

Prepared: April 2020

Many local residents have sent through questions relating to the cancellation of this year's Bulky Waste collection. View the statement released by our waste collection contractor JR Richards & Sons [here\(PDF, 189KB\)](#), and check the FAQs below to see if your question has been answered:

Why has the 2020 Bulky Waste collection been cancelled?

At the time of the COVID-19 outbreak in early March, we were required to determine essential versus non-essential services across all our waste operations. In accordance with NSW State Government advice, the bulky waste collection was deemed a non-essential service.

Why is Bulky Waste not considered an essential service?

An essential service is something that is deemed to be necessary and indispensable. Disposing of waste generated each day is necessary, particularly perishable waste... as a build-up of this type of garbage can pose a health risk and attract vermin. Items accepted during Bulky Waste are generally non-perishable – such as scrap metal, used furniture or electronic waste - and therefore removal of these items from the home was deemed as non-essential.

Why cancel bulky waste in order to focus on kerbside collections when they've done them both at the same time in the past with no issues?

Our efforts have been focused on delivering essential services. By using JR Richards staff for bulky waste, there is a risk of staff contracting COVID-19 which would then impact their ability to deliver essential kerbside collections if their staff numbers were reduced.

Why can't the collection go ahead later in the year?

JR Richards provides a bulk waste collection service in our region as well as in other Council areas across NSW. Collection dates are scheduled 12 - 18 months in advance, leaving no opportunity for JR Richards to reschedule ours, which runs over a total of 20 weeks.

COVID-19 restrictions are easing so why can't the collection start now?

As mentioned above, schedules for waste collections in the MidCoast and other parts of NSW are confirmed more than 12 months in advance. JR Richards have commitments in place that leave no opportunity to commence the collection in our region now or at any time before the end of this year.

Social distancing is not an issue, so why is collecting bulky waste a safety concern for collection staff?

A minimum of two crew members is required to undertake the physical collection of bulk waste items in order to meet Work Health & Safety guidelines. This is because the majority of waste placed out for collection is bulky and/or heavy, and means social distancing as required by law is not possible. Over and above social distancing, the issue of manually handling bulky waste items poses a hazard to crew members, even if they wear gloves, and



can also be a public health risk where people are fossicking through other people's waste piles.

Will I receive a refund in my rates?

The vast majority of waste fees collected as part of property rates are used to maintain the weekly kerbside collection service and to operate our waste management facilities. There has been no decision to refund or provide a rebate in lieu of the cancelled bulky waste collection, and these funds will contribute to a review of alternative disposal options for bulky waste items in the future. Options will be presented to a Council meeting for consideration in the next few months.

Can I call to book a collection?

This option is not currently available in our region, and while it is something that other councils offer, to provide this service across our 10,000km² region may prove to be challenging and expensive. Along with options that include free 'tip' vouchers, on-call collection will be included in our review of alternatives for bulky waste in the future.

Will we have 2 bulky waste collections next year to make up for the one we missed?

No decision has been made about what will be offered next year in regards to bulky waste disposal, however it is unlikely any contractor could undertake two collections across our region as each takes 20 weeks to complete.

When will next year's collection take place?

If the current service continues the collection will take place between March and August.

Why are other Council clean-ups going ahead?

Bulky waste collections are scheduled well in advance, so a council area whose collection was due to start now will make their decision based on current conditions. With social distancing restrictions easing, there is a greater likelihood a collection scheduled for the second half of 2020 will proceed.

I'm a rate payer, why wasn't I personally notified about the cancellation?

Our bulky waste collection was due to start on 23 March, which coincided with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. During that time of uncertainty, the situation was evolving quickly with advice from State and Federal authorities changing daily. Our focus on maintaining essential services and the sheer size of our region made it impossible to contact all residents individually. We have continued to use all possible communications channels to keep people updated about service interruptions, including media releases, our website, newspaper advertising, radio, email newsletter, and social media. You can subscribe for our email newsletter and be kept updated [here](#)

I don't have the means to take my waste to the tip, so what can I do?

We understand not everyone can make the trip to the tip, so think about asking a neighbour or family member to assist in removing your unwanted bulk items. It is also worth considering "sharing the load" – combining waste from several households into the one trailer load ensures fewer trips and benefits everyone.

Check [here](#) to find your closest waste management facility and its hours of operation.

