

WHY AND HOW WE RECYCLE GLASS LOCALLY

There has been lots of discussion in the media recently about the stockpiling of recycled glass in warehouses around Australia because it's cheaper to import glass than to recycle it.

This type of situation is exactly why finding local solutions to recycling our own waste products is so vital.

At Lismore City Council, we built the Materials Recovery Facility in 2014 to recover glass and then process it through a glass crushing plant to produce glass sand.

Some of this glass sand is sent to Blakebrook Quarry, where it is mixed with other materials into road base. We are also finding new uses all the time, the most recent being in drainage works and pipe bedding as a cost effective, sustainable alternative to metal dust and sand.

The photos below show glass sand being used in the initial site works of the new \$2.5 million Commercial Sorting Plant, which we are building in the 2017/18 financial year. This plant will allow us to divert approximately 50% of our current incoming commercial waste from landfill.

As part of these works we have mixed glass sand with gabion rock to form the sub-base of a road that required widening to improve access, as well as using it to backfill a retaining wall, which was then top covered with our 10mm compost and planted out with lomandra.



The other great thing about recycling glass this way is we can capture more products. Conventional glass recycling has only ever allowed for the recycling of glass jars and bottles, whereas when we crush it into sand, we can repurpose glass bottles and jars as well as plate glass, drinking ware, crockery and pyrex.

As well as ensuring more glass can be recycled, transforming glass back into sand reduces the need to mine virgin material for road base. This decreases road resealing costs, limits truck movements and uses considerably less energy and water, as well as reducing air pollution.

We are even winning awards for the use of glass sand, with Council and our contractors, Diona and Calibre Consulting, awarded the Civil Contractors Federation NSW Earth Award in June this year. This recognised excellence in civil construction for the Caniaba Street Sewage Pump Station and particularly the use of recycled glass in its construction.

We hope this provides some insight into our glass recycling, and please remember to place all your old glass, crockery, pyrex, plate glass, drinking glasses etc in your yellow recycling bin. The only type of glass not suitable for recycling is windscreen glass.

Next on our wishlist: Finding ways to recycle plastics locally and make new products! Watch this space.

