



MEDIA RELEASE

Organics Recycling – Combating Climate Change

Most households and individuals struggle to understand how they can meaningfully contribute to easing the impacts of climate change in their everyday lives. The majority of us need our cars and the need for electricity in our homes cannot easily be substituted.

But there is a simple and very effective way to combat climate change that we can all do right now and many of us do already; recycling your organics in your green bin. For many households that might be garden organics (GO), but for an increasing number of households it includes food organics (FO), depending on the recycling services offered by your local council.

When organics material is disposed in the red bin it ends up in landfill where the decomposition of this material produces methane gas which is 28 times more potent a greenhouse gas (GHG) than carbon dioxide. But, when we recover this material via the green bin and send it to an organics processing facility to make compost, mulches and soil conditioners, we avoid generating nearly all that methane gas.

The total GHG savings from organics recycling of materials received in Australia in 2021-22 is approximately 3.9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂-e) at a national recovery rate of 52.3% of organic material.

These GHG savings are considered approximately equivalent to:

- 5.8 million trees that would have to be planted to absorb the same amount of CO₂.
- The greenhouse gas emissions that 902,311 cars would produce in a year.

For most households and individuals, they can make a real and positive contribution to reducing the impacts of climate change simply by recycling their organics. The catch is separation of organics must be done right and that means not contaminating your green bin with rubbish. The most common form of contamination is plastics (of any form), but it is surprising what we find in green bins when the material eventually arrives at an organic recycling facility. Bagged household waste, glass, metal, leather and rubber, cardboard boxes, and food still in its packaging are common contaminants and must be removed, often by hand, before the organics can be recycled.

The proper recycling of organics also contributes to combating climate change because the end products of organics recycling, the compost, mulches and soil conditioners, can then be applied to land to improve growth of gardens, crops, vegetables, fruit, vines, trees and shrubs. These end products reduce the need for inorganic fertilisers and irrigation, build soil carbon, and improve plant survival, further reducing GHG emissions.



Not only does organics recycling reduce harmful emissions from landfill, but it also reduces GHG emissions when growing plants, a win-win for the environment and for all of us. If we can lift our organics recovery rate from the current level of 52.3%, we have a lot more positive impact to make.

The Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA) encourages everyone to recycle their organics thoughtfully and to celebrate the positive impact of this on our environment.

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