

Case study: Food organics and garden organics collection in Kempsey Shire



Residents were provided with a free kitchen caddy and compostable caddy liners.

“We have seen a lasting improvement of a 15% increase in our landfill diversion and reduction of our waste levy payments each month.”

Gavin Hughes
Coordinator Waste Services
Kempsey Shire Council



Resources were provided to help residents recycle organics.

Sorting out the war on waste

The rural residents of Kempsey Shire have embraced a new weekly food and garden organics collection and their dedication has contributed to a 15% drop in waste going to landfill in just 12 months.

Kempsey Shire Council has expanded its existing kerbside food organics and garden organics (FOGO) collection service to 3,012 rural and semi-rural households thanks to a \$187,500 grant from the NSW Environment Protection Authority's *Waste Less, Recycle More* Organics Infrastructure Fund.

Each household was given a 240 litre green bin, along with a kitchen caddy, a roll of compostable bin liners, educational material and a waste hotline number.

In an example of 'walking the talk', the bins were made from up to 40% recycled material and the kitchen caddies were made from up to 100% recycled material.

At the same time council changed the frequency of red bin collections from weekly to fortnightly across the entire local government area (LGA) (13,000

“The new service is very easy-to-use and it encourages all households to dispose of waste in a more sustainable manner, which is ultimately reducing the amount we put to landfill.”

Marnie Jeffery
resident, Turners Flat



The educational campaign was well received by residents.

The EPA's Organics Collections Grants provide up to \$1.3 million to councils and business to introduce new food only or food and garden collection services. They are administered by the NSW Environmental Trust and are open for applications over several funding rounds.



households). The FOGO frequency was also changed from fortnightly to weekly for the households that already had the service.

Together these initiatives reduced the amount of waste going to landfill by an estimated 15% in the first year. This positive result has been maintained to date.



Council changed the red bin collection from weekly to fortnightly across the entire LGA.

Sort and save

Kempsey Shire Council delivered a community education program branded *Sort & Save* to support the roll out. Educational activities included local newspaper and radio advertising, distribution of printed material, a social media campaign and detailed information on council's website. The council also ran community outreach activities at events, shopping centres and rural locations.

While there was some negative feedback at first, the community response was largely positive due to council's effective education campaign. The campaign began months before the service change and took into account experiences from neighbouring councils.

The introduction of the new system in 2017 was much more successful than an earlier trial. In the 2014 trial council provided kitchen caddies and compostable liners to residents in town with an existing fortnightly garden organics collection service. In 2017 the new weekly green bin service was introduced for all food and garden waste to divert FOGO material from landfill and convert it into compost.

The changes to the red bin collection meant residents needed to conserve bin space. The bin change and persuasive education campaign encouraged households to re-evaluate their daily practices and change their waste management behaviour.

Measure of success

The roll out of the new FOGO service to rural and semi-rural areas and the simultaneous change of bin collection frequencies across the whole LGA increased Kemspey Shire's diversion rates by 15%.

A waste audit in October 2017 in areas covered by the new collection service found that:

- the average household put 15.4 kilograms or 129 litres of FOGO into their kerbside bins each week



The kitchen organics bin provided to households.

“Some members of our rural community initially resisted having a new green bin or were concerned about the change to the frequency of collection of the red and green bins. But the waste education messages about how much food and garden waste ends up in landfill is compelling.”

Gavin Hughes



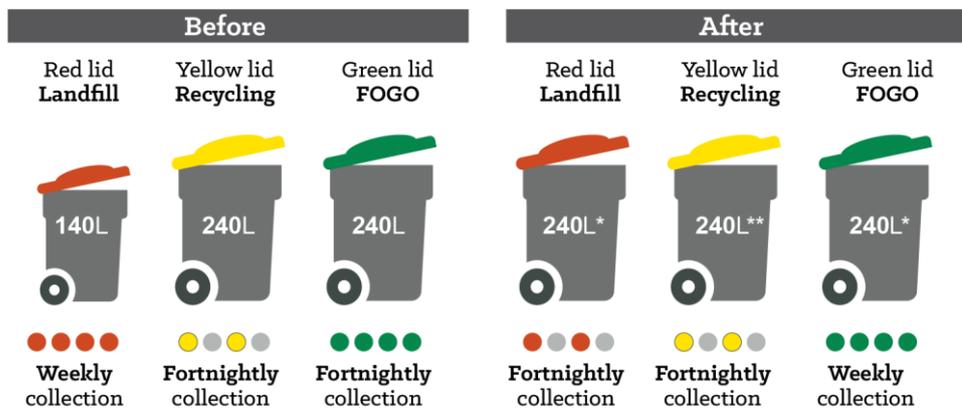
An education trailer telling residents about the bin collection changes.

- 59% of food waste was being recovered in the organics bin
- 78% of loose food waste was recovered in the organics bin
- 99% of garden organics was recovered in the organics bin
- contamination in organics bins was low at 1.5% by weight and 1.1% by volume.

In addition Kempsey Shire Council’s new service has:

- reduced the cost of the waste levy on the local community
- extended the life of the local landfill
- diverted valuable resources from landfill to recycling or composting
- reduced landfill air and water pollution as a result of less food and organics matter going to waste, including reducing methane which is one of the major greenhouse gases
- improved efficiencies and reduced costs for the community.

Figure 1: Changes to Kempsey Shire’s kerbside bin collection service



* option to downsize to 140L bin
 ** option to upgrade to 360L bin

Looking to the future

Kempsey Shire Council plans to continue its community education campaign highlighting the right way to dispose of food waste. Council also plans to work on reducing commercial food waste and recovering more food (mostly containerised) from residual waste bins.

Photos

Courtesy of Kempsey Shire Council.

NSW Environment Protection Authority

Email: info@epa.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.epa.nsw.gov.au

ISBN 978 1 922260 46 8 | EPA 2019P1552

April 2019

The EPA [disclaimer](#) and [copyright](#) information is available on the EPA website.