



# Conducting community education and engagement

FACTSHEET 11

*Food and Garden Organics  
Best Practice Collection Manual*



# Stages of communication

- There are a number of distinct stages to community education and engagement, and the success of these will influence the success and acceptance of your scheme. The stages are:
  1. Pre-launch communications
  2. Information when the service is rolled out
  3. A monitoring and evaluation program
  4. On-going education and communications to householders throughout the life of the collection service.

# Communications Plan

- A communications plan should:
  - Identify target audiences; residents, non-English speaking residents, council customer service officers, media and other stakeholders.
  - List key messages.
  - Identify key issues and how these will be addressed.
  - Summarise communications strategies for each of the target audiences and project phases; before, during, and after roll-out of the scheme.
  - Outline roles and responsibilities of council and other project partners.
  - Outline budget and timelines for actions.

# Pre-launch communications

- 3 to 6 months before the scheme:
  - Provide householders with information about the new service.

Methods include:	Messages include:
information leaflets adverts or notices roadshows media publications council displays	<b>why</b> the new service is required (the 'need') <b>what</b> the new service is, including types of organics householders will be able to recycle <b>when</b> it will be introduced <b>who</b> to contact with queries (for example the number for a helpline, and a website address).

# New service roll-out

- Scheme launch: produce communications materials to support the launch of the service, e.g. a 'service leaflet' outlining:
  - how to participate, i.e. dates and frequency of collection, container use etc.
  - types of organics to recycle
  - who to contact with any queries
  - practical advice on how to make the most of the system and deal with any potential problems.

# New service roll-out (2)

- Include detailed information to include:
  - Whether or not meat and bones can be included
  - Whether or not kitchen towel and soiled paper like pizza boxes can be included
  - Whether scraps from dinner plates and processed food past its expiry date are encouraged or just food items like fruit and vegetable skins
  - How to use newspaper as a liner in the kitchen caddy
  - If liner bags are provided – the difference between compostable, biodegradable and recyclable liners, where to get further bags of the correct type, issues and consequences of using the incorrect liners, how often to change the liners.
  - How to discourage pests, vermin and odours
  - How to wash kerbside bins without polluting stormwater
  - Who to contact if they have a query (e.g. helpline and website).

## New service roll-out (3)

- Your communications plan also needs to respond to any issues that arise during roll-out, such as:
  - Householders using a new liner bag every day thus exhausting their liner allocation
  - An unprecedented hot spell increasing odour and pest issues before householders are familiar and committed to the new service
  - High profile community members or media making incorrect statements about the new service
  - Lack of understanding of the term organics bin to include garden and kitchen 'waste'

# Monitoring and evaluation program

- Monitoring and evaluation program should be considered before scheme inception to:
  - establish a baseline from which outcomes from the scheme can be measured.
  - identify the effectiveness of the communication methods used.



# On-going education and communications

- It is essential to continue education and communications to householders over regular intervals throughout the life of the organics collection service.

# Key issues for consideration

- When planning your community engagement:
  - Prepare a communications plan (12 months before service commences if possible) including a budget, scheduling of when activities should take place and by who
  - Engage the communications/PR departments of council early on when planning and developing communications
  - Senior council management and councillors need early involvement in planning new services to ensure their support
  - Consider a partnership approach with the collection or processing contractor to help resource the communications and to obtain their input
  - A pilot trial provides the opportunity to test communication messages and techniques

NB: Information in this presentation is taken from the *Food and Garden Organics Best Practice Collection Manual* (2012) published by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. The full document is available on the department's website

[www.environment.gov.au/wastepolicy/publications/organics-collection-manual](http://www.environment.gov.au/wastepolicy/publications/organics-collection-manual)