



Centre for Organic
Research & Education



International Compost Awareness Week
7-13 May 2017
Australia

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MEDIA RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL COMPOST AWARENESS WEEK BACKS THE WAR ON WASTE

CORE's flagship program International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) has been fighting the war on waste for over 12 years. **Organic waste is over 50% of the waste stream** so **recycling** it can have a substantial effect on **winning the war on waste** and everyone can do it.

Australian households currently generate around **13 million tonnes of organic waste per year**. We currently **recycle around 6 million tonnes** per year **leaving 7 million tonnes of waste** that can still be recovered, processed and manufactured into beneficial products. **Support for products made from recycled organic waste is crucial to winning the war on waste.**

A recent survey by Centre for Organic Research & Education (CORE) conducted during International Compost Awareness Week has shown that over **99% of government agencies and utilities** are **not** always using available **recycled products** even when they are **comparable in performance, quality and cost effectiveness**. Victorian utility Melbourne Water has actually refused to consider recycled products.

For example **independent research** carried by University of Newcastle has resulted in **scientifically validated breakthroughs** such as **recycled organic products** that filter toxic substances from polluted water. It was discovered that the **performance** of the recycled content product achieves **even better removal of toxic chemicals from polluted waters** than depleting our stocks of virgin excavated materials currently being used. Future generations will not thank us for this.

"Councils do a great job of collecting and arranging recycling but are not completely up to speed when it comes to using the products that contain the recyclable material they collect" says Eric Love Chairman of CORE and ICAW. Lack of adoption of these products could **be costing the Australian community up to \$60 million per year** in extra recycling processing costs continues Love. Greater use of higher value recycled organic products can result in lower waste management costs paid by the community". The Centre for Organic Research & Education calls on councils and utilities to always purchase the most sustainable products especially when they are equivalent in performance, quality and cost effectiveness.

ENDS

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Key words:

- Organic waste is over 50% of the waste stream.
- 13 million tonnes of organic waste generated per year - 6 million tonnes recycled - 7 million tonnes of waste disposed in landfill
- Support for products made from recycled organic waste is crucial to winning the war on waste
- 99% of government agencies and utilities are not always using available recycled products even when they are comparable in performance, quality and cost effectiveness.
- Costing the Australian community up to \$60 million per year in recycling processing costs.
- independent research, scientifically validated breakthroughs for removal of toxic chemicals from polluted waters
- The Recycled Organic Circular Economy.

The Recycled Organic Circular Economy

Recycling is a “circular economy” process (see info graphic). For example:

1. Organic waste (vegetation and food scraps) is collected by councils from consumers and sent to processing facilities for manufacturing into products.
2. These products are then added to the soil by consumers throughout the supply chain cycle (e.g. growers, retailers and consumers) where the carbon and nutrient cycle supports the growth of plants and/or crops.
3. At each stage of the cycle organic waste from trimmings, food scraps or crop residues is generated.
4. Discarded organic materials are then recycled through collection systems.





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About Eric Love

Joining with Eric Love and CORE in the war on waste

Eric Love has been a “**disruptive innovator in the circular economy**” (i.e. waste & recycling systems) for over 35 years, long before anybody even had a name for it. Eric believes waste is a verb not a noun.

The war on waste started for Eric Love in the early 1980's when he was responsible for **introducing wheelie bin systems into Australia**. Up to this point the weekend activity of taking trailer loads of rubbish to the local landfill (burning fuel) and backyard burning of anything combustible was common practice for the community.

Emissions from this had a significant effect on air pollution and climate instability. Before wheelie bins, recycling (where practiced) generally consisted of householders storing paper and bottles until a local charity (e.g. scout group) collected them.

Typical of the previous manually lifted bin systems Garbos suffered from frequent back and knee injuries and some fatalities from running across roadways. Dogs pushing over the small bins also caused widespread litter.

Initially there was a lot of resistance to this disruption from all sectors of the community (e.g. green groups, politicians, media etc.). However the community quickly embraced the wheelie bin system for waste. This enabled the banning of backyard burning, brought household waste management into one convenient and controllable system and significantly reduced OH&S risks and litter. Now that waste was in one system Eric was involved in characterising the contents of the waste management stream and identified that the majority of the waste stream was recyclable.

In addition Eric was involved in the introduction of one man operated robotic collection vehicles for wheelie bin systems which almost completely eliminated the OH&S risk and lowered the cost of waste management to the community.

Following widespread adoption of the wheelie bin waste system by Local Government and the community Eric turned his attention to recycling and conducted industry and community awareness campaigns such “two bin or not to bin”. Eric was responsible for introducing multi wheelie bin systems for recycling glass, paper & plastic. Dry recyclables were easily adapted to wheelie bin collection systems and the community responded very quickly by vastly improving their knowledge about recycling.

Waste stream characterisation studies (*op cit*) conducted by Eric had identified that **organic waste is over 50% of the waste stream**. In the mid 90's Eric turned his attention to this. Of all wastes, organic materials are the most challenging to recycle. However the organic materials breaking down in landfill are the major cause of methane emissions and contribute an average 3% of all greenhouse gasses from the planet. Conversely organic waste matter can be recovered and used, and as most gardeners and many farmers know is also an extremely beneficial ingredient in agriculture, gardens and landscaped areas.

Numerous Councils have now implemented wheelie bin systems for organic waste. The greatest challenge facing organic waste recycling is finding, establishing and securing markets for the products made from the collected waste material which now in many cases includes discarded food and garden materials.

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In 1997 Eric established what is now known as the Centre for Organic Research & Education (CORE). Research includes developing beneficial uses for products made from recycled organic materials. The results of this research are broadcast to the community through CORE's education and awareness programs developed in Australia by Eric such as International Composting Awareness Week (ICAW) which in 2017 is held May 6th to 10th and National Organic Week (NOW) which is held in September. Eric is the Chairman of CORE, ICAW and NOW.

ICAW is creating awareness about:

- organic waste recycling & home composting;
- educating the community about how putting foreign materials such as **plastic bags** in the green waste bin contaminates the recyclables and causes them to go to waste. CORE is a long-time supporter of the current initiatives to **ban plastic bags**.
- research on uses for products made from recycled waste materials; and,
- sustainable purchasing practices.

These programs are supported by media partners such as Organic Gardener combined with messages circulated by ambassador and ABC personality Costa Geogiardis. These messages are improving the community's knowledge of organic materials and the role they play in creating a sustainable society. Reducing landfill emissions, producing sustainable soils for agriculture and sequestering (organic) carbon in the soils to ameliorate climate change impacts are a few of the important outcomes resulting from the beneficial use of recycled organic materials

In a scientific breakthrough Eric has headed up research by CORE, with assistance from the Federal Government, which has funded independent research by University of Newcastle resulting in discoveries on how to use (bio) filtration products made using recycled organic materials to prevent toxic chemicals from entering our precious waterways.

For the past 20 years Eric has run a research consultancy business that has carried out 100's of waste and recycling bin composition studies of red bins (waste) , yellow bins (dry recyclables) and brown bins (food and garden). Eric's consultancy has also conducted 100's of identification and assessment studies of markets for recycled materials. These studies have been carried out for EPA's and councils throughout Australia and examined the composition of residential, commercial and landfill wastes. The studies inform education campaigns and infrastructure planning.

By and large the community is doing a great job of getting it right but there are still improvements possible for waste reduction. There are also still a small percentage of people who don't care and completely ignore their source separation requirements and spoil it for the whole community. The contamination these people cause means that often properly sorted recyclables have to be sent to landfill.

Eric is now in demand overseas in countries such as USA, Singapore and China where his extensive experience and knowledge about organic waste management systems and the innovative products that can be made from them are attracting significant attention from governments concerned about waste reduction and toxic pollutant reduction in waterways.



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About the Centre for Organic Research & Education (CORE)

The Centre for Organic Research & Education (CORE) was established in 1997 and is a collaborative network supporting and promoting the beneficial reuse of recovered organic resources. CORE encourages and facilitates the highest sustainable reuse of recovered resources. In doing so it aims to minimise disposal of precious resources while maximising beneficial reuse.