



Torres Strait Island
REGIONAL COUNCIL



Commercial and Construction Waste Restrictions

Important information for
external work groups

TSIRC waste situation

Recent audits of Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC) landfill sites indicate that they have limited remaining capacity and face significant challenges in achieving compliance with Environmental Approvals. Due to these factors and the large amounts of accumulating waste generated by commercial and construction operations in the region, it has become necessary to introduce operational restrictions.

To reduce environmental risks, and transition to a more sustainable waste management model, Council must work towards addressing compliance issues through critical waste reduction and waste management measures. TSIRC now requires that all commercial waste and construction waste be removed from the TSIRC Local Government Area and disposed of responsibly outside TSIRC's jurisdiction.

TSIRC Local Laws

TSIRC Local Laws and fees and charges have been amended to ensure that all waste from commercial or construction activities is restricted from being disposed of at TSIRC island landfills. **These changes come into full effect on 1 July 2021.**

The new laws restrict commercial and construction waste from being disposed of at TSIRC's island landfills unless agreed upon by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or delegate. Council, therefore, reserves the right to refuse acceptance of all waste at its facilities and will enforce any non-compliances.

Compliance notices, stop orders and fines may be issued in cases where persons or parties breach these new requirements. This does not include domestic type waste produced by contractors at their accommodation or work site (e.g. lunch packaging).

Commercial and Construction Waste

“Commercial waste” is any waste from the normal operation of a business enterprise. Waste types include, but not limited to, paper, cardboard, wrapping and packaging. Disposal of commercial waste (excluding standard property bin collection) will be permitted only under exceptional circumstances with prior written consent from TSIRC CEO or delegate.

“Construction waste” is any material produced during construction, renovation, demolition, or deconstruction activities. This does not include domestic type waste produced by contractors at their accommodation or work site. Waste types incorporate a diverse range of materials that typically include concrete, wood, metals, gypsum board products, asphalt, roofing material and packaging.

Biosecurity Restrictions

Australian and Queensland State Government biosecurity controls such as treatments may apply to the transport of waste from island to island, between legislated biosecurity zones and from all Torres Strait islands to the mainland. In general, biosecurity inspections are required for any materials being removed from the islands. Depending on the risk associated with the waste, biosecurity control measures may include specified treatments, containment and disposal methods. The following contacts from relevant state and federal government departments concerned with biosecurity are provided below for your convenience.

Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment:

Email: Thursday.Island@agriculture.gov.au

Phone: 07 4212 0185

Frequently Asked Questions

How should commercial and construction waste be removed from the Torres Strait Islands?

Plan ahead and include the cost for waste storage, transport, and disposal before commencing projects on-island. Arrangements with waste management services (e.g. JJ Richards, Clean Away, SUEZ) should be made prior to mobilising to the Torres Straits.

How is waste removed from the worksite and taken to the barge?

Prior arrangements should be made with the transport company (e.g. SeaSwift) to ensure that the waste storage container can be put on to the service barge for removal. Waste should be contained to prevent the spread of biosecurity pests.

Where do we put construction and demolition waste while on the work site?

To prevent the spread of insects, plant diseases and other biosecurity risks to new locations within Torres Strait or to the mainland, and improve worksite housekeeping, it is recommended that all materials are kept out of the weather and kept clean from soil, water pooling and organic debris. Typical storage containers include covered skip bins, lidded dumpsters and shipping containers. The appropriate storage container should be decided with your transshipment and waste providers.

What are the biosecurity requirements for waste being sent off the islands?

All waste leaving the islands will require biosecurity inspection to assess the risks. Segregation of waste will assist with adequate biosecurity inspection. If no biosecurity risks are identified or they can be all mitigated before departure, the goods will be released without further intervention. If the waste cannot be adequately inspected, waste may require biosecurity treatments, containment and/or specific disposal method or location. The biosecurity risk mitigation process and associated treatments will depend on many factors including how the waste is stored, the volume, the island's risk status and destination.

What are the requirements for soil and organic debris?

Clean soil and organic materials should either be repurposed on the work site or taken to the landfill for repurposing. Soil/organic material to be left on-island must be clean and uncontaminated free of any construction rubble. If contaminated, it will need to have contaminants removed before being left on-island. If unable to be cleaned, then the material is expected to be managed according to biosecurity directions.

Can commercial and construction materials be given to community members for reuse?

Approval for gifting materials to community members or TSIRC will be assessed on a case-by-case basis only. Gifting of materials must be approved by Councils CEO or delegate. To apply for approval, contact the relevant TSIRC Divisional Engineering Officer staff on-island. They will provide the information to the CEO or delegate. The CEO or delegate will assess the situation and deny or approve with conditions.

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