

BIN HEALTH CHECKS



How healthy is your bin?

Over the next few weeks, you might see a few of our Waste Education Officers around your neighbourhood. We are currently rolling out a Bin Health Check program across Townsville with the following goals in mind:

- To support residents in their understanding of the importance of proper recycling.
- Decrease the number of recyclables that are currently entering the waste stream.

The data we collect as part of this program will be used by Council to develop future waste education materials to help provide sustainable and long-term waste solutions for our city.

Who is funding the program?

The Bin Health Check intervention is proudly funded through the Queensland Government's Let's Get It Sorted program.

This program is not funded by Townsville City Council ratepayers.

Will I be part of the program?

Through our annual audits, Annandale, Condon, Cranbrook, Douglas, Kirwan, Rasmussen, and Thuringowa Central have been identified as having on average more than 24% contamination in their household recycling bins.

What is a Bin Health Check?

A Bin Health Check is a simple 'lift of the lid' visual assessment of the recycling bins presented on bin collection day. We will not be searching through the contents of your bin!

The checks will allow for our Waste Education Officers to gain an on-the-spot understanding of what items are being sorted into a household's recycling bin and what items are persistent contaminants.

On your bin collection day, once your bins have been placed out for collection, a Waste Education Officer will take a quick 'lift of the lid' look into your bins and provide feedback to the household.

When will the checks start?

Bin Health Checks will commence on Monday 24 March through to September 2025. Each area will have their recycling bin inspected 3 times before our team moves on to the next area to conduct the same checks.

How many times will my bin be tagged?

We will visit each household a total of 3 separate times throughout the program. Households with a bin that has high or repeated contamination may need to be revisited to see if any improvements in their waste and recycling disposal habits have been made.

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What does Council look for when assessing the bins?

During the quick 'lift of the lid' visual assessment of your general waste and recycling bins, our Waste Education Officers will look for signs of:

- contamination
- overflowing bin/s
- damage to your bins
- incorrect placements (i.e. bins placed too close together, bins blocked by car/s and/or tree/s etc.)

Why do bin health checks work?

Bin health checks in other local government areas within Australia have proven to be a successful strategy for reducing contamination in waste disposal because they allow for the opportunity to provide on-the-spot feedback about the contents within your individual bins.

Townsville currently has a high level of recycling contamination (24%) in household recycling bins. As a result, problems that arise at the Material Recovery Facility (recycling centre) include endangering workers, reducing quality of recyclables, breakdowns in machinery causing delays in processing of recyclables, and ultimately increasing the costs of processing recycling material.

When we work together and put the right items in the right bins, we can produce high quality recyclables, reduce waste to landfill and reduce processing and disposal costs.

What do the different tags mean?



Thank You

You'll receive this tag if your general waste and/or recycling bin shows little or no contamination.



We Ask One Small Favour

You'll receive this tag if your general waste and/or recycling bin shows some contamination. We may also leave you with a friendly note on what waste to leave out next time.



We Were Not Able to Collect your Bin Today

You'll receive this tag if your general waste and/or recycling bin shows a high level of contamination. You'll also receive feedback on what waste should be removed before the next collection date.

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What will happen with the information collected?

We will use the data we collect to build upon the delivery of our waste education messages to the Townsville community. This data will help us better understand what the most common contaminants found in household recycling bins may be, and help develop greater messaging for residents.

What if I do not want my bins to be assessed?

The contents of the household bins are the legal possession of the property owner when on private land, however, once the bins are left out for collection, the contents become the property of Council. We will conduct a simple, quick, and visual assessment - not a manual search through the contents of your bins.

What if I continue to contaminate my recycling bin?

Bin Health Checks focus on education rather than enforcement.

If a bin/s is found to have a high level of contamination, the bin/s will not be able to be serviced until the contaminants have been removed.

If the contaminants have been removed and you would like your bin/s to be collected before the next collection date, you will need to pay a \$37.50 return service fee (one fee per address) before collection.

How will I receive feedback?

After our Waste Education Officers have conducted their assessment of the recycling bins, they will place a tag through the handle of each bin.

The tag placed on each bin will depend on how correctly you have disposed of the waste in your bins.

What type of feedback will I receive?

The bin tags are designed with happy, sad, and disappointed faces to indicate whether they are being used correctly, partially correctly, or incorrectly. The tags will show you what items you should and should not put in each bin and why.

What can you do to receive a happy-face tag?

To avoid receiving a sad or disappointed face bin tag, we encourage you to follow our recycling tips:

- Keep it simple
- Keep it loose
- Keep it clean
- Keep it safe
- Keep out soft plastics
- Keep out hazardous items

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[Watch our series of short videos on recycling tips here.](#)

For quick reference, see below a list of items that should be sorted into your general waste and recycling bins:

GENERAL WASTE

- & soft plastics
- soiled cardboard & shredded paper
- nappies & wipes
- liquid paperboard (UHT) containers
- food scraps, grass & garden clippings

RECYCLING

- paper & cardboard
- glass bottles & jars
- steel/aluminium cans & foil
- hard plastic bottles & containers

DANGER
Items that are hazardous, harmful or that can cause damage can't be placed in your yellow-lid bin.

NO:

- Hot ashes, liquids & oil.
- Chemicals, paints & solvents.
- Sharps & needles.
- Gas bottles, corrosive & flammable items.
- Car parts, including batteries.
- TVs & computers.
- Recyclables – place in your yellow-lid recycling bin.

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NO:

- Shredded paper & soiled cardboard.
- Food scraps, grass & garden clippings.
- Fabric & clothing.
- Scrap metal.
- Plastic bags/soft plastics.
- Takeaway cups, IV bags & sharps.
- Gas bottles, car batteries, fire extinguishers & marine flares.

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[Read more about what goes in your bins.](#)