



Instructions and steps in organising an ICAW Event

Background

International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) is the largest and most comprehensive education initiative of the compost industry. It is internationally celebrated each year in the first full week of May and was established in Canada in the mid 1990s.

ICAW is a multi-media publicity and education event that showcases composting and compost products. It features everything from composting in your backyard to large-scale commercial composting facilities and businesses serving entire communities. In Australia, ICAW is promoted by both AORA and CORE.

AORA wants to support their members to undertake promotional activities to communicate with key internal and external stakeholders. We have prepared this document to assist members with these activities.

2017 Theme

This year's ICAW theme is **Compost! Healthy Soil, Healthy Food**. The week is designed to promote the benefits of composting and compost for effective resource management, soil health and plant growth. The theme for 2017 also feeds into the AORA National Conference – taking place in Adelaide between 10-12 May, that will celebrate *Recycled Organics: Healthy Food, Healthy Soil in a Circular Economy*.

How to get Involved

Any event you are considering holding as a part of your usual business promotion can be promoted under the ICAW banner.



Browse the Compost Week menu for tools and ideas to help you celebrate International Compost Awareness Week! <http://compostfoundation.org/Portals/2/Images/Celebrate-ICAW-manual17.pdf>

The US Composting Council has suggested almost 20 different ICAW event ideas. Please visit their manual for further [suggestions](#). For overall simplicity and benefit, AORA suggests three simple activity options as follows:

- Host your Local Member of Parliament
- Undertake a mini local community project
- Host a community open day and invite locals to visit your site.

Please see individual “how to” sheets below to assist you in organising your chosen activity. These sheets are simply a guide, so feel free to add as little or as much as you would like. Please also use the sample [media release](#) which accompanies these instructions. Insert all of your own details by replacing the red sections and issue as your own release.

Register your event

Once you have locked your event in, please register your event with AORA by emailing admin@aora.org.au and include your event date, name and details. AORA will ensure this is posted online as well as sharing the information with CORE to ensure your event promotion is maximised.



HOW TO ORGANISE A LOCAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT VISIT FOR ICAW

Arranging a visit by a local MP to your site is a great way to continue or establish an excellent working relationship with your local elected official. It is a great way to highlight the benefits of your business and for you to demonstrate why your operation is so important to the local community, in terms of employment and environmental factors. See [capability statement](#) on AORA website for full benefits.

Step One – Confirm that this option is the best suited option to your current circumstances.

Ask your colleagues for feedback.

Step Two – Identify if you'd like to invite your State or Federal MP or both.

You may also like to invite a neighbouring MP if you are very close to a boundary or your services extend into their electorate.

Step Three – Invite your MP in writing by either letter or email.

Often an initial phone call can help to identify the most suitable date and time which can then be followed up by an email. Be sure to include and promote that you're a member of AORA. Understand when their parliamentary sitting days are and when their electoral days are as this will be the day which they are most likely to visit. As a guide, MPs normally reserve none sitting days and Fridays as electoral days.

Step Four – Schedule

Once a time and day is locked in, design a simple schedule around the time you have been allocated, this will normally be around 30-45 minutes. A simple sit down discussion with a tea/coffee followed by a tour is a simple option. Include a photo opportunity in the morning for your local media, your social media channels, as well as for the MP to promote themselves. Many of them Tweet their activities.

Step Five – Tell your local media

An initial phone call or email with your local newspaper editor, or radio station producer is a good way to gauge their interest and put ICAW on their radar. Let them know what you have planned, who is attending – including your VIPs, and the time and place of your photo opportunity. Remember to schedule the opportunity in the morning before the newspapers



are 'put to bed' around 3pm. See example media release [here](#). You will need to be available on the day for any potential radio interviews (which often take place first thing during breakfast radio).

Step Five – do your research and practice your key messages

Undertake some research to find out the MP's background, political party, interests, policy agenda and where they stand on local issues. This information can again be found on the relevant parliamentary websites, their social media pages, or via some online searches. Understanding this information will enable you to relate to them better and link your organisations priorities to their agenda. For example, if the MP doesn't have an environmental or ag background then forget about discussing the soil chemistry but instead they may be a keen sportsperson who loves footy or cricket, therefore highlight how your compost improves sports fields and mentioned some cases or opportunities locally.

Checklist on the Day

- Confirm the times and ensure all staff are briefed
- Ensure all WHS and regulatory requirements comply with the visit and tour
- Ensure relevant PPE is issued to each visitor
- If media is unable to attend then be sure to take high resolution photos (landscape) and send them to the media and MP's office
- Get on your Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social pages – always post with a photo and use the hashtag **#ICAW2017**. ICAW is also a great opportunity to capture visual content for your YouTube channel.
- Potentially give the MP a small bag of compost to try on their garden at home. Ensure it is worth only a few dollars to avoid it being classed as a "gift."
- Make a note to write a thank you letter or email after the visit and follow up with any information which might address their questions (see compostforsoils.com.au).

You can also send a follow up media release with your photo after the event.



HOW TO ORGANISE A COMMUNITY OPEN DAY FOR ICAW

A community open day is a great opportunity to invite the public to come and learn all about organics recycling and how your facility processes organic material for beneficial reuse. It is also a great way to develop positive relationships with any neighbouring residents, dispel myths, educate, and highlight the overall benefits of your operation – as well as promote any special ICAW offers!

It is always best to keep these events as simple as possible. The following steps are suggested:

Step One – Decide on a day which best suits your site and is in, or either side of 7-13 May 2017.

Step Two – Arrange your scheduled time into organised streams or tours. This is the best approach to keep your guests together, reduce any safety risks and offer the best experience to your guests. You may also elect to undertake a school tour as well which will need to be held on a school day.

Step Three – Advertise your day and the benefits in attending. This might include giveaways of compost, free gifts for the kids or other products of your choosing. You could negotiate paid advertising with your local paper for the possibility of some editorial coverage. You could also undertake free advertising by promoting to your existing contacts, putting a sign up, or doing a local letter box drop. Ask your local school(s) if they'd like to attend and if not, go to them. Get on your Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social pages – always post with a photo and use the hashtag **#ICAW2017**. ICAW is also a great opportunity to capture visual content for your YouTube channel. Be sure to include and promote that you're a member of AORA and use the AORA members' logo, email admin@aora.org.au if you don't have a copy.

Step Four – Put together a basic plan on how you will run the tours, key points, and which staff will do what. This will change from site to site and the quantity of people attending, however you will have done tours in the past so follow what you know.



Step Five – **Run your tours and ask people if they'd like further information on anything that you can follow up with.**

Feel free to point them to the Compost for Soils website where many fact sheets and suppliers can be found.

Checklist on the Day:

- Confirm the times
- Ensure all staff are briefed
- Ensure all WHS and regulatory requirements comply with the visit and tour
- Ensure relevant PPE is issued to each visitor in accordance with your site requirements
- If media is unable to attend then be sure to take high resolution photos (landscape) and send them to the media and use in your own publications
- Potentially give away small bag of compost to try on their gardens at home
- Collect all contact emails on the day and write a thank you email to attendees.

Please use sample [media release](#) and insert your details, then issue to your local media.



HOW TO ORGANISE A MINI COMMUNITY PROJECT FOR ICAW

A mini community event is a great way to extend your company's reach and generosity into the local community as well as highlighting your corporate social responsibility (CSR) in a positive and genuine way. It can also be used as a catalyst for community change and to start a process which might be overdue and in high demand from the community. Great starting points are school gardens, sensory gardens at nursing homes and community veggie patches on public land in partnership with a local council. Also, look out for existing projects where you can value add.

Step One – Decide on the most appropriate and highest demand mini project which is also within your capacity and budget.

Remember that follow up work may be required.

Step Two – Decide on a day which best suits your staff, local needs and is in the first week of May or either side.

Step Three – Arrange a time and organise a plan.

Include which staff will do what, this will change from site to site and the number of people attending. This is the best approach to keep your activity well-coordinated, minimise any safety risks and offer the best experience for everyone involved. You may also elect to undertake a school mini project, which should always be well planned and organised in consultation with a teacher.

Step Four – Advertise your day and the benefits in attending.

This might include giveaways of compost, prizes, free gifts for the kids, education material or other products of your choosing. You could negotiate paid advertising with your local paper for the possibility of some editorial coverage. You could also undertake free advertising by promoting to your existing contacts, putting a sign up or doing a local letter box drop. Get on your Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social pages – always post with a photo and use the hashtag **#ICAW2017**. ICAW is also a great opportunity to capture visual content for your YouTube channel. Be sure to include and promote that you're a member of AORA and use the AORA members' logo, email admin@aora.org.au if you don't have a copy.



Step Five – Run your mini project.

Ensure you involve everyone. Volunteers like to be valued and feel like they are doing worthwhile tasks. Follow up with support information, feel free to point them to the Compost for Soils website where many fact sheets can be found.

Checklist on the Day

- Confirm the times
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are briefed and prepared (working with children checks may be required)
- Ensure all WHS and regulatory requirements comply with the visit. Undertake a safety and risk assessment before starting any work
- Ensure relevant PPE is arranged
- If media is unable to attend, then be sure to take high resolution photos (landscape) and send them to the media and use in your own publications
- Potentially give the site, school, or location a small gift as well to complement their garden.
- Make a note to write a thank you letter or email after the visit.

Please use sample [media release](#) and insert your details, then issue to your local media.