

FOGO

Frequently Asked Questions

What is FOGO?

FOGO stands for Food Organics, Garden Organics and refers to the collection of food scraps and garden organics which, once collected, will be turned into compost.

A handy way to think about FOGO is 'If it lived or grew then it is FOGO'. 'If it never lived or grew, it goes in the general waste bin'.

Home compost v Biomix* processing

The composting methods at Biomix can process more items compared to your home composting system. Council's FOGO bin system can receive and process items such as:

Tea bags, pizza boxes, bones, weeds, dog and cat poo, compostable cat litter, carcasses, tissues, paper towel, all dairy products and bones. Some items listed here such as dairy and bones, are not able to be easily processed through your home composting system.

Due to the scale of the operation (refined in-vessel composting process), this method has the ability to break organics down much quicker than say a worm farm, compost bin or tumbler. Even if you do home composting you will still benefit by having the ability to put larger prunings, sticks and quantities of lawn clippings along with other items listed above that can take a really long time to compost in your backyard.

*Biomix are the contractor who processes the FOGO we create.

What day of the week will my FOGO / green bin be collected?

Your FOGO bin will be collected as per your identified kerbside waste collection day. Refer to the maps for further details or visit our website: www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au/Our-Services/Waste-and-recycling/Find-my-bin-day

What bin will be collected when?

Red General waste bin – weekly, as per the collection schedule.

Yellow Recycling bin - fortnightly, as per the collection schedule (opposite week to FOGO bin).

Green FOGO bin – fortnightly, as per the collection schedule (opposite week to recycling bin).

Will my FOGO bin be collected weekly or fortnightly?

Your FOGO bin will be collected fortnightly on your identified bin collection day on the opposite week to your yellow lid recycling bin.

What can be put in the FOGO bin?

Food waste such as - fruit, meat, vegetables, fish, bones, dairy products, eggshells, bread, pasta, cereal, tea bags, tea leaves, coffee grounds, table scraps, cooked food, raw food, seafood scraps and shells, wooden kebab sticks / skewers.

Garden wastes such as - lawn clippings, garden prunings, leaves, weeds*, flowers, branches less than 30cm in diameter, natural Christmas trees (cut up to fit in the bin), plant cuttings, untreated wood (smaller than 30cm in diameter). *The seeds from weeds are killed as part of the composting process. The in-vessel compost process heats up the material to between 50–70°C, killing weeds, weed seeds, insects, pathogenic bacteria, fungi and viruses.

Other items such as - hair, dog poo, tissues, pizza boxes (soiled or with scraps), paper-based kitty litter, manure, paper napkins, paper towel (clean or dirty), shredded paper, paper straws, saw dust and wood shavings, cardboard takeaway containers, vacuum cleaner dust.

Where does my FOGO go?

All FOGO collected via Council's kerbside waste collection will be transported via our contractor to the Biomix composting facility in Stanhope, who are currently contracted to provide this service on behalf of Murray River Council.

Where does the compost end up?

The compost that is produced from Council's FOGO bins will be able to be purchased back by Murray River Council and used on various Council locations, parks and open spaces.

Various farmers use the compost to provide nutrients to soils, residents & gardeners can also benefit from the compost by utilising it in their gardens.

How big is the bin?

You will receive a 240-litre green lid mobile garage bin (MGB) also known as a wheelie bin.

Will I get a kitchen caddy?

Yes, all residential kerbside FOGO customers will receive a 7-litre kitchen caddy.

I broke / lost / misplaced my caddy. Can I get a new one?

Council will not be supplying additional caddies to properties. If the caddy is lost, misplaced or broken, it will be up to the owner or tenant to replace it at their own cost.

I don't want a green bin as I have my own chooks / compost bin at home.

The FOGO bin can complement your compost heap as it can take the things that your compost can't – like weeds and weed seeds, excess lawn clippings and leaves, meat, bones and dairy products. Compost needs the right blend of 'green' and 'brown' materials so if you've got excess of one type, you can add it to the green bin, knowing that it will still be composted. Branches that are too thick for the compost heap can also be put in the organics bin.

Worms can be fussy eaters and often do not like onions, citrus, eggshells and potato peels. You can put the things they don't like in the FOGO bin.

Chooks are great at turning organic matter into fertilizer. There are some things that chooks won't eat so they can be put in the FOGO bin.

How much is this new service going to cost me?

The new FOGO 240-litre bin and kitchen caddy are provided free of charge, thanks to a grant from the NSW Environmental Trust.

The ongoing cost of the service will be identified yearly within the Murray River Council adopted fees and charges. The proposed yearly service charge will be approximately \$105.00 per year. Click on the link below to find information on the most up to date fees and charges.

<https://www.murrayriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Forms-and-documents/Finance-fees-and-charges>

I don't live within the FOGO Collection boundary; will I be paying extra in my rates?

All properties within the FOGO collections boundary will be rated for and pay the charges for the 3-bin collection service. All remaining properties who only have 2 kerbside bins will only be charged for the 2-bin system.

Do I have to use compostable liners in the caddy?

If you would like to use a liner in your caddy only those that comply with *Australian Standards 4736 (AS4736)* which are accepted at the composting facility. This just means they meet the commercial composting standards. You are welcome to use other liners such as newspaper or paper towel as an alternative.

If you choose to use a bag liner that is not compliant with AS4736 then you need to dispose of the liner in the general waste bin after emptying its contents into the FOGO bin. An easy way to tell if a liner is AS4736 compliant is to look for the seedling logo.

Plastic, degradable and biodegradable liners are **NOT** suitable for composting and therefore are not able to be placed in the FOGO bin.



Will my bin smell?

Wrapping food scraps in newspaper helps reduce smells or you can use compostable bags. Layering food waste with dry materials, like lawn clippings and paper, can help. Freeze particularly odorous food scraps, like seafood and raw meat, and put them in the organics bin the night before collection.

Can I opt out of having the 3-bin system and remain with the 2-bin system?

No. Once rolled out, the 3-bin (FOGO, recycling and general waste) service will become the standard collection service within the identified organics collection boundary across Council's Local Government Area. This is in-line with Council's Waste Services Policy (POL405.V1 Waste Services policy).

I currently live in Moama or Mathoura and only have 2 bins; will I get the green bin?

Yes. Once rolled out, the 3-bin (FOGO, recycling and general waste) service will become the standard collection service within the identified organics collection boundary across Council's Local Government Area.

If you do not have a green bin currently, please contact Council's Waste Department on 1300 087 004 to ensure your property is within the collection boundary and to organise a 240-litre green bin to be delivered.

I live in a unit block, can we get one green bin between all the units?

No. All residential properties will be provided with the 3-bin (FOGO, recycling and general waste) service. Even though you may not produce a lot of green waste in your block of units, everyone produces food waste. The 3-bin system will become the standard collection service within the identified organics collection boundary across Council's Local Government Area.

Is the compost produced from FOGO safe to use on our garden /environment - ie does it still contain weeds and seeds?

It takes around 12 weeks for the compost to be processed at Biomix. It goes through several processes including heating the product to between 50-70°C, in special cooking vessels where weeds, weed seeds, insects, pathogenic bacteria, fungi and viruses are killed.

Can I take my food waste to the local waste transfer station or landfill?

No, only garden waste is accepted at the landfills and transfer stations. Food waste cannot be recycled at any of Murray River Council's waste sites and must be placed in the green wheelie bin. Any food waste that ends up at the waste management facilities will end up in the landfill.

Are the bins and caddies recyclable at the end of their useful life?

Yes. Both the caddies and wheelie bins can be fully recycled at the end of their useful life. In fact they are even partially made from recycled plastic. On average 40% of the wheelie bin* is made from recycled plastic and around 80% of the caddy body is made from recycled plastic.

*Due to the pressure the wheelie bin is under on a regular basis from the grab arm of the garbage truck, wheelie bins are currently unable to be made with a higher % of recycled plastic.

Why are we implementing FOGO?

Our FOGO collection service will significantly reduce the amount of food and garden organics that end up in landfill. This is not only good for the environment, but also helps to extend the life of the landfill site itself. The 3-bin FOGO system will also provide residents with more options for separating their waste, with the aim of improving recovery rates and reducing harmful greenhouse gases which are produced by decomposing organics in landfill.

In addition to extending the lifespan of our landfills we are also required to implement the 3-bin system in response to the NSW Landfill Diversion Targets implemented via the NSW Environmental Protection Authority. The target of 80% of organic waste to be removed from landfill by 2030.

Which towns will be receiving the FOGO service?

Barham, Mathoura, Moama, Moulamein, Murray Downs, Wakool and Tooleybuc residents will be receiving the new FOGO service.

Will other towns be receiving the FOGO service?

Unfortunately, due to budget restraints and the current grant we have received, we are only able to provide the new FOGO service to the townships identified at this time. We will continue to investigate and seek additional funding options to extend the service to our villages in the future.