

Annual Report

2023-24



ADVOCATE.
COMMUNICATE.
COLLABORATE.
EDUCATE.
INNOVATE.

Our Vision

Recycling and reuse of organic materials within a circular economy is widely understood and supported by Australians.



Our Mission

AORA works with all stakeholders to facilitate an operating environment which maximises the recycling and reuse of organic materials, and promotes the benefits of compost, soil conditioners and mulches across the Australian community and business.

Chair's Report

Charlie Emery

AORA, led by our National Executive Officer, John McKew, has continued to make great progress representing the organics recycling industry and the products we manufacture.

I would like to thank John and the AORA team for their ongoing work across the year. AORA continues to raise the industry profile for organics recycling and is becoming a significant part of many conversations at all levels of Government regarding soil health, carbon and the circular economy.

Our National Coordinator, Alex Hammett continues to ensure that AORA is running smoothly across the country with the support of our State Coordinators Lisa Lepore & Tehani Suafoa. The new website and CRM, now complete, provides opportunity for further improvements to our technical library and digital resources in 2025.

As Chair of the NSW Committee for several years before this current role, I'd like to personally thank Lisa Lepore for her contribution to AORA as State Coordinator. Lisa has been instrumental in gathering a collective of ideas from our committee meetings, utilising the experience of our members, and ensure policy submissions were substantial.

Lisa's work with members, TAFE and EPA to establish a "digital" training program now requires industry and government support to establish, something I hope AORA can finalise in 2025.

I also extend our thanks to Lisa Dower, from Dower House Bookkeeping Services and Veronica Dullens and her team at Revolve Services, their input is invaluable, and we continue to enjoy working with them.

As always, the Board has supported the NEO and team with many hours of conversation and document review to ensure the association achieves our objectives and meets membership expectations. The State committees continue to provide enormous support to the Board and ensure AORA continues to work with our industry stakeholders at local and state government levels across the country.



Another great year for AORA as we continue to go from strength to strength. It is important that we acknowledge the contributions of all our volunteers, who are the backbone of a small association.

Without the contribution of our members, sponsors and conference partners, such a successful year would not be possible.

Chair's Report cont..

Across the year, I have identified some key highlights of our work that I strongly believe have contributed to the progress our association and the industry has made.

Grant Awards & Compost Market Development

AORA received a \$108k grant from the Queensland Department of Environment, Science and Innovation. This funding supported seven innovative Farmer Demand for Compost Workshops aimed at improving compost knowledge and understanding across various agricultural sectors in Queensland. They were also our government partner for the 2024 Annual Conference and contributed \$20k in financial support for the event. The NSW EPA also provided AORA with financial support for a series of industry events in Sydney and regional NSW.

Advocacy and Standards

AORA has been instrumental in advocating for composting standards and practices. AORA and our members continue to work with the multidisciplinary team that is completing a review of the Australian Standard 4454 on behalf of the Federal Government (DCCEEW) to include compost manufacturing, which will help in better tracking and supporting the industry.

AORA continues to advocate for high quality material specifications and regulatory harmonisation that is supported. Revised policy and media releases during 2023-24 were developed in consultation between with State committees, industry stakeholders and the Board.

Educational Initiatives

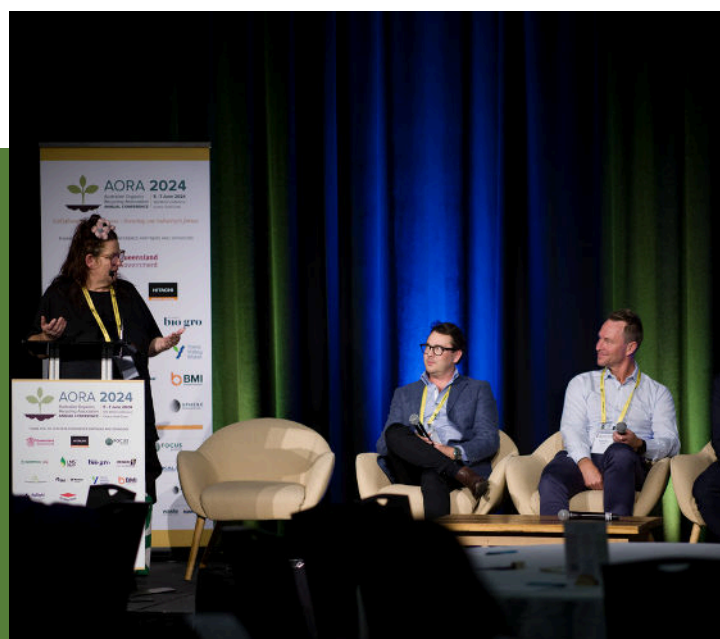
Through the NSW Committee and Tafe NSW, AORA have developed a training outline that aims to provide resources for professional development, continuing education, and certification in composting practices.

Annual Conference

Held in June 2024 at the Sea World Conference Centre on the Gold Coast continued to grow on previous success with increased attendance and importantly, content value each year. Themed 'Collaboration for Success - Securing our industry's future' the event explored critical themes shaping the organic recycling industry. Apart from the great content, for me it remains the highlight of the year as we continue to celebrate our success, contribution to the economy and environment whilst providing opportunities to discuss industry challenges.

Thanks to expert Master of Ceremonies Cate McQuillen who moderated our conference again in 2024. Cate brings her distinctive sense of humour and participative style, keeping us all engaged.

Sally Brown - Research Professor, University of Washington - also brought an important international perspective to our challenges and opportunities as well as sharing her broad knowledge and expertise.



National Executive Officer

Report - John McKew

2023/24 has been another year that has slipped by all too quickly, presenting plenty of issues, challenges, tasks, tests and occasionally (thankfully) wins.

As I look back on the year, I believe as an industry and an Association, we are making progress. One way I see that progress occurring is through our messaging and communications and in that, I am a great believer in the communication rule of threes and fours which broadly states, tell someone something once and they hear it, tell them twice and they recognise it, tell them three times and they will listen to it and tell them four times and they will believe it.

When it comes to the ubiquitous issue of contamination within organic feedstock streams, we have not been silent or backward in our messaging and I suspect that will need to be the case for some time (e.g., years) to come but I also believe we are starting to see increased traction, understanding and empathy of the issue emerging, especially amongst governments and regulators.

We have maintained a steady stream of new members in 2023/24, and we have managed to build our sponsorship base and that has been very pleasing, but the job is far from over. Our State Coordinators, together with myself and Alex, will have an objective to continue to improve member numbers and grow our sponsorship base.

Members and sponsors are the very foundation of every Association and that is equally true for AORA and the conversation on delivering value to both of these stakeholder groups is a feature of Board discussions and beyond, often.

The 2024 Annual Conference on the Gold Coast was an outstanding success on almost every measure and that is largely the result of the investment of time and effort by Veronica and Emma and the excellent guidance of the Annual Conference Committee, chaired diligently by Kurt Palmer.

I also thank Lisa Dower for all of her efforts in managing our finances.

In concluding my AORA NEO Annual Report for 2024, I would like to acknowledge and thank the AORA Board for their support and counsel. I am also extremely thankful and grateful for the outstanding support and dedication of Alex Hammett, our National Coordinator. Alex's commitment to AORA and the Australian organics recycling industry is flawless, and her work ethic is impeccable. I thank our State Coordinators and State Committees for their local expertise and input.



Key Achievements

1. **A new AORA Strategic Plan** was finalised and approved by the Board for the 2024-2027 period. Three key objectives form the crux of this plan and are outlined later in this annual report.

2. Delivery of a **second consecutive moderate operational surplus**, outlined in more detail in the Financial Report.

3. **Participation in two annual trade shows** – Australian Waste and Recycling Expo (AWRE) in Sydney in July 2023, where AORA again hosted the AORA Organics Zone, and Waste Expo in Melbourne in October 2023.

AORA held a booth at both events and I provided presentation: Unleashing the Circular Economy: Industrialising Nature's Recycling Power in Organics, at AWRE and a presentation titled 'Composting - the contamination dilemma' at Waste Expo as well as participating in a panel discussion.

4. **Implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM)** system and associated/integrated website (special thanks to Alex for championing and managing this).

5. A successful **AORA Annual Conference** on the Gold Coast, Queensland in June 2024 delivering our best ever results in terms of trade displays, machines exhibited at the Demonstration Day and on par attendance numbers delivering our best financial result for an annual conference.

6. Signed a **Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) with the Australia New Zealand Biochar Industry Group (ANZBIG)** to leverage the strengths and resources of both organisations to enhance the visibility, outreach, and impact within the environmental and agricultural sectors.

7. Maintained a **close working relationship under our MoU with ACOR**.

Key Achievements cont..

8. **Regular meetings with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)** and continued positive dialogues and relations with the various state regulators and agencies.

9. Ongoing participation in the **DCCEEW Resource Recovery Reference Group (RRRG)**, which is responsible for the National Waste Policy Action Plan (NWPAP).

10. New **VIC/TAS State Coordinator** appointed (Tehani Suafoa) in February 2024.

11. The **second Industry Capacity report** was completed, with a broad communications program, inclusive of six webinars (1 x national + 5 x state).

12. Distribution of a number of **AORA media releases** across the year.

13. **New State Committees** were elected in NSW, QLD and VIC, all of which are supporting a focus on delivering value for our local membership through events, information sharing and relationship management with respective state government agencies.

14. Maintenance of an excellent **social media presence** with over 4000 followers on LinkedIn and more than 120 000 impressions in 2023-224.

15. Established an AORA Position Statement on **Asbestos in Mulch**.

16. **PFAS in Compost** Position Statement revised and updated.

17. **'The 6 C's for Healthy Soils'** fact sheet developed and distributed.



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Strategic Plan Objectives

Strategic Objective One

AORA is the national voice of the organics recycling industry and is recognised in this capacity by governments and all industry stakeholders across the supply chain.

Targets

1.1: AORA is the recognised national peak industry body for the organics recycling industry.

1.2: AORA produces reports, original research and policy positions to ensure that the needs of the industry can be clearly presented and articulated to government and other stakeholders.

1.3: AORA successfully collaborates with governments to design and implement policy, regulation and legislation which optimises market conditions for the industry.

1.4: AORA is sought out by the media as the authority on organics recycling and related issues.

Strategic Objective Two

AORA defines and champions a future where recycling of organic materials is maximised and optimised.

Targets

2.1: AORA leads by defining the future of the industry and its supply chain, including setting targets for our industry and the community.

2.2: AORA identifies, communicates and celebrates best practice strategies, technologies and products.

2.3: AORA collaborates with likeminded organisations nationally and globally to maximise the benefits accruing to our members.

2.4: AORA develops and champions standards, certification and accreditation programs to reinforce the credibility and value of the industry and its products.

2.5: AORA proactively leads the discussion, debate and formulation of strategies to address key industry issues of concern (e.g., contamination, PFAS, plastics, etc.).

Strategic Objective Three

AORA is a modern, successful and sustainable business.

Targets

3.1: AORA consistently reviews and revises its corporate and financial governance to ensure transparency and best practice.

3.2: AORA consistently improves its financial base through strong relationship management of members and corporate sponsors, and extensive relationships with government partners supportive of AORA's products and services.

3.3: AORA applies for and successfully receives government grant funding annually in order to deliver key services to the industry.





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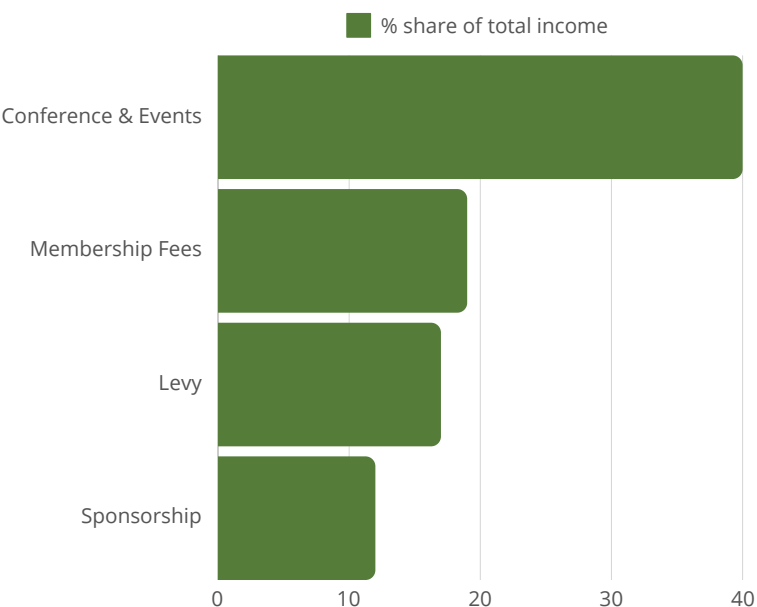
AORA Finance Report 2023-24

Members are welcome to request a full (audited) AORA Financial report for the year ended 30 June 2024

The 2023/24 financial year delivered a surplus for the Association of \$41,187.
This was a second, consecutive surplus after the 2022/23 \$36,890 result.

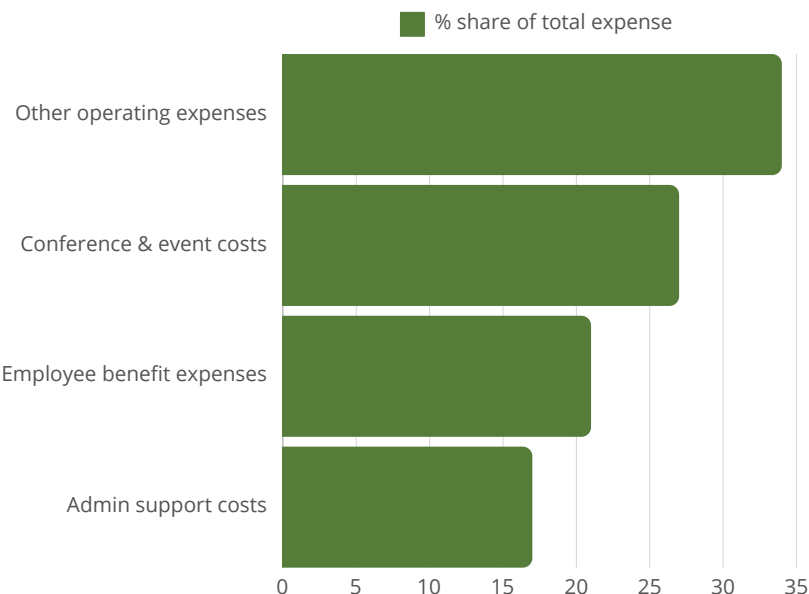
Revenue and other Income: \$934,681

Income improved in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23 by \$94,295 due to increases in all major income streams including membership fees, sponsorship, conferences and events, and levy.



Expenses: \$893,494

Expenses increased by \$89,998 in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23. Increased Employee benefits and Other operating expenses were offset in part by decreases in Admin support costs and Conference and event expenses.



AORA Finance Report cont..

The financial surplus of \$41,187 for the 2023/24 year is another important financial result for the Association in that it indicates that the work progressively being undertaken to improve income and manage expenses is delivering desired outcomes.

A continued focus on growing membership and sponsorship for the Association is a perpetual work-in-progress. It is pleasing that in this last financial year we have also progressed to full levy payments from all processors across all states.

As I have stated before, there is no substitute for a loyal, robust, and growing membership and sponsorship base for any Association, including AORA. The two are not mutually exclusive (i.e., membership and sponsorship) - we understand that a growing membership base is attractive to all sponsors and a suite of strong industry sponsors is appealing to all members. Bringing the two together is the key to fulfilling this mutuality and the AORA Annual Conference, which gets bigger every year, remains our key event to achieve this.

As always, we continue to seek new ways to deliver value to our members and sponsors.

Expenses have to be carefully monitored and controlled, especially in the current environment of heightened CPI.

The Board Finance Committee in association with myself, our bookkeeper (Lisa Dower) and our National Coordinator (Alex Hammett) meet monthly to review the latest monthly financial reports and results; this scrutiny/oversight is important to ensure the financial probity of the Association and to seek input and information into actions which may improve our financial sustainability.

We have invested in a new integrated website and member database (i.e., CRM) this last financial year and implementation, whilst mostly complete, continues. Our National Coordinator, Alex Hammett, has been instrumental in driving this, for which we are collectively grateful.

We appointed a new VIC/TAS State Coordinator in February 2024 (Tehani Suafoa), who is working closely with our VIC State Committee and we are starting to see some significant and important industry outcomes as a result, including events and submissions to state government consultations.

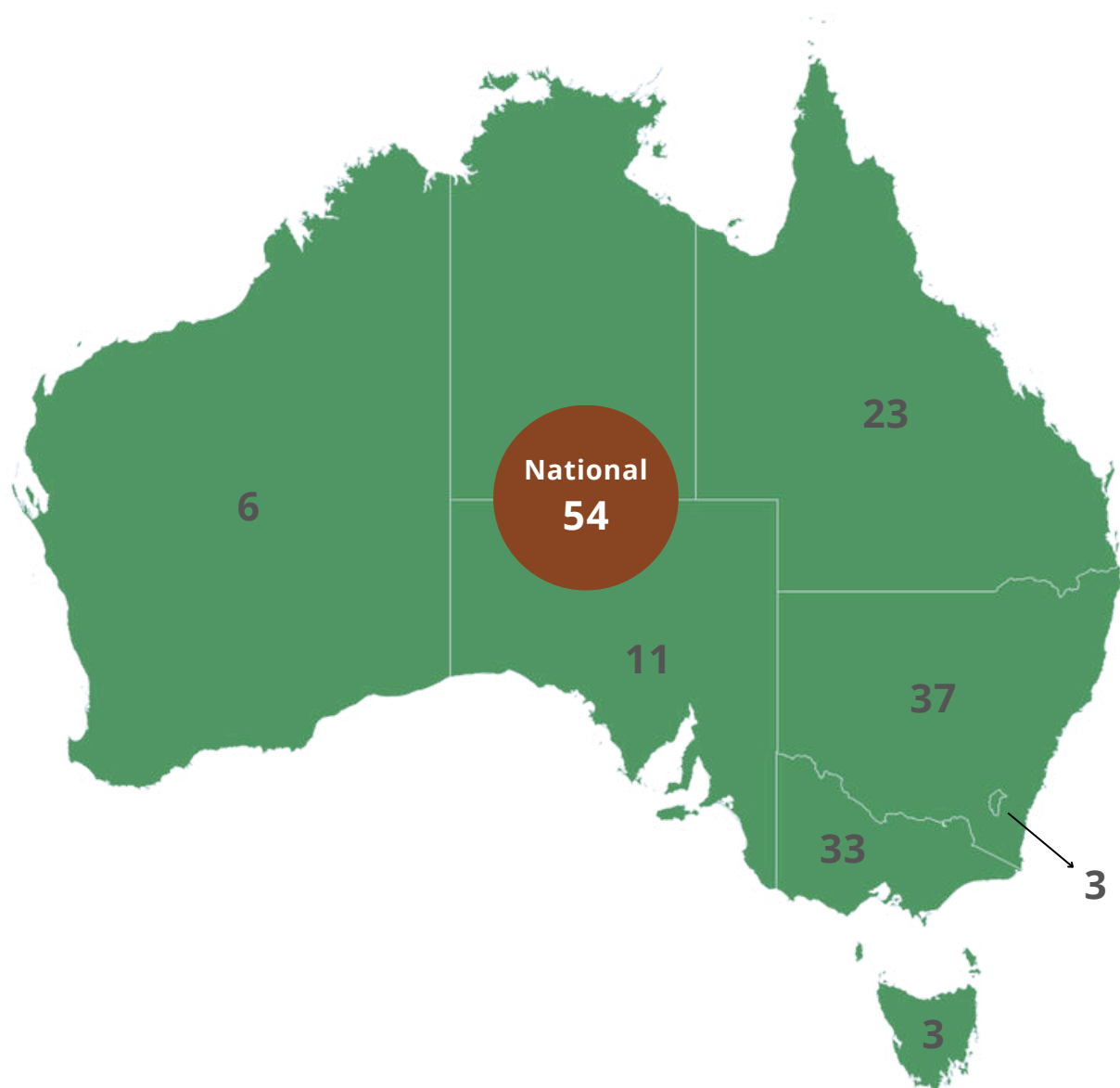
Thank you to all of our members, sponsors, and other stakeholders for your continued support of the Association and for your part in helping to deliver this financial result.



2023 - 24 Member Information

AORA Members as at June 30 2024

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| National Associate Members | 49 |
| National Processing Members | 5 |
| Local Government/Government Members | 14 |
| Processing Members | 43 |
| Associate Members | 45 |
| Individual Members | 11 |
| Student Members | 2 |
| Life Members | 1 |
| Total Members | 170 |



2023 - 24 Partners

AORA sincerely thanks our partners - they are an invaluable part of AORA

Platinum Plus Partners



Gold Partners



Silver Partners



Bronze Partner



Founding Members



Research Partners



Media Partners



Our People

AORA Directors

| Directors 2023-24 | State | Attendance at Meetings |
|--|----------|------------------------|
| Catherine Philips | VIC | 7 of 12 |
| Charles Emery | NSW | 9 of 12 |
| Gregory Whitehead | QLD | 8 of 12 |
| Jan Duebbelde | QLD | 8 of 12 |
| Kali Martin <small>Appointed on 17 November 2023</small> | QLD | 6 of 7 |
| Lachlan Jeffries <small>Appointed on 17 November 2023</small> | SA | 5 of 7 |
| Morne Hattingh <small>Term finished on 17 November 2023</small> | NSW - WA | 2 of 5 |
| Patrick Soars | NSW | 6 of 12 |
| Peter Wadewitz <small>Retired 17 June 2024</small> | SA | 7 of 12 |
| Steven Marshall <small>Term finished on 17 November 2023</small> | VIC | 2 of 5 |
| Timothy Richards | WA | 9 of 12 |
| Company Secretary - Michael Wood | Vic | 12 of 12 |

Finance Committee

Charlie Emery
Catherine Phillips
Greg Whitehead
Lisa Dower
John McKew
Alex Hammett

Membership & Sponsorship Committee

Lachlan Jeffries
Greg Whitehead
Jan Duebbelde
John McKew
Alex Hammett

Technical & Policy Committee

Michael Wood
Tim Richards
Lisa Lepore
John McKew
Alex Hammett

National Executive Officer
National Coordinator
NSW/ACT Coordinator
Vic/Tas Coordinator

John McKew
Alex Hammett
Lisa Lepore
Doug Wilson (retired Aug 2023)
Tehani Suafoa (started Feb 2024)



Our People cont..

State Committees

NSW Committee

Virginia Brunton (Chair)
Karen Muir (Deputy Chair)
Angus Johnston
Shaun Rainford
Michael Bonnano
Hugh Perrotet
Charlie Emery

QLD Committee

Greg Whitehead (Chair)
Kali Martin
Glenn Dale
Peter Thompson
Tara Wilcox
Ben Arthur

VIC Committee

Simon Humphris (Chair)
Michael Wood
Sage Hahn
Fergal Rabette
Ashley Johnston
Kurt Palmer

WA Committee

Greg Watts (Chair)
Tim Richards
Morne Hattingh
Colin Rossbridge
Brendan Doherty
Donovan Farrell



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CONFIDENCE**
**ABA certified compostable
products conform to
AS 4736-2006
and
AS 5810-2010**



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- ✓ Product verification confirms compliance with AS 4736 or AS 5810
- ✓ Compliance verified via independent audit
- ✓ Easy to recognise logos with searchable 'ABAX' number



AS 4736-2006

suitable for composting and other microbial treatment:

- ✓ Easily identify certified compostable products with the 'seedling' logo
- ✓ Compost with confidence knowing certified compostables are suitable for commercial composting systems



AS 5810-2010

suitable for home composting:

- ✓ Easily identify certified compostable products with the 'compost bin' logo
- ✓ Support and encourage well managed home composting with easy to spot logos

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The JCB 427 Wheel Loader is engineered to excel in demanding waste management environments. With its robust construction, powerful engine, and exceptional manoeuvrability, it's the ideal choice for a wide range of waste handling tasks. Key Features for Waste Management:

- **Unmatched Power:** The JCB 427 boasts a powerful engine that delivers exceptional torque and performance, ensuring efficient handling of heavy loads.
- **Superior Load Capacity:** Its large bucket capacity allows you to move more material in less time, increasing productivity and reducing operating costs.
- **Excellent Manoeuvrability:** The JCB 427's compact design and tight turning radius make it easy to navigate tight spaces and work in confined areas.
- **Durability and Reliability:** Built to last, the JCB 427 features a robust construction that can withstand the toughest conditions, minimizing downtime and maximising uptime.
- **Operator Comfort:** The spacious and ergonomic cab provides a comfortable working environment, reducing operator fatigue and increasing productivity.

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Conference Summary

The three-day Conference, themed 'Collaboration for Success - Securing our industry's future', brought together 304 attendees from Australia's organics recycling industry (business, government and academia) to discuss the importance of working together to secure the future of our industry.

Strong foundations for collaboration were established between all parties, focusing on navigating regulatory landscapes, identifying priority issues, and exploring investment avenues for the industry's sustainable growth.

Feedback from attendees and sponsors indicated high satisfaction with the event's content and networking opportunities.

A highlight for many was the annual machinery demo day, sponsored by FOCUS Enviro with an amazing 22 machines on display, most of those operating and 160 attendees.

The conference program featured 32 presenters across seven sessions. The sessions were presented in a single-stream format, with each session wrapping up with panel discussions.

The accompanying exhibition featured 35 companies across an array of the industry and provided an opportunity for attendees to discover more during the event.

Conference Partners



Conference Summary cont..

During the event, the 2024 AORA & Komptech CEA Young Professionals Scholarship was presented to Violet Edwards from Verterra Ecological Engineering.



At the Conference Dinner, sponsored by Hitachi, the AORA Legends Award was presented. This Award recognises an individual who has made an integral contribution to the development of the Australian recycled organics industry, and the 2024 recipient was Greg Whitehead.



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