



HALVE OUR WASTE in Frankston City

Halving household waste in Frankston City

The issue

In 2010-2011, a kerbside waste audit in Frankston City found that the average household garbage bin contained about 54 percent compostable organic materials, made up mostly of food waste. In that year, 12,665 tonnes of food waste was sent to landfill.

An audit in 2013 gathered detailed information about food waste thrown out by households in the Frankston municipality. It is thought that 66 percent of this food waste was avoidable waste, such as uneaten meals, fresh vegetables, bakery items and fresh fruit (as opposed to unavoidable food waste such as vegetable peelings, bones, eggshells and coffee grounds).

The response

In 2013, Frankston City Council received a grant of \$215,000 through Round Two of the Metropolitan Local Government Waste and Resource Recovery Fund to help fund the Halve Our Waste (HOW) project. HOW aimed to work with the community to reduce waste to landfill (including food waste) and improve recycling.

The project ran for 2 years from 2013 to 2015. It focused on families with children, larger households (more than three people) and schools. Over 3,000 households applied to take part in the project, from which 1,000 households were selected. Twenty two local schools were also selected to participate in the project.

A mix of incentives, education and information supported the participating households and schools to minimise their food waste and to recycle organic waste by composting or worm farming.

A series of focus groups and online surveys helped the council to tailor the project's communications and actions to their population.

Households

One thousand participating households were offered:

Incentives

- A compost bin (free) or worm farm (subsidised) for recycling food scraps
- A \$20 incentive to change to a fortnightly kerbside garbage collection (instead of weekly), processed annually on their rates notice

Education

- Free workshops on topics including: composting and worm farming; shopping with a conscience; cooking with veggies and leftovers; and preserving and bottling
- A 'frugavore' Christmas masterclass
- 'Follow Your Waste' tours which involved visiting SITA's Hallam Road landfill and Polytrade material recycling facility (MRF) in Hampton Park



Frankston City residents learned what organic items to compost



This household is reducing waste

Information

- In print, including toolkits (schools and residents), brochures, fact sheets, posters and stickers
- Online, including a regular HOW e-newsletter with information on meal planning, recipes, food storage, composting and worm farming, etc.

Practical support

- Face-to-face help in setting up compost bins and worm farms
- Access to a dedicated Council Waste Officer
- Access to other HOW participants through a dedicated HOW Facebook group

Encouragement

- A sign for the front fence and garbage bin saying that the household reduces waste to landfill by recycling their food waste

Schools

Twenty-two schools were offered a free compost bin or worm farm and an instructional workshop. In total, 86 teachers and 479 students were reached through the project. Feedback was high and teachers reported a significant increase of knowledge in composting and worm farming as a result of their involvement.

Benefits

The waste audit data indicated that household waste to landfill reduced by 13% and recycling contamination reduced by 5%. This indicates strong support for the uptake of waste avoidance and reduction measures, and a continued emphasis on recycling correctly.

The project is likely to have an ongoing positive effect. At the end of the project 99% of participating households indicated that they were continuing to compost and/or worm farm, and 90% of teachers reported an excellent or very good understanding of composting and worm farming in their school.

Next steps

Frankston City Council is keen to build on the momentum of the HOW project, and is looking for new ways to reduce food waste and encourage residents to recycle and reuse products.

An opportunity is currently being explored in partnership with MWRRG to introduce a food waste collection service to accompany the existing garden organics collection service. This service, which will potentially be delivered in partnership with neighbouring municipalities, will transport food and garden waste to a processing facility where it will be processed into compost.

Conclusion

Frankston City Council has a well-established record of motivating residents to take part in projects to reduce waste. With the support of a grant from the Metropolitan Local Government Waste and Resource Recovery Fund, the HOW project was able to harness the momentum of Frankston's Waste Minimisation and Management Strategy to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill by large households.

Background

A large percentage of the total waste collected by local councils is food waste. Most ends up in landfill where it produces odour and methane, a greenhouse gas that is about 20 times more damaging to the environment than carbon dioxide. Food waste in landfill is a lost resource that could be recycled into compost to improve soil health and productivity.

It is a priority for councils to stop food waste from entering landfill. Reducing the amount of household food waste makes environmental and financial sense for local government and the community, and is a practical activity that can fit into the day-to-day running of most households.

For more details about this project contact Frankston City Council on 1300 322 322.

This project received funding as part of the Metropolitan Local Government Waste and Resource Recovery Fund.