

Relevant Information for Council

FILE: X087085 **DATE:** 20 February 2026

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Veronica Lee, Executive Director City Services

THROUGH: Monica Barone PSM, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 7.3 – Post Exhibition - Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035

For Noting

This memo is for the information of the Lord Mayor and Councillors.

Purpose

To provide additional information to Council regarding the Post Exhibition – Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035 and the roll-out of the City's food organics service to all residents.

Background

At the meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Committee on 16 February 2026, further information was sought on the following:

Food organics and community composting

The City's Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026 -2035 does not prevent the community from composting organic waste. The City supports households to compost through our community gardens, running regular composting talks and workshops for the community at the City Farm and our community composting guidelines.

The City supports 19 community gardens in the local area, most of which have onsite composting systems. Four community gardens also participate in the City's food scraps recycling trial to reduce food waste going to landfill and encourage recycling. The organic material produced from the food scraps recycling trial has been used in some City parks and at the Sydney City Farm with good results. Sydney City Farm also host regular free composting talks and demonstrations.

A new Community Greening Framework is in development to guide future footpath gardening, community gardening and community greening volunteer activity in the City. Composting will continue to be encouraged subject to meeting the City's community greening principles and requirements in the Framework, including compost systems being managed to be safe, and free of odours and vermin.

The City has also resolved to provide a food organics (FO) service to all our residents by 1 July 2030 as per the NSW Government mandate arising from the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 for local governments to provide a FO or Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) collection service to all residential households.

The main reasons that a food organics only service type was chosen (and not a combined food and garden organics service) is that it can be processed by a broader range of processing facilities (including circular solutions like insect farming) and produces higher environmental benefits when kept separate from garden organics. Further, the majority of City households do not have an existing garden organics bin and FO provides us with an opportunity to rollout smaller bins to those properties that have limited storage space. Garden organics will remain as a separate bin for households, allowing the City to continue to process this material into quality compost.

To ensure the food organics service is rolled out effectively, the City is focused on only delivering programs and engagement campaigns that will support the implementation of a FO service to our households. To do this, our priority will be educating the community on how to use a FO service, it's benefits and what is accepted in a FO bin.

It should be noted that FO accepts all food waste types. Composting does not accept meat, dairy or processed foods.

FO rollout/timeline and options for acceleration

To achieve the best results for residents and Council, the recommended approach is for staff to focus on rolling out the FO service to all residents in 2028.

At this stage, the City plans to start a phased implementation in mid 2028, with all households being able to access the FO service by mid 2029. This aligns with the timeframe of '2028-2030' noted in the [Information Relevant To Item 7.3](#) - Planning For a Food Organics Recycling Service to All Households from the 17 March 2025 Council meeting which provided a more detailed timeframe than the Environment and Climate Change Committee [report](#) of 10 March 2025.

Meeting this implementation date will require significant planning and time as shown in the table below that captures key stages and estimated completion dates.

Timeline for Service Rollout

Project Stage	Service Component	Task	Estimated Timeframe
1. Build the plan	Processing	Insect farming trial contract extension	January 2025 – June 2027

Project Stage	Service Component	Task	Estimated Timeframe
	Collection	Collection cost benefit analysis to enable assessment of the collection options – in development	Late 2025 - early 2026
	Collection	Collection service business case and cost modelling	Early - mid 2026
	Processing	Processing tender development	Early 2026 – late 2026
	Collection	Council decision – Collection type	Dependent on business case
	Collection – option a)	Collection Service Tender* <i>*If Council resolves to outsource</i>	Mid 2026 - mid 2027
	Collection – option b)	Secure, recruit and procure depot space, staff and plant and equipment* <i>*If Council resolves to insource</i>	Late 2026 - early 2028
	Processing	Processing tender out to market	Late 2026 – early 2027
	Collection	Procure bins, caddies and liners	Late 2026 - mid 2027
	Processing	Council decision – Processing type	Early 2027
	All	Draft communications and education plan	Mid - late 2027
2. Implement	All	Communication and education campaign	2028 - 2030
	Collection	Bin roll-out	2028
	Collection	Collection transition	2028
	Processing	Processing contract commencement	2028

Project Stage	Service Component	Task	Estimated Timeframe
	All	Service commencement	Mid 2028 – Mid 2029

Data on households participating in the FO trial

The food scraps service is currently available to more than 24,354 households in the City. This is made up of 23,000 apartments (in 342 buildings) and 1,354 houses.

Participation is affected by resident transience which can cause service drop off. However the total number of households that have access to the service is consistently growing. When residents that live in houses, move out or no longer want to participate in the service, houses from the waitlist are added. Reduction in participation from households in apartment buildings is managed through education programs and caddy installations in building foyers to encourage more or new households to use food organic bins.

Marked up Strategy

As requested at the Committee meeting, a version of the Strategy more clearly detailing the changes to the Strategy is attached for reference (note there may be some formatting/font inconsistencies).

Memo from Veronica Lee, Executive Director City Services

Prepared by: Kath McLaughlin, Resource Recovery Manager

Attachments

Attachment A. Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035 (with tracked changes)

Approved

P. M. Barone

MONICA BARONE PSM

Chief Executive Officer