

FROM THE COAST

Reducing Waste

Who's been watching the ABC's 'War on Waste' program on Tuesday nights? Waste production happens every minute of every day. Generally speaking people don't give it much thought, but it is a hot topic at the moment and we need to start seriously rethinking our waste production and disposal strategies. Australian households produce more than 2.6 million tonnes of waste in a year, ranging from food scraps and plastics to old clothes and general household rubbish. The Shire of Esperance produces around 20,000 tonnes of municipal waste every year.

The Shire is always looking at alternative options to reducing waste production and ultimately the amount of waste that goes to landfill. We have a very successful recycling plant at Wylie Bay, and the Shire and Council are currently exploring other options from waste to energy as well as gas generation and composting.

From avoiding single use items like plastic bags, takeaway containers, plates and cups, to using recyclable shopping bags and avoiding over shopping for food, we'll be waging the war on waste and protecting an environment that we're in danger of destroying through poor waste disposal practices.

Recyclable materials for the Blue Recycling Bin should be clean and loosely stacked. Lids should be separated from their containers, as they are often made of different plastics, and there should be no liquid in the containers. To make it easier for the rural communities without a roadside rubbish service, the Shire has placed recycling bins in Salmon Gums, Grass Patch, Scaddan, Cascade and Condingup. Last year the Shire recycled almost 70,000kg of plastic.

The Shire's recycling facilities accepts plastics graded 1- 6, which includes plastic bags, food trays, and soft drink bottles. Check on packaging for the grade number and recycling symbol if you are unsure. Paper, cardboard, steel and aluminium containers, glass bottles and jars can all go in the blue bin. The Shire recently purchased a glass crusher so now all glass is dealt with at Wylie Bay instead of being transported to Adelaide, saving the Shire about \$50,000 a year, whilst producing a crushed glass product that can be incorporated with gravel for road construction.

The final episode of 'War on Waste' airs on ABC tomorrow night and is scarily thought provoking. Make a change, however small, and take a step to reducing waste production. The Shire will be taking some steps to help educate and inform our community on how to become a War on Waste Warrior. So watch this space.