

Counting green costs

Council workshop will decide whether the price is right

AS NOOSA Council looked to back in principle a mandatory green bin service for coastal and hinterland town areas in 2017, Deputy Mayor Bob Abbot was railing against the cost of eventually adding food waste to these green bins.

Councillors are expected to approve the first Noosa community jury major recommendations subject to a workshop where they will crunch the numbers on possible costs.

Cr Abbot believes the green bin waste service he now enjoys is excellent.

"On a personal level, I wouldn't be happy that I currently have a green bin, I have a compost bin," Cr Abbot.

"All I'm saying is, when you go to food, you double the service, almost double the cost or probably more than double the cost, but there are many people like me who compost.

"That's going to be an issue we need to face."

Cr Abbot was responding to the estimation of costs provided by waste manager Wayne Schafer.

"I've done a lot of work on the costing of green waste. It's currently \$65 (for the annual fortnightly service).



WASTE ACTION: The first Noosa community jury had much to ponder on waste.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

That would drop hopefully to around the \$50 mark," Mr Schafer said.

This was because the council contractor to be appointed in 2017 would be doing every urban property rather than the current 3700 green waste bin users.

But in adding food waste to the green bins, with new weekly collections for hygiene reasons and the red-lid waste reverting to fortnightly, this would significantly increase the cost.

"My estimates at this stage - and it's quite

difficult to estimate because there's no comparable services in Queensland - the cost that I have run out is an extra \$86 to swap the bin services around and to add food to the green waste bin in the urban areas," he said.

And he and Cr Tony Wellington both cited the case of previous food scrap collection examples - including a 500-bin Sunshine Coast Council trial in Cooroy and Peregian Springs in 2012 - which struck problems.

Mr Schafer said the SCC

trial showed only 7% of the green bins contained food waste.

Cr Wellington, a former SCC councillor, said: "One of the points that was made very clear at that time when we were looking at rolling out a third bin on SCC, which would have included Noosa of course, was that there was a high probability of contamination using kitchen bags."

He said Mr Schafer at the time pointed out that the Hornsby Council experience was for a 30% contamination rate with these bags.

Jurors rise to meet end waste targets

TWO community jurors' views on their green waste minimisation deliberations:

Juror Jacqueline said it was a very rewarding experience "being able to have a say in some policy" despite it coming at a cost to ratepayers.

"When we looked at the experts and the evidence we had... the quality of the experts was what crystallised some people's change of mind.

"We looked at the evidence and the facts and we saw that if we don't do something, there will be further costs down the road. So that's how we justified that. But we were also in our recommendations clear about setting a maximum cost that if it went over that, we weren't sure with the jury if it was worth it.

"As we got more into the detail and more of the impacts of not doing anything."

She said the jury also looked at what other councils were doing with green waste recycling like Bunbury in Western Australia.

"I started to think why can't we do that? We're a big eco tourism centre -

it just makes perfect sense to be aspirational. "Let's set the standard really high."

Juror Brian: "I came with a view (to the jury process) that it could be a talkfest and the process definitely narrowed down to the specifics. We were able to engage through that process, people who had the knowledge to come back to us. Slowly with the gaining of knowledge and the input of experts, the whole thing just sort of came together like a big Lego and the picture at the end of six weeks, there was a picture whereas (before) we had fragmentation of ideas.

"It is our hope that through our endeavours and your trust in us, the move forward is going to be a really positive one.

"I think we arrived where we should have been. I'm happy to walk into any pub in Noosa and stand there and say I championed that cause.

"I'm 100% behind this because of Noosa's position as an environmental destination. The cost today will be the cheapest it will ever be.

"So bite the bullet."

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