices within the council area.

Council faces a number of key challenges generally and in managing waste moving forward, including:

- A general lack of data around waste management;
- A limited rate base covering a large area; and
- Changes to the management of water in Australia having an impact on established business and industry profiles in the region.

This Plan has been developed with a focus on Council developing robust data and information systems around its management of waste in order to allow it to make robust and informed decisions which result in appropriately targeted actions to improve the management of waste in the region.

The vision for this plan is:

To develop and implement an evidence-based approach for socially responsible continuous improvement in the management of waste as a resource.

Council has a number of key objectives for improving waste reduction and recycling in the region. These objectives respond to the key challenges for the Balonne Shire Council in achieving its and the State's waste management objectives.

Objective 1 - Data: Prepare an overarching data management system and processes which includes ongoing measurement and monitoring to allow for continual improvement.

Objective 2 – Landfill management: Develop a plan for the operation and closure of all landfill facilities.

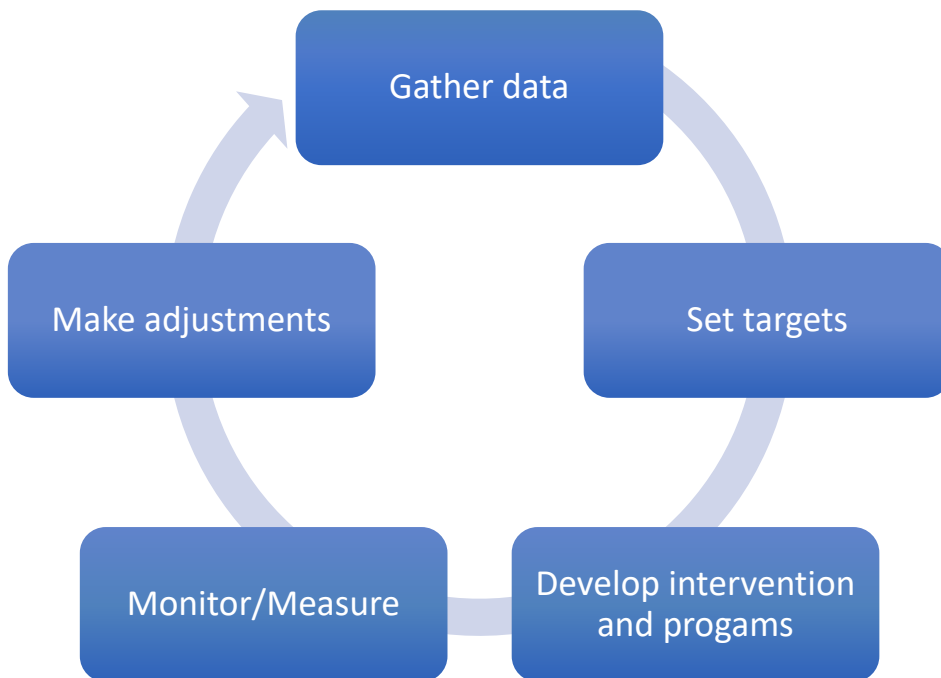
Objective 3 - Targets: Develop targets for key waste streams that relate to the Balonne context.

Objective 4 - Interventions: Develop programs and interventions to achieve key targets.

Objective 5 - Education: Develop and implement a public education and awareness program across a range of community and industry groups to minimise waste and maximise resource recovery.

Objective 6 – Financial sustainability: Develop an overarching financial and business model that results in a sustainable and robust management structure which allows transparency in forward planning of waste management.

The Plan will be reviewed at least every three (3) years and recognises that the first period (up until 2020) will be focused on Council obtaining appropriate information to allow it to better manage waste into the future in accordance with a continual improvement philosophy summarised in the figure below.



This approach allows Council to implement the Plan and to gather and develop the systems and data it will need moving forward in order to manage waste in a planned and informed manner.

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1. Introduction

Council's Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan (the Plan) has been prepared in accordance with the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* (the Act) and the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2011* (the Regulation).

This plan sets out the Council's intentions for managing waste and waste reduction and recycling in the region for the next 10 years. While the plan has been prepared with a 10-year horizon it will be reviewed in three (3) years in accordance with the Act.

Significant changes in Council's waste reduction and recycling needs, legislative requirements, technological advances and community needs may trigger additional reviews as required.

1.1. Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the plan is to provide Council and the community with the information required to effectively and efficiently undertake waste management in the Balonne Shire Council area in a manner that minimises environmental, economic and social impacts and meets the reasonable expectations of the community as well as legislative requirements. The plan complies with the Act and Regulation.

The targets for waste reduction and recycling as well as the actions to be taken to improve waste reduction and recycling are contained in this document.

1.2. Requirement for a Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan

A key requirement of the Queensland *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* (WRRRA 2011) is an obligation for local governments to prepare waste management plans, known as Waste Reduction and Recycling Plans (WRRP). A WRRP needs to set out actions for managing waste in local government areas in a way that best achieves the objects of the Act.

1.3. Vision

The development of Council's long term vision for waste management is underpinned by two fundamental points:

- recognition that landfill airspace is not an infinite resource and the need to manage Council's remaining landfill capacity in a sustainable manner; and
- acceptance of the waste hierarchy, with recognition of the principles of waste avoidance, reuse and recovery wherever practicable.

The vision for this plan is:

To develop and implement an evidence-based approach for socially responsible continuous improvement in the management of waste as a resource.

1.4. Key challenges facing the Balonne region

Council faces a number of key challenges generally and in managing waste moving forward, including:

- A general lack of data around waste management;
- A limited rate base covering a large area; and
- Changes to the management of water in Australia having an impact on established business and industry profiles in the region.

This Plan has been developed with a focus on Council developing robust data and information systems around its management of waste in order to allow it to make robust and informed decisions which result in appropriately targeted actions to improve the management of waste in the region.

This approach allows Council to set its targets and interventions based on realistic and achievable measures which are relevant in the Balonne context.

1.5. How the plan was developed?

This document was developed internally by Council, and went through a period of internal and external consultation with relevant stakeholders and the broader community. Following community consultation, this plan will be adopted by Council.

1.6. Delivery of the plan

The Plan will be delivered in phases which will build on previous work and result in a continuous improvement of waste management processes over time. The key phases will include:

- **Gather** - provide for the development of an evidence base to allow for the appropriate management of waste and resources by:
 - putting in place the management structure to allow us to confirm our current status; and
 - setting in place ongoing management structures to allow the ongoing measurement of performance which allow us to accurately plan our management of waste and resources;
 - set the framework for which an evidence base can be used to set realistic targets for the Balonne Shire Council;
- **Set** – set targets which are relative and achievable in the Balonne context;
- **Develop programs** – develop the programs and interventions, including education to achieve the desired targets;
- **Monitor** – ensure that ongoing performance is measured and monitored to allow for the evaluation of programs and interventions to allow for continual improvement.

1.7. How performance of the plan will be reported?

Performance against this plan will be reported through Council's Operational Planning processes with an annual report on its implementation to Council.

In accordance with the requirements of the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*, an annual report will also be submitted to the Queensland Department of Environment & Heritage Protection (DEHP) about the operation of this plan. The report is due within 2 months of the end of each financial year.

2. Legislative Framework

A range of policies, guidelines, acts and regulations apply to the management of waste in Queensland. The following is a summary of the relevant sections as they apply to Council's Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan.

2.1. Waste Reduction & Recycling Act 2011

The *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* established a framework for managing waste and resource recovery practices in Queensland. It promotes waste avoidance and reduction and encourages resource recovery.

The objectives of the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act (WRRRA) 2011* are to:

- promote waste avoidance and reduction, resource recovery and efficiency actions;
- reduce the consumption of natural resources and minimise the disposal of waste by encouraging waste avoidance and the recovery, re-use and recycling of waste;
- minimise the overall impact of waste generation and disposal;
- ensure a shared responsibility between government, business and industry and the community in waste management and resource recovery; and
- support and implement national frameworks, objectives and priorities for waste management and resource recovery.

The responsibilities of local government for strategic waste planning under the WRRRA incorporates waste generated from the local government itself, households and other waste generated in the local government area.

There are requirements to adopt a waste reduction and recycling plan for at least three years to:

- set waste reduction and recycling targets;
- describe actions to be taken to improve the waste reduction and recycling of these wastes;
- list current and proposed waste infrastructure;
- include performance management and monitoring; and
- any other continuous improvements.

The development of this Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan needs to take into consideration the following current and predicted information:

- population profiles;
- residential, industrial and commercial development;
- amounts and types of waste generated;
- relevant services, markets and facilities;
- waste and resource management hierarchy;
- waste and resource management principles such as polluter pays, user pays, proximity and product stewardship; and
- how the goals and targets of the State's waste management strategy will be achieved.

2.2. National Waste Policy

The National Waste Policy sets Australia's waste management and resource recovery direction to 2020.

The aims of the National Waste Policy are to:

- avoid the generation of waste, reduce the amount of waste (including hazardous waste) for disposal;
- manage waste as a resource;
- ensure that waste treatment, disposal, recovery and re-use is undertaken in a safe, scientific and environmentally sound manner; and
- contribute to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, energy conservation and production, water efficiency and the productivity of the land.

The policy sets directions in six key areas as follows:

- **Taking responsibility** - Shared responsibility for reducing the environmental, health and safety footprint of products and materials across the manufacture-supply-consumption chain and at end-of-life.
- **Improving the market** - Efficient and effective Australian markets operate for waste and recovered resources, with local technology and innovation being sought after internationally.
- **Pursuing sustainability** - Less waste and improved use of waste to achieve broader environmental, social and economic benefits.
- **Reducing hazard and risk** - Reduction of potentially hazardous content of wastes with consistent, safe and accountable waste recovery, handling and disposal.
- **Tailoring solutions** - Increased capacity in regional, remote and Indigenous communities to manage waste and recover and re-use resources.
- **Providing the evidence** - Access by decision makers to meaningful, accurate and current national waste and resource recovery data and information to measure progress and educate and inform the behaviour and the choices of the community.

2.3. Queensland's Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy 2014 - 2024

Queensland's Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy 2014 – 2024 (The Strategy) sets the State's vision for managing waste up to 2024 and includes four key objectives based around the waste and resource management hierarchy:

- **Driving cultural change:** All stakeholders recognise their role in meeting the vision of the waste strategy, and are informed and empowered to participate in achieving its goals and objectives
- **Avoidance and minimisation:** Queensland will realise all opportunities (environmental, economic and social) from maximising sustainable consumption and production
- **Reuse, recovery and recycling:** Queensland will optimise economic benefits from reuse, recovery and recycling
- **Management, treatment and disposal:** Queensland will reduce the impact of waste on human health and the environment through improved waste practices

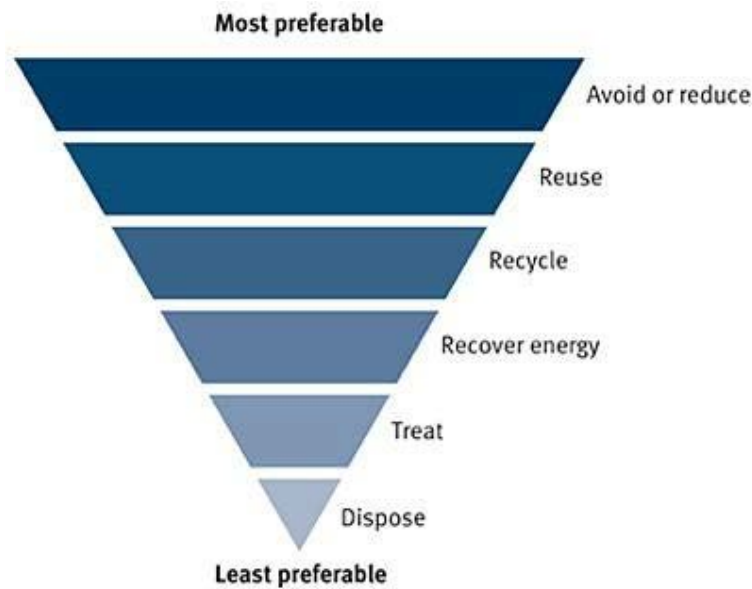


Figure 1 - Waste and resource management hierarchy

The Strategy sets targets for improving waste avoidance and recovery and takes regional differences into account where possible. By 2024 the Strategy aims to:

- reduce the generation of waste by 5% per capita;
- improve recycling of municipal (domestic) solid waste from 33% to 50%:
 - 55% in metropolitan areas;
 - 45% in regional centres;
 - to the extent practically achievable in remote areas;
- improve recycling of commercial and industrial general waste from 42% to 55%;
- improve recycling of construction and demolition waste from 61% to 80% ;
- reduce by 15% the amount of waste going to landfill over the life of the strategy;
- improve management of problem or priority wastes.

The Strategy also identifies Priority Wastes which are wastes:

- with high disposal impacts;
- with social impacts; and
- where recovery would present resource savings and business opportunities.

The Priority Waste streams include examples such as:

- plastic waste (agricultural plastics);
- organic waste (household food and garden waste);
- high volume waste (concrete);
- regional impact (mattresses); and
- complimentary product stewardship waste (used tyres, used oil).

2.4. Other key legislation

Other key State Acts and subordinate legislation that are relevant to Council's waste reduction and recycling plan include:

- The *Environmental Protection Act 1994*;
- The *Planning Act 2017*;
- The *Local Government Act 2009*; and
- The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

These Acts cover the other environmental, planning and governance regulatory aspects of how waste is managed such as licensing of waste facilities, defining waste, tracking waste movements, safe handling of asbestos and the ability of local government to levy utility charges for waste management.

3. Our Community

Our changing community impacts on the development of this Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan. Key strategies and actions have been developed taking into account the changes that are anticipated to occur over the coming years. The current profile of our community, local industry, potential developments and population growth will all impact on achieving a Plan that delivers on council's targets.

3.1. Community profile

The Shire of Balonne is located in Queensland on the New South Wales border approximately 500 kilometres from the east coast of Australia and has an area of 31,119 square kilometres. Rural industry has created and is supported by the towns of St George, Dirranbandi, Bollon, Thallon, Mungindi and Hebel. Whilst small localities such as Nindigully, Boolba and Alton are places of historic significance and important meeting places for the rural communities and travelling public they serve.

Balonne Shire has a predominately rural-based economy with cotton, wool, beef, grain and horticultural production being the most common primary industries - with cotton as the dominant crop. More recently, some economic growth has also occurred in areas such as tourism. The region has a semi-arid climate, with temperature (as measured at the St George Airport) fluctuating between 13.8°C and 28.0°C. Mean average annual rainfall is approximately 490mm.

Major irrigated agriculture has been practised in the region since 1956. It was later expanded in the 1970s with the development of Beardmore Dam in 1972 (near St George, Queensland). The first Queensland cotton gin was built in St George in the early 1970s and the late 1990s saw the addition of the Dirranbandi cotton gin and a second cotton gin in St George.

The region is facing challenges in its agriculture industry base with recent changes to the management of water catchments in Australia. This will be a major economic challenge moving forward as some populations are currently in decline.

3.2. Population and household growth

The population of the Shire of Balonne at the 2016 census was 4,377. The majority of this population is based in the town of St George (approximately 3,000), followed by:

- Dirranbandi (450);
- Bollon (150);
- Thallon (100);
- Hebel (50);
- Nindigully (20),

with the remaining population based in the rural areas of the region.

It is not expected that there will be any significant population increase over the period of the Plan. In a number of towns (such as Dirranbandi) there is the potential for population decline as the region adjusts to changes in the management of water catchments in Australia.

3.3. Commercial, industrial and residential development

Linked to the challenges above, commercial and industrial wastes are typically defined by those consistent with rural industry and its supporting services, and general commercial and retail activity.

It is very difficult to determine what type of industry will evolve at this point due to the changes related to water, however rural tourism has experienced growth. Tourism requires similar management requirements to normal domestic waste streams.

The majority of residential development is expected in St George however again, this is not expected to be significant at this point.

4. Waste Management Infrastructure and Services

Council currently manages six (6) landfills and one (1) recyclables transfer station. ? transfer stations and ? landfill sites.

Council offers a weekly kerbside waste collection service as well as a fortnightly kerbside recyclables collection service.

Our community actively participates in Clean Up Australia day and collects and removes litter from its waterways, parks and public spaces. A bulky kerbside clean-up program is conducted annually by Council alongside the Clean Up Australia Day program.

4.1. Services

Council manages a range of waste services. These services include regular kerbside waste and recyclables collections and a yearly kerbside clean up collection.

4.1.1. Current kerbside collection services

Council has recently (1 July 2017) commenced a new kerbside waste collection contract. The contract has a term of eight (8) years with three (3) x one (1) year options.

The kerbside service is largely focused on domestic users who receive a 240L weekly garbage and a 240L fortnightly recycling service. Council has received an option to introduce a 240L fortnightly garden waste service during the term of the new contract.

The town of Mungindi is a border town with New South Wales. Council has an arrangement with the Moree Plains Shire Council who provide kerbside collection services to Queensland residents of this town. This town has a three (3) bin service (garbage, recycling and garden waste).

The key services included in the contract are summarised in the table below.

Customer	Bin size	Material	Frequency	Community/Comment
Domestic	240	Garbage	Weekly	Standard with dual Garbage/Recycling service
Domestic	240	Recyclables	Fortnightly	Standard with dual Garbage/Recycling service
Domestic	240	Garden Waste	Fortnightly	Optional - not introduced
Commercial	240	Garbage	Weekly or fortnightly	
Commercial	1000	Garbage	Weekly or fortnightly	
Commercial	2000	Garbage	Weekly or fortnightly	
Commercial	3000	Garbage	Weekly or fortnightly	

Customer	Bin size	Material	Frequency	Community/Comment
Commercial	240	Garbage	Twice weekly	St George only
Commercial	1000	Garbage	Twice weekly	St George only
Street	240	Garbage		
Bulky clean up	NA		Annually	Conducted by Council in limited areas during Clean Up Australia. Generally well supported.

4.2. Facilities

Council operates a number of rural trench type landfills and a regional landfill facility at St George which receives kerbside collection waste. The St George facility also includes a transfer station for the deposit of recyclables from the kerbside collection service.

4.2.1. Landfill disposal

Council operates a number of landfill facilities at the locations identified in the table below.

Table 1 List of Landfill Facilities

Facility	Population	General management
Bollon	150	Rural town landfill
Dirranbandi	450	Rural town landfill
Hebel	50	Small landfill
Nindigully	20	Small landfill
St George	3000	Regional landfill
Thallon	100	Rural town landfill

Key services at each facility are summarised in the table below.

Table 2 Key Services at Landfill Facilities

Facility	Staff	General waste	Garden waste	Scrap metal	Batteries	Concrete	General recycling	Trash and treasure	Oil
Bollon	No	Yes	*	*	No	*	No	No	No
Dirranbandi	No	Yes	*	*	No	*	No	No	No
Hebel	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Nindigully	No	Yes	*	*	No	*	No	No	No
St George	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Thallon	No	Yes	*	*	No	No	No	No	No

* Material is diverted however there are limited or no real opportunities to process this material at this point.

There are a number of facilities at which fires can occur at times in the general waste.

Whilst there are garden waste and other services for separation at a number of facilities, Council has difficulty in arranging processing of various materials such as garden waste and concrete.

Hours of operation at each facility are summarised in the table below.

Table 3 Hours of operation at Landfill Facilities

Facility	Hours of operation
Bollon	No control - unsupervised
Dirranbandi	No control - unsupervised
Hebel	No control - unsupervised
Nindigully	No control - unsupervised
St George	7:30am to 5:30pm - Closed Wednesday
Thallon	No control - unsupervised

The illegal disposal of truck tyres is a significant issue in the region.

4.2.2. Management of legacy landfills

Council currently manages legacy landfill sites. This management is delivered via a capital works program and the ongoing monitoring of closed sites. These initiatives include:

- Closure of old landfill sites;
- Remediation of landfill sites; and

The following legacy sites are currently being managed by council. Council has developed strategies to address a range of ongoing legacy issues at a number of sites. These are highlighted in the table below.

Site Name	Location	Challenges and / or proposed / scheduled significant works
Dirranbandi landfill	Whyenbah Road Dirranbandi Q 4486	There is approximately 5 years of life left at the site. Council has identified that this site may need to be changed and therefore will be carrying out a scoping study in 2019-202 financial year to identify costs associated with the remediation of the landfill site.
Hebel Landfill	Castlereagh Highway Hebel Q 4486	There is approximately 5-10 years of life left at the site. Council has identified that this site may need to be changed and therefore will be carrying out a scoping study in 2019-202 financial year to identify costs associated with the remediation of the landfill site

5. Waste Characteristics and Projections

5.1. Waste generated and composition

Council has limited information with regard to the quantity and characteristics of waste generated within the region.

A key objective of this Plan will be to develop a framework for preparing an evidence base for the current performance of the Council which will allow for robust planning and decision making around waste management in accordance with the National Waste Policy.

Not only will this provide a meaningful snap shot of current performance, it will allow for appropriate targets and interventions to be developed and their effectiveness measured by Council.

5.2. Landfill capacity

Council has limited information with regard to the available airspace at its various facilities. Whilst it is expected the St George landfill has significant life, some other facilities (such as Dirranbandi) have little life remaining based on current information.

As above, a key objective of this Plan will be to obtain the appropriate information early in the life of the Plan, and to set up appropriate management processes to allow for the ongoing management of the various facilities.

5.3. Illegal waste dumping

Council has a zero tolerance approach to any illegal dumping and littering. Illegally dumping large items or loads of rubbish and littering is unacceptable and impacts the local amenity of the area with cleaning up being both costly in time and resources.

Common types of littering activity include cigarette butts, drink bottles and fast food packaging often thrown from vehicles or directly on to the ground from pedestrians.

Other types of littering and dumping commonly occur around charity and litter bins when these are full, or the dumping of green waste into Council's parks and road reserves often affecting the natural environments.

Litter can be washed or blown into creeks and rivers and ultimately pollutes land, waterways and ocean environments and can harm or kill marine creatures. Some forms of illegal dumping such as chemicals or hazardous materials including asbestos can be dangerous to people when discarded in the wrong setting and in an inappropriate manner.

Council has a specific issue with regard to the illegal dumping of truck tyres in the region.

Council uses a range of measures to manage litter, illegal dumping and other clean-ups such as:

- education programs to increase community awareness of this issue;
- community partnerships and targeted clean-up campaigns such as Clean-up Australia;
- provision of a range of street and park bins for both waste and recyclables across the region;
- additional services around peak times or in response to disaster management;
- use of monitoring cameras at selected locations to address ongoing hotspot locations across the region;
- and
- continued lobbying of the State with regard to a tracking system for the management of tyres.

In addition, the Queensland Government has an online form for reporting littering and illegal dumping and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) can issue an infringement notice to the registered owner of a vehicle based on the reporting of an incident/offence.

6. Waste Reduction Targets

Over the next decade Queensland will:

- reduce waste to landfill;
- increase the recovery and recycling of resources across all waste streams;
- reduce generation of waste
- reduce the total amount of, and the environmental impacts from, litter and illegal dumping.

In order for Council to actively participate in Queensland’s targets, Council will need to first develop a better understanding of its current performance related to how it manages waste. This Plan is structured to allow Council to put in place appropriate processes to manage waste by collecting appropriate data and information to allow setting realistic targets for diversionary programs and making informed decisions.

This will allow Council to adopt a continual improvement philosophy with regard to its waste management and allow the development of new targets and actions during each review of its Plan in accordance with the general cycle below.

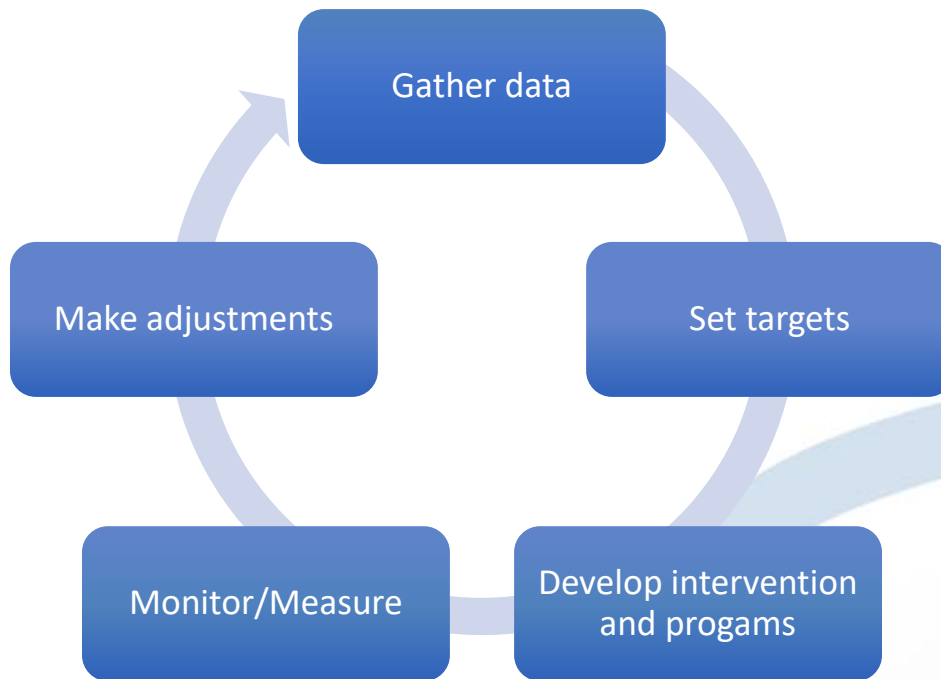


Figure 2 Continual improvement process

7. Waste Management Objectives and Actions

Council has key objectives for improving waste reduction and recycling in the region. These objectives respond to the key challenges for the Balonne Shire Council in achieving its and the State's waste management objectives.

Objective 1 - Data: Prepare an overarching data management system and processes which includes ongoing measurement and monitoring to allow for continual improvement.

Objective 2 – Landfill management: Develop a plan for the operation and closure of all landfill facilities.

Objective 3 - Targets: Develop targets for key waste streams that relate to the Balonne context.

Objective 4 - Interventions: Develop programs and interventions to achieve key targets.

Objective 5 - Education: Develop and implement a public education and awareness program across a range of community and industry groups to minimise waste and maximise resource recovery.

Objective 6 – Financial sustainability: Develop an overarching financial and business model that results in a sustainable and robust management structure which allows transparency in forward planning of waste management.

Strategic actions related to the general achievement of these objective are summarised below. A detailed list of projects and timing has been prepared to allow for the implementation of the Plan. It should be noted that Intervention actions at this point are limited in order to allow for the review and confirmation of the current status. It is expected further Intervention actions will be considered at the first review of the Plan.

7.1. Strategic Actions

This action plan has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders. The following strategic action themes respond to the key objectives previously identified. It is expected these will provide direction and guidance to Council and the broader community in achieving its legislative responsibility under the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*.

The key strategic actions related to each objective is summarised in the table below. A list of detailed projects and timing is summarised in Appendix A.

Table 4 Strategic Actions

Objective	Strategic Actions
1 - Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an overarching data management plan • Conduct ongoing waste stream composition analysis • Prepare contract management plans • Obtain illegal dumping (tyres) data • Report on performance
2 – Landfill management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm current landfill footprints • Prepare landfill master plans • Prepare landfill rehabilitation plans • Conduct landfill operational improvements • Prepare new landfill options analysis

Objective	Strategic Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor landfill use and life
3 – Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider expansion of kerbside collection service • Review and prepare new operational contracts • Conduct key landfill environmental evaluations • Consider priority waste intervention (tyres)
4 – Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby the State re tyre tracking
5 – Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare long-term education plan • Conduction education programs
6 – Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a long term financial business model • Consider efficiency drivers • Monitor product stewardship programs

8. Consultation

The draft Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan 2018 – 2028 was released for public comment on 30 April 2018. Feedback was received on the Plan and considered in preparing a final Plan which was adopted by Council on

9. Review

Legislation requires this Plan to be reviewed every three (3) years. Subsequently, the next major review of this Plan will commence in 2020.

It is expected that the targets and strategic actions outlined in this Plan will remain valid until the next formal review is completed in 2020 and that a number of additional targets and intervention programs will be developed for this first review.



Annexure A

Detailed list of projects

- Council will carry out a scoping study in the 2019-2020 financial year for the remediation of all Council landfills located in St George, Dirranbandi, Hebel, Thallon, Bollon and Nindigully townships.
- Council will continue recycling in all townships unless recycling conditions change in the recycling space.
- Council will continue to educate its community on the benefits of recycling and flag any concerns to its residents with subtle messaging.
- Council will carry out a feasibility study for alternative options in the waste to energy space.

