



KATHERINE HAS A WASTE PROBLEM

Katherine's waste management facility manager **Craig Walker** stands amongst a mound of junk.

In Katherine, and the Northern Territory in general, we lag behind the rest of Australia when it comes to how we manage our waste.

"Waste is everyone's problem and putting it in the bin is not the end of story," Katherine Town Council's director of infrastructure and environment Brendan Pearce says.

Katherine's landfill has about five to 10 years to go. If we separate our rubbish, through composting and recycling, it won't all go to our landfill and this means that 10 years could become 30 years, deferring millions in costs to close the current site and develop a new one.

But why should we care?

"We'd like to leave this world better than we found it," Pearce says. "At the moment, we could be doing a better job."

Here in Katherine, there is a last frontier mentality. We're isolated, far away, and a relatively small population, so residents might feel like what we do doesn't matter. But through consultations with residents, we know this issue does matter. Less than 40 per cent of residents are satisfied with our current waste system.

Katherine Town Council employs over 50 staff who live in Katherine with their families. They pay the same rates, get the same services council provides, and they deal with the same costs of living here. That means decisions that council makes, also affects staff.

Currently Katherine doesn't have many options to process recycling — household recycling goes in the waste bin — yet over 90 per cent of residents support an increase in recycling here. But there is also a strong

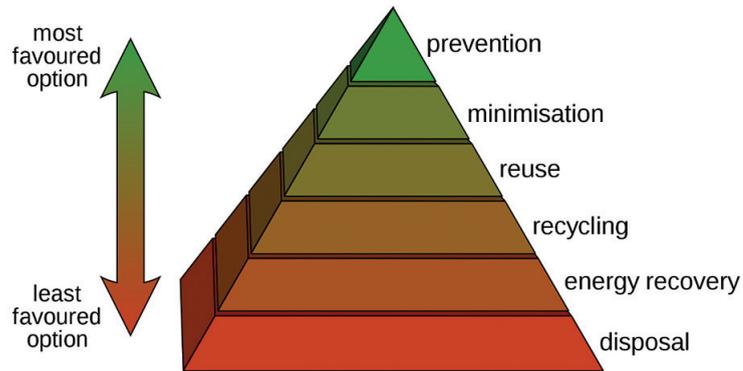
resistance to increasing charges to make improvements.

Currently, the Territory and Federal Governments are looking at developing a \$7.2 million recycling facility in Katherine. It is going through a feasibility study and there will be community consultation soon. If this does go through, a household recycling bin for kerbside collection may need to be rolled out.

Plastic in landfill takes over 500 years to break down (it is still a better option than burning, which releases toxic smoke). Every bit of plastic ever produced still exists today. Every nappy, every lego brick. By 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean by weight than fish. "Having a recycling facility helps create a circular system, that feeds recycling back into the community," Pearce says.

RECYCLING OPTIONS IN KATHERINE

It's all about small behaviour changes. Recycling is less planet friendly when compared to reducing consumption, which means stop buying things we don't need.



M.T. Bins on Bovril Street in Katherine South takes your cans and bottles, giving you back cash.

At the Katherine Landfill

- (Lot 5043 Novis Quarry Road)
- Separate timber, green waste, scrape metal, old computers and tvs, tyres, car batteries, used oil.
 - Pay to degas your white goods – about \$60

Many people dislike paying a dump fee. Illegal dumping costs in fuel to go to a deserted area, and council costs in retrieving, which goes back to residents. Degassing stops toxic gases being released into the atmosphere further damaging

our ozone layer. So that's anything with refrigerant in it such as fridge/freezers, and air conditioners.

Compost

Food, organic and garden waste can make up to 32 per cent of landfill, a huge source of emissions that escalate climate change. When composted, this waste doesn't emit toxic gasses.

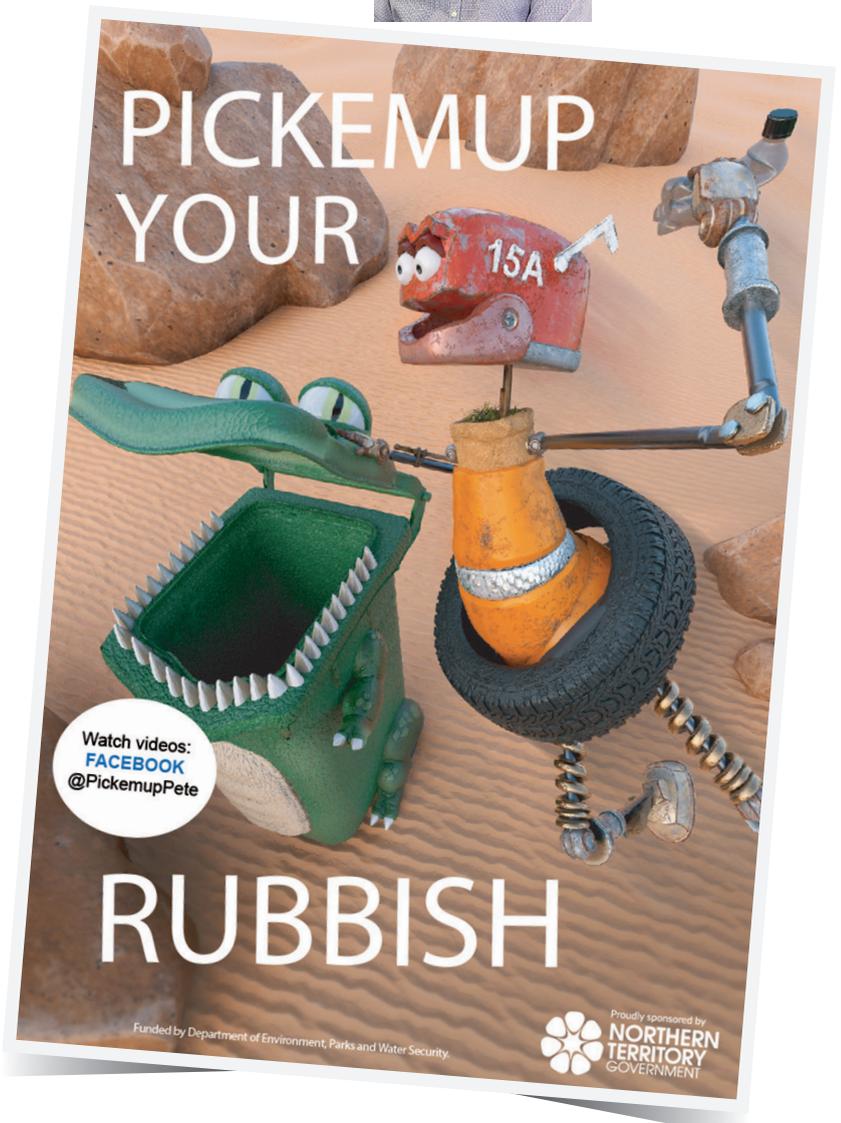
Woolworths

Recycle soft plastics: plastic packets, plastic bags.

MobileMuster

(Civic Centre, Library)
Old phones, batteries, chargers, accessories, smart watches.

Katherine Town Council director of infrastructure and environment **Brendan Pearce.**



For more information on recycling options in Katherine, go to:

Katherine.nt.gov.au/services/environment-and-sustainability

Funded by Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security.

