



JUNE 2024

## Collaborating for success at organics conference

In June, the Queensland Government proudly supported the [Australian Organics Recycling Association \(AORA\) Annual Conference](#), the theme of which was Collaboration for Success – Securing our industry's future.

The Conference, which attracted over 300 attendees from Australia and across the world, provided an opportunity to network with industry leaders and share an overview of the [Queensland Organics Strategy 2022-2032](#) as well as our path to divert 80 per cent of organic material from landfill.

Speakers explored the synergies and differences in government visions, strategies and policies for the organics industry and how we can build greater alignment as we work toward the national commitments and targets for organic material. Other topics that were discussed included building on collaboration between industry and government, research, the value of compost in an agricultural market, and bringing innovative ideas into action.

A range of mulching, shredding and sorting equipment and technology were also demonstrated to provide attendees with an understanding of various machines and their capabilities. *(See image above of mobile screening machine, credit Paul Benjamin Photography)*

The event was full of opportunities for open discussions on challenges while highlighting opportunities and achievements for the organics industry in Queensland.

## Circular Economy Investment Program now open

Funding of up to \$750,000 is available for projects that introduce new, or transition to, circular economy business models or practices.

The Queensland Government is investing a total of \$5 million in the Circular Economy Investment Program to inspire a transition to a system of waste minimisation and avoidance, and retaining resources in circulation at their highest value for as long as possible.

This is an exciting opportunity for businesses and industries to emerge and bring innovative ideas to life.

The Circular Economy Investment Program is open to:

- individual businesses
- industry clusters and/or cooperative groups
- social enterprises
- charities

- not-for-profit organisations
- multisector partnerships - including a mixture of private sector, entrepreneurs, investors, universities and/or non-government organisations.

Applications will be considered for projects that reduce the consumption of raw virgin materials and maintain products at their greatest value for the longest possible time, and those that offer lasting solutions for products or materials that have few or no existing solutions in Queensland.

More information on the [Circular Economy Investment Program](#).

## New environmental laws to help protect communities

New laws have been passed to make sure that companies causing environmental issues are held accountable and act more responsibly.

The changes strengthen the environmental regulator's power to ensure operators are actively preventing harm to the community, punish those breaking the law, and force them to take faster clean-up action.

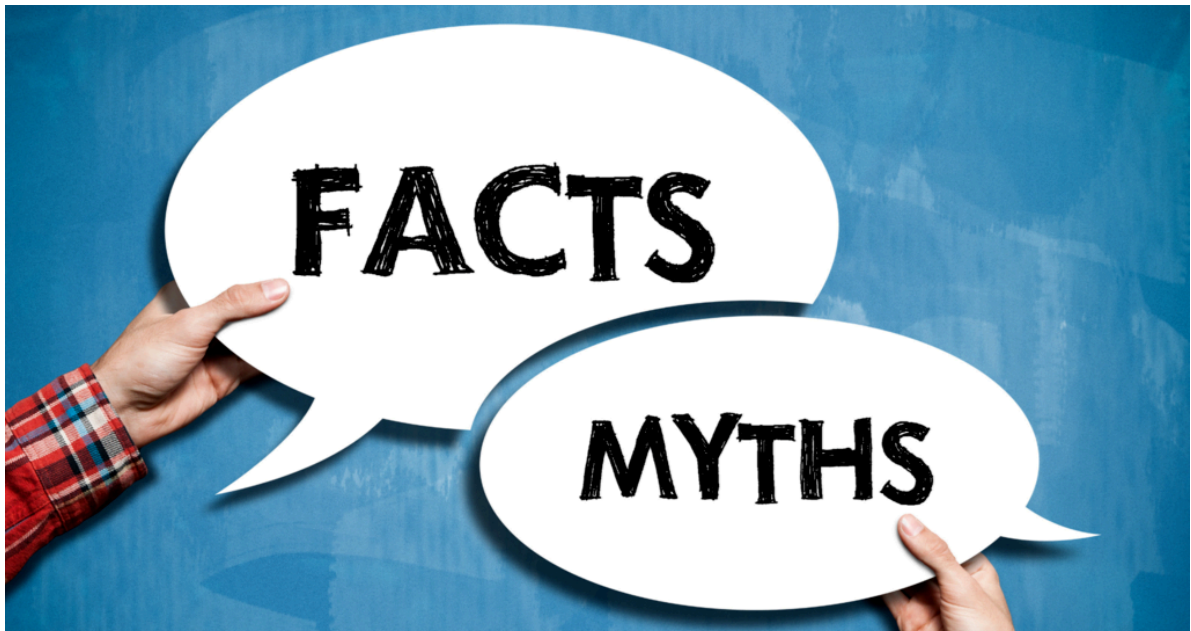
These laws were prompted by odour issues in Ipswich from waste operators not following the rules. The Queensland Government reviewed the laws with help from experts who suggested a more proactive approach to prevent harm in the first place.

The new laws make it clearer that even small environmental annoyances can be considered serious harm. This means the regulator can use more tools and give stronger penalties for persistent issues like odour.

The focus is now on stopping environmental problems before they start, and making sure people's health and safety are priorities.

[More about the review into the powers and penalties available under the Environmental Protection Act 1994.](#)

## Recycling facts and myth busters



### **Local councils have their own rules when it comes to recycling = FACT**

Yes they do. There are 77 councils in Queensland and each has its own policies and infrastructure. This means each council is responsible for what materials are accepted for recycling, how they can be sorted, and how they are collected and processed.

Factors such as local needs, resources, and infrastructure can all influence a council's recycling rules, and they may change over time as technology and practices evolve. Be sure to check your council's recycling

guidelines or check out [Recycle Mate](#) for localised recycling information to recycle more items more often.

### Our recycling just goes to landfill = MYTH

The recycling industry in Australia relies on our household recycling to operate.

In most cases, sending household recyclables to landfill is more expensive for collection companies than recycling.

Here is a simple explanation of what happens when your recycling leaves your yellow lid bin:

1. **Collection:** Your recycling bin is collected and taken to a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF).
2. **Sorting:** At the MRF, recyclables are sorted into categories like paper, plastic, and glass using a mix of manual and high-tech methods.
3. **Pre-sorting:** Before machines take over, workers remove non-recyclable items called contaminants.
4. **Automated sorting:** Machines separate materials further, with magnets picking up steel and scanners identifying paper and plastic.
5. **Processing:** Each material is processed differently; plastics are turned into flakes, paper is pulped and dried, and glass is crushed and melted.
6. **Innovation:** Recycled materials are used to make various new products, contributing to a circular economy and reducing waste in landfills.

[Find out more about household recycling here.](#)

### Littering foods scraps is harmless = MYTH

Food scraps like apple cores might seem like harmless littering, but it can disrupt our natural ecosystems and pollute our waterways.

Leftover food can disrupt the diet of our native animals and seriously harm their health. It may also encourage them to get dangerously close to high-risk areas like roads, putting their lives in danger.

Food scraps break down faster than plastic, but it still takes a long time. An apple core can take around two months to decompose and a banana peel can take up to two years.

[More information on littering.](#)



[Plastic Free July®](#) is a global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution – so we can have cleaner streets, oceans, and beautiful communities.

Will you be part of Plastic Free July by choosing to refuse single-use plastics?

### Down to earth blog



Our expert insights and practical tips will equip you to make informed decisions and embrace behaviours for a healthier planet. [Join us here.](#)

### Funding and grants



Find out about the latest assistance that is available for waste resource and recovery activities [here](#).