

Tamworth Organic Recycling Facility

Frequently Asked Questions

Organic Recycling Facility

Why does the Tamworth Region need an Organic Recycling Facility?

- In June 2017, Council adopted the Integrated Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy ([the Strategy](#)) that identifies Council's ambitions for sustainable waste management incorporating increased resource recovery and recycling.
- Council's Strategy aligns with both:
 - State Government - Environment Protection Authority's *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy* ([WARR Strategy](#)); and
 - Regional waste policies and strategic themes - Northern Inland Regional Waste Group ([NIRW Waste Strategy](#)).
- In order for Council to improve on the region's waste and resource recovery initiatives and diversion targets, the development of a designated Organic Recycling Facility is necessary.

An Organic Recycling Facility can reduce up to 15,000 tonnes per annum of organic material currently being landfilled.

What is an Organic Recycling Facility?

- An Organic Recycling Facility is a purpose built facility, designed with innovative processing technology to accept and treat organic waste streams to recover valuable products from being landfilled and processed to produce a high end product suitable for landscaping or agriculture purposes.

What is a Tunnel Composting System?

- The process of Tunnel Composting involves the treatment of batched organic products in fully enclosed long ventilated composting tunnels for up to four weeks. Each tunnel operates independently from other tunnels, which allows the Operator more control over the desired processing duration and resultant end product;
- Ventilation within each tunnel is achieved by the incorporation of fans within the structure; and
- To maintain hydration of the material during processing, a water spray system is installed to regulate heat and maintain optimal moisture content of the compost output material.

What types of materials are going to be processed?

- The facility will process a variety of organic materials including Food and Garden Organics and Category 3 Organics, which include meat, fish and fatty foods, fatty and oily sludge's and commercial organics of animal and vegetable origin.

What is the expected processing capacity of the facility?

- The facility will be constructed to initially process up to 35,000tpa; and
- There is consideration for expansion of the facility's processing capacity to 50,000tpa in the future as the growth of Tamworth region and associated industry expands.

Where is the Organic Recycling Facility proposed to be located?

- The proposed location for the development of the Organic Recycling Facility is 284 Gidley Appleby Road, Gidley. The operational footprint of the Organic Recycling Facility is expected to be 5ha on a 117ha property.

How long does the composting process take?

- The entire process is reliant on the quality of the desired end product (i.e. high grade mulch vs soil conditioner) and market demand. However, the process can be broken down into two primary stages:
 - Stage 1 - Pasteurisation: 28 day total resident time within tunnels (2 x 14 day cycles); and
 - Stage 2 - Maturation: minimum 8 weeks in open windrow.

What is the end product suitable for?

- The end products that will be produced through the Organic Recycling Facility will be suitable for landscaping and agricultural uses i.e. high grade mulch, compost and soil conditioners.

Will Council operate the facility?

- No, it is proposed that the Organic Recycling Facility will be operated on behalf of Council by a specialist Operator, with approximately 6 on-site staff;
- The facility will be for commercial customers only; and
- All domestic customers will continue to have access to Forest Road Landfill for drop-off of their greenwaste organic material.

Will the facility be licenced with the NSW Environment Protection Authority?

- Yes, Council will submit an application to obtain an Environment Protection Licence (EPL) with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA);
- An EPL is required by law under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 for certain activities of industrial scale. Licence conditions relate to pollution prevention and monitoring, cleaner production through recycling and reuse and the implementation of best practice methods;
- Council would be listed as the Licence Holder of the EPL, not the specialist Operator; and
- The EPA has powers to compel Licence Holders to take action as required should any environmental issues or concerns be raised regarding the facility's operations.

What are the proposed operational hours:

- During Construction:
 - Monday - Friday: 7am to 6pm; and
 - Saturday (only if required): 8am to 1pm.
- Once Commissioned (dependent on Operator): Monday to Sunday - 8am to 4:45pm.

What are the benefits of an Organic Recycling Facility utilising a Tunnel Composting System?

- Front end:
 - Increases landfill capacity and extends lifespan of landfills by the diversion of organic waste streams;
 - Improved control over: aeration, temperature and moisture; and
 - Reduced operational demand on staff, equipment and costs i.e. limited need for turning material and costs of electricity and fuel.
- Back end:
 - Reduces production of greenhouse gasses within landfills by the diversion of organic waste streams; and
 - Recovers and recycles organic materials into a valuable product suitable for landscaping and agricultural application.

How much is the Project expected to cost?

- The overall expected cost of the Project is estimated at \$15.2 million with \$3 million secured in grant funding under Round 6 of the Organics Infrastructure (Large and Small) Program. The balance of the funding will be provided by Council.

The Project is supported by the Environmental Trust as part of the NSW EPA's Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, funded from the waste levy.

Development Application Process

Is this Project subject to a Development Application?

- Yes, this Project is subject to a Development Application. The Development Application is expected to be submitted in August 2019, which will include a full Environmental Impact Statement and Concept Design placed on Public Exhibition.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

- An Environmental Impact Statement is a document specifically prepared to describe the effects for proposed activities on the environment i.e. impacts to threatened or endangered species (flora and fauna), air and water quality, historical and cultural sites, social and economic impacts, traffic etc.

Key topics that will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement include:

- Air Quality and Odour;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Traffic and Transport;
- Biodiversity;
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Non-Indigenous Heritage;
- Soils and Geology;
- Surface Water Hydrology, Stormwater and Wastewater Management and Groundwater;
- Waste Management;
- Visual Amenity; and
- Cumulative Impacts.

Key Facility Design considerations for mitigation measures include:

- Purchase of a large property;
- Sealed access road from Gidley Appleby Road to operational area on the property;
- Location of operational area towards centre of property;
- Investment in state of the art composting technology: a fully enclosed tunnel composting system;
- Fully enclosed receival shed;
- Biofilter for treatment of extracted air prior to discharge to the surrounding environment;
- One way Traffic flows on property within operational area;
- Re-use of leachate and stormwater through processing; and
- Revegetation activities to: improve nature corridors, aid soil and water conservation, enrich native surrounding plant communities and screen operations.

Is Tamworth Regional Council the determining Authority on the Development Application?

- No, Tamworth Regional Council is not the determining Authority on this Project; and
- This Project is considered to be a Designated Development, and as such, the Joint Regional Planning Panel, which operates across New South Wales to provide independent, merit-based decision making on regionally significant developments will determine the outcome of the Development Application.

Can anyone view the Development Application?

- Yes, once the Development Application is lodged, it will be placed on Public Exhibition. Anyone can view the Application and submit comments or express views regarding the Application; and
- Council will advise land owners of properties adjacent to the proposed site when the Development Application is on public display. The Application will also be advertised in the local newspaper.

How long are the documents displayed on Public Exhibition for?

- The documents must be displayed on Public Exhibition for at least 28 days.

Site Location and Alternative Sites

How did Council identify 284 Gidley Appleby Road as being the proposed site?

- Council undertook a detailed desktop Geographic Information System (GIS) investigation, High Level Environmental Review Assessment, Odour and Wildlife Risk Assessment and Site Inspection before determining 284 Gidley Appleby Road was the most suitable site, within 20km of Forest Road Landfill.

Why can't the facility be established at Forest Road Landfill?

- There is no suitable space available on-site at Forest Road Landfill for the establishment of an Organic Recycling Facility;
- Forest Road Landfill is located in very close proximity to high density residential developments, with insufficient space to establish the required buffer zones to mitigate any potential environmental impacts (i.e. odour, noise, traffic etc.); and
- Forest Road Landfill already receives a high level of traffic flow on a day to day basis with a mix of domestic and commercial customers. Establishing a commercial facility on the same land parcel, would increase the risks associated with traffic movements on site.

Why can't the facility be established in the Industrial area?

- Advice from Wildlife Risk Assessment Consultants has confirmed that Organic Recycling Facilities must be located outside 3km or at least 8km from any airstrip or airport to avoid the potential increased risk from bird strike on aircraft; and
- The Glen Artney Industrial area of Tamworth is within 3km of the airport.

Additional Information and Queries

Will this site become the new future Landfill site once the space at Forest Road Landfill is consumed?

- No, there is no proposal for 284 Gidley Appleby Road to become the next identified Landfill site for the Tamworth Region.

Classification of Land

- Upon any purchase of land by Council, there is a legislative requirement, under the Local Government Act 1993, to classify the use of the land as either 'Operational' or 'Community' under the provisions of that Act. This is not a reclassification, but an initial classification process.

Where can I find out more information?

- <http://www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/Waste/Proposed-Organic-Recycling-Facility>
- <https://yourvoice.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/tamworth-organic-recycling-facility>
- Contacting Megan Mather, Senior Environmental Officer, Tamworth Regional Council (02) 6767 5049.