

# Best Practice Guide for Managing Litter and Illegal Dumping at Clothing Bins

2013



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# Glossary and abbreviations

## **Amenity**

The quality of the local environment in relation to health and general cleanliness. Litter is often referred to as an amenity problem.

## **Clothing bin**

A bin that is usually large and of steel construction and provides the general public with a place to donate reusable and / or recyclable clothing and, in some cases, small household items.

## **Charity**

An organisation that is a registered charitable organisation and complies with the Australian Government's Charitable Purposes Act 1946 and / or Victoria's Charities Act 1978.

## **Contamination**

Materials or items disposed of in a clothing bin that are unsuitable for donation because they are not reusable or recyclable or they are damaged and in a dilapidated state.

## **EPA Victoria**

Environment Protection Authority Victoria – Victoria's legislated environmental regulator and authority on environmental impacts.

## **Litter**

Any small, medium or large item of waste deposited inappropriately.

## **NACRO**

National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations – the peak organisation for Australian charities that resell clothing, furniture, household and workplace goods to fund community welfare programs.

## **Land managers**

Land managers refer to the owner/manager of the land upon which clothing bins are placed. They can be local governments, private land owners such as shopping centres, or charitable recyclers.

## **Bin owners**

Refer to businesses and charities who own clothing bins.

## **Collection contractors**

Collection contractors refer to the businesses that empty, and transport bin contents and maintain clothing bins on behalf of bin owners.

# Introduction

The Best Practice Guide for Managing Litter and Illegal Dumping at Clothing Bins has been developed to assist stakeholders that host or manage clothing bins, including charitable recycling organisations, collection contractors, local government, private land owners, and commercial bin operators.

This guide provides best practice information and an approach to help reduce litter and illegal dumping associated with clothing bins. The guide refers to stand-alone clothing bins that are located away from charity stores or other drop-off points. They are usually large bins of steel construction and commonly located in car parks or other public places.

On behalf of the Victorian Government, Sustainability Victoria (SV) drives the prevention and management of litter in Victoria and delivers programs that make a difference to the wider Victorian community in integrated waste management and resource efficiency.

SV estimates that in 2012 there were about 1,350 such bins in use in Victoria. Of those about 1,100 are operated by commercial operators and the remaining 250 operated by charities.

The *Victorian Litter Strategy 2012-2014*, developed by SV, identifies that litter and illegal dumping damage the Victorian environment and generate costs to the community. As the problems are complex and changing, new approaches are required.

This guide has been informed by research prepared for Sustainability Victoria that identified and examined a range of approaches to reduce litter and illegal dumping around clothing bins and other public infrastructure. The research reviewed trials, fact sheets, best practice approaches, codes of practice, policies and guidelines. The resources reviewed in the research are referenced at the end of this document.

In order to understand current practices, this guide has also been informed by consultation with key stakeholders including the National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations (NACRO), commercial bin operators, charity operators, local governments, state government agencies and regional waste management groups.

Research and consultation determined steps that can be taken to ensure the design, siting and management of clothing bins is conducted in a manner that can minimise incidents of litter and illegal dumping and as a result reduce the time and costs associated with clean up. The approach outlined in the document also places the costs of management onto the party responsible for the clothing bin (the bin owner) rather than other land managers, local government or the wider community.

Overall, the research and consultation supported that well placed and maintained clothing bins with regular monitoring, appropriate scheduled clearances and good signage are consistent with best practice and most likely to experience less litter and illegal dumping than other clothing bins.

## Clothing bins operating in Victoria

Clothing bins have existed in Victoria for almost 100 years providing the community with the opportunity to donate good quality used clothing and household items. Clothing bins are part of Victoria's resource recovery infrastructure and assist in the diversion of significant amounts of materials away from landfill allowing for the reuse of materials.

In the case of charity owned bins the donated items are sold to raise funds to support the charity's activities. In more recent years commercial operators have also started to manage clothing bins and sell the donated goods in the open market. This has generated competition between charity and commercial operators.

The siting and management of clothing bins is not a regulated function. However, local government by-laws may apply and a council may have a policy regarding the siting of bins on public land or within its municipality. Any litter and illegal dumping that may be associated with clothing bins is potentially an offence under the Environment Protection Act 1970.

## Who this guide is for

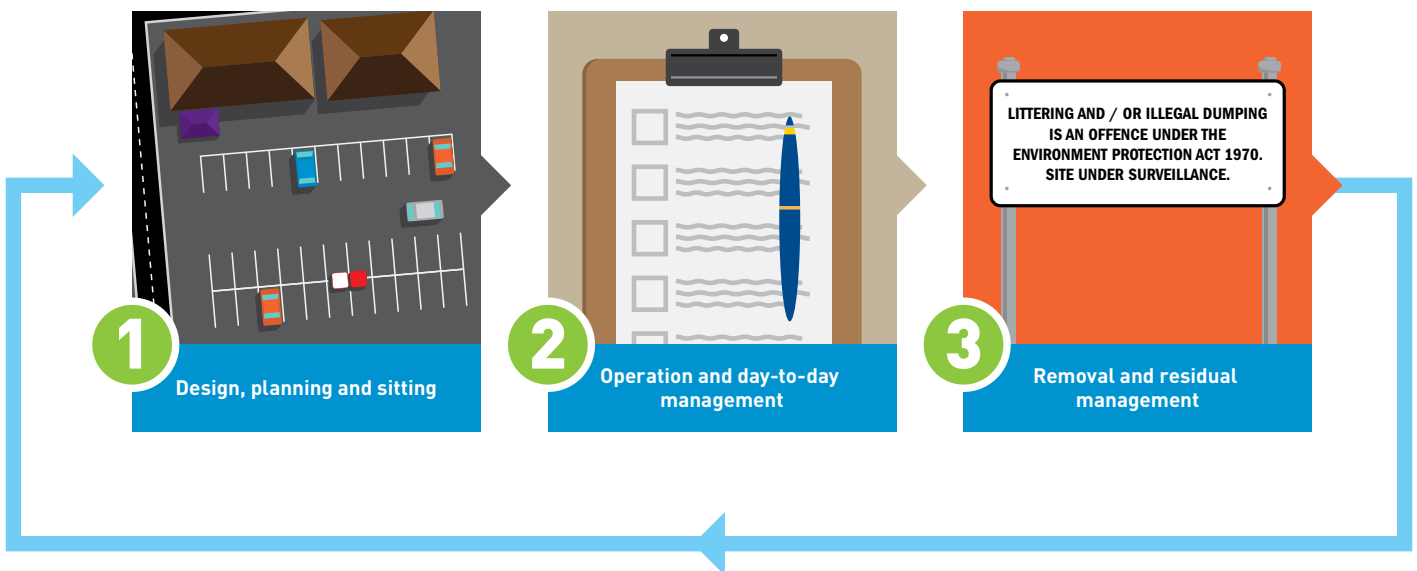
This guide is useful for stakeholders that host or manage clothing bins including charitable recycling organisations, collection contractors, local government, private land owners, commercial bin operators and state government agencies as outlined below:

Stakeholder	Involvement and interest
Charitable recycling organisations	> Bin owner
	> Recipient of collected materials
	> Sort and process collected materials
	> Land manager that hosts bins
	> Manage litter and illegal dumping
	> Client that engages private bin and collection companies
Collection contractors	> Empty bins and transport materials to sorting facilities
	> Monitor bins, litter and illegal dumping
	> Dispose of waste materials
Local government	> Land manager that hosts bins
	> Enforcement authority
	> Manage litter and illegal dumping
	> Monitor bins, litter and illegal dumping
	> Dispose of waste materials
Land managers	> Land manager that hosts bins
	> Manage litter and illegal dumping
	> Monitor bins, litter and illegal dumping
	> Dispose of waste materials
Commercial bin operators	> Bin owner and manager
	> Empty bins and transports materials to sorting facilities
	> Recipient of collected materials
	> Sort and process collected materials
	> Dispose of waste materials
State government agencies	> Enforcement authority
	> Set policy and regulations
	> Education and prevention programs

## How to use this guide

This guide provides best practice information and an approach to help reduce litter and illegal dumping associated with clothing bins. This guide refers to clothing bins that are stand-alone and located away from charity stores or other drop-off points. They are usually large bins of steel construction and commonly located in car parks or other public places.

The following three phases have been identified to reduce litter and illegal dumping at clothing bins:



This guide includes three sections reflecting these three phases. Each section includes a checklist to use to complete activities and supporting information.

An application template has also been provided for land managers that have or may consider hosting clothing bins. The template is to be used to obtain necessary information from bin owners and operators before agreeing to host a clothing bin (see Appendix on [page 12](#)).

# 1. Design, planning and siting

This section covers factors to be considered before a clothing bin is put on a site. The siting of a new bin presents an opportunity to consider the issues and opportunities associated with the placement and ongoing management of the bin.

Two existing documents provide guidance and recommendations for the best practice management of clothing bins – the *Barwon Regional Waste Management Group's Pilot Report*<sup>1</sup> and the *NACRO Code of Practice*<sup>2</sup>. These documents provide recommendations regarding siting of bins. *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) also provide insights into the opportunities for siting issues to be considered in order to reduce the likelihood of behaviours such as littering or illegal dumping. More information is available from the International Security Management & Crime Prevention website [www.ismcpi.org](http://www.ismcpi.org).

## 1.1 Siting approvals and permits

Prior to placing or permitting a clothing bin it is important to ensure that appropriate permissions have been granted from the land manager. This may be a simple written agreement or a more formal agreement between the land manager and the bin owner. Refer to the application template [see Appendix on [page 12](#)].

Table 2: Siting approvals and permits checklist

Action	Bin owner	Land manager	Collection contractor
Has bin owner requested and been granted land manager permission?			NA
Has the permission and response process been documented by all parties?			
Does the bin require a permit? Does it comply with local government requirements, and if so, have such approvals been sought and granted?			NA
Has the bin owner and collection contractor provided evidence of their business credentials, insurance (including public liability insurance) and its operating policies and procedures?			

## 1.2 Choosing a site to ensure public health and safety

It is important that bins are located prominently so not to detract from the amenity and appearance of sites. They should be clearly visible in a well-lit area in a manner that is sensitive to the appearance of the site.

Bins should not be located on driveways, access ways, car parking areas, and landscaped areas or be located to obstruct footpaths, roadways and thoroughfares. Placement should also consider whether the placement of the bin may impede a person's line of site causing safety risks or disrupting operational activities.

Positioning clothing bins so users of the bins are part of the natural surveillance system is ideal. The sense that potential illegal dumping offenders are under observation can be created if the site is well lit, can be viewed from a thoroughfare, is monitored by security cameras or people or is visible through an adjacent door or window.

Research undertaken for the preparation of this guide suggests that sites which have multiple bins and bins from multiple owners have increased instances of litter and illegal dumping. This may be because it is unclear to users and operators who is responsible for the bins and the areas around them.

<sup>1</sup> [www.brwmvg.vic.gov.au/grants/documents/REPORTClothingBinPilotFINAL.pdf](http://www.brwmvg.vic.gov.au/grants/documents/REPORTClothingBinPilotFINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://174.133.140.66/~nacro/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Policy-Operation-of-donation-bins-January-2009.pdf>



Table 3: Choosing a site to ensure public health and safety checklist

Action	Bin owner	Land manager	Collection contractor
Is the bin placed in a high traffic area or near supervision that may deter illegal dumping?			NA
Is the bin clearly visible, monitored and in a well-lit area?			NA
Is the bin located where there is clear ownership of the site? Can the land manager monitor the clothing bin and report litter or illegal dumping in a timely manner to the bin owner / collection contractor?			NA
Is more than one bin going to be located on the site? If so consider aligning monitoring and clearance regimes with bin owner / collection contractor.			
Will the location of the bin be subject to an annual review?			NA
Is the bin adequately fixed to a concrete pad or in a manner that it does not pose a risk of moving or being moved and causing injury or damage to property?			NA
Is the bin clear of thoroughfares such as pedestrian pathways?			NA
Is the bin designed so that people cannot climb or fall into it?			NA
Does the bin present a threat to surrounding infrastructure in the event there is a fire in the bin?			NA
Is the bin placed away from structures to prevent unauthorised access to property			NA

### 1.3 Signage and communication

NACRO recommends that all bins should be clearly marked to differentiate charity bins from commercially operated bins to enable the public to make an informed choice.

Schedule two of the *Competition and Consumer Act*<sup>3</sup> sets out requirements for ensuring that statements made about any goods or services are true, accurate and able to be substantiated. Advice is available from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission website – [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au).

Permission should be sought from EPA Victoria or the relevant local government authority to include litter reporting information on the bin so that witnesses of illegal dumping activity can report it.

Correct labelling of bins includes the following components:

- > The name and contact detail of the organisation that owns the bins
- > The name of the organisation that is responsible for servicing and maintaining the bins
- > A 24-hour emergency number to report any illegal dumping or other issues with the bin
- > What materials can be deposited and that no other items will be accepted
- > Information stating that littering and / or illegal dumping is an offence under the Environment Protection Act 1970.

## 2. Operation and management

This section covers factors to be considered during the use and operation of a clothing bin. Research used in the development of this guide indicates that the day-to-day operation and management of bins affects the nature and extent of litter and illegal dumping.

### 2.1 Operator management systems

The *Barwon Regional Waste Management Group's Pilot Report*<sup>4</sup> found that reducing material overflowing from a bin and minimising the prospect of people leaving material outside of the bin had a direct impact on incidents of litter and illegal dumping. As such, an appropriate clearance schedule and timely response to excess material or overflows is required to reduce litter and illegal dumping.

Table 4: Operator management systems checklist

Action	Bin owner	Land manager	Collection contractor
Does the bin owner / collection contractor have a documented management system and operating procedures?			
Does the bin owner / collection contractor have a schedule for clearing the bin and does it allow for revising the schedule as demand requires?			
Does the bin owner / collection contractor have a process for reviewing the use of the bin and revising the schedule as required?			
If there is excess material or overflow from the bin is there a process for clearing it in a timely manner?			

### 2.2 Maintenance, monitoring and review

Recent research indicates that incidents of litter and illegal dumping that are not responded to quickly can exacerbate the problem. Bin owners, collection contractors and councils use common clothing bin monitoring techniques including cameras, regular physical surveillance and enlisting people on the site to report to the bin owner.

Table 5: Maintenance, monitoring and review checklist

Action	Bin owner	Land manager	Collection contractor
Does the bin owner have a maintenance schedule to ensure the bins are properly maintained, cleaned, graffiti removed, signage updated and that they are generally presentable and functioning properly?			NA
Are incidents of litter or illegal dumping registered and records kept?			
Are follow-up actions taken and recorded?			
Is the bins' general performance, condition and any incidents reported, monitored and reviewed regularly?			

## 2.3 Emergency response

In case of an emergency (e.g. a bin fire) it is important to have an emergency response system in place so the bin owner can be contacted.

Table 6: Emergency response checklist

Action	Bin owner	Land manager	Collection contractor
Is there an emergency hotline to report litter, dumping or other issues?			
Can the land manager or bin users contact the bin owner / collection contractor 24 hours a day?			
Has the land manager set out what constitutes an emergency situation and how quickly an emergency must be responded to?			
Does the bin owner / collection contractor have a procedure for responding to emergency notifications? Is there a service level agreement detailing how quickly it will address any reports of litter and illegal dumping?			

## 3. Removal and residual management

This section of the guide covers factors to be considered when a bin is going to be removed and after its removal.

There is limited research on the removal and residual management of clothing bins however consultation carried out during development of this guide indicates that land managers and local governments take a range of approaches to bin removal and residual management to minimise ongoing litter and illegal dumping.

### 3.1 Bin removal

There are a number of areas for consideration that will assist bin owners, land managers and collection contractors prepare for removal of bins and then manage the land afterwards.

Table 7: Bin removal checklist

Action	Bin owner	Land manager	Collection contractor
<b>Before bin removal</b>			
Is there a process for removing bins which have no prior authorisation?			NA
Does the land manager have a procedure for assessing whether a bin is in compliance with its requirements and a process for removal for non-compliance?	NA		NA
Does the bin owner have a procedure for responding to requests to remove bins and does it provide a timeframe for removal?			
Is a bin assessment and removal process included in any service level agreement between the land manager and bin owner?			NA
<b>After bin removal</b>			
Is there a process for periodic review of the location where the bin was placed to ensure amenity is maintained? See also Section 3.3 Residual management.	NA		NA

## 3.2 Illegally placed bins

During consultation, a number of local governments reported that they have found clothing bins that they consider to have been illegally placed on their land. Some councils have banned such bins from their land if permission has not first been sought by the bin owner. There are reports of similar experiences with private land owners, such as shopping centres, where bins have been placed without and manager consent.

Land managers, particularly local government, have a range of approaches to remove illegally placed bins. These include:

- > Calling the phone number on the bins and requesting the bin be removed (different councils reported different timings from same day removal, three days to five days notice).
- > Issuing written notices requesting removal and a warning that if bins are not removed by a stated date they will be seized. These written notices might be followed up with the issue of a fine and / or Notice to Comply and potential Magistrates Court prosecution.
- > Private land managers who are dealing with illegally placed bins or uncertainty of a bins status can likewise contact bin owners and / or seek advice from EPA Victoria or their local council's local laws department.

## 3.3 Residual management

Consultation indicated that there can be residual problems after a bin has been removed as prior users may return to the location and, in the absence of a bin, illegally dump materials or litter.

Local governments take a range of approaches to minimise ongoing litter and dumping after a bin is removed, including:

- > Ensuring any such site is given a litter assessment and placed on a hot spot register if required (a hotspot register is a system for monitoring and managing areas where frequent littering or illegal dumping occurs).
- > Signage directing people to other nearby clothing bins or drop-off facilities.
- > Signage informing people that littering and / or illegal dumping is an offence under the Environment Protection Act 1970 and that the site is under surveillance.
- > Requiring bin owner / collection contractor to continue to monitor the site for an agreed period.

## 4. References

### Reports

*Clothing Recycling Bank Management – The Barwon Pilot*; The Barwon Regional Waste Management Group; 2012. Available at [www.brwmg.vic.gov.au/grants/documents/REPORTClothingBinPilotFINAL.pdf](http://www.brwmg.vic.gov.au/grants/documents/REPORTClothingBinPilotFINAL.pdf)

*The National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations endorsed criteria for the use and operation of recycling collection bins for used clothing and household items*; The National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations (NACRO); 24 December 2009. Available at [www.nacro.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NACRO-Code-of-Practice.pdf](http://www.nacro.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NACRO-Code-of-Practice.pdf)

*The Key Elements of an Effective Clothing Collection Bin Ordinance*; Secondary Materials and Recycling Textiles (SMART) Association; 2013. Available at [www.smartasn.org/government/SMART\\_bin\\_position\\_documents.pdf](http://www.smartasn.org/government/SMART_bin_position_documents.pdf)

*Charity Kerbside Clothing Collections - Planning for Charitable Clothing Recycling Collections in South Australia*; Zero Waste South Australia; October 2005. Available at [www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/upload/resources/publications/reuse-recovery-and-recycling/charity\\_kerbside\\_clothing\\_collections\\_14.pdf](http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/upload/resources/publications/reuse-recovery-and-recycling/charity_kerbside_clothing_collections_14.pdf)

*Dumping around charity bins*; A joint project between Moreland City Council, the Northern Regional Waste Management Group and FM Recycling; 2004.

*Litter Prevention Final Report - "Bin it for charity, don't dump it" project*; EcoRecycle Victoria; 16 June 2004.

### Websites

*Public Land Use*; ACT Government. Available at [www.tams.act.gov.au/city-services/public\\_land\\_use](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/city-services/public_land_use)

*Clothing Bins*; City of Maroondah (Victoria). Available at [www.maroondah.vic.gov.au/ClothingBins.aspx](http://www.maroondah.vic.gov.au/ClothingBins.aspx)

### Policies

*Charity Clothing Bins Policy*; Burwood Council (NSW); 14 February 2012. Available at [www.burwood.nsw.gov.au/verve/\\_resources/Charity\\_Clothing\\_Bin\\_Policy\\_-\\_Adopted\\_by\\_Council\\_14\\_February\\_2012\\_-\\_Team\\_Responsible\\_Parking\\_\\_Traffic.pdf](http://www.burwood.nsw.gov.au/verve/_resources/Charity_Clothing_Bin_Policy_-_Adopted_by_Council_14_February_2012_-_Team_Responsible_Parking__Traffic.pdf)

*Charity Clothing Bins on City Managed Land (Policy P403)*; City of South Perth (WA); March 2013. Available at [www.southperth.wa.gov.au/Documents/Our-Council/Council-Policies/Strategic-Direction/P403.pdf](http://www.southperth.wa.gov.au/Documents/Our-Council/Council-Policies/Strategic-Direction/P403.pdf)

*Used Clothing Bin Policy*; Fairfield City Council; 2006. Available at [www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/upload/mikhp81764/Used\\_Clothing\\_Bin\\_Policy\\_2006.pdf](http://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/upload/mikhp81764/Used_Clothing_Bin_Policy_2006.pdf)

*Clothing Collection Bins on Council Land*; Wollongong City Council (NSW); 28 February 2005. Available at [www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/council/governance/Policies/Clothing%20Collection%20Bins%20on%20Council%20Land.pdf](http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/council/governance/Policies/Clothing%20Collection%20Bins%20on%20Council%20Land.pdf)

*Charity Clothing Bins Policy (Policy No. PL 780)*; Warringah Council; 24 April 2012. Available at <http://www.warringah.nsw.gov.au/your-council/plans-publications-and-policies/policies/charity-clothing-bins-policy>

*Charity Clothing Bins on Council Controlled Land Policy*; City of Stirling; 26 June 2012. Available at [www.stirling.wa.gov.au/About-the-city/Policies-and-local-laws/Policy%20and%20Local%20Laws/Charity%20Clothing%20Bins%20on%20Council%20Controlled%20Land%20Policy.pdf](http://www.stirling.wa.gov.au/About-the-city/Policies-and-local-laws/Policy%20and%20Local%20Laws/Charity%20Clothing%20Bins%20on%20Council%20Controlled%20Land%20Policy.pdf)

### Fact sheets

*Fact Sheet for Councils*; Southern Cross Recycling. Available at [southerncrossrecycling.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SCR-Fact-Sheet-Councils.pdf](http://southerncrossrecycling.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SCR-Fact-Sheet-Councils.pdf)

*Fact Sheet for Site Owners*; Southern Cross Recycling. Available at [southerncrossrecycling.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SCR-Fact-Sheet-Site-Owners.pdf](http://southerncrossrecycling.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SCR-Fact-Sheet-Site-Owners.pdf)

*Fact Sheet for Australian Disability Enterprises*; Southern Cross Recycling. Available at [southerncrossrecycling.com.au/social-enterprises/australian-disability-enterprises/](http://southerncrossrecycling.com.au/social-enterprises/australian-disability-enterprises/)

### Press release

Brotherhood seeks donations through stores after closing bin network; Brotherhood of St Laurence; 20 February 2008; Available at [www.bsl.org.au/mediareleases.aspx?id=77](http://www.bsl.org.au/mediareleases.aspx?id=77)

## 5. Appendix – Application template

This template is for a land manager that has or may be considering hosting clothing bins. This template can be used to obtain necessary information from bin owners and their collection contractors before agreeing to host a clothing bin. Land managers should adapt the format to suit their needs.

The bin owner is the applicant.

The template aims to assist a land manager to regulate the placement and management of clothing bins within their boundaries to minimise litter and illegal dumping and manage public safety and risk.

Once this template is completed and agreed between the land manager and the bin owner, the document can be signed and become the agreement (or be adapted into a contract).

### Applicant details

#### *Applicant to complete*

Date

---

Name of organisation

---

Registered company / business name

---

Trading name

---

Are you a Registered Charitable Organisation? Y/N

---

ABN

---

Address

---

Contact person

---

Phone

---

Mobile

---

Email

---

## Insurance details

### *Applicant to complete*

Name of insurer	Type	Policy number	Expiry date
	Public liability		
	Professional indemnity		
	Other		
Worksafe certificate of currency			

## Sub-contractor

*If the applicant is intending to use a sub-contractor for collection or other activities please complete the following:*

Name of organisation
Service and function (eg collection)
ABN
Address
Contact person
Phone
Mobile
Email

## Sub-contractor insurance details

### *Applicant to complete*

Name of insurer	Type	Policy number	Expiry date
	Public liability		
	Professional indemnity		
	Other		
Worksafe certificate of currency			

## Site details

### *Applicant to complete*

Address

---

Name of site / business

---

Site owner

---

Detailed description of where the bin is to be placed

---

Attach map

---

## Emergency response

Contact person

---

Emergency response number

---

Emergency response process

---

## Bin management

Applicant to complete on application to land manager.

Do you have a management system, policy and / or procedures? If so please attach.

Do you have a quality management / environmental management / and / or safety management system? If so please attach.

## Land manager terms and conditions

### *Land manager to complete*

(Note: This is an opportunity for the land manager to establish whether it has expectations in respect to services required and what may be included in any Service Level Agreement. As such, the following is indicative of the sorts of issues the land manager may specify as their expectations).

Term of agreement	Length of time with start and end dates
Periodic review of agreement	6 monthly, annually
Frequency of collections	e.g. minimum requirement of one collection per week
Frequency of monitoring	e.g. 1 site visit per week with log book entries recorded and available upon request
Emergency response	e.g. a response to emergency calls made by public or land owner will be within a 6 hour time period
Bin maintenance and review	e.g. response to damaged bins