

# Postmasters gastropub leaves little to waste

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Nestled on the corner of Arrowtown's main street is a local gastropub with a difference. Postmasters Kitchen + Bar and restaurant not only specialise in serving high quality food and bespoke beverages, but they have adopted efficient rubbish and recycling systems throughout their business. They even use food scraps to generate compost for use in their inviting courtyard garden – ensuring nothing goes to waste!

We sat down with Postmasters co-owner, Sam Laycock, to learn more about how they do things behind the scenes.

## Q. Tell us about Postmasters!

Our business was born out of a love of quality produce and a desire to do better for the planet. We see plenty of locals and tourists come through our doors and believe that our community and environment are key to our success. Sustainability is important to us, and we are always looking for new ways to reduce our environmental impact.



**Q. What sort of waste and recycling does Postmasters create and how much?**

Being a gastropub, we've got the usual glass bottles, beer cans, soft drink bottles, food cans, food waste and general waste as well.

**Q. How does Postmasters manage its waste and recycling?**

We've been composting our own food scraps for years but have recently teamed up with local composter Michael Sly, who composts all sorts of things. This has allowed us to expand our composting offering, to include plate scrapings too.

On site we have mixed recycling bins, glass recycling bins, cardboard collection, general rubbish bins and food waste bins as well. Throughout the bar and kitchen, we have multiple smaller receptacle containers that can be emptied into the larger bins when they fill up. We like to keep things tidy, so everything is positioned throughout our site discreetly.

Our waste and recycling contractors collect from us twice a week. They pull into the laneway behind us, and we make sure to have everything ready to go for them to pick up. We made our own custom arrangements with our contractors to improve efficiencies at pick up time, and because we have the space to manage everything on site, we do. We do about one wheelie bin (140L) of each waste stream a week, and in busier times we'll do about two bins of each.

Because we have gardens as well, I manage the hedges and collect everything for composting. Just recently I put 800 litres of home-made compost on our Postmasters garden, all made from food and garden waste from our customers.

**Q. How do you manage food waste?**

Food waste is an issue that many businesses face. To manage food waste, we only order exactly what we need, and bulk orders together. We have deliveries seven days a week, and we work with our suppliers to improve efficiencies here.



We introduced a system for our vegetable suppliers where we gave them our 5 litre ice cream containers that we had finished using, and now they make our vegetable deliveries in them. It's incredibly convenient because it not only reduces plastic and waste, but the produce also comes beautifully organised in the ice cream containers in a crate, ready to go straight from our backdoor to the chiller with no double handling necessary.

We've introduced more beer taps and have wine and mulled wine on tap too, which our customers love. This reduces recycling immensely, as we are saving all that packaging by using reusable kegs – it's about embracing modern systems from the wine industry, so that we produce less.

**Q. What challenges do you face when dealing with your waste and recycling?**

We've been doing things efficiently for close to a decade now, so it's simply how we do things, and to be honest, it's not that hard!

Occasionally we will find something that's a challenge, for example, containers that are greater than 3 litres can't be recycled at kerbside, and some of our products like cleaning chemicals and hand soap come in 5 litres to 20 litres containers, which can't be recycled. Postmasters are working with their suppliers to find a workable solution to this, with discussions ongoing with suppliers

**Q. What opportunities have been borne of the management of your waste and recycling?**

use cups produce. We decided to stop offering takeaway coffees and say to those who ask for one, 'you're welcome to have a coffee, but you'll have to sit here to enjoy it for ten minutes rather than rush off'.

Our customers have been receptive to this and appreciate what we are trying to do.

Our food waste directly helps us grow our garden as we turn it into compost, and we have a thriving rosemary bush in our garden thanks to this! We hardly buy any herbs now, as we grow so many on site. Our customers love our garden and often comment on it, and we are proud to tell them it's thriving all thanks to their food scraps!

**Q. What would you tell other businesses who want to improve their waste and recycling practices?**

It's not that hard at all. There is a bit of habit-building that comes with any change of course, but our team know the importance of why we do what we do.

We make embedding processes and systems easy. Nobody likes to throw away or pay for air, so we always train our staff to squash and flatten anything they can, as you can fit so much more into a bin if you do this!

**Q. What do you think is the most important aspect of sustainability for your business?**

As we are a tourist destination, then we have an opportunity to model good behaviour and educate people who visit us, and hopefully they take these ideas back home with them. If new systems come into play, we adapt to them, and are always looking for improvements.

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1. Postmasters in Arrowtown
  2. On tap: Arrowtown Choppers beer is one of Postmasters' best-selling beer, with \$1 from every beer going towards the local environmental conservation crew.
  3. Hidden in the kitchen and bar are smaller containers to collect waste and recycling – improving efficiencies throughout the tight spaces.
  4. Food scraps are collected by Michael Sly, local composter.
  5. Cardboard recycling and mixed recycling is organised and waits to be picked up out the back of Postmasters.
  6. Postmasters in Arrowtown
  7. Medium sized bins are emptied daily into the larger recycling bins for collection, meaning no space is left to waste.
  8. All fruit and vegetable deliveries arrive in recycled ice-cream containers – and go straight in the chiller with no waste. The plastic liners in the bins are reused with each delivery.
  9. The thriving courtyard and garden is composted by food scraps from any leftovers made by Postmasters' customers.
  10. As 10.
  11. Postmasters staff have embraced waste minimisation and waste efficient systems.
  12. Recycling contractors can pull up into the lane outside for easy collection out the back of Postmasters.
  13. As 9.
  14. As 9.
  15. Postmasters serves Gibbston's Mount Edward wines on tap, reducing the need for heavy glass bottles.
  16. Even mulled wine from a keg is available at Postmasters!
  17. The thriving rosemary bush in the garden is growing strong thanks to Postmasters compost.

