

Community Dog Poo Organic Recycling - January 2022



In 2019, Bayside Council (a council in southern Sydney, New South Wales, Australia) commenced a trial to recycle dog poo in ten fenced off-leash dog parks across the local government area.

The objectives of this trial, which was implemented in partnership with Council's Parks and Open Spaces, were to:

- Reduce odour from open-top litter bins
- Increase organic recycling
- Showcase dog poo recycling systems that could be used in homes
- Reduce litter bin collections.

Phase 1

This trial began in mid-2019 and involved a ready-made worm farm bin designed for household use. The bin is designed so that a portion of the bin is underground and allows worm castings from the worms digestion of dog poo to enrich soil around the bin.

These worm farm bins were placed in 10 off-leash dog parks in Bayside from July 2019. Dog poo bag dispensers in the park contain vegetable based compostable bags to be used with the worm farm bins. Standard garbage bins were placed near the worm farm bins to discourage contamination of the dog poo recycling bins with general rubbish.



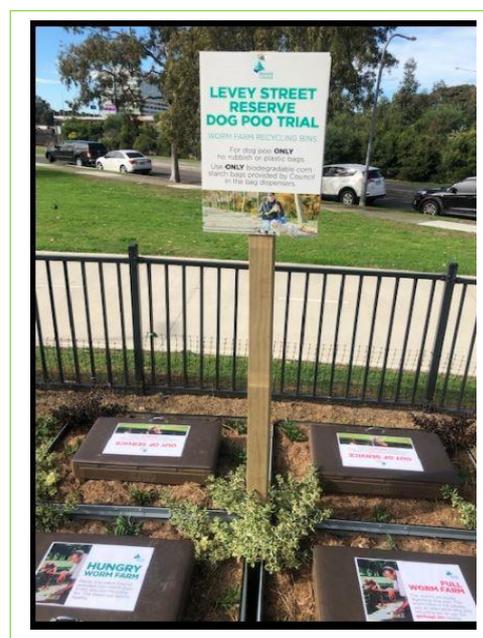
Whilst healthy worm activity and dog poo/bag decomposition was observed in these bins in both 2020 and 2021, there were several issues with the dog poo recycling bins including:

- Contamination - both with non-conforming dog poo bags and general rubbish (approximately 25% of the bin contents by visual inspection)
- Lid breakage (caused by the frequent use compared to household use)
- Time to maintain the system (approximately 4 hours per week) and contamination/overflow issues if staff resources meant that bins couldn't be maintained weekly
- Dog poo bins filling up quicker than the worms could digest due to high usage of the bins.

Phase 2

This trial began in December 2021, and Council has endeavoured to address these issues with the use of a second ready-made worm farm solution.

This solution involves 4 worm farm pods imbedded within a garden bed. These worm farm pods can be rotated to allow worms to digest dog poo in three pods whilst the fourth is open for community use.



Phase 2 has shown many benefits compared to Phase 1, such as:

- The Phase 2 pods and gardens are aesthetically pleasing and enhance the visual appearance of the parks
- As the Phase 2 setup does not look like a bin, contamination was reduced to approximately 10% and is almost entirely non-conforming dog poo bags, not general rubbish
- Whilst the bins still require a similar maintenance time, the pods are not filling up as quick and therefore can be left unattended for longer, for example if the maintenance staff are on leave.

Both systems show healthy worm activity and are considered suitable for at home dog poo worm farms. In the Phase 2 system, migration of the worms from the worm farm into the surrounding garden bed was observed in one instance and may have been due to insufficient moisture in the worm farm. Additional shade or routine watering of the beds is being examined as potential solutions to this issue.

The Phase 2 trial is still at an early stage and future plans include optimising the Phase 2 set up to maximise worm activity; potential quantification of system use with counters or motion sensors; and providing additional education to both encourage correct use of the worm farms and encourage the community to try worm farms for dog poo at home.

Phase 1 of this program contributed to Council winning the Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Sustainable Cities Recycled Organics Award in 2019. Phase 2 has been nominated for the 2021 award in the same category, with award winners being announced in late January 2022. The trial has received favourable feedback and coverage in person, on social media and in local printed media.

Link - [Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Award Nomination - Recycled Organics Award | Bayside Council](#)

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