

**Case study:  
Food  
organics  
and garden  
organics  
collection in  
Byron Shire**



Photo: Alasdair Smith, farmer and founder of Munch Crunch Organics. (Byron Shire Council)

**'It is really important to us as organic farmers and the general community that we return organic waste back to the soil to build the organic matter and reduce the effects of climate change.'**

**Alasdair Smith,  
farmer and founder  
of Munch Crunch  
Organics**

## **Food on the table thanks to recycled FOGO waste**

**Organic waste that has been diverted from landfill is being used by Byron Shire's farmers to grow sustainable produce and improve local soil quality.**

### **Bin change a boon for local farmers**

Landfill space has been saved, soil quality has been improved and local farmers have been supported to grow sustainable food thanks to Byron Shire Council introducing a food organics and garden organics (FOGO) household collection service.

A \$735,759 grant from the NSW Environment Protection Authority's Waste Less, Recycle More Organics Infrastructure Fund has seen more than 10,000 tonnes of FOGO waste diverted from Byron Shire's landfill between August 2015 and December 2017. The valuable resource is instead converted into rich compost to help the region's growers and farmers produce sustainable food.

Byron Shire Council introduced the green-lid FOGO service after finding 50% of waste in red lid bins in 2012 was recyclable organics.

**'The willingness of the local community to participate has contributed to the success of the new service. The initiative has provided households with the opportunity to make responsible choices around reducing waste. Residents can see how their individual efforts are supporting local farmers and helping the environment.'**

**Lucy Wilson,  
Resource Recovery  
Education Officer,  
Byron Shire Council**

**'The organics collections grant has enabled Byron Shire to deliver a significant environmental initiative to the local community.'**  
**Lloyd Isaacson,  
Team Leader  
Resource  
Recovery, Byron  
Shire Council**

## Being a good sort

The FOGO collection service was rolled out to 10,500 households living in urban areas of Byron Shire in August 2015.

The funding was used to deliver FOGO wheelie bins, kitchen caddies, compostable kitchen caddy liners and education packs for residents.

The introduction of the new green-lid organics bin also saw the red-lid landfill bin switch from a weekly to fortnightly collection cycle. To support the rollout of the new collection service, Byron Shire Council delivered a comprehensive three-stage communication and education plan. This was informed by valuable research and community consultation, which had indicated overwhelming support for the introduction of the new service.

The grant also allowed Byron Shire Council to employ a Resource Recovery Education Officer to deliver the communication and education campaign.

The bin changes were promoted with the tagline 'Be A Good Sort' on local TV, radio, social media and the council's website; in cinema ads, newspapers and magazines; and via events.



Photo: Mayor Brian Richardson with the new green-lid bin and kitchen caddy. (Byron Shire Council)



Photo: Local farmers and gardeners now have access to certified organic compost. (Byron Shire Council)

## Outstanding success

Since the new system began in 2015, not one load of kerbside FOGO waste has been rejected at the council's composting facility, which has a strict 1% contamination threshold. So far the Byron Shire FOGO service has:

- diverted more than 4,600 tonnes per year of FOGO waste from landfill
- produced certified organic compost, which has helped local farmers by improving soil quality and increasing agricultural production
- reduced kerbside waste sent to landfill by 33%
- reduced the need for landfill expansion and saved \$180,000 a year in landfill waste and disposal costs
- reduced greenhouse gases.

'The green bin is a great system for teaching children about good recycling practices.'

Byron Shire resident Suzie (pictured at right)



Photo: Byron Shire residents. (Byron Shire Council)

The Environment Protection Authority's Organics Collections Grants provide up to \$1.3 million to councils and business to introduce new food only or food and garden collection services. They are administered by the Environmental Trust and open for applications over several funding rounds.

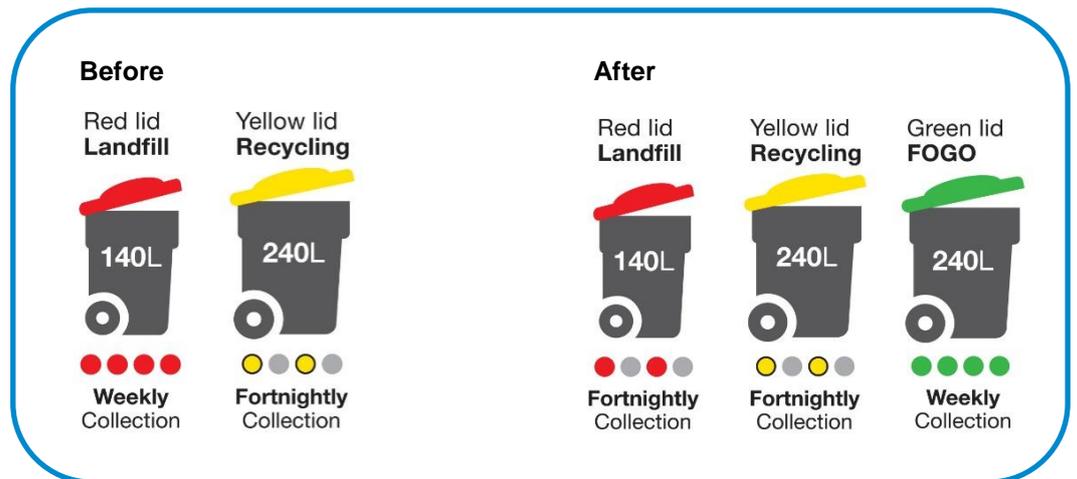


Figure: Changes to Byron Shire Council's kerbside bin collection service

## Looking forward

With more than 2 million visitors to the popular holiday destination each year, Byron Shire Council is considering running a specific education and behaviour campaign targeting holiday properties. The EPA's Organics Collections grants provide up to \$1.3 million to councils rounds.

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