What changes are being made to my garbage collection service?

From 3 August there will be important changes wherever you live or work.

In the southern part of our region, you will have a second bin and will need to separate your waste into “wet” and “dry” (something that has been the norm in the north of this region for many years).

Across the region, the wet waste bin will be collected once a week and the dry waste bin once a fortnight.

Everyone in the Cassowary Coast region will now have the same bin collection service.

What is ‘wet’ waste?

Wet waste goes in your smaller wheelie bin. It will break down in a landfill. Wet waste includes:

- Food scraps (please wrap)
- Unrinsed food and drink containers
- Dirty or smelly plastic bags
- Used disposable nappies and other sanitary products (this includes napkins, incontinency pads, sanitary products, tissues, cotton wool etc.)
- Garden clippings and other garden waste

The following items also go in the smaller wet waste bin because they need to go to a secure landfill due to their hazardous nature:

- Household dry batteries (except rechargeable batteries which should go to a collection service such as Battery World and Mobile Muster)
- Surgical plastic e.g. colostomy bags (contents removed) and used dialysis tubing

What is ‘dry’ waste’?

Dry waste goes in your big wheelie bin. Dry waste includes:

- Clean plastic containers (these can also be taken to a dedicated recycling bin at your local waste transfer station)
- Paper and cardboard (this can also be taken to a dedicated recycling bin at your local waste transfer station)
- Wood, cork and small quantities of building materials from household hobbies
- Glass - all types
- Small metal items
- Fabric, clothing, shoes (if they are in good condition these can also be donated to a local charity bin or dropped off at the local waste transfer station for the tip shop)
- Clean packaging material

Please do not put excess garden clippings in the dry waste bin as all the contents of the dry waste bin would then become wet waste and need to be sent out of the region.
**Why do we need to separate our garbage into wet and dry?**

Because of the Cassowary Coast’s high rainfall our ‘wet’ waste has to go to a landfill site outside the region. This is a condition of our landfill licences, issued by the State Government and aimed at protecting our surface water and groundwater from contaminants. It is a condition that is unique to this region.

‘Dry’ waste goes to our Innisfail (Stoters Hill) and Tully landfills.

If you separate your waste correctly into "wet" and "dry", it reduces the amount of waste that has to be transported to Mareeba, in turn reducing our transportation and disposal costs. If wet waste is placed in the dry waste bin the whole bin of waste becomes "wet" waste and has to go to Mareeba. (Previously, with the one-bin system in the south of the region, all southern waste went to Mareeba.)

**Why separate when both bins go into the same truck?**

The trucks have a split-bodied compartment. The driver uses a lever in the cab to send the wet waste to one compartment and the dry waste to another compartment. (This can be adjusted for all wet or all dry waste if needed.)

The rubbish goes into two piles at the transfer station. These piles are sorted into wet and dry bulk containers, with some recyclables extracted.

**What change will there be in my garbage bin space?**

In the north, you currently have a fortnightly bin space of 720 litres when both bins are taken into account. From 3 August it will be 520 litres - with the change from a weekly dry waste bin collection service to a fortnightly dry waste bin collection service.

In the south you currently have a fortnightly bin space of 480 litres. From 3 August it will also be 520 litres, with the addition of a second bin so you can have a wet waste bin and a dry waste bin.

**What do I do if I can’t fit all my waste into the bins provided?**

Currently more than 70 per cent of kerbside dry waste bins are not filled to capacity.

A lot of properties in the northern area (which already have the two-bin system) only put their dry waste bin out once a fortnight - some once a month.

However we recognise that larger households generate more waste.

If your household is regularly generating more waste than can be fitted in your bins, an additional bin can be provided, for a fee, to be collected on the same day as the standard service. Please ask us about this.

We have a factsheet with tips on how to reduce your household waste, available at our customer service desks and on our website at www.cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au

**What do I do with lawn clippings/prunings that won’t fit in my wet waste bin?**

If you have space in your wet waste bin, you can use it for prunings and lawn clippings (green waste).

Alternatives to consider are:

- Setting up a compost bin
- Using lawn clippings as mulch to prevent weeds from growing around plants
- Taking excess green waste to your local waste transfer stations - there is no fee for green waste disposal and it can be recycled as mulch for the region’s public spaces
- Do not put green waste in your dry waste bin. This contaminates the dry waste and means all the waste becomes “wet” waste and has to be transported out of the region.
When will I receive my second bin (in the south of the region)?

Bins will be delivered to households, businesses, schools etc in June and July, with the first deliveries on 22 June. Please keep putting out only your original bin until the changes happen in August.

The new bin needs to be kept in a safe place until the first week of August.

Why is the region moving to a fortnightly service for “dry” waste?

There are cost and environmental reasons.

Council’s garbage collection contract had expired after eight years and needed to be renewed.

Council called tenders in November 2013 for a two-bin system right across the region. The tendered price came in at $2 million - which was $500,000 more that the cost of the existing service for the whole region.

Council decided to re-call tenders to explore more affordable service options for the region, and provided two options for tenderers:

• Option 1: A weekly collection of both bins
• Option 2: A weekly collection of the “wet” waste bin and a fortnightly collection of the “dry” waste bin.

The prices tendered were:

• Option 1 – $1.91 million a year
• Option 2 – $1.58 million a year

Council accepted Option 2: It was $320,000 cheaper per year for the community to have a weekly collection of the ‘wet’ waste bin and a fortnightly collection of the ‘dry’ waste bin.

The decision was also in line with the State Government’s legislative requirements for councils to reduce the amount of waste generated in each region. Another Council consideration was that more than 70 per cent of dry waste bins in the north are not full when collected and just under 10 per cent of people in the north already put their dry waste bins out once a fortnight rather than once a week.

With the fortnightly service will I have problems with maggots or smells?

If you separate your waste correctly, you shouldn"t have problems. The smaller wet waste bin will still be collected every week. If you have space, a good practice is leaving some items in the freezer until bin day especially in very hot weather.

Why don’t we have kerbside recycling?

Kerbside recycling is not an economically or environmentally viable option in this region at the moment - but recycling still takes place at our waste transfer stations.

To go ahead with kerbside recycling at the moment, we would need a third bin and Council would need to spend significant funds on a sorting facility or the regular use of a larger region's sorting facility. We would need a third bin because many of the items that go in our dry waste bins - such as timber, children’s toys, plate glass, clothing, broken furniture and electronic goods - cannot physically go through an automated sorting facility.

There would be significant environmental costs for a relatively small environmental benefit (i.e. the fuel consumption or "waste miles" for a separate garbage truck run to transport recyclables from kerbs all over the region to a sorting facility and then to either a domestic or overseas reprocessing plant).

Unfortunately, due to our relatively small population and the relatively small volume of recycling collected from a kerbside recycling service, as well as the distance the items would have to travel to get to a processing plant, this service cannot be justified at the moment.

Council will continue to review this decision and will re-consider kerbside recycling should recyclable
Materials processing facilities become available in North Queensland. Council is supporting the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils' work to further recycling opportunities in the region. For many years Council has recycled items at waste transfer stations such as scrap metal, concrete, green waste, tyres (fees apply), car batteries, waste engine oil and gas bottles.

There is now a tip-shop at each transfer station.

There are also recycling drop-off bins. You can bring items to the transfer station for three bins - one for paper/cardboard, another for plastic bottles and containers, and the third for steel/aluminium food and drink containers. These items are sent to Brisbane in bulk.

**Will my waste management charge reduce now that dry waste is collected fortnightly rather than weekly?**

The 2015-16 Budget has not yet been finalised. It will be brought to a Council meeting on 1 July. However, the last time Council went out to tender was eight years ago. Since then a number of costs such as fuel and wages have increased.

The cost of the new service is $130,000 a year more than the current service. (If Council had chosen to have a weekly dry bin collection it would have been $450,000 more a year.)

One of the major cost increases relates to specialised collection trucks that have a purchase price of nearly $400,000 each. (Council collection trucks, previously used in the south of the region, were at the end of their economic life.)

The waste management charge in Council's rates notices is not just for the collection service. It includes a contribution to operating the region's waste disposal infrastructure. A number of long-running waste management contracts expired and needed to be renewed during the year (waste collection, landfill maintenance, gatehouse operations, bulk waste transport). There were price increases for all new contracts.

**What type of community consultation was there about the changes?**

Extensive community consultation was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council Solid Waste Management Strategy 2013-2023. There was community consultation from October 2012 to January 2013 including:

- Community meetings at community hubs
- Community and industry focus groups - invitations were sent to all community groups, industry representative groups and media outlets
- Displays in all libraries and stalls at community markets
- Information and the chance to have your say on Council's website.
- Announcements and discussion in newspapers and on radio.
- Articles in community newsletters and school newsletters.

**What do I do if my bin has been stolen?**

Firstly, have a look around your neighbourhood. If you can't find your bin and you believe it has been stolen, you should contact the police and get a QP number. You'll need to quote this number when you contact Council to request a bin replacement. Your bin may be replaced at no cost. Call Council on 1300 763 903.

**What do I do if my bin is badly damaged?**

If the bin can be repaired (e.g. a missing wheel, missing pins for the lid, missing lid) you will be advised to leave the bin out for repair. If the bin is beyond repair due to unreasonable wear and tear you will need to pay for a replacement. If it is damaged through the fault of the contractor it will be replaced free of charge. Call Council on 1300 763 903.

**For further information please call Council on 1300 763 903.**