

# Interim Submission on the DWER Better Bins Program Review

May 2019



## Status of this Submission

This Submission has been prepared through the Municipal Waste Advisory Council (MWAC) for the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA). MWAC is a standing committee of WALGA, with delegated authority to represent the Association in all matters relating to solid waste management. MWAC's membership includes the major Regional Councils (waste management) as well as a number of Local Government representatives. This makes MWAC a unique forum through which all the major Local Government waste management organisations cooperate. This Submission therefore represents the consolidated view of Western Australia Local Government. However, individual Local Governments and Regional Councils may have views that differ from the positions taken here.

*Due to meeting schedules, this Submission is yet to be considered and endorsed by MWAC. The Department will be informed of any changes to this Submission following consideration by the Municipal Waste Advisory Council on Wednesday 26 June.*

## Better Bins Program

The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030 contains a headline strategy that “a consistent three bin kerbside collection system, which includes separation of food organics and garden organics from other waste categories, be provided by all local governments in the Perth and Peel region by 2025 and supported by State Government through the application of financial mechanisms”. The Better Bins Program is one of the mechanisms that the Government has at its disposal to assist Local Government in achieving this outcome. The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) is currently reviewing the Better Bins Program to ensure it is configured to assist in the delivery of this headline strategy.

In providing feedback on the Better Bins Program, the Association notes that a number of Local Governments have signed Waste to Energy contracts which may inhibit the ability of these Local Governments to implement a three bin collection system in the timeframe identified in the Strategy.

## Feedback on DWER Questions

As part of the review, the DWER has posed a number of questions.

- 1. What other information would you expect to find in the guidelines in order to provide clarity and guidance to local governments about better practice kerbside FOGO services?**

The Guidelines should provide sufficient flexibility on elements such as bin size allocations. There are a range of factors which could influence a Local Governments' choice of bin size. For example, the Guidelines should consider the likely impacts that the size of a household, and the Container Deposit Scheme will have on the amount of material generated. Local Governments should be encouraged to undertake audits to determine the frequency and the degree to which existing services are used.

- 2. What if any, additional guidance would a local government expect in relation to demonstrating that waste was residual and therefore suitable for WtE?**

The Guidelines need to provide a definition for residual waste, and what is considered to be an acceptable end destination(s) for this material. It is suggested that this term is defined in a manner

that is consistent with the EPA's Advice, the WARR Strategy 2030, and the Waste Authority Position Statements on Source Separation of Waste (2014) and Food Organics and Garden Organics (2019).

### **3. What types of costs should be eligible for funding support under a new program, given it has a focus on FOGO?**

The funding support should cover all elements of implementing new services, including infrastructure and community engagement. This is particularly relevant, given Local Governments are required to resource the ongoing provision of services.

Some Local Governments have questioned if the Program would assist with the implementation of a FOGO system, but not a comingled recycling system. As the focus of the Program is on FOGO, these Local Governments should be eligible to receive assistance. With the implementation of the Container Deposit Scheme, there are opportunities to increase recovery without introducing a comingled kerbside collection system.

### **4. If a new program were to shift away from funding bins, towards other costs, such as kitchen caddies and liners, what issues does this raise?**

Currently, the provision of kitchen caddies and liners is a discretionary element of the service. Local Governments could determine not to provide caddies and liners and look at other options. If funding is specifically provided for these materials, then it is more likely that Local Governments will use them. The Department must clarify if caddies (and liners) are an essential part of a better practice FOGO system.

The promotion of caddies (and liners) needs to be supported on a continued basis. Considerations include:

- The requirement to use compostable liners that meet the relevant Australian Standard
- The number of suppliers and availability of compostable liners to the community
- Any storage requirements for compostable liners
- Replacement of caddies over time.

Other significant barriers related to the implementation of a FOGO kerbside collection system include the need for continued community engagement on correct source separation, the establishment of processing facilities and stable market outlets for the collected material. This will necessitate ongoing programs, and support from Government.

### **5. What are the issues or barriers to local governments using FOGO derived compost?**

Feedback from Local Government indicates that one barrier to the use of FOGO derived material is a lack of demand for such a product within the Local Government, as all compost/mulch needs are currently met using existing parks and gardens material. Officers have reported that it is difficult to convince other Local Government stakeholders that this product is fit for purpose. Officers have also questioned if there is any knowledge of the potential size of this market. WALGA has a Preferred Supplier Panel in place for Parks and Gardens and will investigate if information on the use of soil improvers / compost can be captured.

It is worth noting that a range of other markets will need to be identified and effectively engaged to ensure that FOGO derived material can be used in a range of applications. DWER is currently undertaking work on the Legislative Framework for waste derived materials. WALGA anticipates that this initiative will provide additional clarity on the use of FOGO derived materials.

### **6. What might local governments need to support the use of FOGO derived compost?**

The provision of fit for purpose product standards could provide Local Governments with certainty that the material can be used in parks and gardens. Similarly, the provision of a cost/benefit analysis could address concerns on cost competitiveness. Financial incentives may also encourage Local

Governments to use this material. It has been highlighted that all FOGO processing systems will need to produce consistent and good quality material to ensure market demand and a good reputation for the product.

**7. As the new program targets FOGO, should the guidance on the rollout of services change or be removed, and if guidance needs to change, what should be considered in developing guidance for FOGO services?**

The guidance should reflect the focus of the Program, noting that all households generate food waste, not necessarily greenwaste.

**8. Should the revised program be offered to properties with shared services? If so, what are some of the issues or constraints that should be considered?**

Yes. The program should be offered to properties with shared services – noting that the implementation of FOGO in multiple dwelling developments will require more in depth engagement. WALGA, with funding from the Waste Authority, has developed Better Practice Guidance for these type of developments that could form the basis of such an engagement approach. In some shared services situations, it is likely that FOGO systems will not be able to be implemented. Introduction of new services for these properties will require more effort to ensure they operate well, and that material is correctly source separated. Therefore, while there should be an option for shared services to be included, it should not be a requirement of the Program.

Another issue which has been raised by some Local Governments relates to bin ownership. In some Local Government areas (predominantly the non-metropolitan area) Local Governments may not own kerbside bin infrastructure. This does not inhibit the introduction of a FOGO system and consequently these Local Governments should not be excluded from the Program.

**9. Given the requirement for the Waste Authority to manage annual budgets, would you support a fixed allocation in each financial year which is available on a ‘first come first served’ basis? Do you have other suggestions in relation to how funds are allocated in each year?**

Local Government supports an increase in the amount of funds allocated to the Program and suggests that funds should be allocated on a per household basis. The Association suggests that an Expression of Interest Process should be undertaken with Local Government to determine if, and when, FOGO would be implemented. This would allow interested Local Governments to fully plan for when the implementation would occur. For example larger Local Governments will need more time to procure additional bins and roll out services.

Local Governments have raised concerns that the processing infrastructure for FOGO is yet to be put in place. This is an essential element of FOGO implementation. A staged implementation would allow the Department and Local Government to budget over multiple financial years. In relation to prioritising the allocation of funding, it would be prudent to align funding with the achievement of Targets in the Strategy.

**10. What types of complementary measures do you believe would be a minimum requirement in terms of supporting better practice FOGO collection services?**

General communication and Bin Tagging are some of the minimum requirements for supporting the implementation of FOGO. Other innovative or alternative options should also be considered.

**11. How can the Waste Authority improve project management arrangements whilst maintaining accountability and good governance?**

For the revised Program to be effective and delivered in a timely manner, a number of other issues need to be addressed. This includes the amount of money made available to Local Government, the

level and type of justification required of Local Government (reporting and review) and the rapid progression of the funding agreement. The extended time taken to obtain a signed funding agreement has had a direct, negative impact on the planning and implementation of FOGO collection systems by Local Government. Local Government supports a streamlined application and reporting process where the Department clearly identifies eligible areas for funding and the Local Government provides information about what funds have been expended on in line with those activities.

## **12. What other types of issues need to be addressed to support better practice FOGO collection services?**

The timeline for FOGO implementation outlines many of the issues which need to be addressed to support the implementation of FOGO collection systems. Other Government policy decisions are also required, including long term certainty (at least 10 years) for the future trajectory of the WARR Levy and long term certainty regarding FOGO systems as the preferred approach to kerbside collection.

The timeline includes specific reference to DWER's role in licencing facilities to process FOGO derived material. One Local Government, with a Category 67A – Compost Manufacturing and soil blending licence, was seeking to undertake a FOGO trial and compost the material on their site. Unfortunately as the site licence is only for mulching, DWER indicated that an entire new Operational Plan needed to be submitted for approval. There is a need to ensure that there is a clear process, and sufficient information, to assist Local Governments seeking to undertake pilot projects or progress to full FOGO processing.

Ongoing Programs to support community education and engagement are also required. The Association notes the Waste Sorted Program is intended to provide consistent materials for Local Government to use, and that the WARR Strategy 2030 indicates there is Government support for state-wide communications to support messaging on a range of waste management related issues.

The Association requests that once this consultation phase has been completed, further engagement occurs with Local Government to ensure the sector is aware how their feedback has been incorporated into the new Program and how the wider issues relating to the implementation of FOGO collection systems will be addressed.

## Implementation of FOGO Collection Systems

Implementation of the headline strategy in the WARR Strategy 2030 on FOGO Collection Systems will be significantly impacted unless key issues are addressed. WALGA has developed an indicative timeline to demonstrate the range of issues that need to be considered by Government in the implementation of FOGO Collection Systems in the Perth and Peel regions. To inform their consideration of FOGO Collection Systems, Local Governments have indicated that they require confidence that these issues will be addressed by Government. The Local Government timelines are indicative, dependent on existing contracts, procurement and approval timelines.



	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	
<b>Local Government</b>	Develop a business case for consideration by Council	Budgets are already finalised.					
	Obtain Council approval						
	Secure funding from the Better Bins Program						
	Procure bin infrastructure, new collection services, processing services						
	Recruitment and/or training of staff for implementation						
	Roll out collection service					Small LG	
						Large LG	
Undertake audits & intensive community engagement							
<b>Processors</b> (no entity has responsibility for the completion of these tasks)	Location of processing infrastructure						
	Obtain regulatory approvals for processing infrastructure		Dependant on DWER capacity for assessment and approval of prescribed premises				
	Secure finance for processing infrastructure						
	Procure, build and trial processing infrastructure						
	Obtain accreditation (quality control, product specifications)				Dependant on the release of DWER fit for purpose standards, and external accreditation processes		
<b>End users of product</b> (no entity has responsibility for the completion of these tasks)	Establish legislative framework for waste derived materials and fit for purpose standards	Dependant on the passage of legislation and the release of DWER fit for purpose standards					
	Identify market capacity and end user needs and requirements						
	Secure supply contracts with end users of the product (e.g. State, Local Government, agricultural industry)				Dependant on the type of material produced and the approach taken to market development		