

SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS IMPLEMENTED FOR HOUSEHOLD BULKY WASTE DROP OFF EVENTS

On 18 September 2024, three days after our Household Bulky Waste Drop Off Event, in the process of loading the landfill material into one of our trucks to transport to the waste facility, a fire took hold and emergency services were called. It is believed that the likely cause of fire was from a lithium battery.

Through rigorous discussion and collaboration between Council's Waste Services and Risk Management teams, various improvements were incorporated, as identified by the comprehensive Risk Assessment.

The benefits of these improvements include:

- A safer environment for staff and the general public.
- To minimise risk exposure.
- To raise awareness on the correct disposal of hazardous materials.
- To continue to provide a valued service to residents of the Kiama LGA.
- To establish a site that meets EPA and SafeWork standards.
- To establish a better practice approach to developing, managing and operating the waste and recycling facility for Council, operators and other stakeholders.

What improvements were implemented?

- Daily booking numbers reduced from 300 to 175 per day. The reduction in numbers spread across the day, ensures that there is more control on traffic movement throughout the site and allows staff to provide better customer service on determining what materials are being brought in for disposal.
- The Terms and Conditions for the event has been updated to provide residents with important information including what materials are accepted for drop off, materials not accepted for drop off, conditions of entry, all items containing batteries must be removed prior and handed to staff at the Checkpoint.
- Installation of Conditions of Entry sign at the Checkpoint.
- Stringent controls in place at the Checkpoint and at the Drop Zone area to ensure all material coming in is assessed for batteries. All registered participants are asked at the Checkpoint and again at the Drop Zone area, if they have any items that may contain batteries. If so, these are collected separately, and batteries are removed and placed in the dedicated metal bins.
- All landfill material is removed off site to the approved licensed facility at the end of each day. This daily process ensures that, should a fire break out, the extent of the fire is greatly reduced.
- Improved line marking to clearly identify drop off areas, speed limits and direction of traffic flow.
- Additional key staff to assist with control number of cars at the Drop Zone area. This avoids congestion and limits the number of vehicles disposing of material, to enable staff to closely monitor the material before it is placed on the landfill pile.
- Impose a one hour break from 12noon-1pm to provide staff with a sufficient break to minimise fatigue from the outdoor elements and to allow plant movement.
- Positioning water cart close to the drop zone area.
- Use of two-way radios to all key staff for effective communication.