

Case Study

Queen Victoria Market

Education campaign boosts food and green waste recycling at Queen Victoria Market

June 2021

AT A GLANCE:

10 million

visitors per year

600

small businesses

1,400 tonnes

organic waste annually

**85%
diversion
goal**

of organic waste from landfill

66%

current recycling rate

**Zero carbon
emissions**

by 2027

This case study shows how education and communication helped Queen Victoria Market increase food waste recycling amongst stallholders.



WHY?

Queen Victoria Market (QVM) is Australia's largest open air market, a 140 year old Melbourne icon that's home to more than 600 small businesses.

It offers fresh produce and consumer goods for an estimated 10 million visitors per year, making it Victoria's most visited attraction. Its size, scope and popularity, however, mean QVM produces a significant amount of organic waste: 1,400 tonnes annually. That's more than two other major Melbourne markets and the Melbourne Zoo combined.

QVM has an ambitious goal of diverting 85% of its organic waste from landfill. As part of achieving this goal, an organics recycling unit was installed at QVM in September 2019 for an initial 12 month trial.

QVM knew that to achieve its waste diversion goal, it needed to ensure stallholders were aware of the importance of organic waste recycling, the presence of the recycling unit and how to use it. In a single day audit, QVM had found 70% of recyclable organic waste was going to landfill.

In 2019, QVM partnered with Metropolitan Waste Resource Recovery Group (MWRRG) on the Behaviour Change and Education Campaign for Stallholders Project. The project aimed to promote use of the organics recycling unit and improve the market's waste management practices, including correct waste segregation.

HOW?

QVM engaged an independent consultant to review its waste management practices and develop an Operational Waste Management Plan, aimed at reducing waste to landfill. QVM used findings from the plan to develop a range of resources to support the Behaviour Change and Education Campaign for Stallholders Project.

A series of education videos on how to recycle organic waste at QVM correctly was developed for stallholders, particularly targeting butchers, fishmongers, delicatessens, and fruit and vegetable stallholders. A brochure on QVM's sustainability initiatives and how it manages waste was also produced as part of the project.

The videos clearly communicate QVM's recycling goals, along with the challenges and benefits associated with organics recycling. They include footage of QVM management demonstrating how to segregate and sort waste for recycling.

The videos are now part of QVM's Stallholder Induction Program, and through QVM's Trader's Bulletin, stallholders are periodically reminded of the videos and their waste management principles.

QVM recognised from the outset that the project would need strong communication and engagement with stallholders. This happened throughout, with stallholders' feedback given consideration and all of their queries about waste management answered.

WHAT WAS THE RESULT?

- Within 10 months of the project's completion, **recycling at QVM had increased from 50% to 66%**. This statistical improvement in waste management had tangible results in the observed cleanliness of QVM laneways.
- After fruit and vegetable stallholder feedback – and following waste audit results – **additional 240 litre general waste and 240 litre organic waste bins were provided** to stallholders to help them sort and manage their waste.
- **QVM found that contamination of recyclable materials reduced**. This change meant QVM's organic waste could be sent to a recycling facility more than 120 kilometres closer to the market than the one used previously. This helps QVM reduce its greenhouse emissions in line with its commitment to operating with zero carbon emissions by 2027.
- **The project was a success**, with stallholders engaged and enthusiastic about managing their organic waste properly. With awareness raised amongst stallholders, cleanliness has been enhanced, amenity improved and QVM is on track to reaching its goal of diverting 85% of its organic waste from landfill.



Partnership project between MWRRG and QVM

MWRRG research found food and plastic waste represent two of the three highest streams of commercial and industrial waste, offering the greatest opportunity for additional resource recovery. Reducing waste sent to landfill is one of MWRRG's key objectives, and we were proud to work in partnership with QVM to help reach their goal and make the project a success.

[Click here for more information from MWRRG.](#)