

Starting Scraps Social Research

Summary Report



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Research conducted in 2022 by
Micromex Research for the NSW EPA.

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Photos provided by the EPA Starting Scraps
Education Program and WSROC FOGO
photo library.

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Aim

Benchmark FOGO attitudes before FOGO introduced

- Measure current waste attitudes and behaviours
- Interest in FOGO service
- Perceived concerns and benefits of FOGO
- Preferred communication and engagement channels.

Approach

Methodology

- Online survey
- 38 NSW local government areas (LGAs) who don't currently have a FOGO or Food Waste only (FO) service
- Participants recruited from existing Micromex online panel and through Pure Spectrum Market Research
- Data weighted to match ABS statistics for Greater Capital City Statistical Area.

Who

- N= 1028 residents
- Both single unit (SUD - 78%) and multi-unit (MUD - 22%) dwellings
- Urban and peri urban LGAs (Sydney, Greater Sydney, Newcastle, Central Coast) - 82% urban, 18% peri urban
- Majority have garden organics bin (66%)
- 18 - 85+ years
- 51% female, 48% male
- 79% English only speakers, 18% rely on English language information sources, 3% rely on mixed or mostly another language.



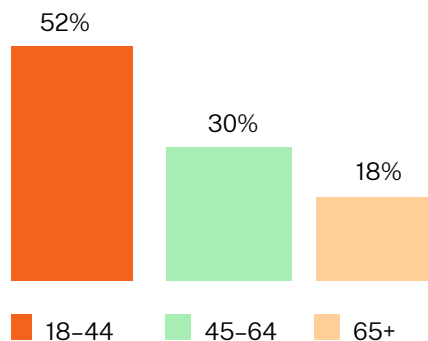
51%

Female



48%

Male Other/
prefer not to say 1%



Age



78%

Single
dwellings



22%

Multi unit
dwellings

Headline findings

95% of residents are aware of at least one of the ten listed outcomes of FOGO, particularly for environmental benefits and generating compost.

When asked how likely they would be to use a FOGO service because of each of these ten outcomes the top motivations for using the service are:

- '45% of the contents of the average red bin is food waste and garden organics that could be repurposed by a new food and garden service'.
- 'Putting food and garden waste in the green organics bin would be the right thing to do and good for the environment'.
- 'In many parts of NSW we are running out of landfill space for red lid bin waste'.

Respondents prefer permanent physical items to communicate with them about the new service and reminders of the FOGO process. These include leaflet, kitchen caddy and bin sticker. SMS was also popular with younger residents.

Based on a list of 22 possible issues/ concerns about a FOGO service, 70% of residents identified at least one major/big concern:

- other residents won't properly sort scraps
- vermin in kitchen caddy and organics bin
- odours from kitchen caddy and green lid bin
- increased cost of service.

Effort, learning and bin fullness were least likely to be nominated as concerns.

Red bin concerns –86% of residents selected at least one concern about loss of weekly red bin service. Main concerns:

- odours
- bin too small for fortnightly collection.

73% of respondents who watched the EPA Scrap Together video ‘Every Scrap Matters’¹ said it would encourage them to use the FOGO service.

79% of people know that putting FOGO in the green lid bin would be the right thing to do and is good for the environment.

1. Scrap Together is a suite of community education resources helping councils make the most of FOGO. ‘Every Scrap Matters’ video is available online here.



95%

of residents are aware of at least one benefit of FOGO.



70%

of residents are interested in a weekly FOGO service.



Interest in FOGO service drops to

48%

once people hear about the red bin going fortnightly.



Current waste attitudes and behaviour

Who is responsible for reducing waste to landfill?

Respondents consider responsibility for reducing waste is shared.

They rated themselves as second most responsible (44%) after local government (45%).

Q3

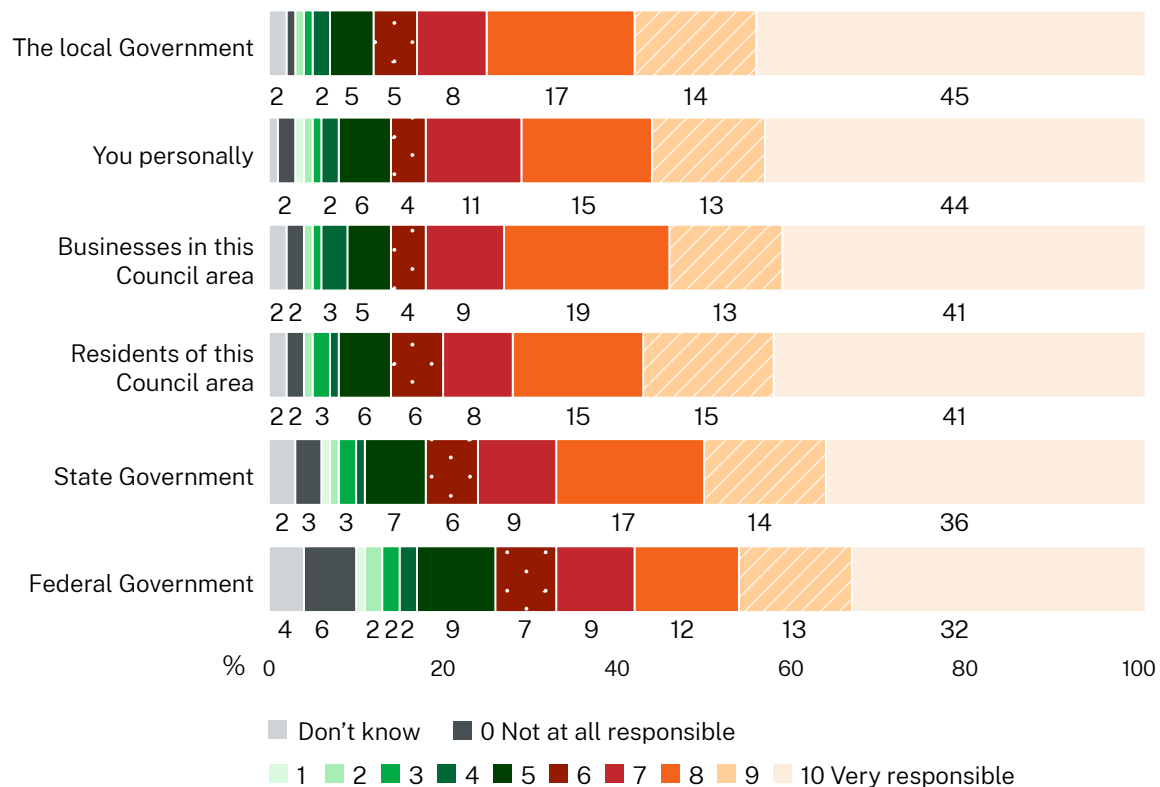
How responsible, if at all, do you think each of the following people or groups should be for reducing the amount of waste to landfill?

How are people currently disposing of food waste?

60% of respondents currently put food scraps in the red bin.

27% use a compost bin or worm farm.

Responsibility for reducing waste to landfill



Older residents, females and those living in the area a long time (over 20 years) are significantly more likely to have a worm farm or compost bin.

Of those who already have a green garden organics bin (GO) males and those under 65 are more likely to be using it for food scraps (incorrectly).

FOGO knowledge, interest and motivation

Are residents interested in a new FOGO service?

70% of residents are interested or very interested in having a FOGO service.

14% were not interested – some were already composting or feeding scraps to animals.

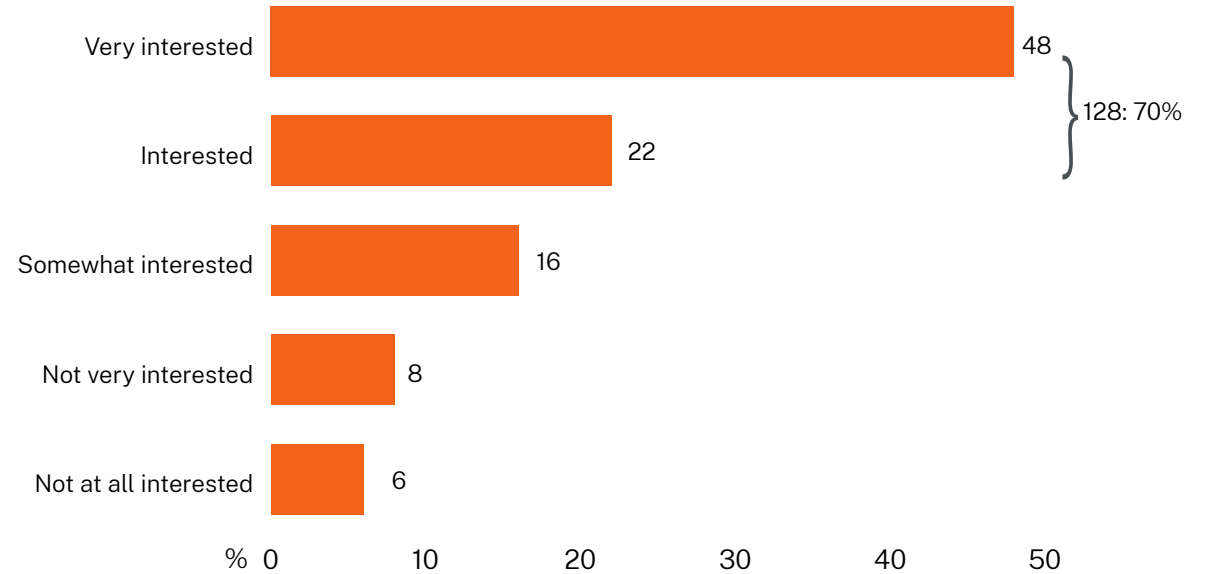
Most interested

- Younger (18 - 44)
- Females and those in larger households
- Those in urban areas and SUDs.

Less interested

- Older people (over 65s)
- Men generally
- Those with no children
- Those who live in MUDs.

Interest in council-provided FOGO service



Q6 Based on what you now know* about this organics service, how interested, if at all, are you in having this service at your home?

*Participants were told about the organics service:

- 240l bin
- weekly collection
- put garden waste and food scraps
- given a small benchtop caddy to collect scraps (photo shown).

Are residents interested in a new FOGO service?

Interest drops to 48% when told the red bin collection will reduce to fortnightly.

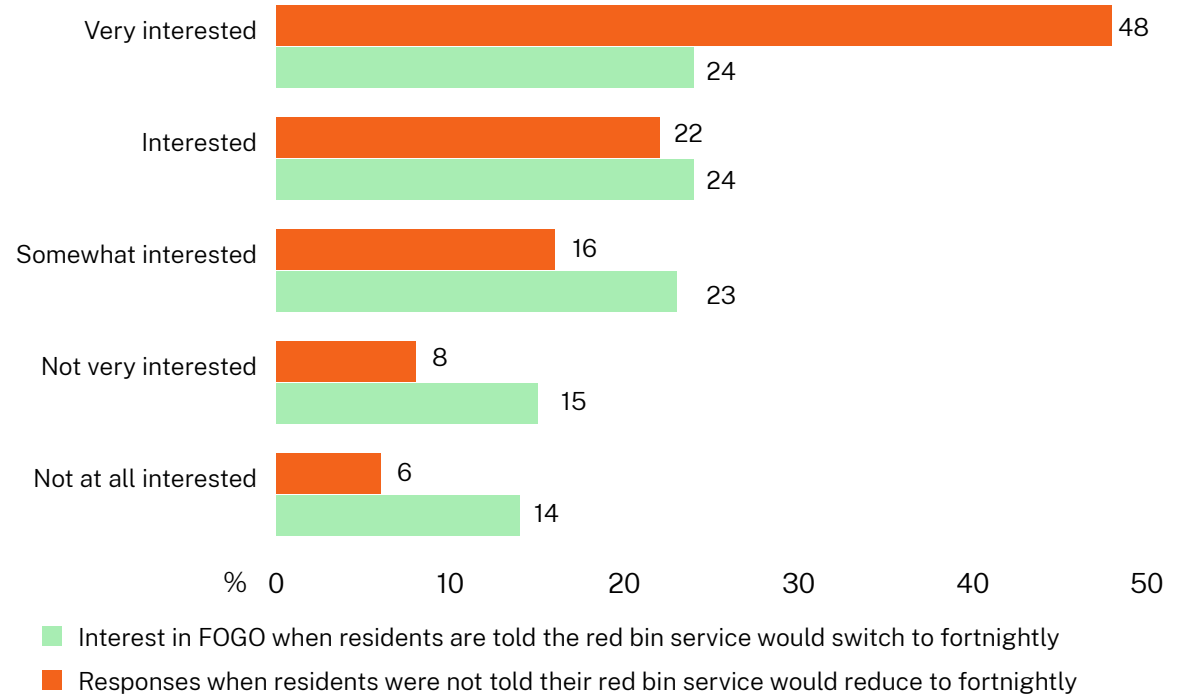
Those who changed their interest were more likely to:

- have a lower sense of personal responsibility
- have full/overflowing red bins
- be larger households
- be female.



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Interest in FOGO when residents are told the red bin service would switch to fortnightly



FOGO knowledge, interest and motivation

What do residents know about the benefits and outcomes of a FOGO service?

95% of residents are aware of at least one of ten identified outcomes/benefits of a FOGO service.

Sample differences

Those who had significantly less awareness include:

- 18-44
- females
- living in council area for a shorter period
- those living in MUDs.

Q8

Listed below are several outcomes of having a food and garden organics bin. Before today, were you aware of that outcome?

Awareness of identified benefit (above 50%)

79% Putting food and garden waste in the green organics bin would be the right thing to do and good for the environment

77% Compost made from food and garden waste in green lid bin services improves soil health

65% Food and garden waste collected in your green lid bin would be turned into quality compost

62% In many parts of NSW we are running out of landfill space for red lid bin waste

62% Food scraps sent to landfill in the red lid bin make methane and adds to climate change

FOGO Those with more awareness of FOGO outcomes identified less concerns about FOGO services.



Concerns about service changes

What are the main concerns about a new FOGO service?

Top concerns

70% identified at least one major/big concern from a list of 22 possible concerns.

Top concerns about a new FOGO service (apart from loss of the weekly red bin collection) were:

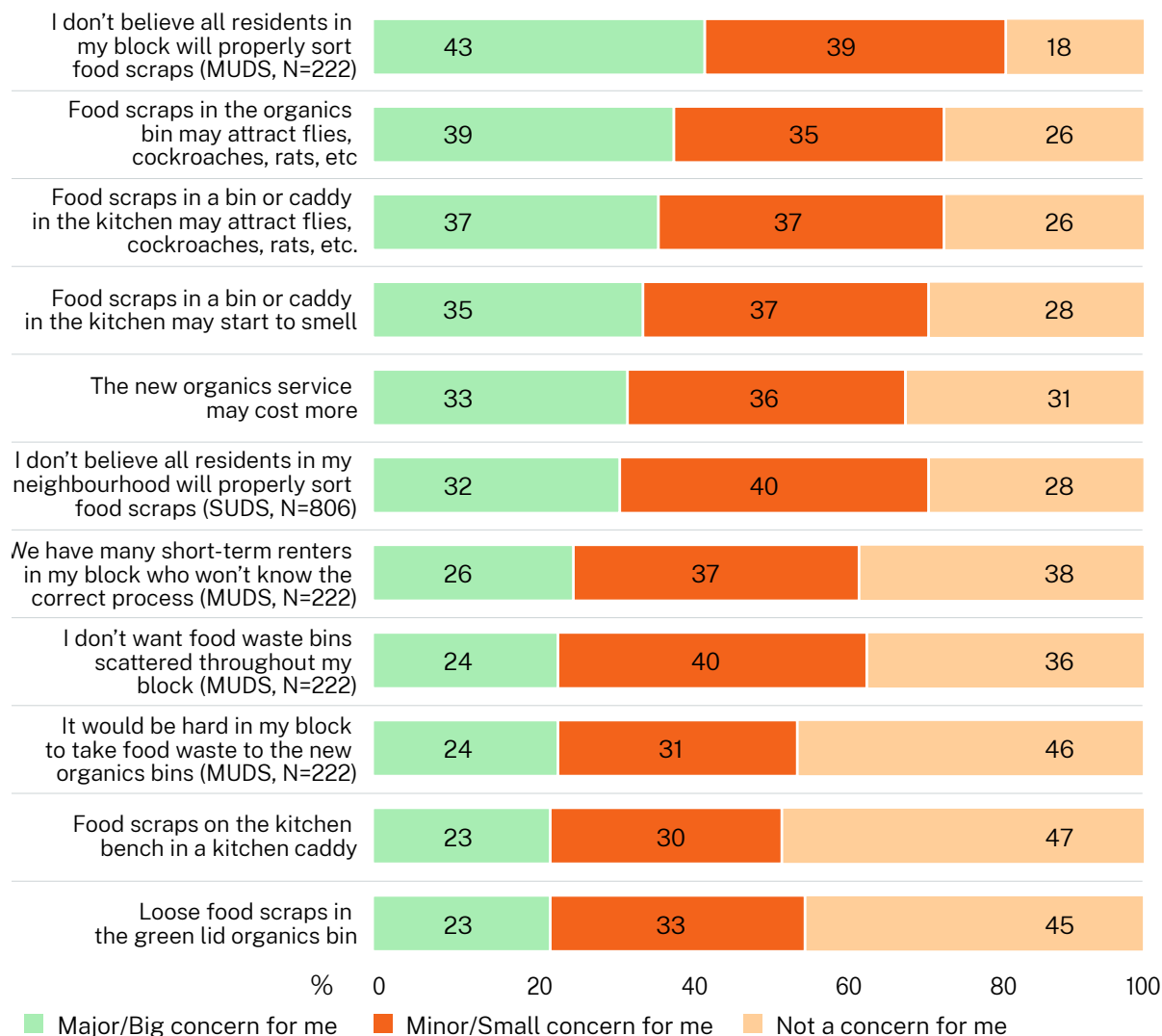
- not believing that all residents in their block will properly sort food scraps (MUDs residents only)
- concerns about attracting vermin (both for the bin and/or the kitchen caddy)
- bad odours from the bin and/or the kitchen caddy
- increased cost of the service.

Sample differences

Those without a garden organics bin (No-GOs) selected a lot more concerns than GOs (average 9.3 concerns vs 4.3).

Others who identified greater numbers of concerns were 18-44, male, medium-size households, with children over 4, living in urban LGAs, and MUDs residents.

Top 11 concerns



Q7

Based on what you now know about this organics service, how much of a concern, if any, would each of the following issues be for you if you had a weekly collection service for composting all your food and garden waste?

New FOGO service

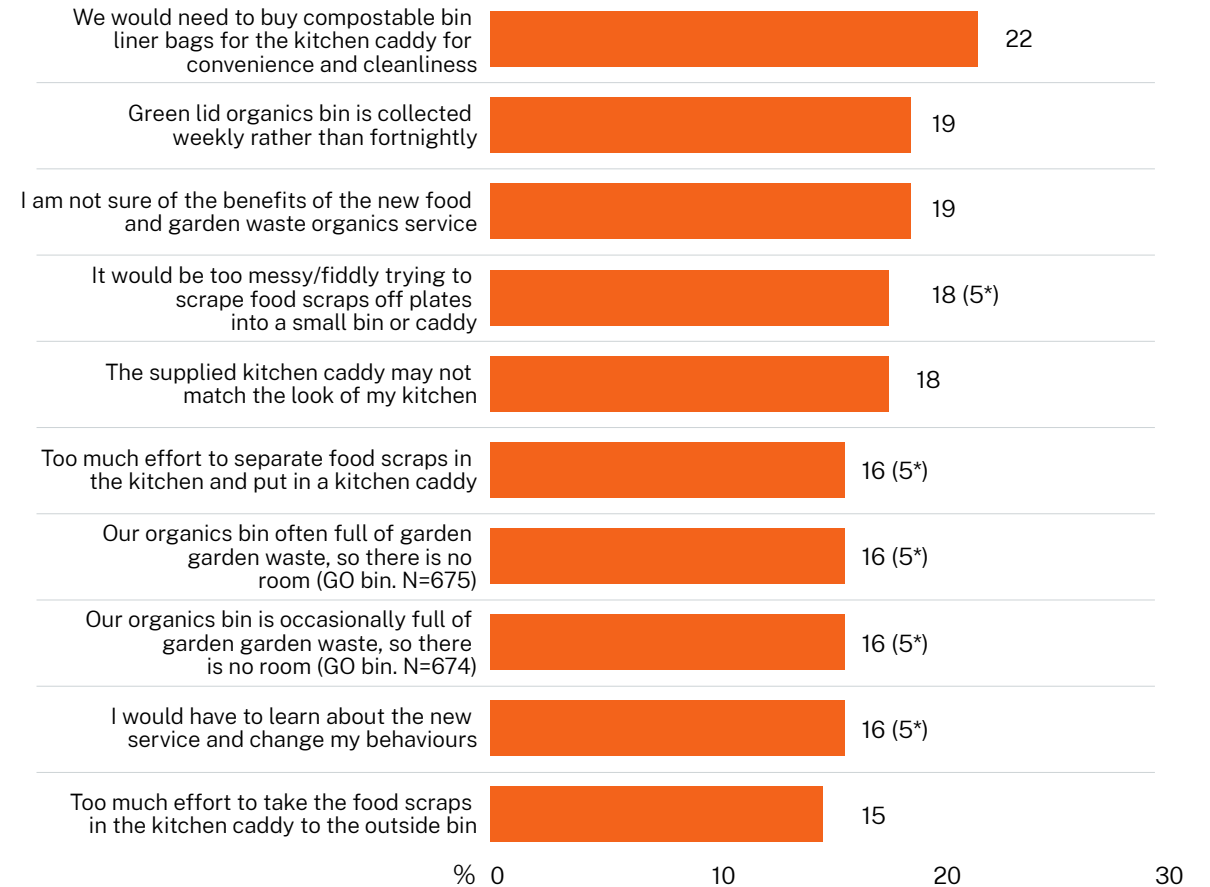
Lesser concerns

- Too much effort to take food scraps from the kitchen caddy to the bin
- Need to learn about new service and change behaviours
- Green bin already full-those who have already GO
- Too much effort to separate food scraps in the kitchen

Q7 Based on what you now know about this organics service, how much of a concern, if any, would each of the following issues be for you if you had a weekly collection service for composting all your food and garden waste?



Lesser 11 concerns



*Values in brackets denote the results from FOGO User Survey (2020) research, as samples are different compare with caution

Red bin changes

86% of respondents have at least one concern about a reduced red bin service.

Top four concerns around a reduced service are:

- odours e.g. from pizza boxes/food containers with food scraps
- bin will be too small for fortnightly collection
- inconvenient
- loss of a paid service.

Sample differences

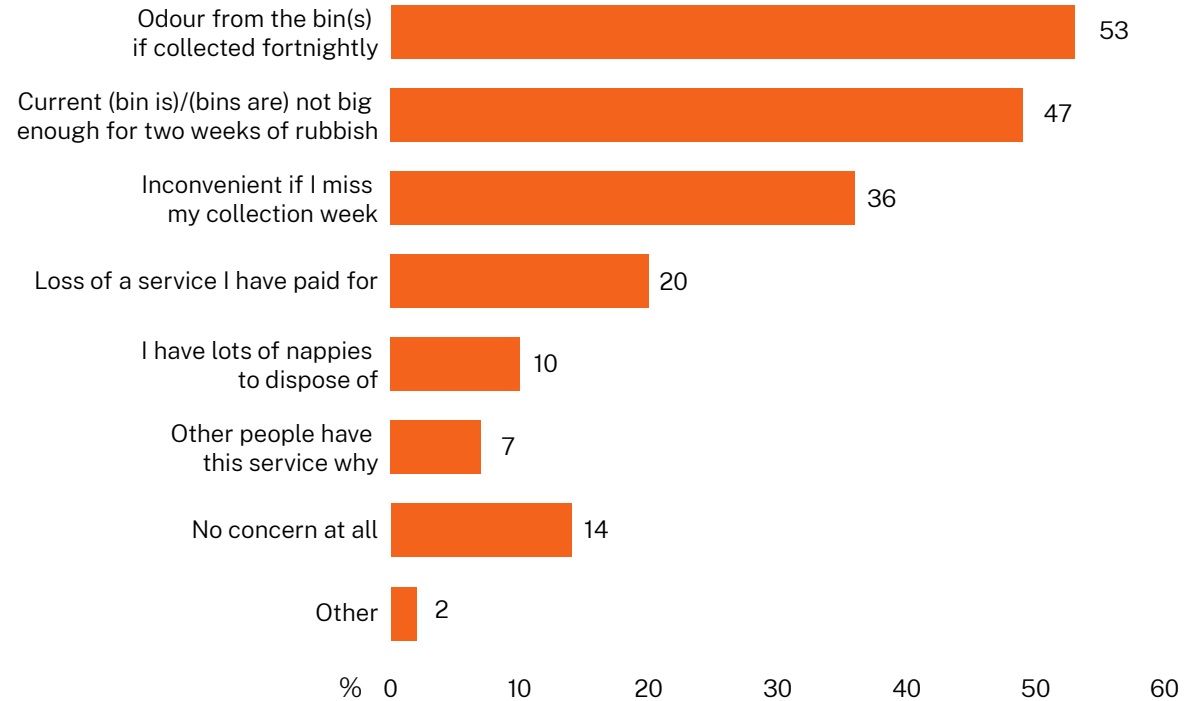
Peri-urban residents are much more accepting of the idea of a fortnightly red bin service than urban residents (87% vs 52%).

SUDs residents are less likely (46%) than MUDs residents (63%) to have an overflowing red bin and therefore less concerned about the change to red bin service.

Those with a garden organics service already (GOs) more likely than No-GOs to say they that they could make do with a fortnightly red-lid bin service.

Q12b What concerns, if any, would you have if your red-lid garbage bin service became a fortnightly service?

Concerns if red bin service switches to fortnightly



'Other' specified

Count

Pests, insects	7
Other peoples waste management behaviour	7
Hygiene/Health/Safety	3
Already is fortnightly	1
Complicated to remember	1
Not relevant to me	1

Preferred communication channels

People prefer physical rather than digital communication.

Top preferences for information

- Letterbox drops
- Bin stickers

(67% selected one/both)

Other preferences

- SMS
- Council rate notices
- Council email

Sample differences

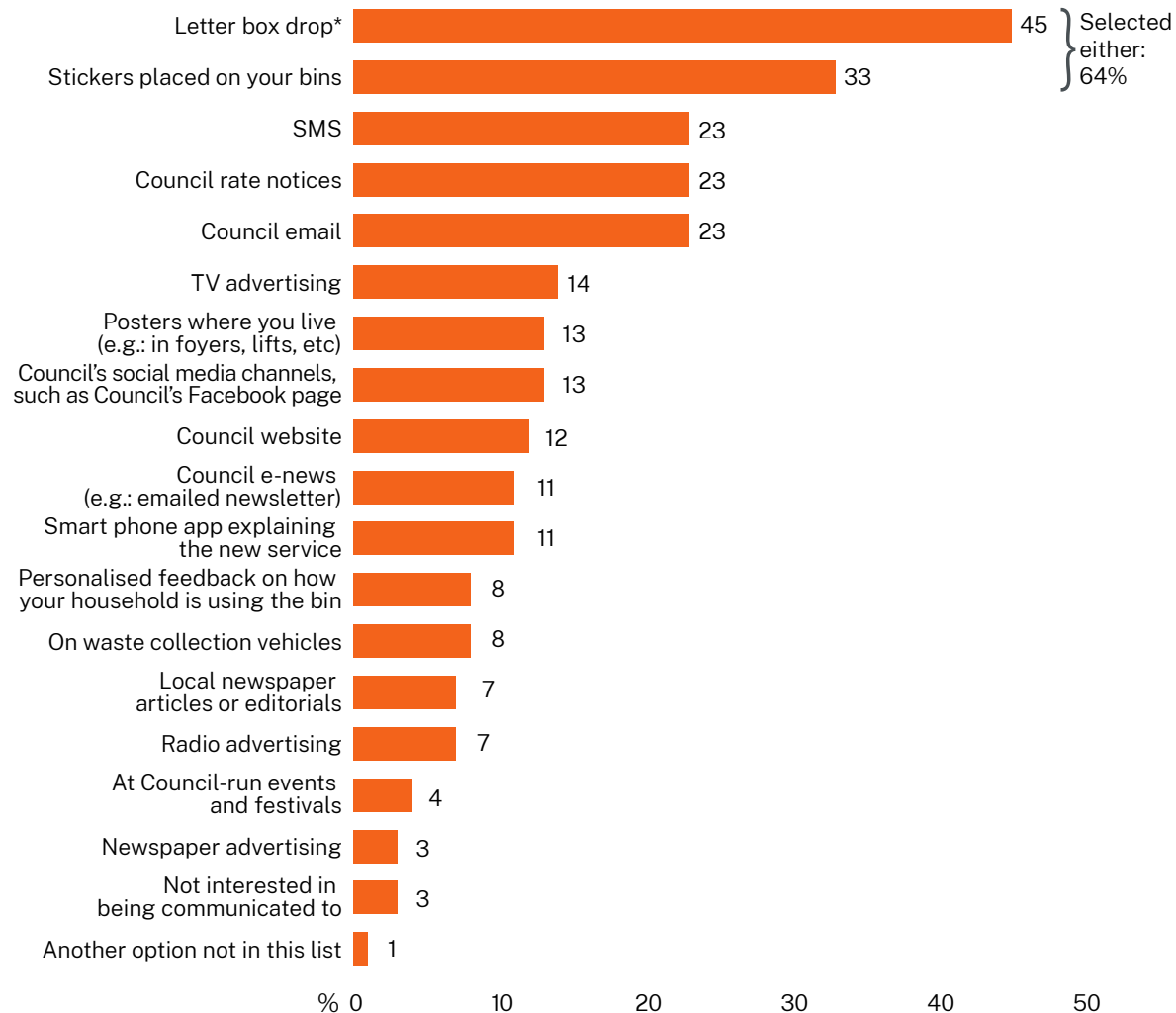
Younger respondents (18–34) more likely to prefer an SMS (31%) whilst 35-44 and older more likely to prefer a bin sticker. All respondents still prefer a letterbox drop overall (37%).

Older respondents (65+) much more likely to prefer a letterbox drop (67%).

Letterbox drop was most popular across all language groups and all household groups.

Q13 If your Council introduces a new weekly service for food and garden waste, which, if any, of the following are the best ways for them to let you know about it?

Preferred information channel



*(Could be a Newsletter, or just a note about waste and recycling issues)

Preferred communication channels

People want to be reminded to use the FOGO bin using permanent, physical items.

Top preferences for reminders

- Leaflet explaining what can and can't go in the FOGO bin
- Kitchen caddy
- Sticker on FOGO bin
- Fridge magnet

64% mentioned either/both a leaflet and a kitchen caddy

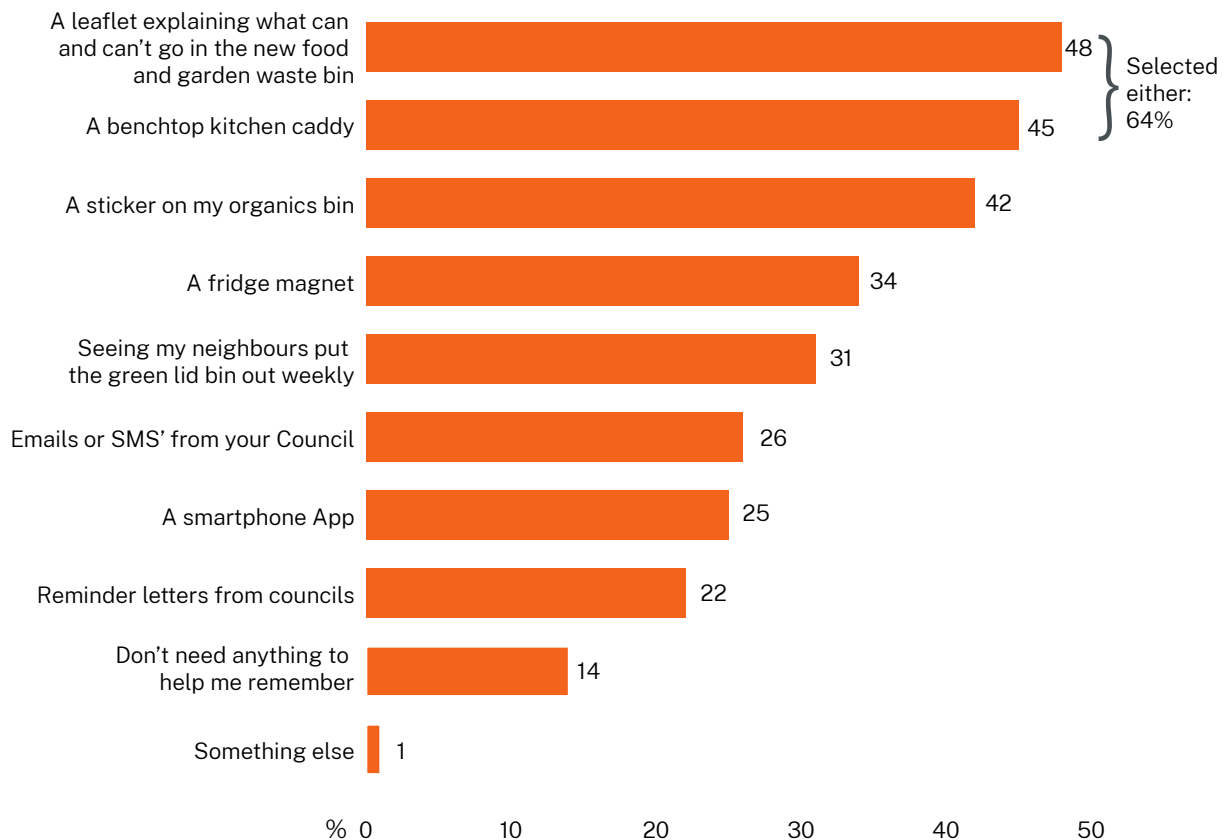
Key message: If only two reminders are used, make them a leaflet and a kitchen caddy.

Sample differences

Younger respondents more likely to mention SMS, emails or a smartphone app but still preferred physical items overall.

Q10 If your Council introduces a new service for food and garden waste, which, if any, of the following would help you remember to use your green lid service?

Preferred reminder method



Drivers and blockers

A previous survey completed in 2020² asked some similar questions to this survey but with those who already have a FOGO service.

Key findings from 2020 survey – those who already have a FOGO service.

Main drivers of correct FOGO behaviours

Awareness – those with a greater understanding of what can be disposed of, how to dispose and the impacts are more likely to utilise the FOGO system.

Environmental benefits – respondents seeing the benefits of the system as being the ability to recycle food and garden waste and less waste to landfill.

Convenience – makes correct disposing of food waste easier.

Main roadblocks to using service

Mess/smell – for reasons above.

Lack of awareness – 19% had low awareness about placing food in the green bin. Some commonly place items such as fish, bones, dairy and take-away in the red bin.

Attitude – those who tend to place more food in the red bin also were more likely to have limited knowledge of FOGO and to nominate multiple major concerns. They are also more likely to incorrectly dispose of other items in the waste service.

Differences between FOGO and non-FOGO users survey

Awareness of outcomes of FOGO service – considerably higher in the FOGO users' sample than the non-FOGO sample.

Issues/concerns with FOGO service – lower concerns amongst the FOGO users' sample

Responsibility for reducing waste – FOGO users gave a higher rating for personal responsibility for reducing waste.



2 NSW FOGO Deep Dive Education Project Community Survey Stage 1 available online here.

NSW Environment Protection Authority

For the full report and other information
contact the EPA Organics Unit at:

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Website: www.epa.nsw.gov.au/fogo

ISBN 978 1 922963 635

EPA 2024P4508 April 2024

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