



# “Better Compost with Smart Bans”

## Position Paper

### Key Considerations

The Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA) is calling for an immediate phase-out of items that frequently contaminate Garden Organics (GO) and Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) feedstocks. Contamination is a significant challenge for organic recycling processors, directly impacting the quality and marketability of compost products made from GO and FOGO. Without prompt action to ban select items from everyday use, these contaminants will continue to compromise compost quality, drive up production costs, and reduce the environmental benefits of compost applications. Beyond bans, improved disposal management of other common contaminants is essential to support effective organic recycling and its positive environmental impact.

### “Better Compost with Smart Bans” items

- Plastic fruit and vegetable food labels
- Plastic bread seals
- Styrofoam food packaging

### Items for Better Disposal Management

- Disposable wipes
- Batteries of all description
- Vapes of all descriptions
- All plastic packaging

### Who We Are

The Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA) is the peak industry body and national voice for businesses across the organics recycling supply chain. AORA envisions a future where recycling and reuse of organic materials within a circular economy is widely understood and supported by all Australians. AORA works 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.

## Guiding Principles

1. The recycled organics industry has been producing high-quality and high-performing compost products that are safe for application to land and safe to human health for decades and is committed to continuing to do so.
2. The supply of quality feedstock to the processor gate is the key component of the organics recycling supply chain. Source separated feedstock without plastics, chemicals, and other contaminants (from all organic feedstock sources including household, commercial, agricultural, forestry, water treatment, etc.) is central to the growth of organics recycling rates and production of high-quality outputs such as compost.
3. AORA expects most organics processors to be able to process source separated kerbside FOGO and commercial food wastes with up to 2% physical contamination (by weight), and as such AORA supports a national target of less than 2% contamination. Hazardous materials cannot be accepted as physical contamination under any circumstances. Whilst it is possible to process organics with greater than 2% contamination to a Compost Order and Australian Standard, this will come at a higher cost associated with the additional infrastructure required and the disposal of contamination. As the industry matures and government support improves, AORA expects the 2% target for contamination to be lowered over time as consistent communication and education efforts instil improved community understanding and behavioral changes.
4. Wherever possible, all participants in the Australian resource recovery supply chain, in particular, State and Local governments, should deliver a common message on materials to be recovered by organics processing facilities. This should be supported by appropriate education material that is consistent, clear, and recurring.
5. Items to be banned are too often appearing within organic feedstock streams, especially GO and FOGO and these items either no longer serve a clear need or, there are better alternatives available to substitute their use.
6. Items listed for Better Disposal Management are equally problematic within organic feedstock streams but are recognised as being more difficult to ban. However, these items need improved management at their end-of-use and clear, ‘proper’ disposal options communicated and available. Australia's leading peak waste and recycling industry organisations recently joined together to call for urgent action on the growing hazard posed by batteries (inclusive of vapes) and electronics in conventional waste and recycling streams.

For more information, please visit the AORA website ([www.aora.org.au](http://www.aora.org.au)) or contact John McKew, National Executive Officer, Australian Organics Recycling Association via email ([john@aora.org.au](mailto:john@aora.org.au)) or mobile: 0434 711 011.