

Better Practice Local Waste Drop-Off Points

2025

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1. Introduction

Local Governments in Western Australia play a crucial role in delivering waste services to meet the needs of their communities. Among these services, small scale local waste drop-off points (also known as recycling hubs) offer residents a way to safely dispose of, or recycle, items that are unsuitable for kerbside or vergeside collection. While these local waste drop-off points can support responsible waste management, careful consideration within the broader context of waste avoidance and product stewardship is required.

This Guideline provides operational guidance to Local Governments on small-scale, product-specific drop-off points. It excludes large-scale facilities such as landfills and transfer stations, which serve broader waste collection purposes and are subject to different operational, environmental and regulatory requirements. However, the framework may still be useful in assessing whether specific items should be collected at these larger sites. For data on the range of materials and facilities that Local Governments are collecting at drop-off points, refer to [Section 1.2](#) Local Government Drop-off Collection Survey. This Guideline is intended to assist Local Governments to focus efforts on the collecting items which will have the biggest impact.

Under the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 (WARR Act)*, Local Governments are empowered, but not obligated, to provide waste services. Section 52 of the Act allows Local Governments to determine the types of services they offer, based on their capacity, resources and community needs. While discretionary, these services are increasingly expected to align with the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030*, which prioritises the waste hierarchy, starting with avoidance.

Small scale local drop-off points play a valuable role in collecting materials for recovery and fostering community engagement in recycling and responsible disposal. They offer a practical solution for managing specific waste streams, especially where reuse or avoidance is not currently feasible. However, drop-off points do not inherently promote waste avoidance. In fact, their availability may unintentionally encourage disposal behaviour through the "warm glow" effect, where individuals feel morally satisfied when discarding items, they perceive as being responsibly handled (van Doorn & Kurtz, 2021). This can lead to increased consumption of single-use products and premature disposal of reusable items. For this reason, education to encourage waste avoidance is a priority.

However, Local Governments still need to focus on material recovery, particularly for items that cannot be avoided, are high-risk or lack viable alternatives. This Guideline provides a decision-making framework to help Local Governments assess the need, risks and feasibility of implementing small scale local drop-off points. The Guideline is not prescriptive and offers practical direction on evaluating which product types are suitable for collection and how to align services with broader sustainability objectives. The framework can also be used to justify the establishment of new, or removal of existing, drop-off points (refer to [Appendix 1](#)). By supporting informed, context-sensitive choices, the Guideline helps ensure that drop-off programs contribute to both resource recovery and long-term waste reduction goals.

[WALGA advocates](#) for the Australian and State Government to implement effective product stewardship schemes which ensures producers are physically, and/or, financially responsible for their products at end of life. Where such schemes are well-established, Local Governments can play a supportive role rather than taking on primary responsibility for collection. For example, by promoting how the community can access the product stewardship scheme.

Disclaimer

The term "Better Practice" is used rather than "Best Practice" to acknowledge that waste management practices evolve over time. There is no static "Best Practice", rather, there are ongoing improvements through developing better practices.

The Better Practice Local Waste Drop-off Points Guideline (this document) was produced in collaboration with Local Governments across Western Australia.

Note: The Guideline has been prepared by WALGA to assist Local Governments in Western Australia. The information contained in the Guideline is true and correct at the date of publication. WALGA does not warrant or represent that the information is exhaustive or complete. WALGA will not be liable for any loss or damage suffered or incurred by any person arising from the use or reliance on the information contained in this Guideline. Local Governments are advised to obtain their own legal advice on matters raised in this Guideline.

1.1 Objectives

Guideline objective

The objective of the Guideline is to provide a practical framework to assist Local Governments in assessing the need to establish, or discontinue, small scale local drop-off points.

Drop-off objectives

The objective of small-scale local drop-off points is to support safe and effective collection of materials.

In meeting this objective, the drop-off point should not undermine waste avoidance outcomes or duplicate existing product stewardship options.

1.2 Local Government Drop-off Collection Survey

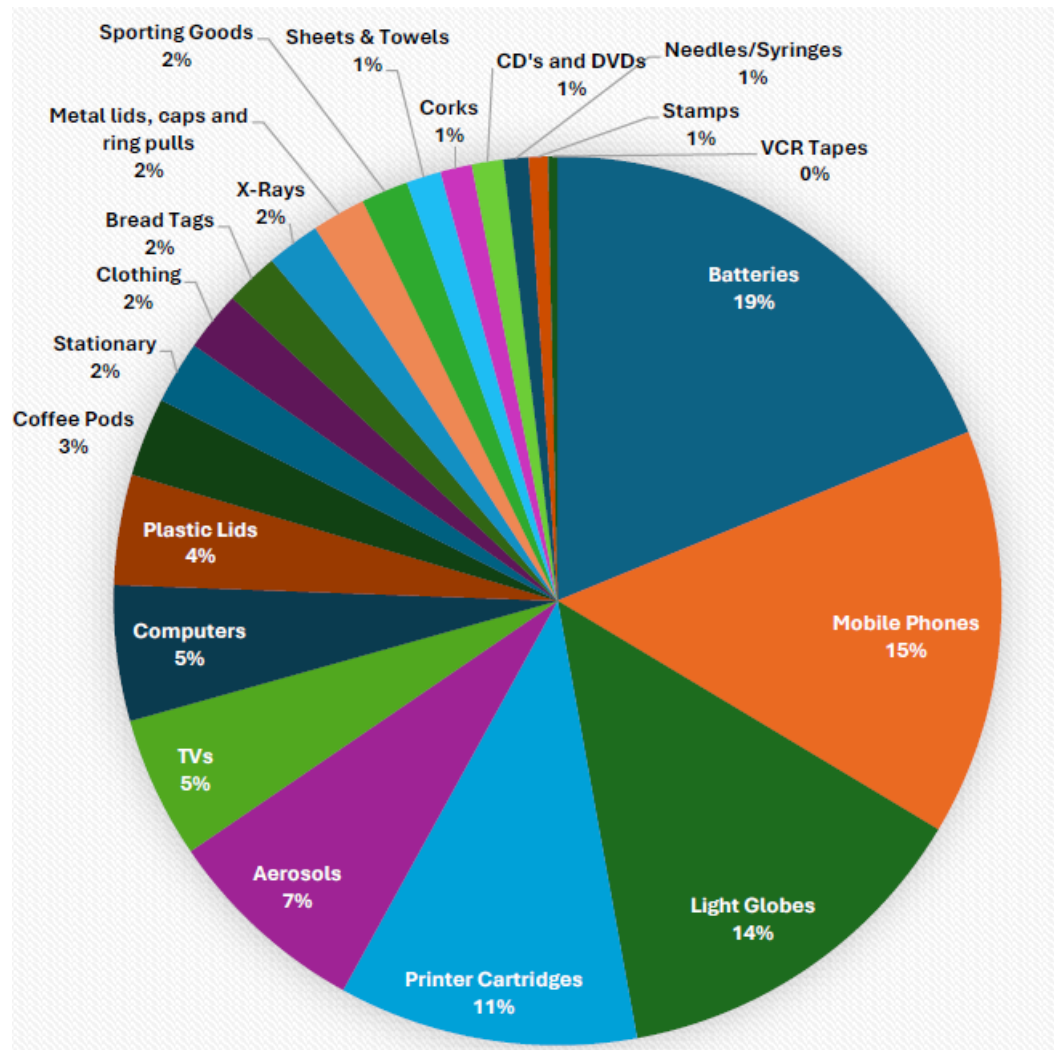
To assist in identifying the range of materials that Local Governments are collecting at drop-off points, in 2024, WALGA conducted a survey with Local Governments. The survey received 70 responses from metropolitan and non-metropolitan Local Governments, including information on 243 facilities and over 40 different materials (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1: Facilities where Local Governments have drop-offs points

Type of Facility	Number (and percentage) of facilities that collects Waste Materials
Library	93 (38%)
Landfill/Transfer Station	72 (30%)
Administration Centre	33 (14%)
Recreation Centre	24 (10%)
Operation Centre	15 (6%)
Shopping Centre	6 (2%)
Total	243

Note: The survey included landfill and transfer stations but did not specify the exact location of drop-off points within these sites. This is particularly relevant in regional areas, where drop-off points may be located within tip shops on-site.

Figure 1: Common waste materials collected at drop-off points established by Local Governments.



Across the surveyed facilities, batteries emerged as the most commonly collected item, consistently serving as the primary material at each location. This was followed by mobile phones, light globes, printer cartridges and aerosols. The survey found that Local Governments are collecting a wide range of materials, with nearly 40 different materials mentioned, highlighting the diversity and complexity of local drop-off points.

2. Decision-Making Framework

WALGA has developed a decision-making framework, outline in Figure 2 and Table 2, to assist Local Governments in determining whether there is a service gap for a specific product. Table 2 provides the range of considerations which are important when making a determination regarding establishing a drop-off.

Figure 2: Flow chart for considering establishing a drop-off point

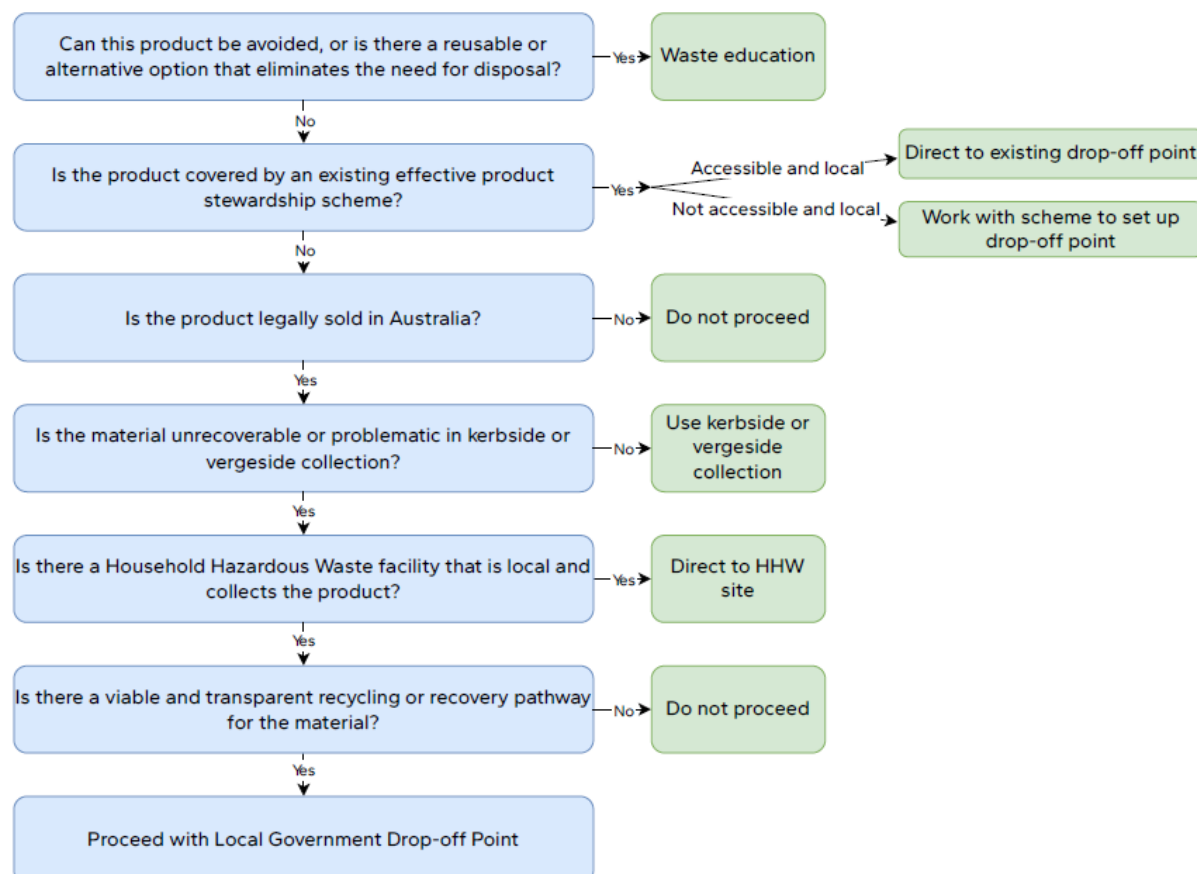


Table 2: Key considerations within the Decision-Making Framework

Assessment area	Key considerations
Waste avoidance	- Determine if the product can be avoided all together. - Identify reusable or alternative options that eliminate the need for disposal. - Promote behaviour change and education to reduce consumption.
Product stewardship schemes	- Check if the item is already covered by an effective product stewardship scheme. Refer to Australian Government accredited industry-led voluntary schemes and Appendix 2 for examples of current product stewardship schemes. - Confirm that schemes offer accessible local drop-off points and assess their catchment areas. Previous HHW Program surveys show 40% of respondents are willing to travel 10–20 minutes. - Coordinate with the scheme organisation to establish a local drop-off point or to obtain materials for promoting an existing nearby drop-off location.

Illegal product	- Consider whether the product has a high potential for potential misuse and poses a security risk. - Determine that the product is legally sold in Australia and therefore has a clear, responsible and safe disposal option. - Carefully consider the potential implications of collecting illegal products, such as the risk of inadvertently normalizing or legitimising their use within the community.
Kerbside or vergeside collection	- Determine if the product is accepted in kerbside or vergeside collection systems. - Identify whether the product is a common contaminant in recycling or waste streams. - Assess whether the material poses a risk of damage to collection vehicles, processing facilities, or other assets. - Evaluate the extent to which the product contributes to overall bin contamination. - Consider whether the presence of the product undermines the effectiveness or integrity of the kerbside system.
Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities	- Determine if a local HHW facility or drop-off point exists within or near the Local Government area. - Confirm that the HHW facility collects the product.
Viable recycling or recovery pathway	- Confirm the existence of a transparent and effective recycling or recovery pathway for the material. If no such pathway exists, collection should not proceed, as landfilling undermines the intent of the initiative. - Evaluate the feasibility of collection and processing, including costs, available resources, and logistical requirements, as alternative recovery methods can be expensive. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis. - Assess the market value and end-use of the recovered material. - Assess whether the product is still in production and if there is sufficient, consistent supply to justify establishing and maintaining collection. - Investigate the availability of incentives, grants, or funding to support the establishment and ongoing operation of the drop-off point.

3. Establishing a Local Drop-off Point

If the outcome of the decision-making framework identifies a service gap and the recommendation is to proceed with establishing a drop-off collection point, the following considerations will help ensure it is safe, accessible and user-friendly. Use Table 3 to assess the key requirements for setting up a drop-off point.

In cases where an effective product stewardship scheme exists but lacks a local and accessible drop-off location, these considerations can also guide collaboration with the scheme operator to establish a collection point, without the Local Government taking on operational responsibility.

Table 3: Key considerations for establishing a local drop-off point

Assessment area	Key considerations
Location	• Choose accessible and high foot traffic location. • Ensure the drop-off point is secure and appropriately supervised, such as by restricting access to staffed hours. Choose a well-lit, highly visible location to deter misuse and enhance safety. • Ensure the drop-off point is accessible to the contractor for safe collection.
Risk assessment	• Consider the following risks in the assessment: ◦ Fire (e.g. lithium batteries). ◦ Environmental and human health (e.g. chemical leaks, such as mercury from Compact Fluorescent Lamps). ◦ Public safety (e.g. sharp objects). ◦ Children (e.g. button batteries). ◦ Chemical segregation (assess the compatibility of materials being collected and ensure that incompatible substances are not stored in proximity). • Ensure drop-off points are included in existing site management plans. • Identify additional requirements for products collected.
Regulation	• Comply with all relevant Regulations for the handling, storage, and transport of materials. • Under the <i>Dangerous Goods Safety (Storage and Handling of Non-explosives) Regulations 2007</i>, for example, aerosol collection at drop-off points is below the threshold for specific storage requirements. • Review other applicable regulations when establishing drop-off points and consult the contractor regarding storage and transport arrangements. • Check licensing requirements for hazardous materials.
Collection and disposal logistics	• Partner with suitably qualified, verified and licensed contractor. • Schedule regular pickups to prevent overflow. • Ensure that a designated representative from the Local Government is assigned responsibility for the drop-off point and is accountable as the primary point of contact. • Track waste types and amounts for reporting.
Design and contamination control	• Separate items in accordance with their class and storage requirements. • Consult with the contractor to determine their preferred storage method for the product, ensuring compliance with their Dangerous Goods license requirements if relevant. • Use clear, consistent signage (Include details about alternative drop-off locations, such as "Did you know you can take these items to your local store instead?", to promote accessible options and help reduce reliance on Local Government collection points). • Consider the height of the drop-off point to discourage children from accessing. • Ensure the storage containers are suitable for the type of material being collected, consider: ◦ Ventilation (e.g. for smell of aerosols and to avoid compression).

	- o Material of container (e.g. do not store batteries in a metal container as they can spark). - o Manual handling (Ensure that each box, when filled, does not exceed the recommended safe lifting weight for manual handling). - o Theft (e.g. locked boxes). - o Contamination (e.g. rosette lids for aerosols). • Refer to Appendix 3 for examples of drop-off points by Local Governments.
Community and staff engagement	• Promote drop-off points via signage, social media, Local Government websites and newsletters. • Provide clear drop-off instructions. • Share educational materials on safe disposal and environmental impact. • Engage and educate staff on the purpose and operation of the drop-off point so they can effectively inform the community, support compliance, and assist with supervision as needed.

4. Removal of Local Drop-off Point

If the decision-making framework determines not to proceed with a drop-off point where a Local Government already has one in place, consider the following factors when removing the existing drop-off point (Table 4). This framework may also be used to guide decisions to scale back the number of collection points or to remove all drop-off points entirely.

Table 4: Key considerations for removing a Local Drop-off Point

Assessment Area	Key Considerations
Signage and Communication	• Notify the community of changes to the drop-off points via signage, social media, Local Government websites and newsletters. • Have signage placed at the drop-off point months prior to the closure (including alternative drop-off locations and explanation for removal). • Keep the signage at the drop-off location for months following its removal.
Monitoring and Feedback	• Monitor the area for illegal dumping or confusion after closure. • Provide a contact point for feedback or questions from the community.
Closure	• Assess whether any existing infrastructure can be reused elsewhere. • Readjust arrangements with the waste collector following closure.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Scenarios

1. Outcome: Proceed with Local Government drop-off point

Scenario: There is a request to set up a drop-off point for aerosols at the Local Government administration centre.

Decision making framework:

	Decision making question	Answer
1	Can this product be avoided, or is there a reusable or alternative option that eliminated the need for disposal?	While alternatives like roll-on deodorants and non-spray air fresheners are available, a significant number of people still rely on aerosols. Therefore, progress to the next stage, but pair it with waste education.
2	Is the product covered by an existing effective product stewardship scheme?	No
3	Is the product legally sold in Australia?	Yes
4	Is the material unrecoverable or problematic in kerbside or vergeside collection?	Yes, due to the high risk of compression causing risk of fires and risk to workers. These products are specifically excluded from kerbside recycling collections.
5	Is there a Household Hazardous Waste facility that is local and collects the product?	Yes, the Household Hazardous Waste Program collects aerosols. However, the nearest facility is over 20 mins away which is outside the catchment area.
6	Is there a viable and transparent recycling or recovery pathway for the material?	The aerosols are recyclable and there are various providers who can recycle them.
	Outcome	Set up a safe drop-off point as per the considerations.

2. Outcome: Do not proceed with Local Government drop-off point

Scenario: A resident requests to set up a drop-off point for stamps at the recreation centre.

Decision making framework:

	Decision making question	Answer
1	Can this product be avoided, or is there a reusable or alternative option that eliminated the need for disposal?	No, except for the reduction in using the mail.

2	Is the product covered by an existing effective product stewardship scheme?	No
3	Is the product legally sold in Australia?	Yes
4	Is the material unrecoverable or problematic in kerbside or vergeside collection?	No, stamps are not problematic and do not contribute largely to contamination.
	Outcome	Do not proceed with drop-off point.

Appendix 2: Existing Product Stewardship Schemes in Western Australia

Item	Product Stewardship Scheme organisation	Website
Batteries	B-cycle	Australia's official battery stewardship scheme - B-cycle
Containers	Containers for Change	Containers for Change WA Giving 10¢ Containers Another Life
Mobile Phones	Mobile Muster	Recycle a mobile - Mobile Muster
Printer Cartridges	Cartridges 4 Planet Ark	Cartridges 4 Planet Ark

Appendix 3: Case studies

Examples of drop-off points at different locations.

Recreation Centre

Figure 3: Recycling Hub for Household Batteries, Light Bulbs, Printer Cartridges, Mobile Phones and Aerosol cans at Cockburn ARC, City of Cockburn.



EcoHub

Figure 4: Recycling Hub for Household Batteries, Light Bulbs, Printer Cartridges, Mobile Phones at EcoHub, City of Melville.

