

How to start composting for your business



This fact sheet will provide you with the information and tools you need to start composting in your business. Composting may look complex, but the many different methods can be pretty simple once you've found the one that works for your business.

What is composting?

Composting is a natural process in which your food scraps (or other organic matter) are broken down by microorganisms. It has two main benefits:

- Composting is a way to reduce your emissions: when food waste goes to landfill, it emits greenhouse gases.
- Compost can be used as a fertilizer, which reduces the use of chemical options.

DID YOU KNOW?



If 1% of all Australian food scraps were composted instead of thrown away, it would save 45 million kg of CO₂ from being released.
[Source: ABC]

How your business can start, step by step

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Reduce your waste

The waste minimisation and management guidelines in the ECO Certification ensure you have measures in place to reduce your waste. Ecotourism Australia has also developed additional fact sheets to help you:

- Food waste fact sheet
- Plastic free business tips (for food service businesses)



Conduct a waste audit

Understanding the types and amount of waste your business produces is vital. If you are unsure, conduct a waste audit during operating hours or at the end of the day. This entails going through the waste and separating it into three groups to then weigh and record the total amount of:

- Organic waste,
- Commingled recycling,
- General waste.

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Separate your waste

Once you have a good understanding of the types of waste you're producing, it's time to implement the separation process into your everyday procedures.

Similar to the audit, you will need a clearly labelled organics waste bin, commingled recycling bin & a general waste bin.

At this point it is imperative to inform and train staff in how the separation process works and what you're aiming to achieve, for example:

- What exactly is organic waste,
- What needs to be separated,
- Why you are doing this.

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Choose a composting option

After you've successfully separated your waste, it's time to compost. There are several ways of going about this process (see next section), so pick which one works best for you:

- Compost yourself;
- Community composting;
- Organic waste collections.



Use your compost

Now that you've successfully started and maintained your own compost, it's time to put it to good use.

Compost is the best material to condition and enliven your soil. By adding the finished product to your lawn, veggie or herb garden, you're certain to grow healthier plants that are naturally disease and insect resistant. If you've got spare or leftover compost, reach out to your local community. Landscapers and recreational gardeners are always looking for quality compost.

Composting options

Compost yourself

Several composting methods exist and your choice will mostly depend on your available space and amount of food scraps you need to compost. Each method requires different maintenance and processes.



A few examples of composting methods:

- **In-ground composting:** burying your food waste into the ground is free, but you need space, it is more work for your staff and it can attract pests.
- **Closed bins:** usually bottomless, these are ideal if you have space outside. This is a cheap system that can handle large volumes, however there's a risk of attracting pests.
- **Tumblers:** these are closed and off the ground (making them less likely to attract pests), but more expensive.
- **Worm farms:** can be kept indoors and this composting method does not require a garden. However, the maintenance is more complex.
- **Bokashi composting:** as with the worm farm, it can be kept indoors, but you will need a space to bury the final waste. It is easy and convenient to use as any food scraps can go in it, but the bucket is small and the process when it is full takes more time.

The Bokashi website has summarised the pros and cons to help you find out which method works best for you.

Community composting

More and more community council composting stations are popping up in local suburbs.



Check with your regional council to see if there is one near you. If not, visit sharewaste.com and connect with a local host who is willing to accept your scraps.

Organic waste collections



Search online to find businesses that offer organic waste collection services in your region.

Sharewaste.com is a free initiative that connects people and promotes community composting.

Instead of throwing out your organic waste, become a waste donor! Search the site map to find a local host that will accept your garden and food scraps. If you have your own compost going, become a host.

By joining ShareWaste, you will not only be diverting your organic waste from landfill, but you will also be actively building stronger relationships with your local community!



In Action!

Mt Barney Lodge (ECO certified since 2002) has joined the ShareWaste economy revolution!

While the lodge has been composting its organic waste for years, the owners reached out to the local community and connected with Hummingbirds Pantry and Café. By doing so, Mount Barney Lodge has not only "closed the loop" on the Hummingbirds Café's business practices, but are also providing a leading example to the wider community.

