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COUNCIL URGES RESIDENTS TO RECYCLE RIGHT FOLLOWING CONTAMINATED RECYCLING LOADS

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) is reminding residents of the importance of correctly sorting household waste and recycling after recent contamination incidents were identified in kerbside recycling collections.

Recent recycling loads collected across the Local Government Area contained inappropriate and potentially hazardous items, including general waste, bulky materials and other contaminants that should not be placed in recycling bins.

The contamination was identified by Elouera Association, the region's recycling processor, which employs and supports people living with disability. Recycling materials are hand-sorted before processing, meaning contaminated loads create real safety risks for workers, can damage equipment and result in more material being sent to landfill.

Recent contamination has included household rubbish, textiles, bulky materials and reports of needles and sharps in recycling streams.

Council's Acting Manager Regional Services, Steven Lowe, said many residents may not realise that recycling is not fully automated.

"Every item placed in a recycling bin has the potential to be handled by a real person. Many of the workers sorting our recycling at Elouera Association are living with disability. Taking the time to put the right item in the right bin helps protect those workers, improves recycling outcomes and reduces costs for the community," Mr Lowe said.

Mr Lowe said while education remains the priority, residents need to understand their responsibilities when using the kerbside waste collection service.

"Most residents do the right thing, but contamination continues to impact recycling workers, the broader community and the environment. It's important that residents understand how to use the bin system correctly and dispose of waste through the appropriate channels," he said.

Mr Lowe also reminded residents that there can be serious consequences for deliberately misusing Council's waste services, including fines of up to \$2,500, potential legal action, increased public health risks and disruption to local recycling programs.

With Local Government Week taking place this week, Council will be increasing community education around correct recycling practices, including the safe disposal of sharps and other hazardous waste.

Residents are reminded that needles and sharps should never be placed in kerbside recycling or waste bins and can be disposed of safely through local hospital services in Cootamundra and Gundagai.

Pictures and caption:

Examples of contamination recently found in kerbside recycling loads, including textiles, bulky waste and household items that should not be placed in recycling bins. These materials create safety risks for recycling workers and can result in recyclable materials being sent to landfill.



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