

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### ***Why do we need this new service?***

We are living in a time where the environment can no longer withstand the pressures of human waste and the problems it generates, especially in relation to global warming. Our waste is often neglected when we think about greenhouse emissions, but what we need to recognise is that our organic waste generates significant quantities greenhouse emissions when disposed in landfills. Besides, we can't let good food go to waste. This would be a terrible loss of a valuable resource which can so easily be separated from our garbage for composting. By recycling your food organics, you will be personally contributing to not only reducing waste, but also saving water, energy, reducing greenhouse emissions, creating a valuable compost product and conserving our natural resources for future generations.

### ***What do I have to do to use the new Kitchen to Compost Service?***

It's easy! All you need to do is place food scraps into your existing green garden bin (with lime green lid). This way all your organics will be in the one bin ready for transport to the recycling facility. Food scraps can be wrapped in newspaper or placed loosely into the green garden bin. Please **do not** use plastic bags or corn starch/biodegradable bags.



### ***Will I receive a kitchen organics bin to collect scraps in my kitchen?***

Yes, the kitchen organics bins (small bin used in kitchen - as pictured above) will be delivered to you during the end of October or beginning November 2008.

### ***What kinds of Food scraps can I place in my Green Garden Bin?***

You can place any type of food scrap, leftover, spoiled or out of date food into your green garden bin. This can include:

- ***Fruit & vegetable peels and scraps***
- ***Meat & fish scraps & bones***
- ***Egg shells***
- ***Dairy products (cheese, yoghurt etc.)***
- ***Bread, pasta, rice, cereal***
- ***Tea bags & coffee grounds***
- ***Out of date food (processed or fresh)***
- ***Confectionary***
- ***Processed food***



### ***What will happen to my Food and Garden organics?***

Food and garden organics will be processed by WSN Environmental Solutions. After collection from your bin, the material will be transported to a WSN waste transfer station. Here the material will be screened and shredded into smaller pieces. The shredded load will then be transported to a composting facility in Castlereagh where it is composted. Once the composting process is complete, the compost is used to rehabilitate contaminated land as well as remediate development sites which have had most of their topsoil erode after land clearing. The high nitrogen content from your food scraps makes this particular compost even more nutritious for the soil, establishing a base for trees and plants to grow bigger, faster, stronger, which in turn help to remove contaminants from soil, and minimise further erosion. The compost also increases water holding capacity of soil and maintains soil structure.

As you can see, unlike landfill, this is a sustainable waste management alternative which results in more positive, long term environmental outcomes for our community and environment.



Place food organics into your green garden bin



Food and garden material is shredded



Then composted in long windrows



Compost is used to remediate contaminated and eroded land



### ***What will happen if I put the wrong things in my Green Garden Bin?***

The wrong materials in your green garden bin can contaminate a whole truckload of organics, and therefore **contaminated bins cannot be collected**. Your green garden bin should only contain food scraps (loose or wrapped in newspaper) and garden refuse. *Please place only the correct materials in your green garden bin and IF IN DOUBT – LEAVE IT OUT!*

### ***What happens if my Green Garden bin is not emptied?***

As long as you follow our advice about what can or cannot be placed in your garden organics bin it should be emptied each week. However, a missed collection may result if wrong materials are found in your bin. If your bin is not contaminated or you have removed the contamination, it should be reported to Customer Service by calling 9391 7000. Missed collections should be addressed within 24 hours.

### ***Will my Green Garden bin get smelly and attract pests?***

Food organics can create some odour as they decompose or if are over exposed to heat. Your green garden bin has a sealable lid which should trap odours and keep pests out. Food scraps may also be wrapped in newspaper which should detract pests, minimise odour and soak up any liquids. Some other tips include:

- Store your green garden bin out of direct sunlight to stop it heating up.
- Freeze bones/scraps of fish, meat, and dairy until the night before collection to avoid odours and pests.
- Place some twigs in the bottom of your green garden bin to stop food sticking and help with aeration.
- Place bi-carbonate soda in the bottom of your green garden bin to absorb liquids and odours
- Keep some grass clippings or leaves on hand. After placing food scraps in the green garden bin, place some grass clippings or leaves on top which will provide cover from pests, and minimise odour.
- In the event you find fly maggots in your bin and wish to eradicate them, boiling water poured on-top is a safe and non-toxic method.
- Natural fly deterrents include citrus and eucalyptus oils. Place a few drops onto an absorbent cloth and leave in the area where flies are a problem or even attach to bin lids. You could also experiment with citrus peels.

Residents that have trialed the service also suggested:

- Keeping the little kitchen organics bin in the fridge to keep tiny vinegar flies at bay.
- If you have little or no garden organics to mix with food scraps, ask your neighbour if they wouldn't mind parting with some of theirs OR ask your neighbour if you could put a small bundle of food scraps in with their green garden bin the evening before collection.
- Line the bottom of your bin with scrunched balls of newspaper to absorb liquids.

*Remember, do not place plastic bags in your garden organics bin as they do not stop odours and interfere with the recycling process.*

### ***I live alone or with one other person, we don't generate enough organics to fill a bin.***

It doesn't matter how much or how little you have, your bin does not have to be full for collection. Council will empty your green garden bin weekly as long as you place it out for collection. If your green garden bin is too big, phone Council on 9391 7000 to discuss other bin options available. Keep in mind that every little bit helps. Collaboratively, your little bit, along with the rest of the municipality will drastically reduce organic waste to landfill and ensure it is recycled.

### ***What if I don't have any garden refuse and compost my food scraps?***

Council supports home composting and encourages you to continue to do so. This is the most effective and environmentally friendly way to manage your organic waste. Any food that you do not currently compost can alternatively be placed into your green garden bin like meat scraps, bread etc. In addition, garden refuse is not essential for this collection. Your food scraps are the most important part as we are trying to reduce this waste to landfill. We still encourage the use of your green garden bin for food scraps even if you have little or no garden organics. If your green garden bin is too big, phone Council on 9391 7000 to discuss other bin options available.

***What if I don't have a Green Garden bin?***

You can purchase a green garden bin from Council. Only Council bins will be accepted for use as part of this service. Phone Customer Service on 9391 7000 to place an order. The bin will then be delivered to you within five working days.

***My Garden refuse gets collected in an open green crate, can I participate?***

Open crates (pictured right) are only used in the Zone 1 – garbage collection area which includes Paddington, West Woollahra and a part of Edgecliff. Unfortunately, we cannot accept food organics in open crate receptacles. If you wish to participate in the service, please phone Council on 9391 7000 to discuss bin options.



Alternatively, you can consider doing your bit for the environment by composting or worm farming at home which can achieve the same results in waste reduction.

***I live in a unit block, can I participate?***

The service is being rolled out to single households at this stage. However, unit blocks are also welcome to use the service. The more food scraps we can recycle, the better. If you would like your unit block to use the service, Council can help by providing all the necessary education materials for residents, strata managers and cleaners. By working together, we can ensure that all residents in the block are aware and understand that green garden bins may now be used for recycling food scraps as well as garden refuse.

***Do I have to participate in this new service?***

We are all responsible for generating waste and as such all residents are encouraged to participate as this is an easy way to help protect the environment, reduce waste to landfill and reduce greenhouse emissions.