

Community Consultation Summary Report

A Submission to Gunnedah Shire Council

7 September 2020



Draft Community Consultation Summary Report

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Job No. 220-5357-01-00

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Revision History

Rev	Date	Status	Author	Approver
0.1	26/08/20	Draft	Gemma Priddle, Rebecca Larkin	David Cocks
0.3	07/09/2020	Final	Gemma Priddle, Rebecca Larkin	David Cocks

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Executive Summary

Gunnedah Shire Council is currently developing a new waste collection contract and is considering potential service options to meet the needs of the community. With the aim of consulting with the community, a residential waste survey and a commercial waste survey were undertaken with residents and business owners. A total of 584 resident responses were collected for the residential survey and 54 responses were collected for the commercial survey.

For the residential waste survey, 74% of respondents currently receive the 3-bin service, 18% receive the 2-bin service and 8% receive no kerbside service. The majority of residents were happy with their waste collection service and rated services as very important.

For respondents receiving the 2-bin service, 54% of garbage bins were overflowing and 40% were $\frac{3}{4}$ full to full. 53% of recycling bins in the 2-bin service were overflowing and 37% were $\frac{3}{4}$ full to full. For respondents receiving the 3-bin service, 48% of garbage bins were overflowing and 41% were $\frac{3}{4}$ full to full. 45% of recycling bins were overflowing and another 45% were $\frac{3}{4}$ full to full. Green waste bins had a lower rate of overflowing bins (32%) with the majority being $\frac{3}{4}$ full to full (50%).

The preferred bin sizes were 240L for both the garbage (55% of respondents) and recycling bins (62% of respondents) and the preferred collection frequency was weekly for both the garbage (95% of respondents) and recycling bins (84% of respondents). 48% of residents were willing to pay \$1-2 more per week for a larger garbage bin and 50% of residents were not willing to pay more for a larger recycling bin.

Residents were introduced to the idea of a joint food organics garden organics (FOGO) service and 76% indicated they would likely use the service however, of those likely, just over half indicated they would not want to pay more than their current collection rates.

For the commercial waste survey, the majority of respondents (67%) receive the Council commercial garbage service and 44% of these reported their bin as overflowing at the time of collection. 45% indicated that their recyclable waste is disposed of in the garbage stream, highlighting the opportunity for waste to be diverted from landfill and into a recyclable stream. A large majority of businesses would likely use a Council commercial recycling service (79%) and would pay \$7-9 (81%) per week.

1 Introduction

Community surveys were undertaken by MRA to consult and collaborate with Gunnedah Shire Council (GSC) residents and business owners about the process of developing a new waste collections contract and the potential service options that are available.

The consultation gave the community the opportunity to provide input for the development of options and express their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the current services. It also presents a snapshot of community values and opinions enabling Council to understand what motivates the community in the context of waste management.

A residential waste survey and a commercial waste survey were created with questions targeted towards understanding the services currently received, satisfaction with these services and preferences for potential future services. Potential future services include changes to bin sizes, collection frequency and cost of service. Potential changes for the commercial waste service include the introduction of a Council recycling collection service.

1.1 Methodology

The surveys were published online using the Survey Monkey platform and made available via the Council website and social media pages. Hard copies of the surveys were also made available to ensure all community members have access to the surveys.

The consultation period ran for 29 days from the 23rd July 2020 to the 21st August 2020. Following this period, responses were collated, analysed and summarised in this report. The quantitative results of the survey can be found in Section 2 while the extended qualitative responses can be found in the Appendices. Please note, when asked for written responses any respondents who replied 'N/A' or equivalent have been deleted.

2 Residential Survey Results

2.1 Demographic Results

A total of 584 resident responses were collected for the residential waste survey. As can be seen in Figure 1, the response from this survey managed to be collected from a diverse range of ages. The survey also indicated that the vast majority of respondents lived in free-standing houses(97%). Of those that lived in multi-unit dwellings, over 85% had a waste system where units had individual bins. 81% of respondents were homeowners.

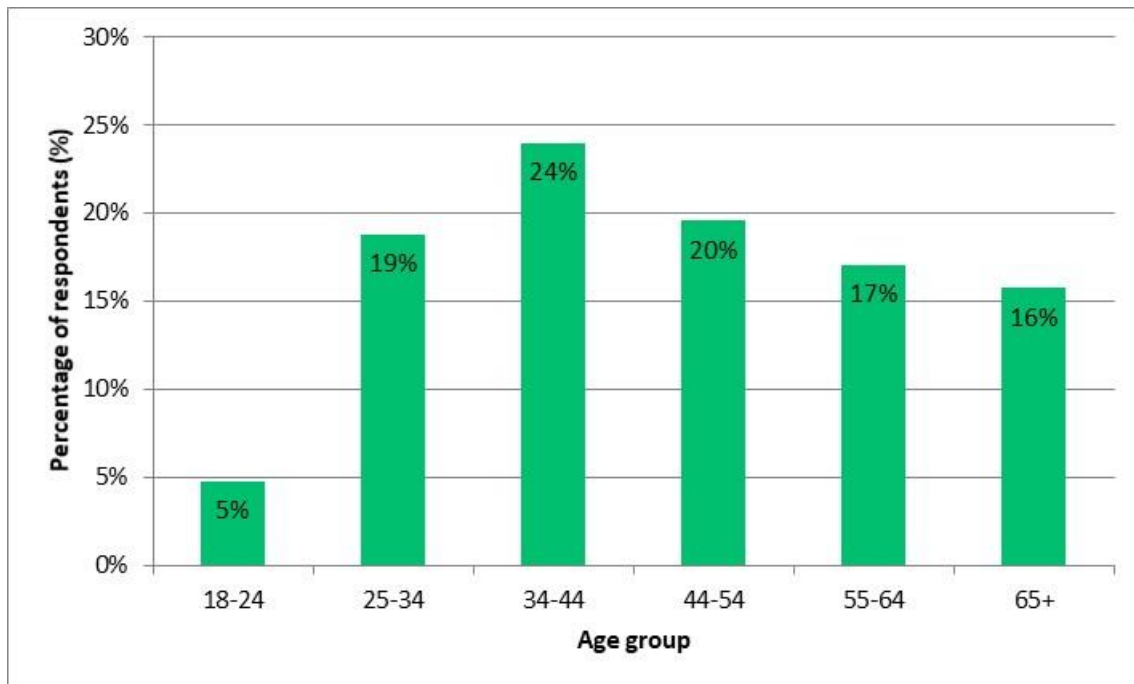


Figure 1 The age range of survey respondents

2.2 Current Service

74% of respondents currently utilise the 3-bin council-provided service, 18% utilise the 2-bin service and 8% receiving no kerbside collection service.

2.2.1 Bin fullness

Figure 2 displays how residents rated the fullness of their bins at collection. Households with a 2-bin system were more likely to have an overflowing bin before waste collection. Troublingly, over 50% of these residents reported having overflowing garbage and recycling bins.

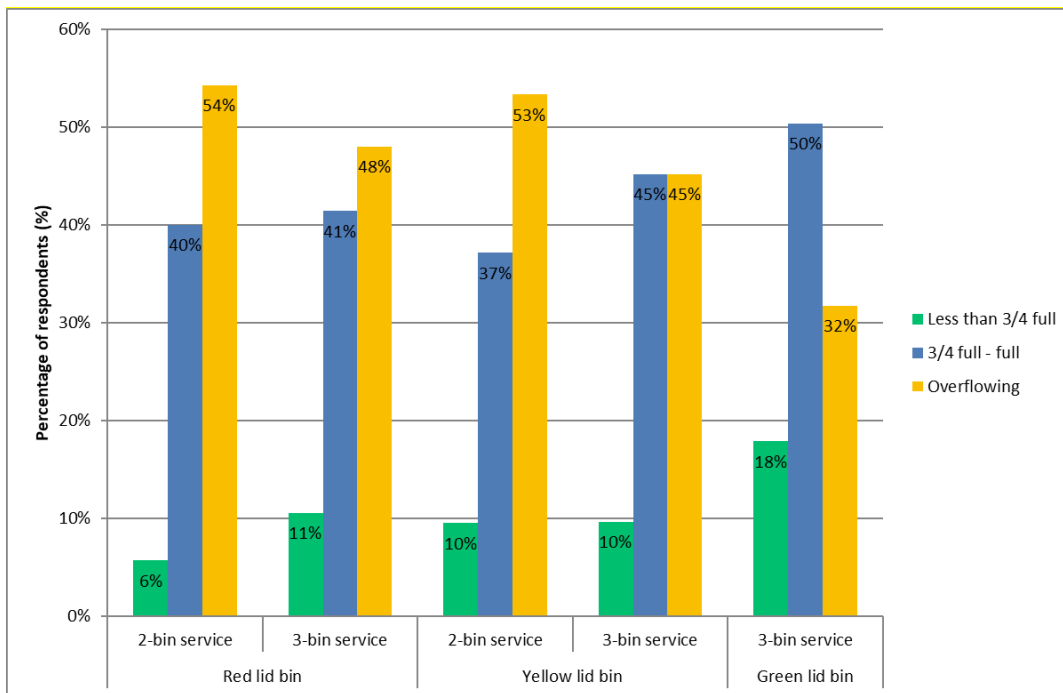


Figure 2 Bin fullness for the 2-bin and 3-bin service

2.2.2 Service satisfaction

Despite bin fullness, most residents still indicated that they were happy with the waste collection service; residents with a 2-bin system reported a slightly higher rate of satisfaction at 62%, which can be seen in Figure 3.

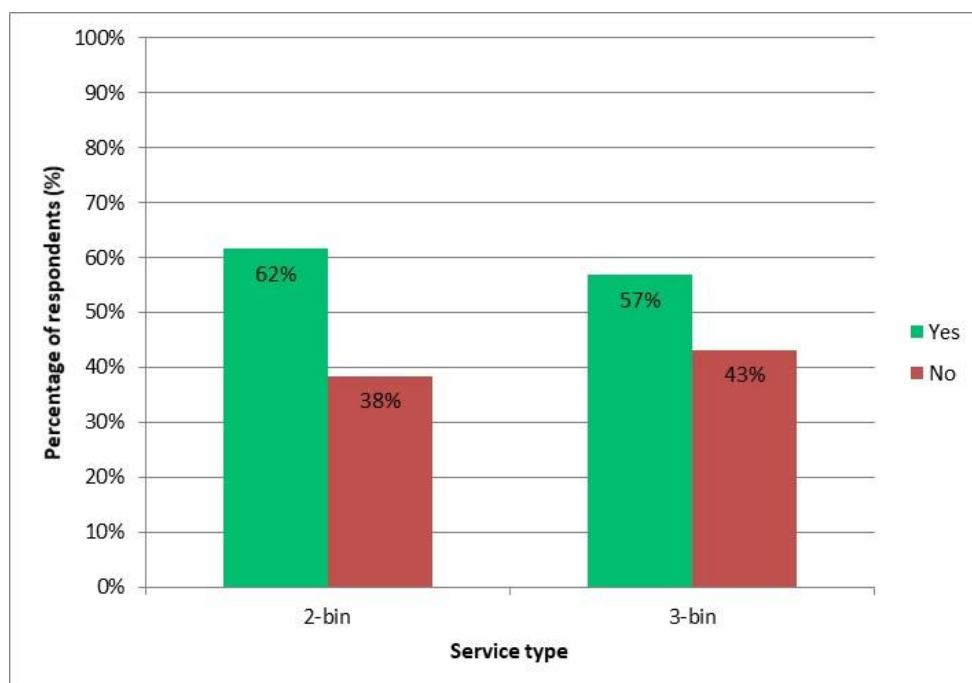


Figure 3 Satisfaction with current service

When asked why they weren't happy with the service, the most common responses for residents with a 2-bin service included:

- The inadequate size of bins: many felt they were far too small for families
- Requests to receive the green bin service

The most common responses for residents with a 3-bin service included:

- The inadequate size of bins
- Requests for more frequent collection: especially for the green bin in summer

A summary of the responses can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2.3 Service importance and considerations

Figure 4 and 5 contain combined data from 2-bin and 3-bin serviced residents. As can be seen in Figure 4, most respondents of the survey rated Council waste services as very important. Only a small proportion (5%) of respondents found the green lid bin to be not important.

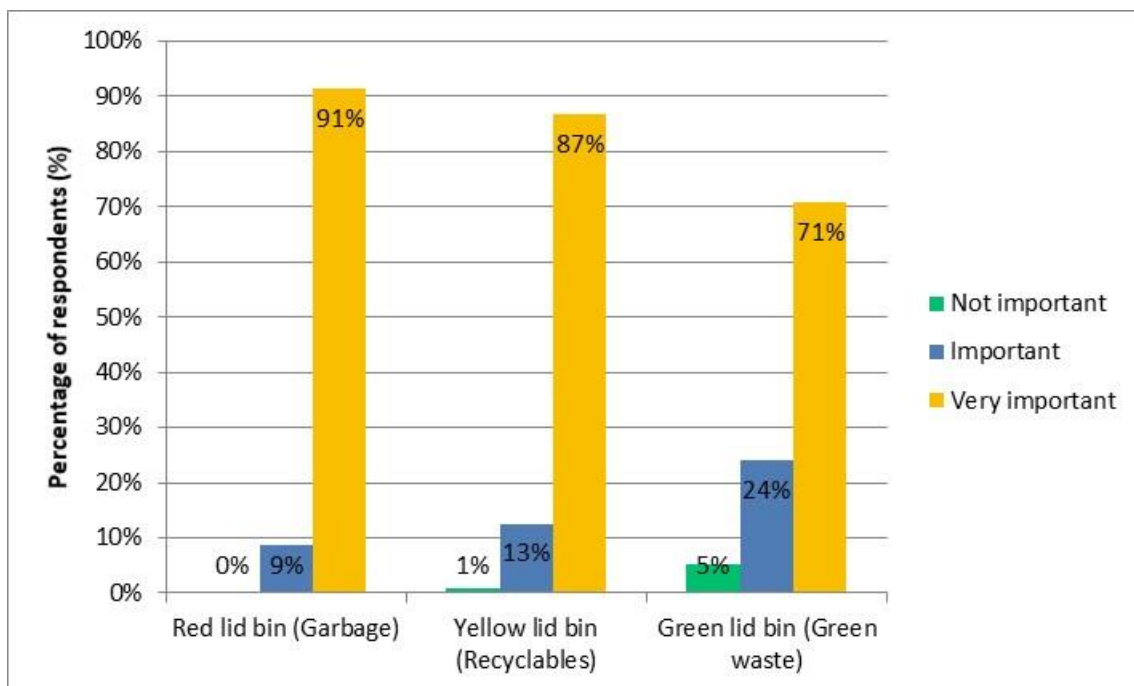


Figure 4 Importance of service (Q17)

When asked about the importance of different considerations surrounding waste management, residents displayed that they were concerned with all three options, see Figure 5. Convenience, cost and the environment were all important issues to consider in the operation of a waste management system, with 60% of respondents rating the cost of the service to be very important compared to 73% for both convenience and the environment. 5% of respondents found cost to be not important.

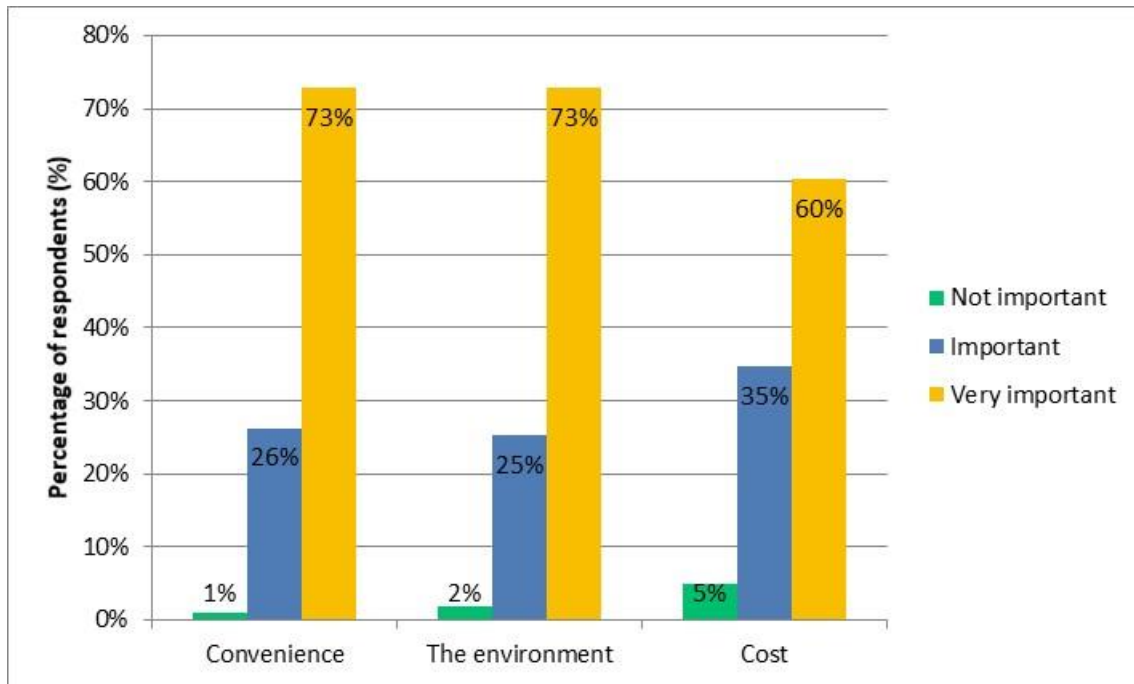


Figure 5 Considerations surrounding waste management

2.3 Future Service

2.3.1 Preferred bin sizes

Residents were asked what size of bin they would prefer. The 2-bin and 3-bin serviced residents reported similarly and the combined results for the garbage bin can be found in Figure 6; the most popular option was a 240L bin for garbage (55%). The combined results for the recycling bin can be found in Figure 7; the most popular option was a 240L bin for recyclables (62%).

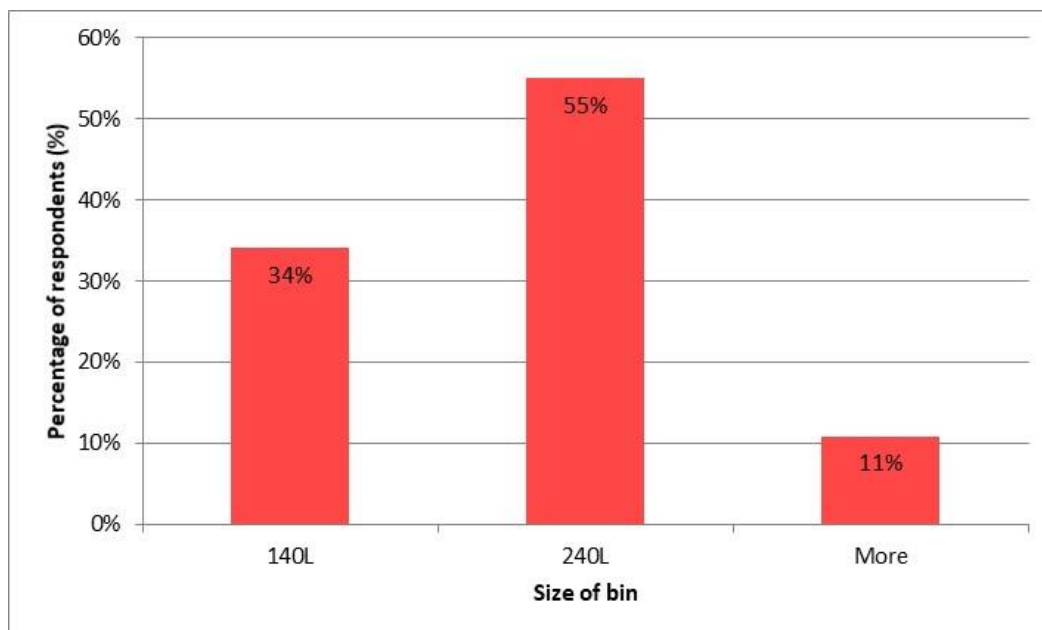


Figure 6 Preferred bin sizes for the red-lid bin

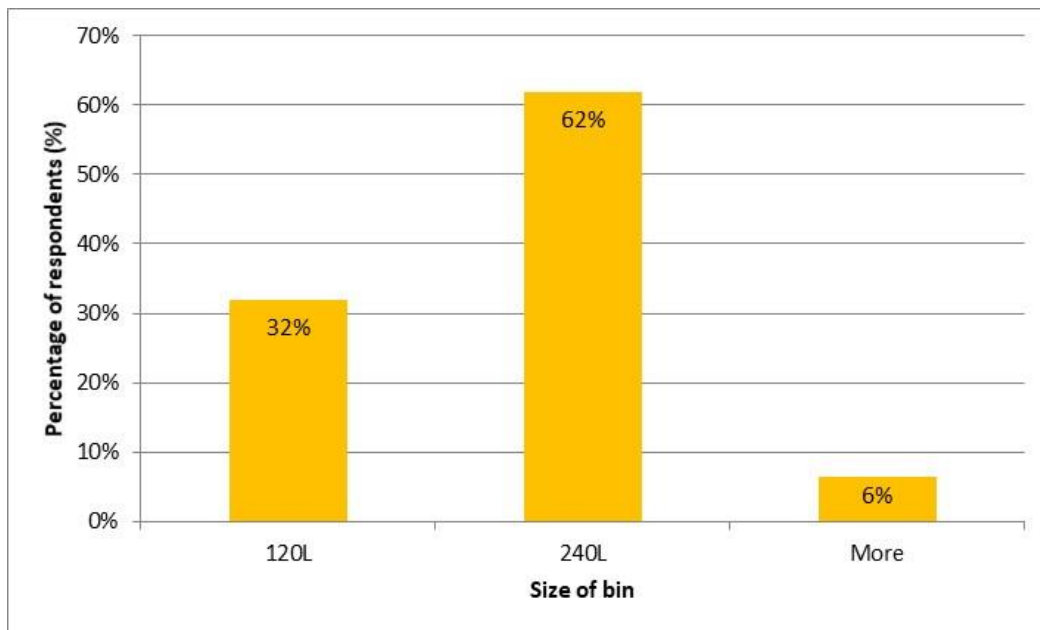


Figure 7 Preferred bin sizes for the yellow-lid bin

2.3.2 Willingness to pay

The survey asked respondents to indicate how much extra they would be willing to pay for a larger bin. Both 2-bin and 3-bin serviced respondents had similar results. For their garbage red-lidded bins, the largest proportion of respondents (48%) were willing to pay \$1-2 more per week for a larger bin followed by 42% not willing to pay more, see Figure 8. For recycling bins, the largest proportion of respondents (50%) were not willing to pay more for a larger bin followed by 42% who were willing to pay \$1-2 more per week, see Figure 9. A small proportion of respondents (8-10%) were willing to pay \$2-4 more per week.

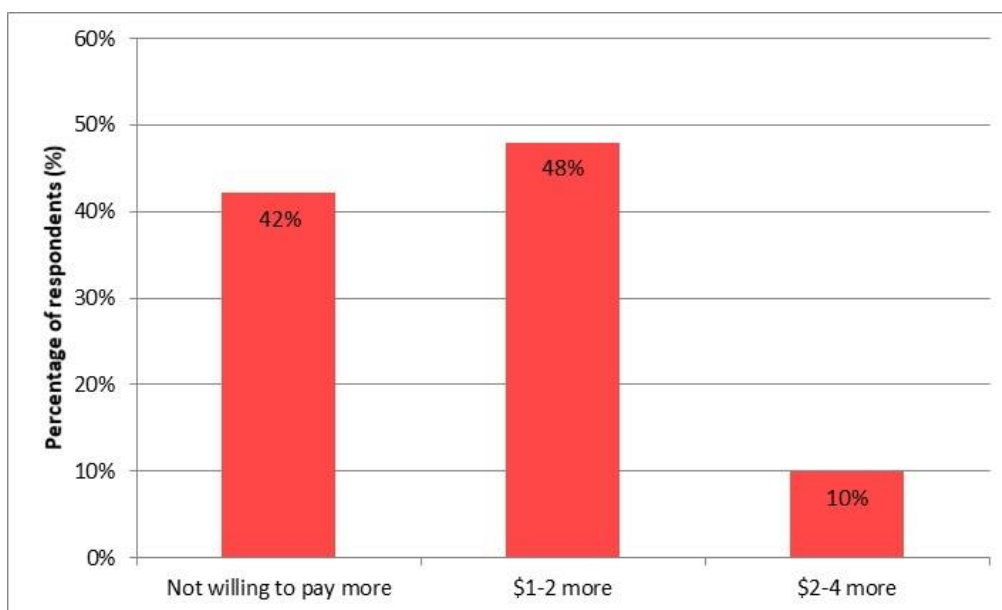


Figure 8 Propensity to pay for a larger garbage bin

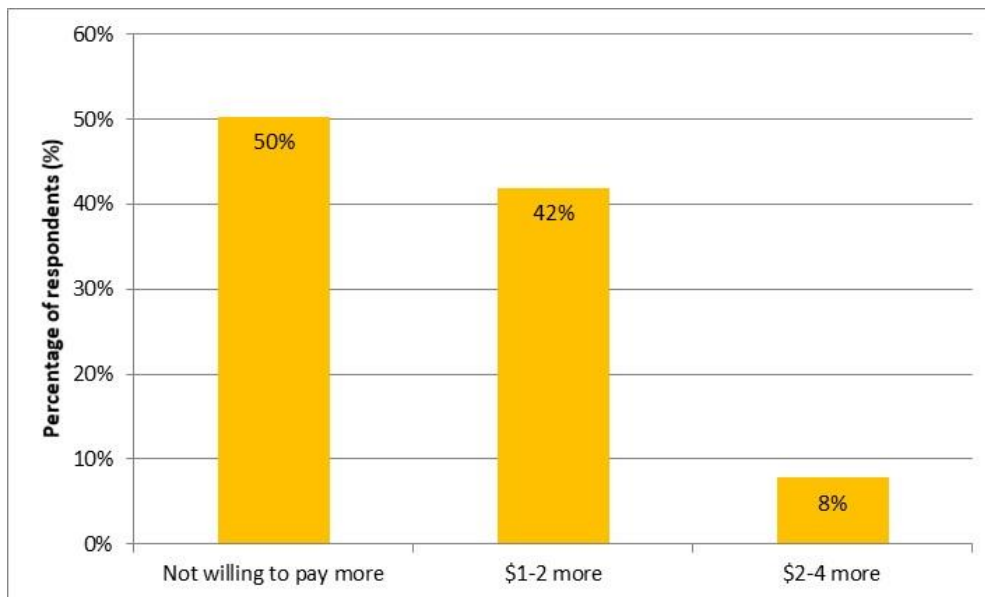


Figure 9 Propensity to pay for a larger recycling bin

2.3.3 Preferred collection frequency

The survey questioned residents on their preference for a weekly or fortnightly collection service. For the red bin, over 95% of respondents wanted weekly rubbish collections for their garbage service. Over 84% of respondents desired a weekly service for their yellow-lidded recycling bins. Understandably, those with a 2-bin service had a slightly higher percentage of respondents wanting weekly servicing compared to those with a 3-bin service.

2.4 No service

Those that did not use the service were asked how they disposed of their waste. The most common method (88%) was self haul to a waste facility such as Curlewis Tip, Spring Ridge Tip, Mullaley Tip, Kelvin Mobile Collection and Gunnedah waste facility. Burning of waste was reported by 9% of respondents and disposal on their own property was reported by 3% of respondents. A summary of responses can be found in Appendix 2.

Those who did not receive a service were also asked to give feedback on their current system and were given the opportunity to ask for changes they'd like to see. Many were currently unhappy with their current system. Some did not mind taking their rubbish to the tip; however, many felt the trading hours were too restrictive and inconvenient. There were many comments wanting the kerbside service to be made available to them. Another common response was frustration over being charged for waste services but receiving none and having to pay tip gate fees. A couple of respondents suggested a council-led roadside pickup of bulky items would be great and very well received. A summary of responses can be found in Appendix 3.

2.5 FOGO service

When asked to indicate how likely residents would be to utilise a FOGO collection service, the responses were relatively spread between the options as can be seen in Figure 10. The majority of respondents (76%) would be interested in using such a service. Of those interested, just over half indicated that they would not want to pay more than their current collection rates. Figure 11 shows how respondents indicated they would be willing to pay.

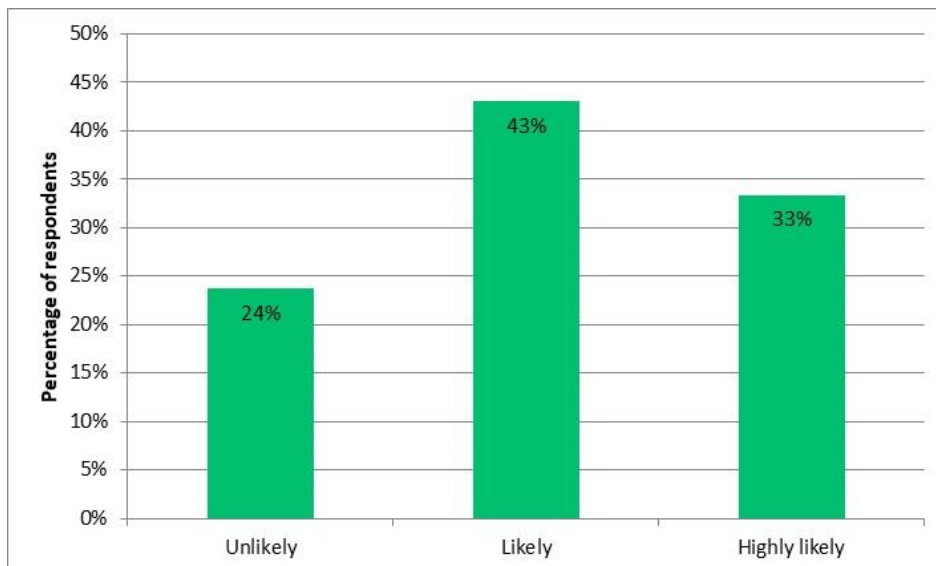


Figure 10 Likelihood of using FOGO service

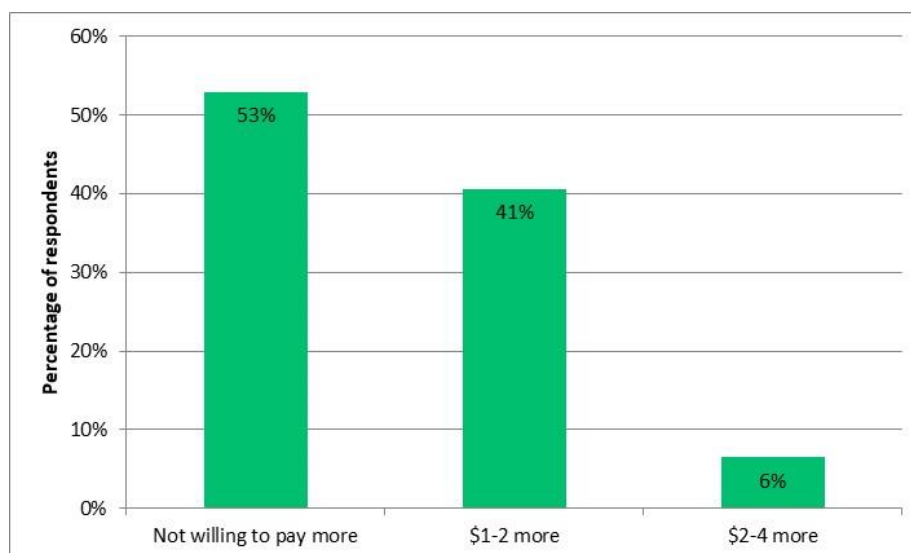


Figure 11 Propensity to pay for a FOGO service

2.6 General feedback

There were a wide range of responses when respondents were asked to give general feedback regarding future waste services. Many points echoed what had already been discussed in prior questions; desire for larger bins, less damage to bins from collections, issues with how the pricing of waste services work. There were many calls to extend services; such as green bin to those with 2-bin services and services in general to rural residents.

There was mention of residents wanting to be educated and calls for education and engagement campaigns regarding recyclables. Many respondents to this survey were engaged with their waste system and wanted to see improvements in more than just the cost of a service.

See Appendix 4 for a summary of responses.

3 Commercial Survey Results

A total of 54 responses were collected for the commercial waste survey.

3.1 Garbage service

3.1.1 Service type

The majority of respondents of the commercial waste survey utilised Council’s commercial garbage collection service for their garbage (67%) followed by those who have opted for private collection (27%), see Figure 12. Only three respondents used neither of these choices; one using the tip and another generating a sufficiently small amount of waste to use a public bin. Of the respondents who used the Council’s collection service, the average number of bins used was just less than two.

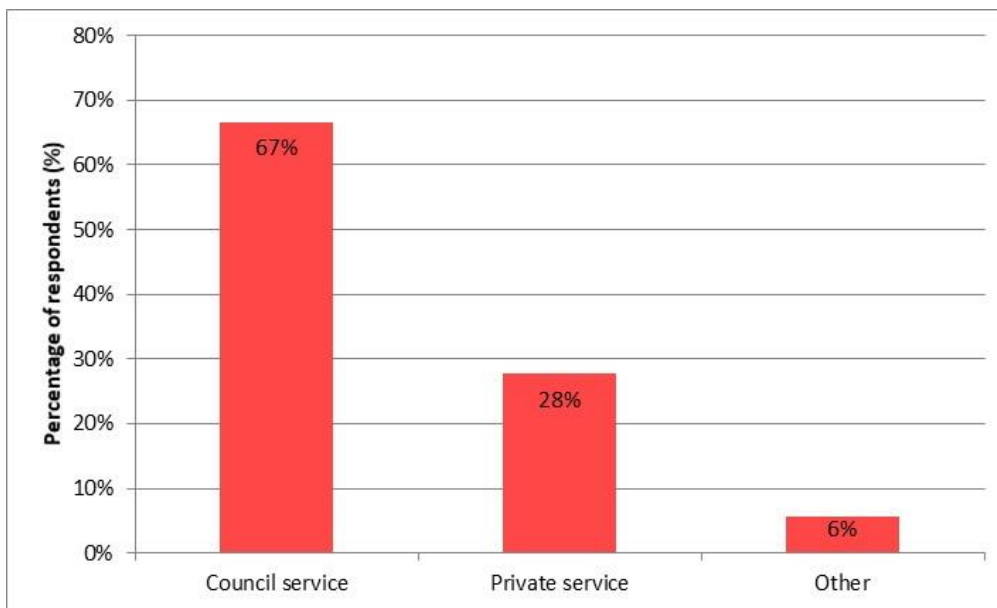


Figure 12 Commercial service type

When asked of interest in signing up for Council’s garbage collection service, 53% of respondents (9 of 17) indicated they would be interested. Those that were not interested found it unnecessary for their circumstances or claimed they prefer to take their waste to the landfill because of cheaper gate fees.

3.1.2 Bin fullness

The responses when asked about the volume of their bins full when collected can be seen in Figure 13. Less than 10% of respondents noted that their bins were less than $\frac{3}{4}$ full when waste is collected. Significantly, 44% of respondents claim their bins are overflowing by collection day.

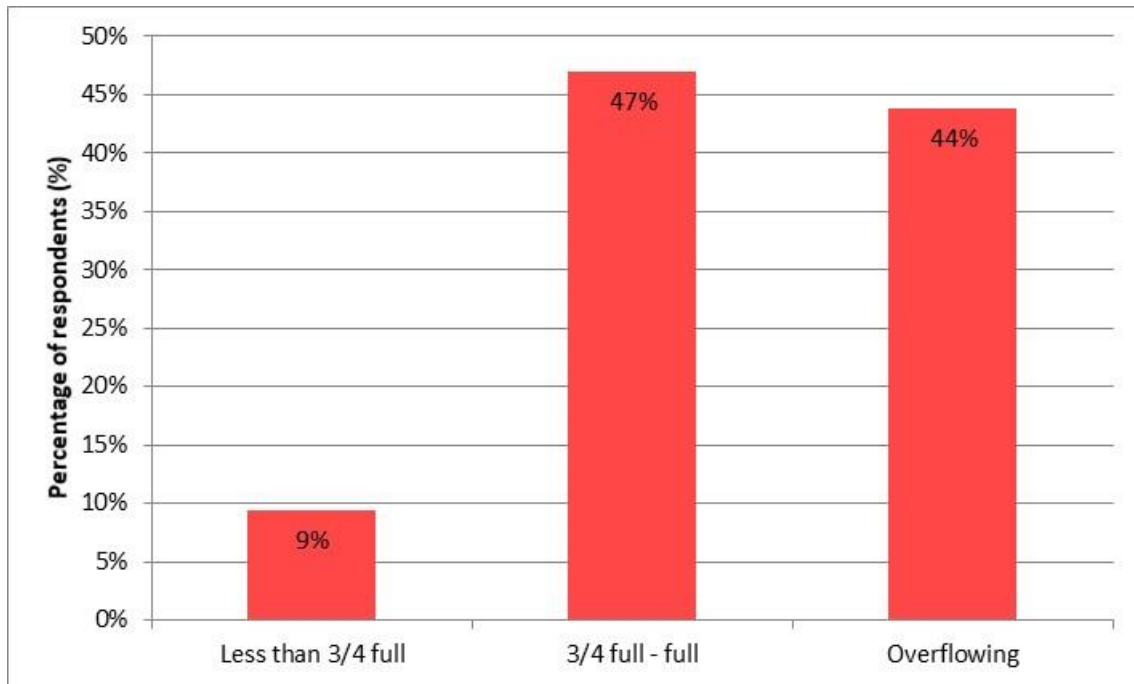


Figure 13 Bin fullness for the commercial garbage service

3.1.3 Service importance

When asked of the importance of the Council's collection service, the overwhelming majority of respondents viewed the service as important (28%) or very important (69%).

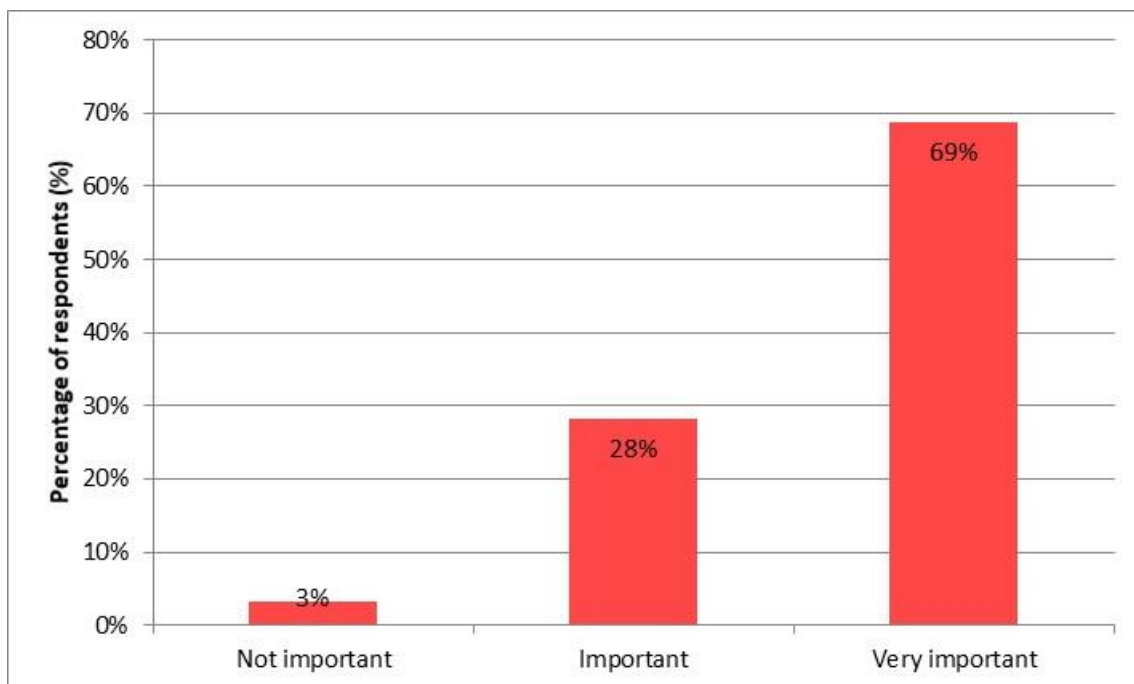


Figure 14 Importance of service

3.1.4 Service satisfaction

Respondents who currently used Council’s waste collection were asked if they were satisfied with the service. 78% were happy with the current service and 22% were unhappy. The most common reasons for dissatisfaction included the bins being too small and the waste collection service damaging their bins through rough handling. Individual responses can be found in Appendix 5.

3.2 Recycling Service

3.2.1 Method of disposal

18 respondents to the survey (45%) indicated that their recyclable waste is disposed of in their garbage stream while 38% receive a private collection service, see Figure 15. Those who responded ‘other’ (18%) had mixed responses of where their recycling ends up, including some who personally drop off recyclables to the depot and others using a mixture of other services. A summary of responses can be found in Appendix 6.

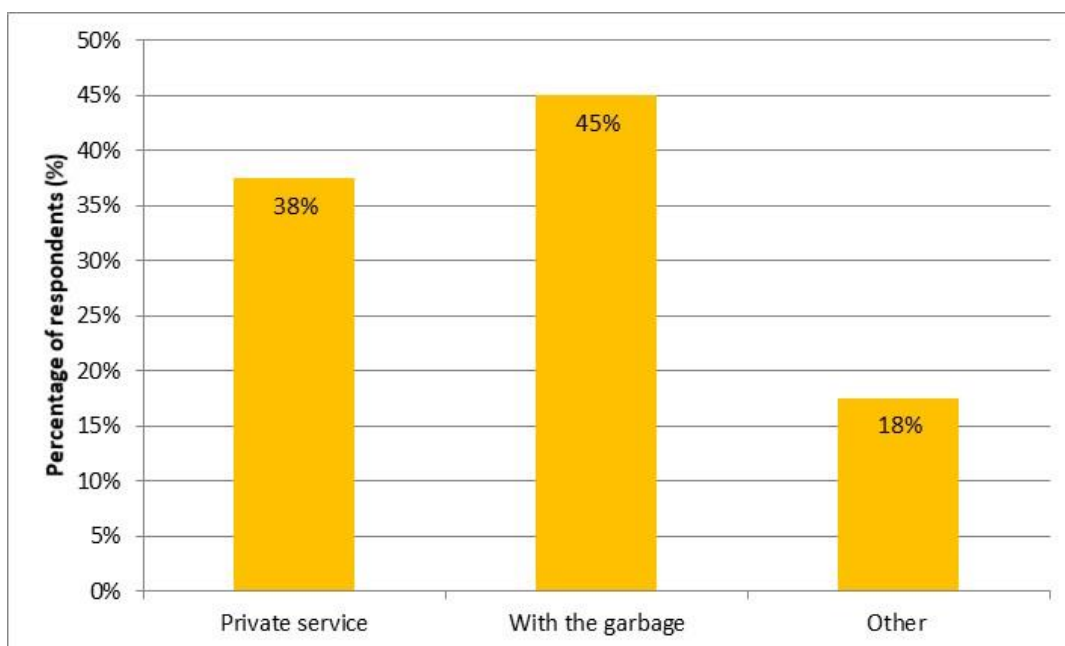


Figure 15 Method of disposal of recyclable material

3.2.2 Future council service

When asked to indicate interest in the implementation of a Council recycling service, the majority of respondents reacted favourably, stating they were likely (28%) or highly likely (51%) to use such a service, see Figure 16. Those who would not be interested had a range of answers including:

- Unnecessary
- Currently we support Gunnedah workshop enterprises/Recyclit who employ local people with disabilities
- The tip fee is cheap, not worth the time taken to sort
- Not applicable: large metal items

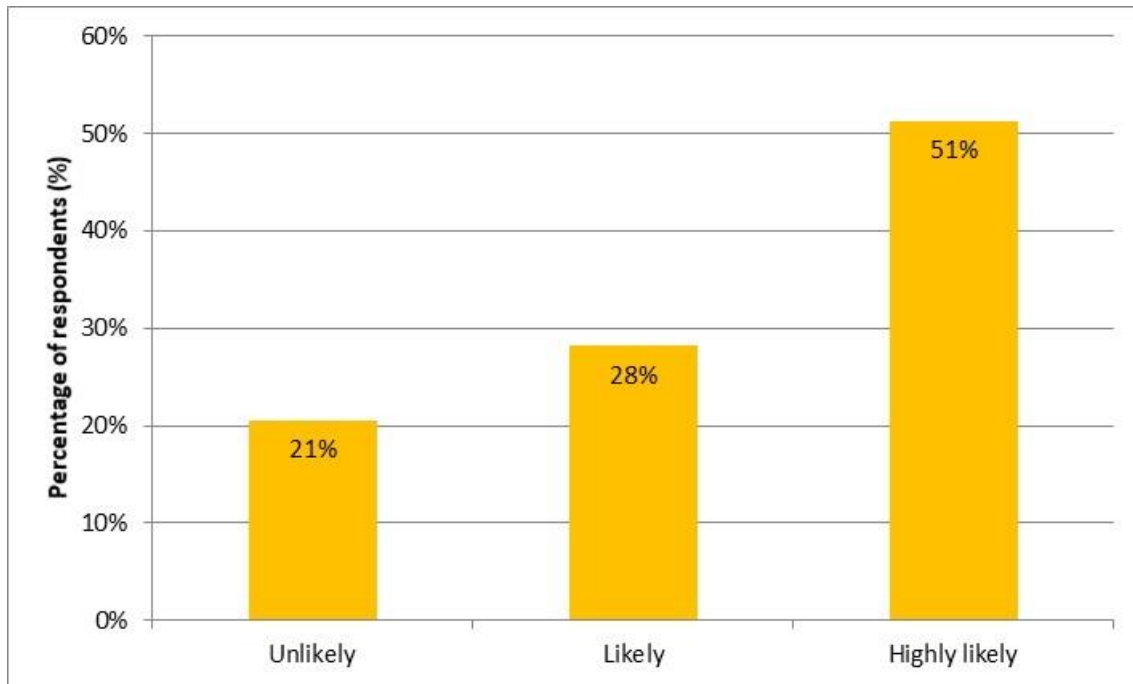


Figure 16 Interest in a council commercial recycling service

A strong majority of respondents (83%) wanted a yellow bin recycling service to be a weekly collection as opposed to fortnightly.

When asked to indicate the price willing to be paid for a council commercial recycling service, 22 of the 27 respondents chose the lowest option of \$7-9 per week. No one opted for the highest price range of \$11-13, and the two comments left for 'other' wished for a price range of \$7-9 per fortnight or free altogether.

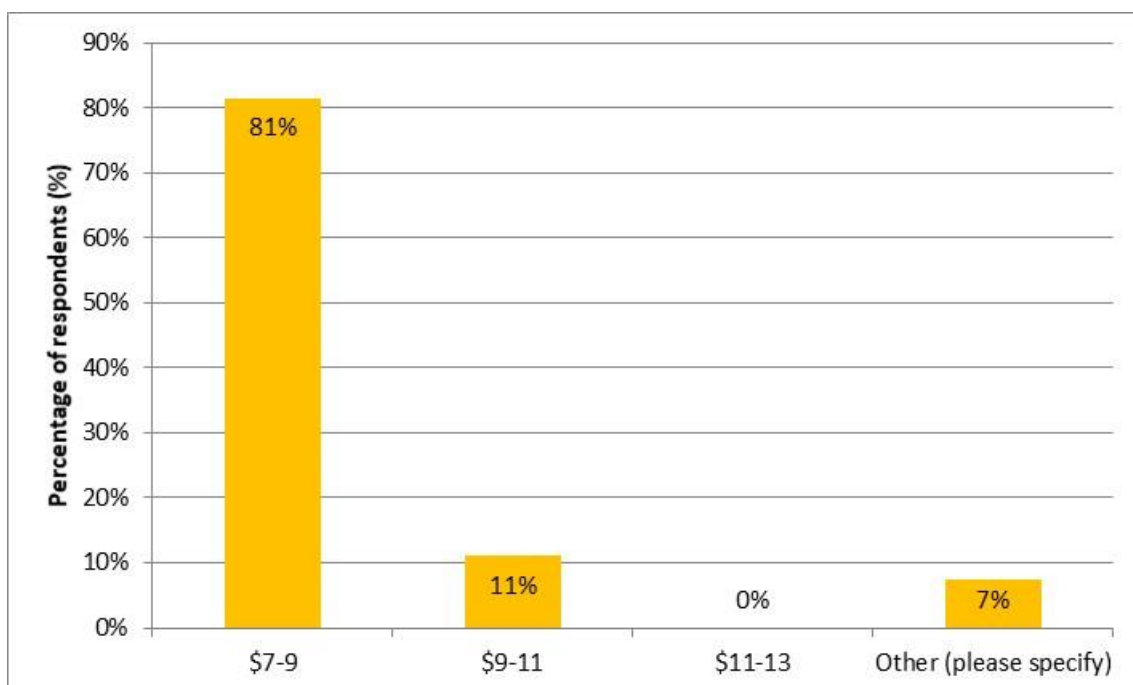


Figure 17 Propensity to pay for a commercial recycling service

3.3 General feedback

When asked for general feedback around future waste services council may provide, respondents had a range of responses which are summarised in detail in Appendix 7. Common answers included wishes for larger bins. Notably, some respondents wished for the service to consolidate all kinds of recyclables as their private services currently only took paper and cardboard.

Appendix 1 Residential Survey – Service Satisfaction

Question: Please provide feedback about why you are unhappy with the current service.

Summarised responses for respondents with the 2-bin service are provided in Table 1 and summarised responses for respondents with the 3-bin service are provided in Table 2.

Table 1 Appendix 1 Residential Survey - Service Satisfaction of 2-bin Service

Responses	Frequency of response
Requests for bigger bins/complaint about small bin size	29 (73%)
Requests for green waste bins	11 (28%)
Complaints about broken bins	3 (8%)
Request for bulky waste service	1 (3%)
Request for more focus and updates on recycling	1 (3%)

Table 2 Appendix 1 Residential Survey - Service Satisfaction of 3-bin Service

Responses	Frequency of response
Requests for bigger bins/complaint about small bin size	27 (66%)
Requests for more frequent collection of green waste bins (especially in Summer)	13 (32%)
Requests for FOGO	4 (10%)
Complaints about broken bins	3 (7%)
Request for bulky waste service	1 (2%)

Appendix 2 Residential Survey – Alternative Methods of Disposal

Question: How do you dispose of your waste? Summarised responses are provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Appendix 2 Residential Survey - Alternative Methods of Disposal

Responses	Frequency of response
Self-haul to waste facility	30 (88%)
Burn	3 (9%)
Dispose on own property	1 (3%)

Appendix 3 Residential Survey – No Service Feedback

Question: Do you have any feedback on your current disposal method? Summarised responses are provided in Table 4.

Question: What changes would you like to see to waste collection services? Summarised responses are provided in Table 5.

Table 4 Appendix 3 Residential Survey – Disposal Method Feedback

Respondent	Responses
9 (39%)	Complaint about paying tip charge as well as rates
7 (30%)	Would like a kerbside collection service
2 (9%)	Inconvenient tip opening hours
2 (9%)	Not happy
1 (4%)	Good service
1 (4%)	Need easy access for recyclables
1 (4%)	Tip charge is inconsistent

Table 5 Appendix 3 Residential Survey – Desired Changes

Respondent	Responses
20 (63%)	Would like a kerbside collection service
6 (19%)	Complaint about paying tip charge as well as rates
2 (6%)	Request for bulky waste service
1 (3%)	Good service
1 (3%)	Rural village pickup works fine
1 (3%)	Swap and go at Kelvin would be good
1 (3%)	Would like more information about what is recycled
1 (3%)	Bigger recycling bin for town

Appendix 4 Residential Survey – General Feedback

Question: Is there any other feedback regarding future waste services you wish to provide Council? A summary of common responses is provided in Table 6.

Table 6 Appendix 4 Residential Survey - General Feedback

Respondent	Responses
58 (27%)	Request for bigger bins
42 (19%)	Request for weekly collection for green waste (in Summer)
35 (16%)	Request for bulky waste service
20 (9%)	Request for FOGO
18 (8%)	Request to keep weekly service for garbage
12 (6%)	Don't want to pay more (bigger bins should be optional)
11 (5%)	Request for sturdier bins/Complaints about rough handling of bin by collection staff
7 (3%)	Request for green waste bin
6 (3%)	Request for more recycling education
7 (3%)	Request to extend service to more village areas

Appendix 5 Commercial Survey – Service Satisfaction

Question: Please provide feedback about why you are unhappy with the current service. Responses are provided in Table 7.

Table 7 Appendix 5 Commercial Survey - Service Satisfaction

Respondent	Responses
1	Breaking the bins all the time
2	Need bigger bin
3	Need bigger recycle bin and weekly green waste bin being on big block
4	Bins are way too small especially the recycling one. I ended up general wasting things that could be recycled
5	Bins have either cracked lids or no lids at all, they've been broken off by the rough handling from the garbage truck
6	No CBD recycling service. No public recycling in parks and Main Street. Recycling at the pool not available- only outside pool!

Appendix 6 Commercial Survey – Alternative Methods of Disposal

Question: How does your business currently dispose of its recycling waste? Responses are provided in Table 8.

Table 8 Appendix 6 Commercial Survey - Alternative Methods of Disposal

Respondent	Responses
3 (50%)	Mix of private service and with garbage
2 (33%)	Residential recycling kerbside service
1 (17%)	Self-haul to waste management facility

Appendix 7 Commercial Survey – General Feedback

Question: Is there any other feedback regarding future waste services for businesses you wish to provide Council? Responses are provided in Table 9.

Table 9 Appendix 7 Commercial Survey - General Feedback

Respondent	Responses
6 (35%)	Would like to see a Council commercial recycling service
4 (24%)	Continue weekly pick up of commercial garbage service
4 (24%)	Request for larger bins
1 (6%)	Keep up good work
1 (6%)	Request for annual bulky waste collection service for private dwellings
1 (6%)	Sturdier bins needed
1 (6%)	Concern for Recyclit staff losing jobs if Council commercial recycling service introduced

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