

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

***Hepburn Shire Council will be running a 12-month trial weekly organics bin (food and garden) kerbside collection for residents of Clunes with a current township weekly collection.***

### **What is an organics bin?**

Your organics bin will have a lime-green lid and will be suitable for food scraps and garden materials, such as weeds, prunings and more. The collected organics will be turned into compost.

### **When will the Clunes organics bin service start?**

Delivery of your lime-green lid bin will occur in early March 2021 and the service will start on Monday 22 March 2021.

### **Is there a cost?**

For the duration of the trial the Clunes community will receive the organics service free of charge. After the trial, if the service continues, the ongoing cost will be determined, and any extra charges would be added to rates.

### **Why is Hepburn Shire running a trial organics bin?**

As the population in our Shire grows, so does the amount of waste that is generated. The new organics bin trial will divert a significant amount of organic waste from landfill and will instead recycle it into compost, which has many positive environmental benefits (see below). This is also important as the cost of sending waste to landfill is increasing, at a cost to both the Council and residents.

The Victorian Government has introduced policy, through *Recycling Victoria*, requiring councils in Victoria to provide households with four waste services, including organics by 2030 (and glass by 2027) in addition to the general waste and recycling services. The organics collection has already been successfully introduced in several local government areas.

The trial will allow us to determine options for the Council to process organic waste in the future, frequency of collection and the impact the collection has on households' landfill bin.

### **Why is Clunes the location of the trial?**

Clunes has been selected as the trial location for the organics bin because the amount of organic waste estimated to be generated is suitable for processing capabilities of the in-vessel composting unit located at the Creswick Transfer Station (which is also suitable proximity wise) and the number of kerbside collections (under 1000) make it a suitable size for the trial.

### **What changes will happen to my bin service?**

No changes will occur to your existing services. However, your household will soon have three separate bins: a landfill bin (120-litre red lid), which will be collected weekly; an organics bin (120-litre lime-green lid) which will also be collected weekly; and a recycling bin (240-litre yellow lid) which will still be collected fortnightly.

You will also be provided with a kitchen caddy (small bin) when your new organics bin is delivered. This caddy is designed to be placed on your kitchen bench (or in a cupboard) to collect your food scraps and then to transport to your organics bin outside.

All households will receive one bin. During the trial there will not be the option for more bins or for not receiving this service. However, if you find you are easily filling your new organics bin please let us know.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

### What can be put in the organics bin?

All food waste, including fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, bones, dairy products, eggshells, bread, pasta, cereals, tea leaves and bags (no plastic teabags), coffee grinds and mouldy food can be put in the organics bin. Garden waste includes lawn clippings, garden prunings, leaves, weeds and flowers. Even animal droppings, kitty litter and hair can be included. More information can be found by visiting [www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/organics-bin](http://www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/organics-bin).

### What can not be put in the organics bin?

The following can NOT be put into the organics bin:

- Plastics;
- Plastic bags or any bagged material.
- Biodegradable and compostable bags are NOT accepted.
- Nappies;
- Fabric (e.g. clothing);
- Dryer lint (it will contain man-made fibres like nylon and polyester etc.);
- Vacuum cleaner bag contents (will contain inorganic residue);
- Hard waste or broken household items, like furniture or plates and cups;
- Thick branches (max. 75 mm diameter);
- Paper (if small amounts and food soiled it is okay);
- Fruit stickers;
- Tea bags with plastics.

### What are the benefits to me as a resident?

An organics bin will greatly reduce the amount of waste that goes into your landfill (red lid) bin. This will be helpful if you have difficulty fitting your waste into your existing bin.

If you compost already, an organics bin will help you to dispose of organic waste you may not normally compost at home like meat, dairy, citrus and other hard to compost food items, weeds, bigger twigs and branches (up to 75mm diameter).

If you currently bring your garden waste to the transfer station you will no longer need to make those trips, saving you time and money.

### Where will the collected organic material be processed?

The organic material will be collected from the Clunes community and taken to a compost facility at the Creswick Transfer Station. Here it will be turned into high grade compost, over several weeks, which has many potential uses.

The in-vessel composting unit uses temperatures that are high enough to kill pathogens and weeds. This process also produces very little of the gas methane.

### What will happen to the compost created?

The compost made will be a great quality compost. Part of the trial will be working out how we can use this compost (we would like it to be used in the Shire). This can lower the emissions our Shire produces but how exactly it is used is still to be determined. Options for the compost include use by residents, on parks and gardens and by local farmers.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

### **What do I put my food scraps in?**

You will be provided with a 7L caddy for the kitchen bench or cupboard. Kitchen caddies cannot be lined with a bag - the cheapest option is to rinse the caddy after emptying it into the organic bin. If you prefer to line the caddy, a small amount of straw, a piece of paper towel or folded newspaper at the bottom works well to catch any drips. A handy tip is to freeze any smelly waste (e.g. seafood or meat scraps), and only put into your organics bin the night before your collection.

### **Can I use bags or compostable bags?**

No bags (including compostable or biodegradable) will be accepted in the Hepburn Shire trial bin. Any type of plastic bag in an organics bin will contaminate it and is very bad for the end-product of the process, compost. The organics bin, just like recycling bin, should have loose items in it.

### **Can I opt out of receiving an organics bin? I don't think I produce enough organic waste.**

In Clunes you will receive a lime-green organics bin if you currently have a weekly kerbside collection (at no cost). There is no option to opt out of the free trial.

You can use the organics bin for just food and kitchen organic waste even if you don't have any garden waste. Remember to put your organics bin out regularly for collection even if it's not full.

### **What if I already have my own compost or worm farm at home?**

This is great news and we hope you keep using it! An organics bin will accept some difficult to compost items like meat, bones, dairy, seafood, citrus, wooden skewers, pet poo and kitty litter. Diseased plants or weeds are also excellent for your kerbside organics bin, as the in-vessel composting unit will use heat that will kill the weeds.

Some home compost systems are difficult to aerate, or have the right mix meaning compost ends up wet, slimy and decomposing anaerobically (without oxygen). This produces methane, smells bad and attracts rodents. The organics bin can provide an alternative solution.

### **I don't want to use an organics bin because I think it will smell.**

There are lots of ways to prevent smells. For your kitchen caddy make sure you are draining liquid from leftovers before putting them in your caddy, adding something to the bottom to catch the drips will both help prevent any smells. Don't place your caddy in full sunlight. Freezing anything very smelly until collection day can also help.

For your organic wheelie bin, you might like to put garden waste (like lawn clippings or straw etc) at the bottom to collect drips from food organic material. Try not to store your wheelie bin in all-day sun if possible.

### **What happens after the trial?**

What we learn during the trial will impact on the long-term plan for an organics collection in the Hepburn Shire. Some of the things we are looking to learn are:

- Amount of organic waste is collected
- The impact this service has on the amount in resident's landfill bin
- How much contamination occurs
- Details on how the in-vessel compost unit works
- How to effectively use the compost within the Shire.

It is hoped that we can offer all the Shire an organics service soon. The State Government has stated all councils must offer residents an organics service by 2030.