



Media Release

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City's sustainable food waste service appeals to Bibra Lake's Urban Forager

If there's one thing the director of Bibra Lake-based certified organic producer Urban Forager is passionate about, it's sustainability.

Lou Corteen's small business produces vegetable, chicken and beef stock concentrates at a commercial kitchen in Bibra Lake and despite creating more than a tonne of waste since July, she has prevented 100 per cent of it from rotting in landfill.

Urban Forager subscribes to the City of Cockburn's Commercial Food Waste Service (CFWS) which has diverted 85+ tonnes of food waste from landfill since beginning as a trial in August 2020.

That is equivalent to 163,248 kg of CO2 emissions, or 40 years of electricity consumption for one Australian household.

City of Cockburn Waste Education Coordinator Clare Courtauld said the CFWS formed part of the City's Waste Strategy 2020-2030.

"It's just another way the City is striving to fulfill the WA Waste Strategy 2030, by helping the WA community generate less waste, recover more value and resources from waste and protect the environment by managing waste responsibly," Ms Courtauld said.

"The City service not only reduces the waste that goes to landfill, but it reduces greenhouse emissions and creates a clean energy source, achieving the Waste Strategies three objectives of avoid, reduce and reuse.

The service provides 140, 240 and 660L bins to participating Cockburn commercial food businesses and delivers the contents weekly to Richgro's

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anaerobic digestion plant in Jandakot to produce high-quality biofertiliser.

Richgro's biofertiliser production process also captures methane to generate electricity which is fed into the electricity grid, with two 1.5MW generators creating a maximum of 57,600KW per day, powering the equivalent of 3,200 homes.

Ms Corteen established Urban Forager from her Hamilton Hill home kitchen in 2012 until moving to purpose-built commercial premises in Bibra Lake at the start of 2021.

For many years she rotated all food waste through five compost bins in her garden, helping feed more than 30 fruit varieties on her 600m block.

"As the business and the food waste grew, we took our vegetable scraps to the Randwick Community Garden in Hamilton Hill, along with our cardboard waste where it was used under mulched paths and in compost systems," she said.

"Reducing our waste is so important to us as a sustainable business. The cost of the service is fantastic value for money, and we are happy in the knowledge that we are helping participate in the circular economy.

"I couldn't recommend the service more highly and I'm very grateful to be operating in a local government area where sustainable initiatives are supported."

The business does all it can to remain sustainable including sending packaging back to suppliers, including 20-litre apple cider vinegar drums which are re-used by the farmer that supplies them.

"We continued taking our vegie scraps to the community garden until I read about the food waste pilot program the City was running.

"I rang the City as soon as I read the article about fellow participating Bibra Lake



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business La Paleta and asked to sign up as soon as possible.”

Urban Forager received its bins in mid-July and sends about 40kg of onion, carrot, tomato, celery and herb waste through the program each week.

“From a business perspective, the food waste collection service could not be easier,” Ms Corteen said.

“We store our waste in the freezer until collection, to reduce the risk of feeding cockroaches and rodents, then pop it in the bin. Once the bin is collected, we give it a quick wash and scrub so it’s ready for the following week without being smelly and attracting pests.”

Participating Cockburn food retailers, producers and restaurants pay an annual charge of \$260 per 240L commercial food waste bin service, \$78 less than the City’s annual general waste service fee for businesses.

Ms Courtauld said over 5 million tonnes of food ended up in landfill every year in Australia – enough to fill 9,000 Olympic size swimming pools – where it decomposes to produce potent greenhouse gases.

The City’s program, which began as a trial thanks to an \$18,257 State Government Community and Industry Engagement grant, puts the nutrient-rich resource to work, producing valuable biogas, compost and fertiliser.

This November, the City of Cockburn was recognised by WA’s peak representative body for local government professionals for 20 years of environmental and sustainability action.

The City took out the Environmental Leadership and Sustainability category at the LG Professionals 2021 Honour Awards.

To find out more about the CFWS and apply to be a participant, visit the City’s [website](#).



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