

## Media Release

5 December 2023

# \$ 7.4 million organics composting facility opens near Mildura

Cleanaway's new organics processing facility near Mildura will soon turn the region's garden waste and food scraps into compost for local farms.

Up to 11,000 tonnes of food and garden organics (FOGO) collected through Mildura Rural City Council's kerbside green bin service, will be processed at Cleanaway's Thurla organics composting facility each year.

The \$7.4 million Thurla facility was officially opened today.

Up until now, Cleanaway has been transporting all Mildura's FOGO to a commercial Cleanaway composting contractor 300 kilometres outside the region.

Environment and Sustainability Portfolio Councillor Jason Modica acknowledged Cleanaway's investment in the Mildura region and commitment to making a sustainable future possible.

"Our community has diverted 40,000 tonnes of organic material from landfill since the kerbside FOGO recycling service started in July 2020," Cr Modica said.

"Landfilling is our single biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and it is an incredibly expensive practise, which is why we all need to keep sorting our waste and recycling as much as possible."

Cleanaway empties around 26,000 green FOGO bins in the Mildura Rural City Council area every week.

Cleanaway's Mildura Branch Manager, Paul Mulder said: "Cleanaway is excited to be able to contribute to Victoria's ambition of reducing food waste sent to landfill through the transition to FOGO.

"Our Blueprint 2030 strategy is committed to building a local circular economy and organics is one way we are bringing this to life. At the same time, the organics strategy is playing an important role in reducing our carbon emissions by diverting food waste from landfill.

"The Thurla facility will play a critical role in supporting the Council and community's transition to FOGO and Cleanaway are proud to be able to support Mildura with this transition."

The collected organic material will be sorted, shredded and heated at the Thurla facility using controlled biological decomposition to produce a high-grade compost.

Construction of Cleanaway's Thurla organics processing facility was assisted by the Australian Government's Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund and the Victorian Government's Circular Economy Organics Sector Transformation Fund.

*ENDS*

### **From organic waste to commercial compost: How the Thurla composting facility works**

1. Cleanaway empties green kerbside bins and delivers food and garden organics (FOGO) to the Thurla composting facility.
2. FOGO travels over a conveyor belt and gets sorted by hand, to remove contaminants such as plastics bags and non-organic material.
3. FOGO is shredded into small pieces and transferred to large concrete bunkers.
4. A Gore-Tex cover is placed over the bunkers, trapping odour and moisture within the bunker.
5. Air is pumped into the bunker via floor channels, supplying the organic microbes with oxygen.
6. The microbial activity generates heat, raising the temperature high enough to destroy pathogens and break down the organic material.
7. The material is 'cooked' for eight weeks and then transferred to a maturation pad.
8. The material is sorted again using a trommel screen and the final product is ready.
9. The compost created at Mildura is returned to the community to improve soil health, closing the loop and creating a circular economy for the region.

### **About Cleanaway**

Cleanaway Waste Management Ltd is Australia's leading waste management company, with a national network of unique collection, processing, treatment, and landfill assets. Cleanaway operates from more than 250 locations and directly employs more than 6,300 people. Our philosophy is that all waste is a resource and we aim to incorporate recovery, recycling, and reuse throughout our operations and those of our clients. Our mission is to make a sustainable future possible for all our stakeholders.

Australia's waste industry directly and indirectly employs more than 50,000 Australians and provides essential services to the community.

### **Media enquiries**

#### **Cleanaway**

Mark Biddulph, Head of Corporate Affairs  
0499 332 601  
mark.biddulph@cleanaway.com.au

#### **Mildura Rural City Council**

Ben Piscioneri, Acting Manager, Communications  
0410 407 200  
ben.piscioneri@mildura.vic.gov.au