

Jumbo bins for Brisbane City Council

Brisbane City Council's Lord Mayor, Campbell Newman, last week inspected the first, new "jumbo" bins for domestic recycling and officially invited Brisbane residents to upgrade their existing bins. The unveiling was the culmination of many years of work from bin maker, SULO Australia, in creating what it considers to be the ultimate bin for the Australian market.

The company, which operates one of the largest plastic injection moulding plants in Australasia, recently launched the 360 Litre Kompakt (for domestic use) and Roto (for commercial/industrial use). They are the biggest two-wheel mobile garbage bins (MGB) in Australia and could represent, according to SULO, the next generation in municipal recycling.

In the case of Brisbane City Council's program, the new 360 Litre recycling bins can carry 40 per cent more co-mingled recyclable products than the regular 240 Litre recycling bin.

The council is selling the environmental benefits of the opt-in program for residents to upgrade to the larger size, which it began back in May.

Newman said the council had received more than 4,500 orders for the 360 Litre bins to date, with the highest take up rate seen in Brisbane's western suburbs.

The marketing program will be rolled out across the entire council area, for residents to order a 360 Litre recycling bin for a subsidised one-off cost of \$30, and used either as a replacement or in addition to the current 240 Litre recycling bin.

John Kernahan, director of sales and marketing at SULO, said, "We're hoping for greater, longer term uptake, over about two to three years, purchasing the 360 Litre."

"About 100,000 tonnes of general waste goes into landfill that could have been recycled," said Newman.

The costs to Brisbane City Council of subsidising the bin program will be partly offset by the commodity value of the increased volume of recyclable material and the lower volumes taken to landfill. It will also be able to recycle damaged bins which may be exchanged for the 360 Litre option. However, the council has not introduced the larger sized bin for domestic green waste disposal.

Ku-ring-gai Council is the only council nationally currently offering residents of its leafy Sydney area the option of a 360 Litre bin for green waste recycling, a practice which has been in place since the early 1980s.

While some contractors have voiced concern about 360 Litre MGBs being used for green waste, it's not the weight that could create headaches for contractors according to MacDonald Johnston's manager of product development and technical services, Darrin Pritchard.

“Our lifters are capable of lifting 120 kilos and have a safe working load of around 80 kilos....I wouldn't for see a problem with green waste.

“The major challenge for us has nothing to do with lift capacity...but with a grab assembly that has the capability of grabbing the bin efficiently and holding onto it through the bin's motion and discharge. The clamping force is an important factor.”

Pritchard said that using a standard bin design in a 360 Litre model may have produced problems for conventional side lift vehicles but the innovation in SULO's design made the difference when it came to MacDonald Johnston road testing the 'jumbo' bin.

“I do think it's the optimum in design,” said Pritchard, “we have some experience in exporting into Europe and we are capable of lifting 360 Litre bins there but only with a special lifter. To produce something that works with a standard lifter is quite an achievement.”

Kernahan said there are several councils “waiting in line” to follow Brisbane City Council's lead in the introduction of a 360 Litre option for general domestic recycling. He believes that the market for the 360 Litre MGB could encompass every household in Australia.

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