

2024-25

Annual Report



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

Throughout 2025, AORA has continued advancing its mission to be the national voice of Australia's organics recycling industry, championing the growth of organics recovery and supporting the transition to a true circular economy.

This year marks strong progress in advocacy, industry stewardship, operational improvement, and collaboration.

Strategic Leadership and Industry Profile

AORA continued implementation of our 2024-27 Strategic Plan, centred on three objectives: asserting AORA's standing as the peak national body, defining and leading the future of organics recycling, and optimising industry performance across sustainability, regulation, and stakeholder engagement.

Our advocacy efforts have ensured organics recycling features prominently in government and industry forums, with AORA increasingly recognised by state and federal policymakers as the principal authority on sector wide priorities.

Industry Performance and Capacity Growth

In 2024-25, Australia's organics recycling industry processed an estimated 7.68 million tonnes of organic material, maintaining an overall recycling rate of 52.3%, equivalent to almost 296 kilograms recycled per person.

Garden organics remain the largest material stream, followed by biosolids, timber, and food organics. While population growth offers an opportunity for increased diversion, the rollout of Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) services by Councils continues to expand sector reach.

Notably, AORA's Economic Contribution report highlighted both the sector's GDP impact and the need for harmonised policies and improved waste classifications nationally.

In response, AORA continues to collaborate on a national dialogue about consistent regulatory frameworks and best practice standards to unlock further circular economy growth and improve soil health.

Sector Advocacy and Collaboration

Over the past year, AORA deepened its partnerships with other peak bodies, including the Australia New Zealand Biochar Industry Group (ANZBIG) and the Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR). These relationships have enhanced collective lobbying for harmonised regulations and facilitated joint events promoting compost, biochar, and soil health initiatives.

AORA's presence at cornerstone events, including our Annual National Conference and industry expos in Sydney and Melbourne, supported knowledge sharing, stakeholder networking, ongoing advocacy for our sector.



Chair's Report cont..

Operational and Financial Highlights

AORA delivered a moderate operational surplus according to the 2024-25 financial report. The successful Annual Conference in Newcastle delivered record financial results and engagement. Further, the Association has modernised its CRM and continues to improve our integrated website to streamline member and industry engagement.

Addition of a National Policy Officer Role

In recognition of urgent national challenges, including harmonising regulations and waste classifications to addressing contamination and FOGO rollout, AORA has created a dedicated National Policy / Advocacy Officer position to be rolled out in 2025-26.

This high impact strategic role collaborates closely with AORA's State Committees to identify key issues and develops clear policies to guide industry and government action at both state and national levels.

The Policy Officer will be responsible for ensuring AORA's collective voice is effectively heard in settings where critical policy decisions are made.

This additional resource will enhance AORA's capacity to proactively engage with government and rapidly respond to a dynamic policy environment, ensuring the industry's priorities, including national harmonisation, best practice standards, contamination management, and FOGO expansion are consistently and expertly advocated.

Board Recognition and Closing Thanks

I wish to thank all Directors, our executive John McKew and Alex Hammett, members, committee members, and volunteers for their dedication and professionalism.

AORA's accomplishments reflect our industry's expertise and commitment to advancing organics recycling for economic, environmental, and social benefit across Australia.

Together, AORA remains steadfast in delivering practical solutions for a thriving circular economy. As I reach the end of my term on the Board of Directors, I look forward to continuing to contribute to the industry in other capacities and thank everyone for their time and support during my time on the Board and as Chair.



KOMPTECH

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Engineered for sharper performance and smoother material flow, it delivers quick screen changes, all-electric power, and maintenance-free efficiency — keeping you running cleaner, faster, and longer.

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GROUP

National Executive Officer Report - John McKew

For many Associations, including AORA, articulating the value proposition to existing members and communicating this effectively to attract new members is a constant challenge.

Personally, I believe that one of the most important services an Association like AORA provides and one that is vitally important in our industry, considering the constant policy and regulatory flux, is advocacy.

Formally and informally, we are advocating constantly on behalf of the Australian organics recycling industry. This includes our communication efforts in industry publications (i.e., inside waste and Waste Management Review), our social media presence (i.e., LinkedIn), the AORA Annual Conference, participation in industry conferences (i.e., ReGen in Sydney and Waste Expo in Melbourne), media releases, policy papers and position statements, fact sheets, our website, the production of our reports, The Economic Contribution of the Australian Organics Recycling Industry and the Australian Organics Recycling Industry Capacity Assessment.

It also includes the relationships and conversations we have with other industry bodies including ACOR, APCO, WMRR, WSAA, WRIQ, VWMA, WCRA and the regular dialogue we have with various federal and state department personnel.

Governments prefer to work with industry Associations like AORA; we provide a single point of focus for industry issues, concerns and challenges. Governments cannot consult with everyone in an industry and so they rely on industry Associations to provide the input they need to develop policy and regulation.

It then becomes incumbent on the industry Association to provide a representative view of the industry and its issues, concerns and challenges back to government – advocacy at its most important!

Having a broad, strong Association membership base then is vital to the legitimacy of that representative view of the industry.

As I look back on the 2024/25 year, I believe as an industry and an Association we are making good progress. We have welcomed a number of new members in 2024/25 and we have managed to build our sponsorship base.

Our 2025 AORA National Conference in Newcastle was a great success and continued with the momentum that began to build in 2023 and 2024. The AORA National Conference is now, without doubt, the preeminent organics recycling event in the country.



NEO Report cont..

In 2025/26, the priorities for AORA will be to continue to prosecute the needs of our industry in a concise and vigorous manner to government at all levels – advocacy.

As the momentum behind the rollout of FOGO builds, the scrutiny on circular economy progress, the continuing dialogue around contamination and acceptable levels of various chemicals (e.g., PFAS) within the community, soil health and productivity, climate change, consumer and public expectations, etc. there has never been a stronger need or time for an effective industry Association like AORA to represent the Australian organics recycling industry.

In concluding my report for 2024/25, I would like to thank the AORA Board for their guidance and stewardship.

To Alex Hammett, our National Coordinator, my sincere gratitude for your commitment and dedication to the Association and your continued support. To our previous State Coordinators who moved on in 2024/25, Uma Preston and Tehani Suafoa, thank you and to our State Committee, thank you for your commitment of time and efforts to the Association.

As many of you are now hopefully aware, we have embarked on a restructure of activity from 2025/26 and we will be welcoming a new National Policy and Advocacy Officer to the small but dedicated AORA team.

To all of our members, sponsors and supporters, our heart-felt appreciation for your continued support of the Association – thank you.



Membrane CASP



Trommel Screen



Shredder



Decontamination & Screening Plants



Star Screen



BACKHUS Windrow Turner



Key Achievements

1. Updated AORA **FOGO Position Paper** which, for the first time, states that we as an industry and as an Association support a national target of less than 2% contamination within the FOGO feedstock stream.
2. An updated AORA/ABA Joint Position Paper on **Certified Compostable Packaging**.
3. Development of a new AORA Position Paper '**Bans for a Better Compost**' seeking action on a range of other problematic contaminants that should be banned/removed/limited.
4. Participated in a joint peak industry body initiative (coordinated by ACOR) titled '**Waste and Recycling industries unite for urgent action on battery fire crisis**'.
5. Redevelopment of the AORA suite of **Fact Sheets** (eight in total) available on the AORA website
6. Implementation of a **new membership database and integrated website**.
7. AORA participated (with thanks to Michael Wood) at a gathering of the **International Compost Alliance** (ICA, of which AORA is a member) in Canada in early October 2024 at the Compost Council of Canada Conference and issued a joint media release '**Global Meeting Advances Transition to Certified Compostable Produce Stickers**', a roadmap towards a certified compostable PLU sticker standard.
8. Continuation of 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. The third **Economic Contribution Report** was completed, with a broad communications program, inclusive of six webinars (1 x national + 5 x state).



AORA Finance Report 2024-25

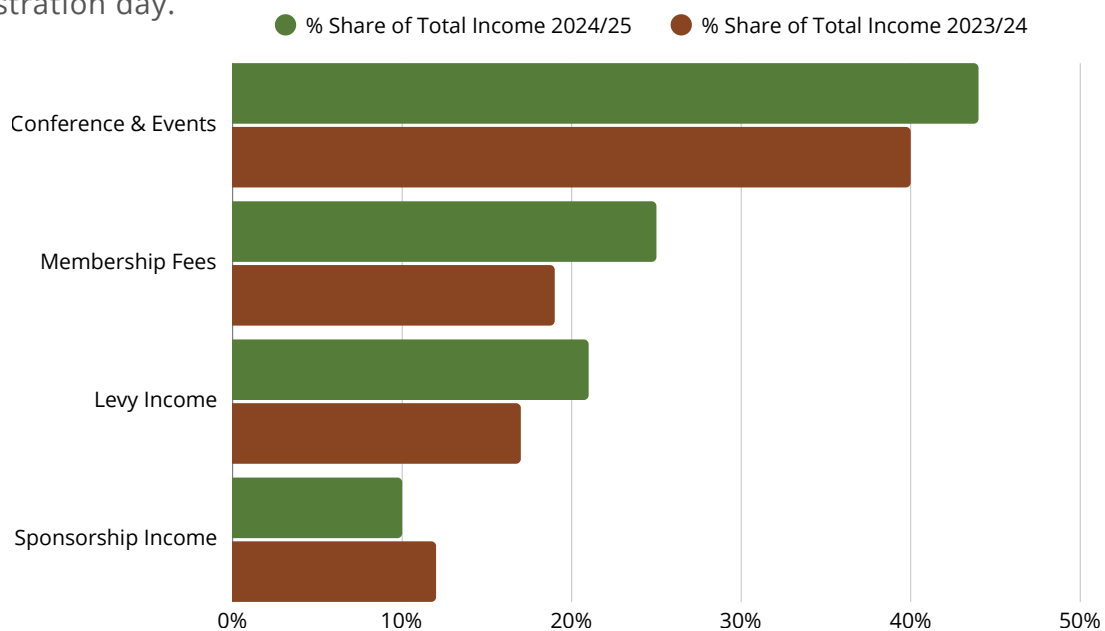
Members are welcome to request a full (audited) AORA Financial report for the year ended 30 June 2025

The 2024/25 financial year delivered a surplus for the Association of \$51,146.

This was a third consecutive surplus after the 2023/24 \$41,187 result and the 2022/23 \$36,890 result.

Revenue and other Income: \$845,482

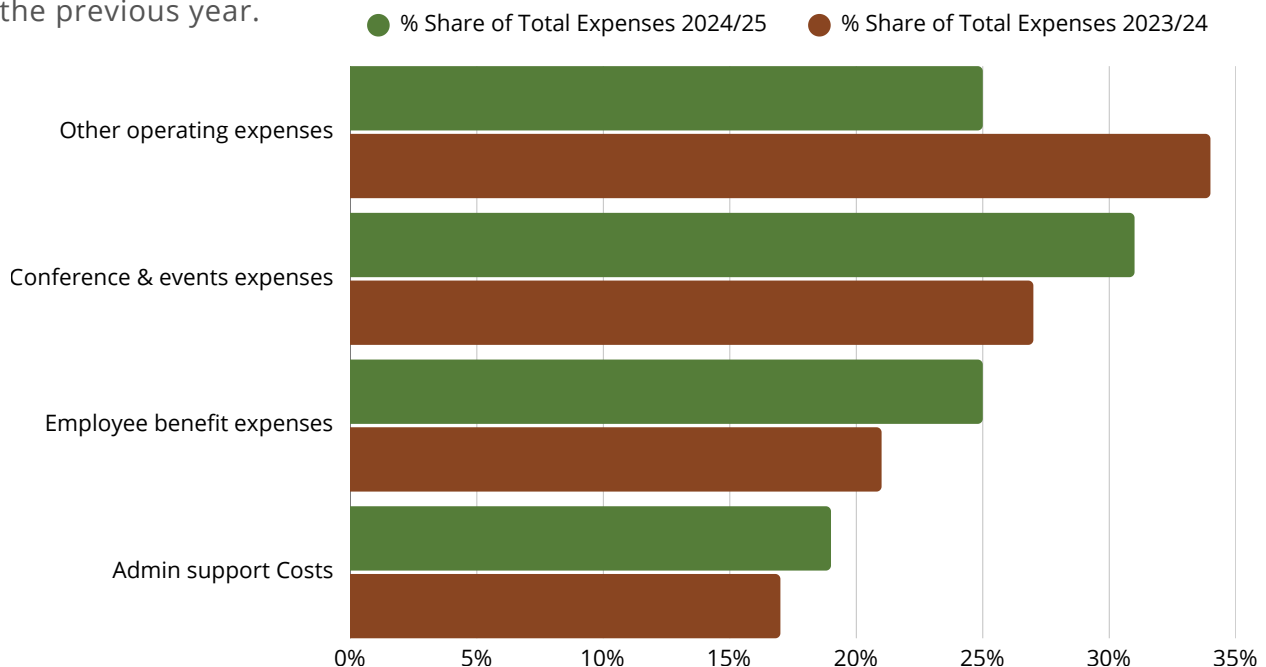
Income declined in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24 by \$89,199 due principally to a significant decline in grants income. Membership fees and levy income increased during the year, however sponsorship income declined and conference and events were on par to the previous year. We are confident in rebuilding our sponsorship income as we continue to leverage the success of the Annual Conference, including the associated demonstration day.



Expenses: \$794,336

Expenses decreased by \$99,158 in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24.

Other operating expenses was the largest contributor to this decrease in expenses (specifically Project expenses) with Admin support costs, Conference and events expenses and Employee benefits expenses registering only small changes compared to the previous year.



AORA Finance Report cont..

Surplus: \$51,146

The financial surplus of \$51,146 for the 2024/25 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.

Aside from the annual financial pragmatism, building financial reserves is also considered an appropriate longer-term strategy for the Association.

A continued focus on growing membership and sponsorship for the Association is a perpetual work-in-progress. 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.

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.

A copy of the full (audited) AORA Financial report for the year ended 30 June 2025 is available to all members on request.

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.



2024-25 Member Information

AORA Members as at June 30 2025

National Associate Members	53
National Processing Members	4
Local Government/Government Members	14
Processing Members	46
Associate Members	37
Individual Members	6
Student Members	1
Life Members	2
Total Members	163

2024 - 25 Partners

Gold Partners



Silver Partners



Bronze Partners



Founding Members



Research Partners



Media Partners



Our People

AORA Directors

Directors 2024-25

Angus Johnston	Appointed on 12 November 2024
Ashley Johnston	Appointed on 12 November 2024
Catherine Philips	Term finished on 12 November 2024
Charles Emery	
Daniel van Veen	Appointed on 12 November 2024
Gregory Whitehead	Term finished on 12 November 2024
Jan Duebbelde	Term finished on 12 November 2024
Kali Martin	
Lachlan Jeffries	
Patrick Soars	
Peter Thompson	Appointed on 12 November 2024
Simon Humphris	Appointed on 12 November 2024
Timothy Richards	Term finished on 12 November 2024

State

NSW
VIC
VIC
NSW
WA
QLD
NSW
QLD
SA
NSW
QLD
VIC
WA

Attendance at Meetings

5 of 5
4 of 5
4 of 5
9 of 10
4 of 5
2 of 4
4 of 5
8 of 10
7 of 10
7 of 10
4 of 5
4 of 5
4 of 5

Finance Committee

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

Partnerships Committee

Lachlan Jeffries
Greg Whitehead*
Jan Duebbelde*
Ashley Johnston**
Simon Humphris**
John McKew
Alex Hammett

Technical & Policy Committee

Michael Wood*
Tim Richards*
Kali Martin**
Patrick Soars**
Daniel van Veen**
Angus Johnston**
John McKew
Alex Hammett

*finished November 2024

** started Decembed 2024

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

John McKew
Alex Hammett
Uma Preston (Oct 2024 - April 2025)
Tehani Suafoa (Nov 2023 - August 2025)

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
Emma Mountjoy

WA Committee

Greg Watts (Chair)
Tim Richards
Daniel van Veen
Colin Rossbridge
Brendan Doherty
Donovan Farrell

Certified Compostable Products: A Sustainable Solution for Packaging and Waste Management



Why We Need Certified Compostables

Australians generate millions of tonnes of packaging waste annually, much of which ends up in landfill or contaminates recycling systems. Certified compostable products offer an environmentally responsible alternative by helping to divert food and packaging waste from landfill, contributing to a circular economy. Certified compostable products could facilitate participation in FOGO services, breaking down in industrial and/or home composting environments, leaving no toxic residues behind.



2.96million
sent to landfill in
2020-21.¹
tonnes of
packaging was



7.6million
tonnes of food
waste is
generated by
Aussies each
year.²



Landfills are under pressure, and the Australian Organics Recycling Industry Capacity Assessment 2022-23 showed the industry is capable of processing an additional 61.1% of organic materials with the existing operations and infrastructure.

Key Facts

Certified compostable products help divert organic waste from landfill, reducing methane emissions. ABA certified compostable products meet rigorous standards, including AS 4736 (industrial) and AS 5810 (home).

Key Facts

Products include compostable bags, food service items, packaging films and packaging. Packaging that has been contaminated with food cannot be recycled, but it can be composted if using certified compostable packaging.

About PFAS

Certified compostable products verified under the Australasian Bioplastics Association (ABA) certification scheme do not contain intentionally added polyfluorinated alkyl substance (PFAS). A condition of the certification programme is a declaration to that effect and ABA certified products must meet strict fluorine limits as part of the compostability assessment. Products exceeding these limits are not certified.

More information at <https://bioplastics.org.au/>

How Certified Compostable Products Benefit Australia

Certified compostable products simplify waste sorting and support circular economy goals.

Benefits of Certified Compostable Products:

- Reduce contamination in recycling streams.
- Lower greenhouse gas emissions from landfill.
- Support organics recovery targets set by federal and state governments.
- Promote innovation and green job creation in Australia.



Conference Summary

Building upon the success of our previous conferences, this year we centred around the theme “Beyond the Windrow - Building industry resilience.”

As we navigate a rapidly changing world, it is imperative that the organics recycling industry continues to adapt and evolve. Through showcasing cutting-edge technologies, exploring new trends, and fostering meaningful partnerships, the AORA 2025 Conference provided a platform for industry leaders to come together and drive sustainable growth.

The 2025 conference, held at NEX, in Newcastle, featured a fantastic array of sessions with dynamic speakers that fostered honest and open dialogue. In addition to offering networking opportunities, and social activities, the event provided valuable chances for career advancement and networking.

A highlight for many was the annual machinery demo day, sponsored by Skala Environmental with an amazing 28 machines on display, most of those operating, and 180 attendees.

The conference program featured 37 presenters across eight sessions. The sessions were presented in a single-stream format, with each session wrapping up with panel discussions. This year we also introduced the Technology Showcase, highlighting innovations for suppliers, improving operations and processing technologies.

The trade exhibition featured 30 companies across an array of the industry and provided an opportunity for attendees to discover more during the event.

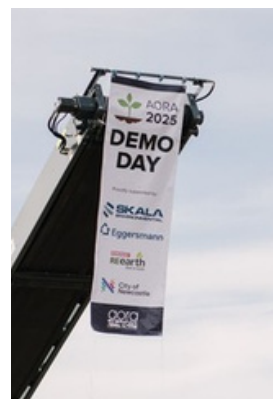
During the event, the 2025 AORA and Pure Environmental Young Professionals Scholarship was presented to Jesse Clune, from RMCG.

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 2025 was Lisa Rawlinson.

Conference Partners



Conference Snapshot





Australian Organics Recycling Association Limited

ABN 17 158 519 736

0434 625 472 | compost@aora.org.au | aora.org.au
PO Box 585 Hove SA 5048

