

News Release

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Hon Gail Gago
Minister for Environment and
Conservation
Minister for Mental Health and Substance
Abuse
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health

Thursday, 14 February 2008

**** Today's forum runs to 1pm at the Adelaide Convention Centre.**

STRONG INTEREST IN FOOD SCRAP PILOT

There's been strong interest in the Rann Government's proposed system to remove food scraps from South Australia's household waste bins, with 24 councils signing up for the next step.

Minister for Environment and Conservation Gail Gago says representatives from the councils are attending a forum today to gather more information about the proposal, before deciding to commit to the project.

"This is a visionary opportunity for councils to demonstrate their green credentials and leadership on a national level," says Minister Gago.

"I applaud those involved for taking this step toward an opportunity which will see our State set the national agenda in yet another area of recycling.

"Councils who decide to sign up for the pilot will be committing to an ongoing project of collections that extends beyond the initial 3 months associated with gathering data.

"The kerbside collection of food waste, which will be placed in a compostable bag in the garden organics bin represents a major milestone in SA's waste strategy.

"It can go a long way to helping achieve the 2010 State Waste Strategy target of recycling 75% of material collected at our kerbsides," says Minister Gago.

South Australian councils that introduced three-bin systems in the past three years have led to an increase in household recycling from 25% to 50% for the metropolitan area and about 45% overall.

A catalyst for this remarkable achievement has been the State Government's provision of some \$4.8 million in financial incentives since 2004 for councils to upgrade their recycling systems.

However, around 40% of what is left in the household waste bin is food, and removing this waste would result in a total diversion rate of about 76%.

Diverting this food waste from landfill creates valuable compost that can enrich our soils and save on water consumption as opposed to creating methane within landfill, a damaging greenhouse gas.

A successful trial undertaken with Burnside Council in 2005-06 showed the technical feasibility of food waste collections and a high level of community support for the service.

During the trial residents used a small ventilated basket lined with compostable bags to collect peelings, vegetables and meat scraps.

Councils can consider repeating this system in the proposed pilot and potentially combining it with the option of a fortnightly residual waste collection service.

Councils will be expected to implement a comprehensive community information program to support the pilot and to have policies in place to address the needs of residents if they need extra bin space.

^ Councils that have signed up for the forum are listed at www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au (follow quick link on right for 'food waste pilot' or http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/reg_orgs_zwsa_food_forum.html

- Please note that residents have been discouraged from placing food waste in the garden organics bin because compost processors have had to introduce extra measures to handle the waste in the processing system. Only residents participating in the proposed pilot will be able to put the food waste in their garden organics bin.

For further information contact Nicole Thomas on 8463 3460 or 0488 588 710
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