



## **AUSTRALIAN ORGANICS RECYCLING ASSOCIATION BACKS INTERNATIONAL COMPOST AWARENESS WEEK 2-8 May 2016**

### **Organics Recycling and the Return of Compost to Soils Delivers Fundamental Solution to Climate Change, Food Security and Resource Management around the World, declares international network of organics recycling advocates**

*The Australian Organics Recycling Association, European Compost Network, Composting & Anaerobic Digestion Association of Ireland, The Compost Council of Canada, and the US Composting Council join in common voice during International Compost Awareness Week 2016 to encourage the recycling of organic residuals and compost use for improved soil health and climate change mitigation*

Recycling organic residuals instead of throwing them in the garbage is the first step to capturing the full potential that these under-recognised resources can play to address a wide range of current global environmental issues. And on the occasion of *International Compost Awareness Week 2016* (May 2 – 8), a global network of organisations, devoted to organics recycling and compost use, are combining their efforts to bring attention to the multiple benefits to be realised when organic residuals are viewed as resources rather than waste.

While details vary amongst countries and continents, the following facts and benefits about organics recycling and compost use transcend political and cultural boundaries:

- The use of landfill space and incineration can be reduced by at least one-third when organics are recycled. Focused attention on recycling organic residuals is key to achieving high diversion rates.
- Methane, a greenhouse gas twenty-five times as powerful as carbon dioxide, can be significantly reduced through the recycling of organics instead of their being landfilled.
- Soil health and productivity is dependent on organic matter in the form of compost or humus to provide the sustenance for the biological diversity in the soil. Plants depend on this to convert materials into plant-available nutrients and to keep the soil well-aerated. Additional benefits include the reduced need for pesticide usage to ward off soil-borne and other plant diseases.
- Soil erosion is mitigated and water-holding capacity improved through compost's enhancement of soil structure which helps bind soil particles together. Without good soil structure, soil erosion can remove nutrients from the soil as well as carry sediments into waterways thereby creating new sources of pollution.
- Compost offers a significant answer to climate change mitigation. Compost's return to the soil serves as a "carbon bank", helping to store carbon thereby removing it from the atmosphere.

“Through organics recycling, quality soil can happen naturally. But it’s based on one main equation: what you take out, you must put back in. The ongoing addition of organic matter and compost provides soil with the texture, structure and nutrients needed to create a positive environment for plant growth.” Said Paul Coffey, Chairman of AORA.

“AORA also sees International Compost Awareness Week as a great opportunity to highlight the problem contamination in our organics recycled streams, banning of single use plastic bags and the use of certified compostable bags can assist in the source separation of organics and enable the best compost to be produced.” Said Mr Coffey.

Throughout International Compost Awareness Week, community events will be held to encourage and celebrate organics recycling. All types of organics recycling – from “do it yourself” composting in your backyard, community garden or nearby community centre to large-scale community-wide composting and anaerobic digestion – are being promoted. The importance of the use of compost to bring Life back to the soils for strong, healthy plant growth, improved water quality and conservation is also being highlighted.

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