

# Small change, big difference – a community engagement campaign for successful FOGO implementation

## COUNCIL NAME

Randwick City Council

## WEB ADDRESS

[randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://randwick.nsw.gov.au)

## SIZE

37 square kilometers

## POPULATION

156, 000

## Overview

The introduction of a Food Organics and Garden Organics collection service to Randwick represented a substantial change to residents' usual waste management practice and a major challenge particularly in multi-unit dwellings. Council developed and ran a comprehensive community engagement and education campaign using multiple channels, with a mixture of behavioural change strategies, traditional marketing, and digital marketing tools to engage a diverse community of residents. This creative engagement program resulted in a 28% reduction in the content of household waste bins and a 75% increase in organics recycling, with only a very minimal level of contamination.

## Background

Randwick Council's Waste Management Strategy articulated Council's strategic direction for the implementation of FOGO. Audits of household bins showed that food remained the highest single component (38%) in the waste bins. Diverting food waste and other organics into a FOGO bin was expected to increase Council's landfill diversion from kerbside bins to over 70%.

A FOGO service requires a substantial change to the waste management practices of households and overcoming the perception that FOGO is "dirty", which was a major challenge particularly in multi-unit-dwellings.

The objectives of the FOGO behavioural change program were to:

- Implement an engagement plan that would result in a high level of FOGO awareness in the community, and
- Encourage a high participation rate and low contamination.

These objectives were based on the principle that the recovery of food and garden organics is an important tool in diverting waste from landfill and that if collected and processed appropriately can be turned into compost to improve soil health.

## Implementation

Council's comprehensive education and communications plan detailed the milestones for a three staged campaign. In the first stage "FOGO is coming", the goal was to raise awareness of the impact of food waste going to landfill and beneficial use of food waste when composted. It also let residents know about the FOGO waste service. The second stage, "How to FOGO" focused on how the new service would work, and how to use the bins properly. And the final stage "FOGO like a Pro" had a focus on keeping residents motivated while addressing common concerns raised by the community.

A wide range of communications including street banners, bus shelter ads, cinema, digital and print advertisement, posters and brochures and social media promoted the FOGO messaging with key materials translated into five languages. Videos were prepared involving Randwick's local FOGO ambassador, Costa Georgiadis providing tips and hints for successful food organics recovery. A welcome pack was delivered door-to-door to all households, information stall 'pop ups' were set up and Council staff established a network of FOGO 'champions'.



Kitchen caddy and compostable liners were delivered to all households



Council staff along side FOGO ambassador Costa Georgiadis

## Outcomes

Council undertook waste composition audits of waste and garden organic bins prior to the new service commencing along with follow-up audits three months after the service had been implemented to measure outcomes.

The audit results confirmed that more than 70% of food waste from the waste bin was being removed through the new service. Between March and June 2021, over 1000 tonnes of FOGO was collected on average per month, which represents a 75% increase on the garden organics alone which was previously being collected. In addition, a contamination rate of only 1.5% was also achieved, an exceptional result.

The FOGO engagement campaign used the simple message “Small Change, Big Difference” to show that the little effort required to recycle food waste through the FOGO bin would reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and produce compost for farms. More than 120 residents volunteered to become FOGO ‘champions’ and an online survey showed that 86% of the respondents had heard of the new FOGO service. There were more than 8,000 hits across the Council’s website at its peak.

The engagement and education campaign has led residents of Randwick to become increasingly accustomed to recycling their food waste and solidify source separation behaviour.

## Key Learnings

Council only had a short lead time to implement the FOGO service which led to challenges engaging key stakeholders and educating building managers around how to manage food collection in MUDs. This presented an early barrier along with limited options around processing infrastructure.

The implementation of a comprehensive school education program would have contributed to enhanced results but key successes from the campaign included timely response times to resident enquiries and a multifaceted communication and engagement approach. Ongoing education programs including contamination management projects will focus on maintaining low contamination and high participation in FOGO.

## Contact

**Name:** Talebul Islam  
**Position:** Coordinator Strategic Waste Management  
**Phone:** 0408 298 945  
**Email:** [talebul.islam@randwick.nsw.gov.au](mailto:talebul.islam@randwick.nsw.gov.au)

This project was the 2021 winner of the Behaviour Change in Waste Award at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards