

Unlocking the potential of FOGO-derived compost for councils

Food organics and garden organics (FOGO) compost is more than waste management – it’s a cost-effective and sustainable solution to managing organic waste, which delivers multiple environmental and operational benefits for councils and their communities.

With the 2030 FOGO collection mandate on the horizon, now is the time to understand how councils can lead the way in using FOGO-derived compost.



From reducing landfill reliance and cutting emissions to unlocking important infrastructure value, councils that understand and embrace FOGO can reap the benefits of improving the health and resilience of their public green spaces.

FOGO urban market opportunities

In 2025, the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) commissioned Marsden Jacob Associates (MJA) to understand the potential demand for FOGO-derived compost. The study shows that for councils across NSW significant opportunities to expand the use of FOGO-derived compost exist across a range of urban amenity applications, including sporting fields, parks and gardens.



Playing fields

Natural turf playing fields to best-practice standards improve playing surface resilience and water efficiency, and reduces heat islands and maintenance.



Garden beds and flower displays

Using FOGO-derived compost to extend or create new or temporary garden/flower beds in parks and gardens.



Subsidised compost to households

The potential to distribute subsidised bags of compost to households to support home gardening and create a more circular economy.



Residential developments

Using FOGO compost for green space development, such as green areas that adjoin property developments.

Why embracing FOGO compost makes sense



Save money

Some councils report saving ~\$20 per tonne using FOGO compost over traditional soil products.



Boost community value

Healthier, greener spaces improve wellbeing and support active lifestyles.



Meet sustainability goals

Support climate resilience and reduce reliance on synthetic fertilisers.



Show leadership

Champion circular economy principles and meet upcoming policy expectations.

Case study – natural turf playing fields

Natural turf playing fields – a major opportunity for FOGO compost use.

Upgrading sports fields with compost-rich soil can deliver a wealth of environmental, health, and cost benefits for councils and their communities.

In the Sydney region, there are approximately 27 million m² of natural turf playing fields.¹ Rebuilding just 10% per year to best-practice standards – using soil profiles that include 20% compost – could generate demand for around 110,000 tonnes of FOGO-derived compost annually.



A solution grounded in circular economy principles

Using FOGO-derived compost as part of a soil improvement strategy provides councils with a cost-effective, sustainable alternative to full synthetic conversions. It helps close the loop on organic waste while delivering long-term benefits to public infrastructure.

¹ NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer (2023). *Synthetic turf in public spaces: Final report*. NSW Government



Natural turf is often replaced due to poor performance, but when built and maintained to best-practice standards, natural turf can match or outperform synthetic turf, staying cooler, supporting environmental health and reducing injury risk.

This approach offers councils a practical way to:

1. **Reduce infrastructure costs** by improving the durability of natural turf.
2. **Avoid environmental and health risks** associated with synthetic turf, including microplastics and heat.
3. **Enhance community green spaces** through improved soil structure and drainage.

EPA NSW – Opportunities to overcome barriers and support FOGO uptake

From our study, we identified a range of opportunities to support uptake of FOGO-derived compost for consideration by NSW EPA and councils.



Regulatory and industry action

Foster standardised specifications and implement rigorous contamination testing



Education and promotion

Expand education on contamination reduction and benefits of compost use



Procurement and supply chain

Integrate FOGO-derived compost into council and government agency processes

While the uptake by councils can support circular economy outcomes by bringing FOGO-derived compost back into council areas as an input into urban amenity outcomes, the study also concluded that the development of other markets such as agricultural markets will also be important.

This factsheet was created using information from a Marsden Jacob report for EPA NSW, which investigated the enhanced adoption of FOGO-derived compost to support environmental sustainability and circular economy goals.

For more information on this project, contact Marsden Jacob Associates:



info@marsdenjacob.com.au



+61 3 8808 7400