



# DISCUSSION PAPER: FOOD WASTE

## Draft Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030

This discussion paper is part of consultation on the draft Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030. We are seeking views via our website at [participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/waste-resource-strategy](https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/waste-resource-strategy)

A large amount of food is wasted each year by City of Melbourne residents, businesses and our own operations. City of Melbourne has only a limited level of control over food waste disposal as most of this material is generated by businesses. Household garbage bins typically contain around 50% food waste: an estimated 12,500 tonnes of food waste per year for City of Melbourne residents. Business surveys have indicated that 64,400 tonnes of organic waste is discarded per year, of which one quarter is collected for recovery. Much of this waste could be avoided. While some food is rescued for use by food charities, composted or processed on-site or collected for processing, a large amount is still being landfilled.

## What are the current issues?

**Economic impact** - The economic impact of current food production, purchase, use and disposal practices are substantial. Individual households lose between \$2,200 and \$3,800 and the overall economy loses \$20 billion annually.

**Environmental impact** - The breakdown of organic waste in the anaerobic (oxygen-free) conditions in a landfill creates methane, a greenhouse gas with 25 times the global warming impact of carbon dioxide.

**Separation of food waste** - Collecting food waste for recovery requires residents or businesses to separate their food scraps and have this collected in a dedicated bin. This requires additional effort, adequate bin storage space and education on what can be recovered.

**Current processing capacity** - There is currently only limited food organics reprocessing capacity in metropolitan Melbourne. More capacity is needed to recover the large amounts of food waste being produced by residents and businesses.

## What are other cities doing?

There are substantial efforts being made internationally to avoid, reduce and recover food waste. These global best practice ideas can help to inform the right approach for Melbourne.

Food waste avoidance campaigns aimed at providing information to households and businesses include the UN's Think.Eat.Save and the TriFOCAL and Love Food Hate Waste programs in London. Substantial food rescue activities are in place in many cities, capturing food that has become surplus due to low consumer demand, labelling errors, lack of storage space, quality or condition defects or failing to meet product specifications. Food sharing applications or on-line platforms are also being used to reduce food waste.

Food organics collection services are increasingly being implemented in cities such as Copenhagen, Auckland, Toronto, Vancouver and San Francisco.

Formal policy and regulatory measures such as bans on food waste in residual waste bins have been used by cities such as Vancouver.

## What should be done to address these issues in Melbourne?

The actions currently proposed in the Draft Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy include:

- Assessing the costs and benefits of a bin-based organic collection for households and other options for managing organic waste.
- Ensuring that the Queen Victoria Market redevelopment maximises organic waste reduction, food rescue and recovery options.
- Working with the food rescue charity operators to help them expand their reach.
- Working with food businesses, supermarkets and high volume organic waste generators and precincts to separate and recover organics.



City of Melbourne's Degraives Street Recycling Facility collects recycling and food waste from local cafes and restaurants.

## What if?

**The Victorian Government banned food organics from landfill.**

**City of Melbourne's local laws required all food-related businesses to have a food waste reduction plan and a separate collection for food waste.**

**City of Melbourne provided a user-pays food waste collection service for businesses.**

**Incentives were provided for businesses to separate their food waste for recovery.**

**New residential and commercial developments were required to install on-site processing technologies such as in-vessel composting units, dehydrators or worm farms.**

## We want your thoughts

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