

FOGO FAQs

(Lots of letters, but it all comes back to u.)

Glenorchy City Council will be introducing a fortnightly FOGO (Food Organics and Garden Organics) kerbside collection service in February 2020.

What does this mean for me?

The new FOGO service will be an easy way to throw away your organic waste. It is best practice for the environment and for waste reduction, because food scraps and garden waste get turned into compost that improve the soil and do not take up Landfill space.

Why is there a FOGO charge on my rates?

Rates are issued once a year and you will see the new FOGO charge for the service that starts in February 2020. The \$35 charge covers collection and treatment costs from February 2020 until June 2020.

How will FOGO save me money?

FOGO helps all ratepayers because it halves the amount of waste sent to Landfill, leaving space for all the garbage that can't be recycled or composted.

Landfill costs are increasing and by introducing FOGO Council is planning ahead to limit the cost risk for ratepayers. By diverting this waste away from Landfill this will maximise the life of landfills and keep costs down.

If you are one of the many thousand residents who pay extra for a larger bin or more frequent collection, by using the FOGO bin you will likely be able to go back to the normal 140L size bin and reduce your costs.

FOGO also helps anyone who drives to the Landfill and pays gate fees for garden waste - FOGO is done for you on your doorstep.

FOGO also helps anyone who currently pays for their garden waste to be taken away.

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waste management

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What CAN I put in my FOGO bin?

Residents will be given a 240-litre wheelie bin for any organic waste, including:

- Food scraps – vegetables, seafood, dairy, meat and bones (cooked or raw), teabags, coffee grounds and egg shells;
- Lawn waste – grass clippings, leaves, bark, twigs and weeds;
- Shredded paper, paper towels, paper napkins and tissues;
- Food-contaminated cardboard (e.g. pizza boxes with food on them);
- Personal cuttings – hair and nails; and
- Animal waste – such as organic kitty litter and soiled paper from bird cages.

What CAN'T I put in my FOGO bin?

If it can't decompose, don't put it in. In general, only things that were once alive or were grown should go in your FOGO bin. This means no:

- Plastics (not even degradable plastic bags)
- Nappies
- Fabric (e.g. clothing)
- Hard waste or broken household items
- Plastic take-away containers
- Hazardous or contaminated waste
- Thick branches; and
- Nothing that is currently allowed to go in your recycling bin.

What are the benefits to me, as a resident?

A FOGO collection will greatly reduce the amount of waste that goes into your general waste bin. This will be convenient if you have difficulty fitting your waste into your existing bin.

If you compost for environmental reasons, a FOGO collection will help you to responsibly dispose of material you wouldn't normally compost at home, like dog poo or meat scraps, which attract vermin.

If you bring green waste to the landfill or pay for a private green waste collection service, you'll no longer need to make those trips, saving you money and time. If you generate a lot of garden waste, you can spread it across multiple collections.

What are the environmental benefits of FOGO bins?

Currently in Glenorchy, more than 50 per cent of our general waste collection (which goes to landfill) is made up of FOGO waste. This equates to more than 4,000 tonnes of waste a year. Additionally, around 3,000 tonnes of garden waste is brought to landfill by residents each year.

The FOGO collection service would divert all this waste from landfill, saving space and reducing greenhouse emissions.

Organic waste decomposes anaerobically (without oxygen) in landfill, producing lots of methane. Methane is about 25 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Currently, some of this methane is extracted from the landfill and burnt to produce power. If FOGO is collected and composted, it breaks down aerobically (with oxygen) and so very little methane will be produced at all.

Collecting FOGO and turning it into a compost product conserves organic compounds and nutrients by returning them to the soil, instead of burning them or burying them where nothing is being grown.

Some people who compost at home are unable to sufficiently aerate their compost so it ends up decomposing anaerobically (without oxygen), which produces methane and can smell and attract rodents. It doesn't produce a very good compost product either.

What will I get as part of the FOGO service?

You will receive a 240-litre wheelie bin with a lime green lid, the same size as your recycling bin. If you have limited space, access or mobility issues you may request a smaller bin. If you currently share recycling and waste bins (for example, where there are multiple units), you will receive a shared bin.

Each household will also be provided with a 7-litre kitchen caddy and a 12 months' supply of compostable liner bags. The caddy is a small bucket with a lid and a handle that you can keep on your kitchen bench to transfer food waste to your wheelie bin.

The service will operate fortnightly in alternate weeks to your general waste collection. Details around arrangements for those who have shared bins will be provided between now and the rollout.

What kind of bin bags can I use?

If you want to put bags in the FOGO caddy or bin, they must be compostable. Biodegradable bags should not be used, as these just break down into smaller fragments of plastic. They do not de-compose.

Will the bins smell?

Combining food and garden waste reduces the impacts of odour from food waste. We will provide important tips on using the bin to help resolve odour issues.

What happens to the waste?

The organics will be mulched together and broken down into compost in a system that makes sure there is enough oxygen for aerobic decomposition. This results in a compost product that is suitable for agricultural and domestic garden use.

Why is council rolling out FOGO?

The community has asked for improved waste services and more regular kerbside services.

Nearly half the residents in Glenorchy use some form of additional service to manage their organic waste, including trash packs, private collections, larger bins, private gardeners or taking green waste to the landfill. The introduction of a FOGO service will provide an affordable service for all residents.

Organics make up nearly half of the waste in the general waste bin. Separating and composting the material will remove it from landfill and reduce the generation of greenhouse gases.

When will the service be rolled out?

The FOGO collection service will commence in February 2020. The wheelie bins will start to be delivered over summer, along with further information prior to the service starting.

What will it cost? Will my rates go up?

The cost of providing the service is estimated at \$2 per week per rateable property. Council has not yet determined exactly how much it will charge. Council will make this decision as part of setting the fees and charges in June 2019.

Council is continuing to work with other southern councils to look at how we can work together to provide scale and encourage processing services closer to Hobart. This will assist in further reducing the cost and providing an affordable service.

Has the community been consulted?

Council conducted an extensive survey to gauge the level of community interest in a FOGO collection service and their willingness to pay for such a service.

The survey indicated significant support from the community, with more than 1,400 survey responses received. Of these responses, 90 per cent identified a FOGO service as either 'important' or 'very important'.

Who will receive the service? Can I apply for the service or get an exemption?

The service will be provided to the majority of residents to ensure it is effective enough to remove waste from landfill, while at the same time ensuring there are enough people to keep it affordable.

Those in the rural resource and rural living zones of Collinsvale and Glenlusk with larger blocks will not receive the service but will be able to apply to receive it. Council will develop a process to allow residents to apply to be exempted. The process will assess residents against criteria to ensure they are effectively managing all their organic waste. Criteria will be developed in consultation with the City of Hobart and other southern councils to ensure a consistent and fair approach. Exemptions will not be available prior to commencing the service. The service will not be automatically provided to businesses, but those entitled to a bin collection service will be able to apply to receive the service.

Council has considered difficulties people might experience and will work with people with special needs, such as those living in unit complexes and group care homes, to make sure bin size and collection arrangements are suitable. Council has also decided to develop a Hardship Policy which will apply more generally to Council charges and is planned to be presented at the June Council Meeting.

We already have a compost system at home. Would I still need a FOGO bin?

We are looking at providing a FOGO collection to all residents, including those who compost. If residents meet certain criteria, they may be able to apply for an exemption of the service. Our bin collection audits have shown us that there are very few residents that currently send no food or garden organics waste to landfill.

A FOGO collection service accepts a greater variety of waste products than a standard home-compost system. For example, you can put meat, seafood and bones into your FOGO bin.

Are other councils doing it?

Yes, in Tasmania so far Launceston, Meander Valley and West Tamar Councils provide a FOGO service. Central Coast Council is planning to introduce a FOGO service in 2019. Hobart currently provides a green waste collection service and is planning to upgrade to a FOGO service. Many interstate and overseas Councils are providing FOGO services.

Can cat and dog poo go in FOGO?

Yes. FOGO is a safer, more hygienic option than home composting dog and cat poo, burying it in your garden or putting it in your general waste bin. FOGO is collected and transported directly to a commercial composting facility where an industrial composting process treats pathogens to an acceptable level. Industrial composting facilities need to go through stringent environmental assessment and regulation. Composting needs to meet relevant Australian Standards (AS 4454-2012) and the facility will regularly test and send off samples of their compost to laboratories to ensure that it does not contain pathogens.

If you have any questions or comments, we encourage you to contact our customer service team on 03 6216 6800 or email gccmail@gcc.tas.gov.au.

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