



# Media Release

16 April 2019

## Cockburn residents encouraged to keep recycling

Cockburn residents are encouraged to continue recycling their hard plastics after reassurance from the City's recycling contractor, SUEZ, that recyclable material is sent to certified, licensed operators that process the material legally and ethically in destination countries.

The City has moved to reassure residents about their recycling efforts following a damning plastics recycling investigation on *60 Minutes* on 14 April which said it had tracked mixed plastic to dozens of illegal processing sites in Malaysia where it is either dumped, buried or burned.

SUEZ Infrastructure Manager WA, Daniel van Veen said SUEZ had invested in state of the art recycling facilities and quality control procedures to ensure commodities reached the appropriate quality criteria to maximize resource recovery.

"It is essential that residents separate different waste and recycling streams to use bin systems effectively and correctly, to reduce contamination at source," Mr van Veen said.

"We would encourage all our customers to continue recycling correctly as we each can do our part to create a more circular model of consumption".

City of Cockburn Waste Manager Lyall Davieson said it was no accident Cockburn's residents had enabled the City to be named the joint top recycler in WA for 2017/18 last week.

"Cockburn residents are fantastic role models for other council areas. They have responded very positively to our bin tagging community education program over the last four years to educate the community about recycling," Mr Davieson said.

"So far we have audited around 300,000 bins to provide individual feedback to residents on how to correctly use their bins.

"Residents also responded well to the City's 2018 education campaign in response to China's National Sword Program to inform residents that certain items such as soft



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plastics, aerosol cans, meat trays and polystyrene should no longer be placed in the recycling bin as they cannot be recycled.

“Soft plastic currently has very little value on the global commodity market so, when it is exported overseas, it may not be recycled.

“This is one reason why soft plastic is no longer accepted in the recycling bin. Items in the recycling bin that cannot be recycled are removed and sent to landfill in Australia, rather than being exported.

“Our City is committed to reducing waste because it’s important to our residents. We recently consulted on a Wastewise Events Policy to restrict the use of single-use plastics at events.

“We’ve implemented several programs aimed at reducing waste in recent years, including providing water refill stations and reusable cups at all major City events, providing home compost subsidies and holding a series of educational events and workshops around waste reduction in the household which have been very popular with residents.”

Mr Davieson said the Australian recycling industry needed stronger regulation to ensure transparent and traceable export supply chains.

“We are all responsible for ensuring we do not pass on our environmental and health problems to developing countries and/or future generations,” Mr Davieson said.

“The City advocates for a State and Federal Government commitment to establish recycling industries here in Australia. This will generate jobs and provide the community with confidence that their waste is being processed in the most responsible manner.

“We’ve been an advocate for onshore processing for many years, and hope the *60 Minutes* feature will be a catalyst for strong commitment and action from State and Federal Government.”

Reducing the waste we produce is the most effective way to reduce negative impact and the City is one of WA’s biggest buyers of Replas products which are made from



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recycled soft plastics.

## What can you do:

- Take soft plastics to REDcycle collection points at your local supermarket for manufacture in Australia into Replas park equipment, bollards and other items
- Purchase items with recycled content to help generate a market for these materials, allowing us to recycle more
- The State Government has recently released an issues paper and consultation to reduce single-use plastics. The City encourages the community to complete the survey [here](#), to help send a strong message about tackling the war on waste.

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