

West Arnhem Regional Council

# REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE STRATEGY

2024-2034





**The West Arnhem Regional Council Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Strategy 2024-2034 has been created to provide a framework for waste reduction practices across the region. Providing a benchmark for future waste management in line with International, National and Territory standards**

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## Acknowledgement of Country

**West Arnhem Regional Council acknowledges the First Nations Custodians; and the many Language and Family Groups who are managers and caretakers to each of their Traditional Homelands and Waters across the West Arnhem Regions Wards. West Arnhem Regional Council pay their respects and acknowledge Elders past, present and rising.**



# Message From West Arnhem



West Arnhem Regional Council is committed to the sustainability of our region. As we navigate towards a sustainable future we are mindful that our communities are both remarkable and different to the vast majority of the country. We are excited to introduce the West Arnhem Regional Council Reduce, Reuse Recycle Strategy from 2024 to 2034.

This strategy not only reflects our commitment to environmental sustainability but also our dedication to fostering a circular economy in our remote Indigenous communities. In the face of global challenges such as climate change and resource depletion, the need to transition to a circular economy has never been more pressing.

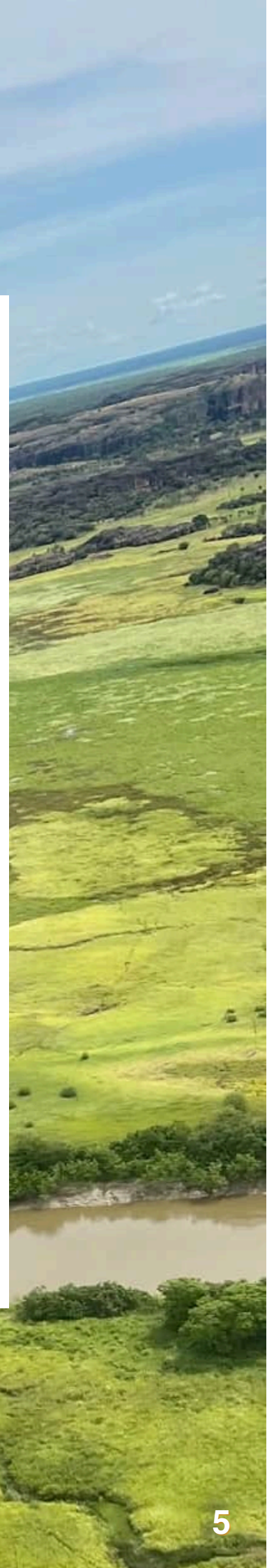
As a region rich in culture and natural resources, West Arnhem is uniquely positioned to lead the way in this transition. By embracing innovative approaches to waste management, resource recovery, and sustainable practices, we can create a more resilient and prosperous future for our communities.

This strategy outlines our vision for a more sustainable future, where waste is minimised, resources are conserved, and economic opportunities are maximised. By working together, we can forge a path of innovation in the field of sustainability, setting an example for other communities to follow.

We look forward to working with all stakeholders, including government agencies, businesses, and community members, to implement this strategy and make West Arnhem Regional Council a model for sustainable development in the Northern Territory and beyond.

**James Woods**  
Mayor  
West Arnhem Regional Council

**Andrew Walsh**  
Chief Executive Officer  
West Arnhem Regional Council



# Introduction

**The West Arnhem Regional Council Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Strategy 2024-2034 has been created to provide a framework for best waste reduction practices across the region.**

West Arnhem Regional Council's borders encompass some 50,000 square kilometres of spectacular outback landscape at the very top of the Top End. The jewel in our crown, the World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park, sets us apart as one of the most culturally important and environmentally significant corners of the Northern Territory. From remote islands and pristine beaches, to the vast floodplains and dramatic escarpments, our towns, communities and outstations are as diverse as the country around them.

West Arnhem Regional Council operates five remote to very remote landfills in the communities of Gunbalanya, Jabiru, Maningrida, Minjilang and Warruwi. These sites provide waste management services for a combined population of approximately 6281 spreads across the five major communities and over 100 outstations.

More than 81.1 per cent population identify as Aboriginal Australians or 'bininj' people. Our Council acknowledges the attachment and relationship of Aboriginal people to Country and the strong connections to culture and language continues within our communities and beyond.

This strategy looks to the Waste Hierarchy, Circular Economy principles, West Arnhem Regional Plan and other key policies to form a framework for innovative waste management that provides economic, social and environmental benefits for all West Arnhem Regional Council Residents.



## HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

**Three Key strategic objectives of Reduce Reuse and Recycle have been established to provide direction for the Waste and Resource Recovery system to 2034**



# Key Policy Drivers

West Arnhem Regional Council acknowledges there are a number of International, Federal and Local legislations and policies that guide this Strategy.



The **United Nations** 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development includes global waste management goals within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to guide actions by Australia.

The **Federal Government** outlines plans for waste management in Australia and delivers the strategic objectives of the National Waste Policy 2016. This policy speaks to improving opportunities for regional, remote and Indigenous communities to adopt circular economy principles.

The **Northern Territory Government** sets the framework for Waste Management within our Territory with the Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998 as well as the 2022-2027 Circular Economy Strategy.

**West Arnhem Regional Council** develops and implements the strategic direction for its waste and resource recovery infrastructure and services through the West Arnhem Regional Council Strategic Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan and Waste Strategy 2021-2026 for West Arnhem Regional Council.



# Strategic Alignment

For all pieces to come together, West Arnhem Regional Council is driven to align each of our 3 key targets with the six identified pillars of our regional plan. These pillars will form the framework for the actionable items of this Strategy.

## Pillar 1 - Partnerships, Relationships and Belonging

Investing in relationships and partnerships at all levels supports and strengthens community and belonging. We prioritise the value of partnerships and relationships as a key determinant of a happy, strong and thriving community.

## Pillar 2 - Increased Local Indigenous Employment

We are committed to investing in and supporting local Indigenous employment. We recognise the instrumental value that Indigenous staff bring to our organisation and the social force that occurs with employment opportunities.

## Pillar 3 - Safety and Wellbeing

As an 'Employer of Choice', we provide and promote a positive culture of safety, inclusion and respect. Our people are skilled, informed and have opportunities to grow and develop within our organisation. Services provided to community are professional, impactful, engaging and appropriate to local needs.

## Pillar 4 - Service Delivery and Built Environment

We provide high quality infrastructure and service delivery that meets the unique needs of each community, creates a sense of place and contributes towards promoting a sense of pride in community.

## Pillar 5 - Sustainability and Climate Action

Leading by example, we commit to developing a culture of sustainable practice. We recognise and champion the importance of safe guarding our environment for future generations by working collectively with community, private enterprises and all tiers of government.

## Pillar 6 - Foundations of Governance

Integrity is at the heart of everything we do. We are leaders of best practice and excellence in governance, advocacy, consultation and administration. Our processes, procedures and policies are ethical and transparent.





# Waste Hierarchy

The Waste Hierarchy is a pivotal instrument in international waste management policy and legislation and illustrates the priorities for managing waste from top down

The significant items that can be observed from the Waste Hierarchy are as follows:

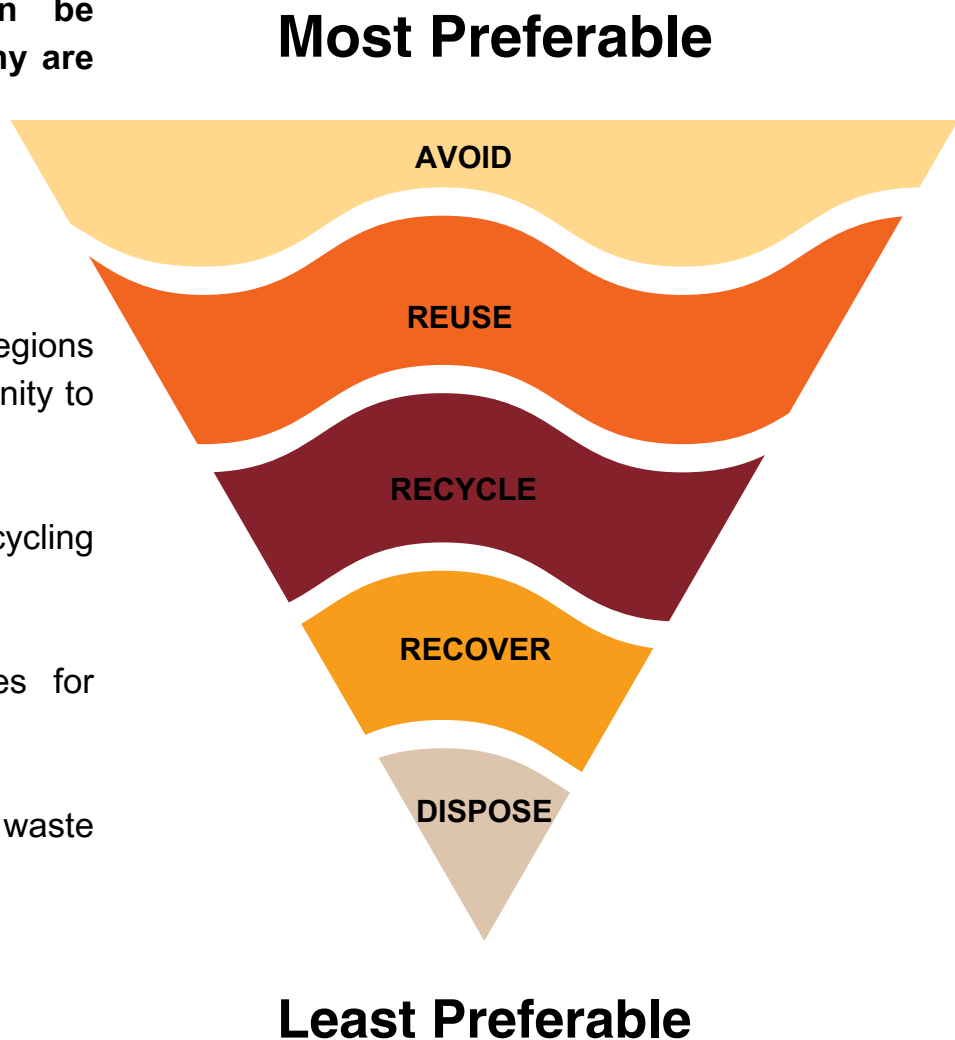
**AVOID** - significantly reduce our regions waste creation

**REUSE** - Maximise our regions opportunities for reuse within community to avoid costly logistics

**RECYCLE** - Create viable recycling streams for our remote communities.

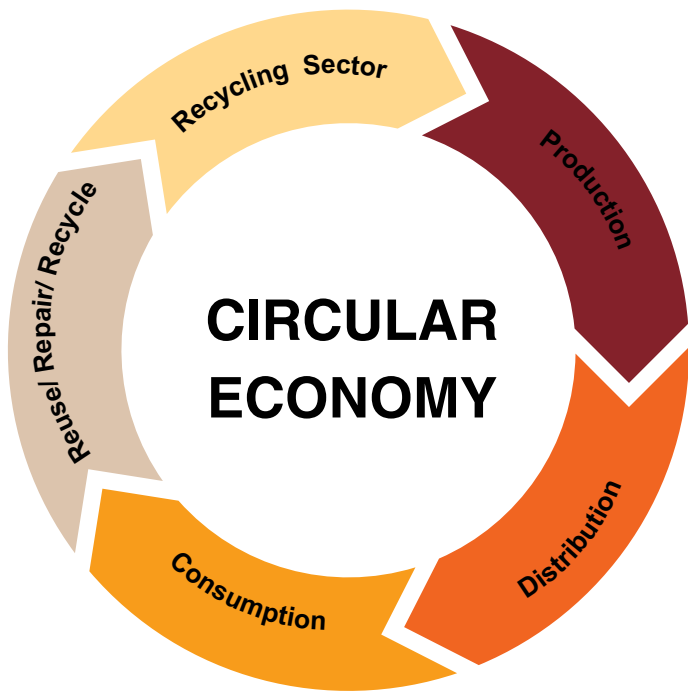
**RECOVER** - Look for opportunities for small scale energy recovery.

**DISPOSE** - Minimise the amount of waste disposed of in Landfill.



# Circular Economy Principles

A circular economy is one where resources are valued. We will take this approach to using our resources at a higher value as opposed to disposing within landfill.



The circular economy is based on three principles, driven by design:

- Eliminate waste and pollution
- Circulate products and materials (at their highest value)
- Regenerate nature

In our current economy, we take materials from the Earth, make products from them, and eventually throw them away as waste – the process is linear. In a circular economy, by contrast, we stop waste being produced in the first place.

The circular economy gives us the tools to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss together, while addressing important social needs.

It gives us the power to grow prosperity, jobs, and resilience while cutting greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and pollution.

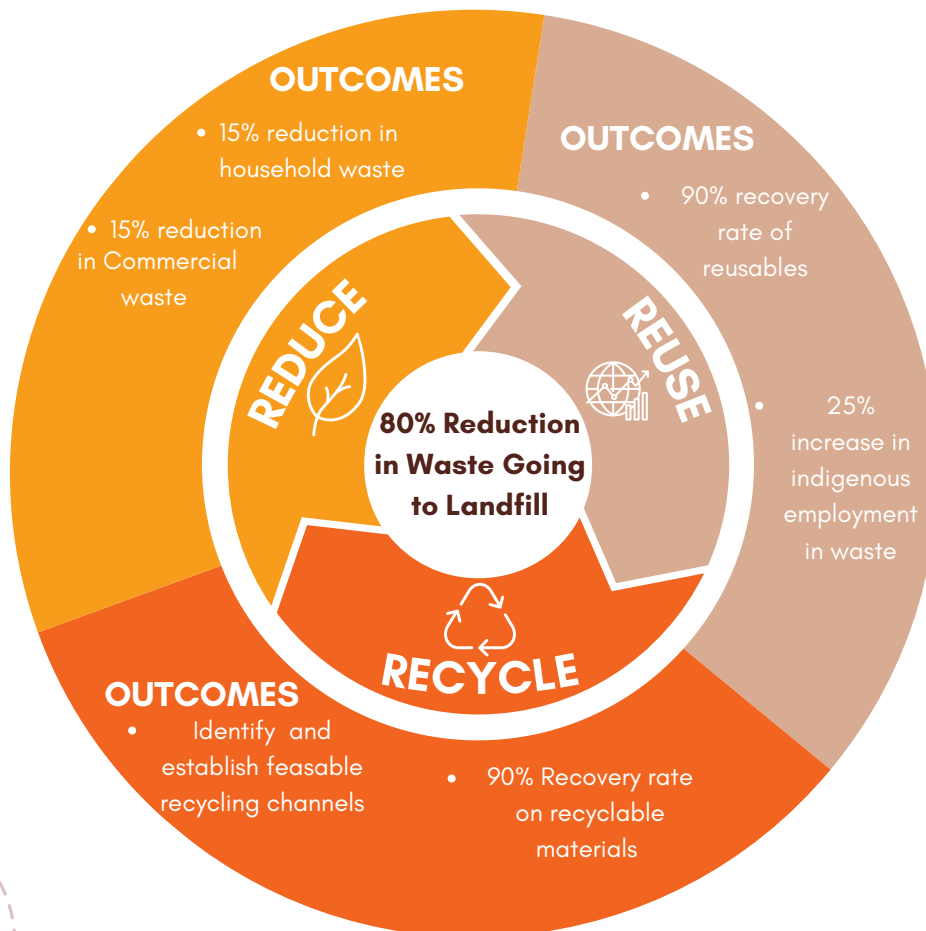


# Vision

## 80% Reduction in waste going to Landfill by 2034

This strategy envisions a future where our region produces less waste and maximises the life of materials through **REDUCTION** in waste generated, **REUSE** of all possible materials within communities and creating viable **RECYCLING** streams within the remote setting.

## KEY TARGETS 2024-2034



# Where are we now?

**With over 6200 residents across 50,000 square kilometres West Arnhem Regional Council has a large physical area with small population base. There are multiple challenges for recycling within our community but these are also opportunities to create a better model in the remote and very remote areas of Australia.**

## Waste Generation

The communities within West Arnhem Regional Council are currently going through a growth phase with substantial redevelopment of housing and infrastructure as well as new development of housing estates in some areas.

This has seen an increase in both commercial and domestic waste across the region. This trend will likely continue unless waste diversion measures are enacted across the region.

Currently there is no accurate measure of waste produced across the region all figures are recorded on an estimated value. This strategy will seek in its actions to accurately measure waste and create an opportunity to see tangible reductions in waste generation across our communities.

## Resource Recovery

Resource recovery is in its infancy across the region. With minimal waste currently being diverted from landfill. A key focus is to identify opportunities for resource recovery and appropriate solutions that are feasible in the remote to very remote settings.

While each of our 5 communities have vastly different profiles it is important to recognise this and adapt for each location. It has been proven historically that there is no one fits best model across the region and each community must have its own plan to combat resource recovery suited to their own specific challenges.

Holistically, logistics costs have been one of the major challenges to our communities and a shift, from transfer from community to reuse within community, is the path forward for our region.

## Services and Infrastructure

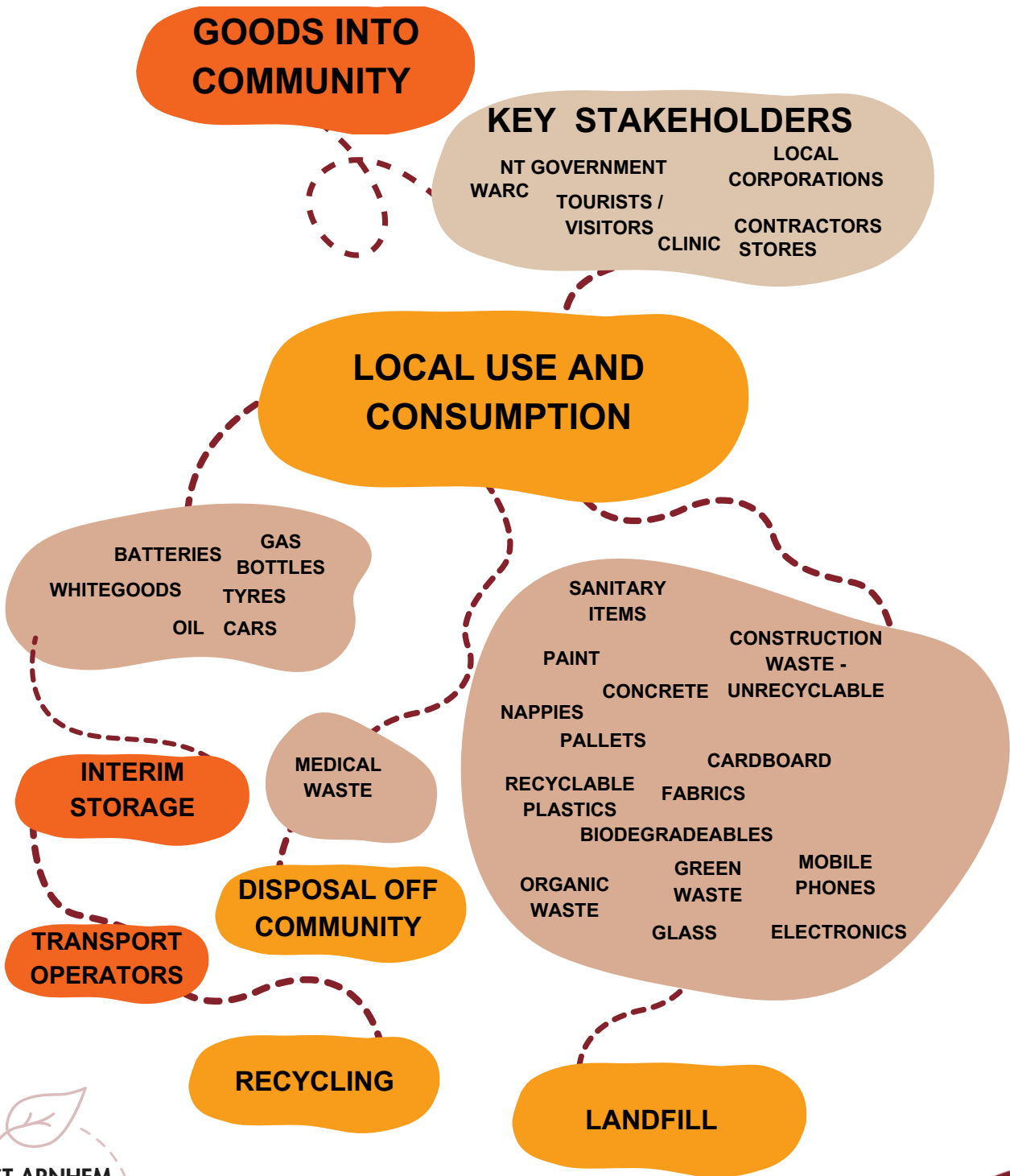
West Arnhem Regional Council currently operates 5 landfill sites in the communities of Gunbalanya, Jabiru, Maningrida, Minjilang and Waruwi. These sites service all communities domestic and commercial waste as well as provide landfill for the over 100 outstations and homelands within West Arnhem.

West Arnhem Regional Council is also responsible for kerbside waste collection in these 5 communities with all domestic waste currently going to landfill. Kerbside collections are managed in each community by the Council Services Manager with up to 3 collections per week in each community.

Current infrastructure at landfill sites is in need of modernisation to be able to sort, store and divert recyclable and reusable waste streams into the future. Plant and equipment also requires modernisation in order to remain effective into the future and account for circular economy needs.



# CURRENT WASTE MANAGEMENT STREAMS



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The waste management sector globally has faced many challenges in recent history, however this has also created a huge amount of opportunity. As West Arnhem Regional Council begins its journey to circularity there is a unique set of challenges that are regionally specific. This also creates some unique opportunities for our communities as well.

## CHALLENGES

### LOGISTICS

All five of West Arnhem's communities fit the profile of remote or very remote communities. With this comes logistics challenges given accessibility by road is not a feasible option all year round. This makes engaging in recycling programs challenging or any activity that involves removing waste for processing out of community.

### COMMUNITY UPTAKE

As remote indigenous communities, the communities of West Arnhem have had very little culturally appropriate community engagement. National messages have not been delivered in language which will impede the community uptake of any waste diversion programs.

### FINANCIAL OUTLAY

As a regional council with a low rates base, funding initiatives in the waste management space are heavily reliant on grant funding. This is not a reliable stream of income and requires a large amount of administration support.

### REGULATORY INTERVENTION

The NT EPA governs the Environmental Protection Act 2019 across the West Arnhem Region. They are responsible for enforcing the Act and can issue breaches for non-compliance should West Arnhem not be able to meet the Acts standards.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

West Arnhem has the unique opportunity to engage in innovative solutions to ensure its future in the circular economy. Not overburdened by large population bases the West Arnhem communities have the ability to process waste for reuse within community driving the closed loop within community.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

West Arnhem Regional Council has the unique opportunity to roll out community engagement across the region that will improve relationships with residents and create a measured program that can be measured across the period of this strategy. Empowering West Arnhem residents to build a stronger and healthier community long into the future.

### BUILDING BETTER PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with stakeholders is integral to West Arnhem Regional Council. Developing partnerships within each community will strengthen West Arnhem Regional Council's ability to deliver core services to our communities.

### ENTERPRISE OPPORTUNITIES

The waste sector provides genuine enterprise opportunities for West Arnhem residents. As a council we are invested in the both the environmental and economic prosperity of our region and creating genuine enterprise and employment opportunities for our residents in waste management.



# KEY TARGETS

1

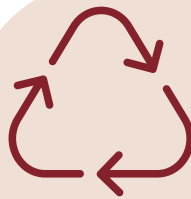
**Reduce**  
15% Reduction in household and commercial waste generated



**Reuse**  
90% rate of recovery for reusable items

2

3



**Recycle**  
90% rate of recovery for recyclable items

## 80% REDUCTION IN WASTE GOING TO LANDFILL

WEST ARNHEM



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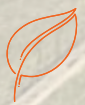
# 1

# REDUCE



## **Create a reduction in the communities waste footprint**

An overall reduction in waste going to landfill is necessary for the future sustainability of the region. Identifying and implementing specific waste avoidance strategies will be integral in reducing the regions waste footprint.



**15% reduction in household waste generated**



**15% reduction in commercial waste generated**



**80% rate of resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill**

# Key Priorities - Reduce

## 1.1 Develop a waste measurement system for all West Arnhem Regional Council communities and initiate monitoring of all waste within West Arnhem

- 1.11 Research and implement a waste measurement system
- 1.12 Conduct quarterly rubbish bin audits
- 1.13 Measure and track all waste streams in each community

## 1.2 Develop and deliver a clear and targeted education and awareness action plan

- 1.21 Create and implement an entire waste diversion education program targeted to each community
  - Community messaging and engagement
  - School and early learning
  - Aboriginal Corporations
  - Health Clinics
  - Contractors

## 1.3 Encourage commercial operators to improve their waste footprint

- 1.31 Update Council tender documents to include a waste responsibility clause
- 1.32 Advocate to Northern Territory Government and Federal Government to include waste removal in the tendering process for West Arnhem Regional Council
- 1.33 Review Commercial waste fees and increase appropriately for items that cannot be recovered

## 1.4 Develop and deliver an action plan for reduction in waste generated by West Arnhem Regional Council

- 1.41 Develop and deliver an action plan for reduction in waste generated by West Arnhem Regional Council
- 1.42 Include waste removal clause in all Council tenders and contracts
- 1.43 Adopt a sustainable procurement policy

## 1.5 Actively seek to reduce littering and illegal dumping incidents

- 1.51 Continued participation in Keep Australia Beautiful Programs
- 1.52 Create localised litter programs for each community
- 1.53 Review and improve public place waste collection options



	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
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	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
<b>1.1 Develop a waste measurement system for all West Arnhem Regional Council Communities and initiate monitoring of all waste within West Arnhem</b>											
1.11 Research and implement a waste measurement system for all communities			X			X			X		
1.12 Conduct quarterly rubbish bin audits			X			X			X		
1.13 Measure and track all waste streams			X			X			X		
<b>1.2 Develop and deliver a clear and targeted education and awareness action plan</b>											
1.21 Create and implement a culturally appropriate waste diversion education program targeted to each community			X			X			X		
<b>1.3 Encourage commercial operators to improve their waste footprint</b>											
1.31 Update Council tender documents to include a waste responsibility clause			X			X			X		
1.32 Advocate for all levels of Government to include a waste responsibility clause in all government procurement			X			X			X		
1.33 Review commercial waste fees and increase appropriately for items that cannot be removed			X			X			X		
<b>1.4 Develop and implement an action plan for reduction in waste generated by West Arnhem Regional Council</b>											
1.41 Develop and implement an action plan for reduction in waste generated by West Arnhem Regional Council			X			X			X		
1.42 Update Council tender documents to include a waste responsibility clause			X			X			X		
1.43 Implement a sustainable procurement policy			X			X			X		
<b>1.5 Actively seek to reduce littering and illegal dumping incidents</b>											
1.51 Continued participation in Keep Australia Beautiful programs			X			X			X		
1.52 Develop and implement localised litter programs for each community			X			X			X		

Review Point

X

Plan

Implement

Maintain

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# 2

# REUSE



**Create economic opportunities through the reuse of waste across the region**

Embrace the circular economy principles to create enterprise opportunities for community members through recycling programs. Create new jobs within the region and help support and develop skills of community members.



**90% Rate of recovery for reusable materials**



**25% increase in indigenous employment in waste**



**80% rate of resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill**

# Key Priorities - Reuse

## 2.1 Initiate and increase participation in reuse across the West Arnhem region

- 2.11 Development of a reuse shop for each community with identified indigenous roles available
- 2.12 Assist contractors and commercial operators to find reasonable reuse source for waste streams
- 2.13 Review Council operations and identify any materials reuse opportunities

## 2.2 Initiate and participate in innovative projects that increase the region's capacity to reuse materials within community

- 2.21 Support the development of Indigenous enterprise that work in the waste diversion field
- 2.22 Support the development of local and online end use markets for recovered materials
- 2.23 Actively seek out projects that Council can incorporate into operations to reuse waste materials

## 2.3 Develop a waste stream for the reuse of organic waste in each community

- 2.31 Create and implement a regional organic waste action plan
- 2.32 Encourage composting on home or community level
- 2.33 Encourage reuse of green waste for firewood for ceremony or sales based on the community



		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Initiate and increase participation in reuse across West Arnhem Region</b>											
2.11	Development of a reuse shop in each community with identified indigenous roles			X			X			X		
2.12	Assist contractors and commercial operators to find reasonable reuse options for waste streams			X			X			X		
2.13	Review Council operations and identify any materials reuse opportunities			X			X			X		
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Initiate and participate in innovative projects that increase the regions capacity to reuse materials within community</b>											
2.21	Support the development of indigenous enterprise that work in the waste diversion field			X			X			X		
2.22	Support the development of local and online end use markets for recovered materials			X			X			X		
2.23	Actively seek out projects that Council can incorporate into operations to reuse waste			X			X			X		
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Develop a waste stream for the reuse of organic waste in each community</b>											
2.31	Create and implement a regional organic waste action plan			X			X			X		
2.32	Encourage composting on home or community level			X			X			X		
2.33	Encourage reuse of green waste for firewood for ceremony or sales based on the community			X			X			X		

Review Point

X

Plan



Implement



Maintain




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# 3

# RECYCLE



## **Create viable recycling streams across the region**

Overcome the barrier of distance and low population to create viable recycling streams for West Arnhem Regional Council communities



**90% Rate of recovery for recyclable materials**



**25% Increase in Indigenous employment in waste**



**80% rate of resource recovery and diversion of waste from landfill**

# Key Priorities - Recycle

## 3.1 Develop key relationships to identify genuine recycling options for the regions Communities

- 3.11 Participate in all LGANT recycling opportunities
- 3.12 Assist contractors and commercial operators to find reasonable recycling opportunities for waste streams
- 3.13 Review Council operations and identify any materials reuse opportunities

## 3.2 Initiate and participate in innovative projects that increase the region's capacity to recycle materials within community

- 3.21 Support the development of Indigenous enterprise that work in the waste diversion field
- 3.22 Support the development of local and online end use markets for recovered materials
- 3.23 Actively seek out projects that Council can incorporate into operations to reuse waste materials

## 3.3 Design and implement community specific recycling infrastructure to support management of recyclables

- 3.31 Create and implement a regional organic waste action plan
- 3.32 Encourage composting at home or community level
- 3.33 Encourage reuse of green waste for firewood for ceremony or sales based on the community



		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Develop key relationships to identify genuine recycling options for the regions Communities</b>											
3.11	Participate in and leverage industry and local relationships to participate in recycling opportunities (LGANT, ANZPAC)			X			X			X		
2.12	Assist contractors and commercial operators to find reasonable recycling opportunities for waste streams			X			X			X		
2.13	Review Council operations and identify any recycling opportunities			X			X			X		
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Initiate and participate in innovative projects that increase the regions capacity to recycle materials within community</b>											
2.21	Support the development of Indigenous enterprise that work in the waste diversion field			X			X			X		
2.22	Identify and seek out opportunities to use recycled products in Council operations			X			X			X		
2.23	Actively seek out projects that Council can incorporate into operations to recycle			X			X			X		
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Design and implement community specific recycling infrastructure to support management of recyclables</b>											
3.31	Create a business case for development of remote recycling hubs			X			X			X		
3.32	Asses waste assets and create an asset replacement development program			X			X			X		
3.33	Work with Northern Land Council to secure tenure over current and future waste processing sites.			X			X			X		

Review Point    X    Plan    Implement    Maintain



# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

## **PILLAR 1 - PARTNERSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS AND BELONGING**

Bringing stakeholders and relevant partners on the journey to reducing waste within remote communities

## **PILLAR 2 - INCREASED LOCAL INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT**

Creating genuine enterprise and employment opportunities for Indigenous community members

## **PILLAR 3 - SAFETY AND WELLBEING**

Improving quality of life through household rubbish mitigation and public space cleanliness with view to improving public health

## **PILLAR 4 - SERVICE DELIVERY AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Creating infrastructure that supports circular economy principles and modernizes practices in remote communities

## **PILLAR 5 - CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Applying circular economy principles in the remote community setting to achieve a more sustainable future.

## **PILLAR 6 - GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY**

Advocating on behalf of the communities we represent with integrity to ensure best practice waste management standards are met



# OPTIMISED WASTE MANAGEMENT STREAMS

**GOODS INTO COMMUNITY**

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

NT GOVERNMENT  
WARC  
TOURISTS / VISITORS

LOCAL CORPORATIONS  
CONTRACTORS  
CLINIC STORES

## LOCAL USE AND CONSUMPTION

MOBILE ELECTRONICS PHONES METALS  
BATTERIES CARDBOARD  
CONTAINERS TYRES PAINT  
OIL CARS GAS  
WHITEGOODS BOTTLES

SANITARY ITEMS NAPPIES  
CONSTRUCTION WASTE - UNRECYCLABLE  
SOFT PLASTICS

PALLETS CONCRETE  
RECYCLABLE PLASTICS FABRICS  
BIODEGRADEABLES  
ORGANIC WASTE GREEN WASTE  
GLASS

MEDICAL WASTE

**INTERIM STORAGE**

**DISPOSAL OFF COMMUNITY**

**TRANSPORT OPERATORS**

**LANDFILL**

**RECYCLING**

**REUSE IN COMMUNITY**



# Implementation and Review

The most important factor of this strategy is the implementation of the key priorities and subsequent review. As the waste management field is a rapidly changing space the vision and key priorities will remain the same, but the action items will shift as technology and West Arnhem Regional Council evolves.

## STEPS TO SUCCESS

### Initiate Waste Measurement and Tracking

Devise a waste measurement system accounting for all waste streams that is suited to current infrastructure and will evolve with the strategy.

### Annual Community Waste and Litter Plans

A community-by-community annual waste and litter plan will be established that is adapted annually to assist in achieving the goals set out in this strategy and any community specific goals.

### Successful Community Engagement

Engaging with our communities will be the key to implementation of this strategy in order to change behaviours and take residents on a journey to a sustainable community.

### Reporting to the Strategy

Reporting to the strategy actions bi-annually in January and July every year to ensure it remains relevant and West Arnhem Regional Council is accountable for delivery of the strategy.

### Maintaining Review Points

Maintaining the review points within this strategy is critical to its success and leaves room for growth and subsequent versions of the strategy to become more targeted in the future.





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