



Charitable Donation Bins: Planning Principles for Local Government

1. Background

Charitable Recycling Australia (formerly NACRO) members share the same objectives as local governments – clean streets, healthy communities and opportunities for residents to reuse and recycle locally. Every year, an estimated 600,000 tonnes of material is diverted from landfill by charitable recyclers, directly saving local government the burden of additional kerbside collections and waste management costs.

For this purpose, *Charitable Recycling Australia* members operate approximately 10,000 donation bins around Australia. These bins are an important way for community to directly support charitable causes, while also diverting materials from landfill and giving them a second life. These donated items are sold in op-shops, and the proceeds of over \$550 million in revenue raised is used to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged community members.

For more information about the positive impacts of charitable recycling, please visit *Charitable Recycling Australia* website – <https://www.charitablerecycling.org.au/>

2. Signage & Transparency

Wherever possible, access to donation bin sites on public lands should be restricted to charitable organisations that are members of *Charitable Recycling Australia*. This ensures that all donation bins are compliant with the Voluntary Code of Practice, which outlines our industry standards for bin design and management and is available at <https://www.charitablerecycling.org.au/>

Where commercial collection operators are permitted to use public lands to solicit donations, it is imperative that full transparency is practiced, and that the donating public is fully aware of where the benefits from their donations will ultimately go. This can be achieved by:

- Requiring that a minimum A3-sized notice be attached to commercially operated donation bins specifying (in large print) the name of the operating party, the specific proportion of revenue or profit (if any) that is donated to charitable entities, and the contact details of those charitable entities as well as a 'Commercially Operated' sticker at the top of the bin.
- Maintaining a policy of zero tolerance for organisations that impersonate charities or otherwise mislead the public regarding the destination of their

donations, with immediate and permanent removal of such bins from public lands.

3. Placement and Bin Management

Charitable Recycling Australia members and local governments have the opportunity to work together in a close partnership, ensuring that donation bins are a well-maintained and effective way for residents to recirculate their unwanted items in the community. Issues such as illegal dumping, graffiti and poor bin management can be mitigated by applying a set of common principals to the management and placement of charitable donation bins. These include that donation bins:

- Are placed in mutually agreeable areas for each local area between Council and *Charitable Recycling Australia* Member
- Are not placed in thoroughfares or pedestrian pathways
- Do not impede line of sight, causing safety hazards
- Are placed in appropriate areas to ensure collection truck access and parking for donors without disturbing traffic flow
- Are clearly marked with the name and contact details of the organisation responsible for servicing and maintaining the bins, including a business hours phone number
- Are labelled in accordance with the consumer laws to ensure labelling is not misleading
- Are removed promptly if requested by the local authority

4. Security

Wherever possible, sites that are well-lit, with CCTV cameras and prominent warning signs for littering and vandalism, are preferred. Areas that have significant foot traffic and are easily patrolled by Council Rangers are also preferable, as this will reduce the risk of illegal dumping and vandalism, ensuring the amenity of donation bin sites is maintained at a high level.

5. Complaints

Occasionally, issues with illegal dumping or vandalism may result in complaints from residents. In such cases, it is preferable that charitable bin operators are given a chance to respond directly to the concerned person(s), as well as the local government and to take steps to rectify the situation. Removal of bins should be considered as a last resort only, and only after appropriate alternative sites have been negotiated with the affected charity. *Charitable Recycling Australia* members are committed to positive relationships with the communities they serve, and value the opportunity to improve their services.

6. Circular Economy and Collaboration

With State and Federal Governments becoming more committed to a Circular Economy, the importance of collecting pre-loved household resources through donation bins to encourage reuse and reduce waste to landfill, is set to increase into the future. And as more residents embrace sustainability and environmental consciousness, both local governments and charities will benefit from ongoing, best practice collaboration.

Charitable recyclers and councils commit to work together to address common issues and challenges, as well as opportunities for addressing them collaboratively.