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Smarter solution for hard waste disposal

Rather than going to landfill, unwanted household items are being used to produce alternative fuel thanks to an initiative of the City of Burnside and East Waste.

As part of their commitment to reduce landfill, the council and its waste provider East Waste, trialled a free at-call hard waste collection service for residents in 2014-15. This replaced an annual kerbside pick-up.

Residents book a time for East Waste to collect items like furniture, whitegoods, floor and window coverings, scrap metal, bikes and toys from their homes.

“Our main aim, in conjunction with Council, was to find an environmentally responsible alternative to sending this material to landfill,” said Adam Faulkner, East Waste’s General Manager.

“We chose the SUEZ-ResourceCo alternative fuels facility at Wingfield as it recycles or re-uses 95 per cent of all incoming materials. This compares with about 20-30 per cent if sent to landfill,” he said.

The plant processes waste into an engineered fuel product used to fire the kilns at Adelaide Brighton Cement, replacing the use of non-renewable fossil fuels.

“Put simply, we couldn’t find a better option in terms of landfill diversion performance,” said Mr Faulkner.

“We put about 400 tonnes of material through the facility during the trial. In terms of landfill waste diversion, the results met all our expectations.”

Based on the success of the trial, East Waste continues to work with SUEZ-ResourceCo, which processed 500 tonnes of domestic hard waste from the City of Burnside last financial year.

“While the cost of waste disposal is a factor, achieving the best environmental outcome is the main incentive for us and the councils we work with,” said Mr Faulkner.

“So we tend to form relationships with companies and facilities that align with our values around diverting waste from landfill,” he said.

The City of Burnside diverts around 65 per cent of household waste from landfill through its three-bin and a basket system.

“By moving some of our other waste streams to this type of solution, we can set our sights even higher to further boost the landfill diversion target.”

Mr Faulkner said that the initiative has produced a more mature hard waste collection service with strong environmental outcomes.

“It’s crystal clear that this was the right solution for us.”