

14.10 THE 2023 NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

D2023/06339

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to attend the 2023 the 29th National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) to be held in Canberra from 13 – 16 June 2023 and to support the Town of Bassendean's FOGO motion, as attached.

KEY POINT(S)

- The NGA is organised annually by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).
- The purpose of the NGA is to build the profile of local governments nationally.
- Councils are encouraged to canvas ideas via motions which are then debated at the annual NGA.
- Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) processing is of national importance and interest and therefore is considered a suitable topic for a motion, to be debated nationally.
- Regional Councils are not permitted to submit motions, as motions must come from individual Councils.
- The Town of Bassendean will be submitting the proposed motion regarding the need for federal funding to progress FOGO processing facilities.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council:

1. Supports the FOGO motion put forward to the 2023 National General Assembly of Local Government by the Town of Bassendean forming the attachment to this report.
2. Approves the EMRC Chief Executive Officer to attend the 2023 National General Assembly of Local Government in Canberra from 13 - 16 June 2023 at an estimated cost of \$3,000.

SOURCE OF REPORT

Chief Sustainability Officer

BACKGROUND

- 1 The Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) mission is to champion and strengthen Australian Councils by representing the agreed position of ALGA members and the seven state/territory local government associations who represent the 537 Australian councils.
- 2 Part of ALGA's remit is to host the annual NGA, the purpose of which is, to build the profile of local governments nationally and to demonstrate to the Australian Government the strength and value of working with local governments.
- 3 As part of the NGA, debates on submitted motions provide a platform to canvas ideas and potential solutions to challenges facing councils and communities, nationally.

- 4 Outcomes of debated motions, become NGA Resolutions, that can then be used by participating councils to inform their own priorities and to advocated to the Federal Government and Federal Members of Parliament (MPs)

REPORT

- 5 The EMRC was keen to put before the NGA a motion seeking Australian Government investment in national FOGO processing infrastructure.
- 6 On contacting ALGA the EMRC was informed that Regional Councils are not eligible to submit motions and that this was best done by one of our member Councils.
- 7 In this regard the Town of Bassendean offered to submit the motion.
- 8 The EMRC CEO is prepared to travel to the NGA to be a part of the national conversation around FOGO processing infrastructure and to support the Town of Bassendean motion (attached) and is therefore seeking Council approval to undertake the necessary travel.

STRATEGIC/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 9 Reporting on EMRC Strategic Policy implications align with the revised 10 Year Strategic Plan 2017-2027 and the Sustainability Strategy 2022/2023 – 2026/2027:
Goal – To Demonstrate Circular Economy Leadership
Target – 80% resource recovery of waste generated in the region by 2030
Goal – To Respond to a Climate Emergency
Target – Infrastructure adaptation and education by 2030
Target – Below zero emissions by 2040
- 10 In addition to the above, 'Council Policy 6.3 Attendance at Events', covers attendance at events and is consistent with this recommendation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11 A budget allocation for EMRC travel, accommodation and attendance at conferences is included in the 2022/2023 EMRC budget.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 12 The recovery of organics is a key sustainability consideration.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk – Non-Compliance with Council Policy		
Consequence	Likelihood	Rating
Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate
Action/Strategy		
<p>➤ Approval be sought for the CEO to attend the 2023 National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) to be held in Canberra from 13 – 16 June 2023 and to support the Town of Bassendean motion on FOGO processing infrastructure.</p>		

MEMBER COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS

Member Council	Implication Details
Town of Bassendean	} Nil direct impact
City of Bayswater	
City of Kalamunda	
Shire of Mundaring	
City of Swan	

ATTACHMENT(S)

Town of Bassendean NGA Notice of Motion (D2023/06339)

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple Majority

RECOMMENDATION(S)

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COUNCIL RESOLUTION(S)

MOVED

SECONDED

2023 National General Assembly Draft Motion

Australian Government investment in Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) processing infrastructure

MOTION

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to commit to appropriate funding mechanisms for the establishment of Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) processing facilities, nationally; as an undertaking to co-partner with local governments and their regional associations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills, closing the loop on a priority waste stream and progressing healthy soils initiatives.

National Objective

Why is this a national issue and why should this be debated at the NGA? (max 200 words)

This motion aligns with the NGA's 6th priority area "Climate Change and Renewable Energy" and in particular 'lowering carbon emissions and responding creatively to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills'.

The lack of FOGO processing capabilities across the nation is a significant concern as the various states and local governments attempt to reduce methane emissions by diverting organic waste from landfill. Source separation and recycling of household organic waste aligns with Commonwealth, State and Local Government strategies for waste reduction, reuse and recycling. The development of circular economy processes adds real value to local communities via the production of new circular materials, job creation and economic development.

Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) accounts for one third of the total waste stream and FOGO accounts for approximately 50% of MSW. Lack of FOGO processing infrastructure is a serious impediment to achieving state and national net zero emission targets. Many local governments lack the resources to underwrite the establishment of new FOGO processing infrastructure, upgrade existing GO facilities or to expand existing processing infrastructure to receive increasing volumes of FOGO material. This fact is a significant impediment to the adoption of FOGO programs at a local level.

Summary of Key Arguments

Background information and supporting arguments (max 500 words)

FOGO is the single biggest high impact emissions mitigation action currently available at a household level. FOGO processing is a joint responsibility of local, state and federal government, with local government's role as community implementor and catalyst and state/federal government joint role as policy makers, funders and change-makers.

There is a lack of adequate FOGO processing infrastructure across the nation, to receive the expected volumes of FOGO material once all local governments have introduced a third bin (FOGO bin). FOGO is food organics and garden organics collected from households, which have been separated at the source, to reduce contamination.

FOGO is screened, composted and combined with other organic materials to produce a range of Australian Standard Soil Conditioners and Mulch products with the products used in a range of applications from urban amenity to agriculture.

Establishing FOGO processing facilities will result in the production of composted soil conditioner that can be incorporated into topsoil to improve growing properties; and

composted mulch to be applied to the soil surface to protect topsoil, retain moisture, prevent runoff, suppress weeds.

Environmental benefits include:

- Greenhouse gas savings equivalent to 0.22 Tco₂-e per household pa. as a result of diverting FOGO from landfill
- Building soil health and biodiversity
- Improving soil water retention
- Reducing reliance on synthetic fertilisers
- Using material close to the source to reduce transport emissions
- Returning organic matter to the carbon deficient soils
- Achieving net zero targets, nationally

Key facts about FOGO processing:

- FOGO derived products are processed to meet Australian Standards AS 4454 for composts, soil conditioners and mulches or AS 4419 for topsoils.
- The FOGO process removes physical contamination, and pasteurisation eliminates pathogens and weed seed propagation.
- Certified fit for purpose FOGO product can be used in major infrastructure projects, used to improve soil health in the agriculture sector and used in landscaping and garden applications, including households.

Investing in FOGO processing facilities will result in:

- Reducing carbon emissions generated from organics decaying in landfill
- Regional prosperity through enduring jobs and growth (National Taskforce extra 6 jobs per 10kT of material)
- Achieving a typical overall recovery rate of 67% with a 3-bin FOGO system where 95% of the FOGO material is diverted from landfill (an average of 300kg per household per annum)
- Delivering state and federal government targets for Carbon Emissions Reduction and the National Healthy Soils Strategy

The business case for FOGO processing facility investment in Australia is compelling and, with assistance from the Federal Government, will support local governments to transition to net zero emissions by 2050. Such collaboration will deliver economic and environmental benefits for the nation.