

FAQ: Organics Processing Facility

September 2026

Why an Organics Processing Facility?

The new Southern Grampians Organics Processing Facility will convert food and garden waste collected through the kerbside service, together with selected agricultural organic materials from the Hamilton Regional Livestock Exchange (HRLX), into high-quality compost and soil products using advanced enclosed processing technology.

The project is expected to process thousands of tonnes of organic material each year, creating valuable products that can be returned to local farms and landscapes while supporting a more circular regional economy.

What's in the numbers?

Council's new facility is designed to process more than 5,000 tonnes of organic material a year when it opens, with potential to expand to 15,000 tonnes. It also has the potential to become a regional processing hub, creating new possibilities for how organic waste is managed well beyond the Shire boundary.

The composting process, and how the material is treated

The Gaia units compost organic material at temperatures that typically reach 65-70°C, with material kept above 55°C for at least 72 hours to help destroy pathogens and weed seeds. After leaving the units, the compost matures for a further 12 weeks before being screened and tested to ensure it meets quality standards and is ready for use.

Thermal pasteurisation occurs within the first week of processing

Once the composting containers are loaded and sealed, the material typically reaches pasteurisation temperatures within the first week. These high temperatures help destroy pathogens and weed seeds before the compost moves to the next stage of the process.

The composting process is largely unaffected by weather conditions

The Gaia composting vessels are sealed from rain and wind and insulated against temperature changes, helping maintain a stable composting environment throughout the year.



Ensuring the compost is good quality

The finished compost is independently tested to ensure it is safe, mature and suitable for use. Samples are taken from across the compost batch and analysed by a laboratory for factors such as nutrient balance, moisture, contaminants and overall quality. The compost must meet industry standards before it is ready for use.

How biosecurity risks would be managed in the event of a livestock disease outbreak at HRLX

Council would work with biosecurity and animal health authorities to determine the safest course of action. Any decisions about waste collection or composting would be based on expert advice and regulatory requirements to protect animal health and the broader community.

Building a consistent supply of high-quality compost

During the first 12-18 months of operation, compost is expected to be screened approximately every six weeks. This allows each batch to be independently tested and the results reviewed, helping establish a quality baseline for ongoing production. As confidence in the process grows and testing requirements reduce, screening frequency is expected to increase. Current projections suggest compost could be screened every fortnight, creating a more consistent flow of finished product while maintaining quality assurance standards.

The spread - what is typically needed?

The amount varies depending on the soil and farming operation, but many producers apply around 5-10 tonnes per hectare initially to improve soil health, followed by lower maintenance rates in future years. Incorporating compost into the soil generally delivers better results than simply spreading it on the surface.

FAQ: Organics Processing Facility

September 2026



How Council will determine how compost is sold and distributed?

An Expression of Interest (EOI) process will be undertaken before the first batch of compost is available, which is expected to be around February. The EOI will help Council understand the level of demand for the product, preferred purchase quantities and how customers would like to receive it. This feedback will help shape future supply and distribution arrangements. In addition to bulk sales, compost is expected to be available for direct purchase from the transfer station, with bagged product also available through local retail partnerships.

How much material will be delivered to the Transfer Station each week

Delivery volumes will vary, however the facility is designed to process at least 100 tonnes of organic material each week. The number of truckloads required will depend on the type of material being collected and the size of the vehicles used for transport.

Contaminated material will be safely removed from the process

Any contaminated material identified during processing will be removed and assessed. If it cannot be safely treated or decontaminated, it will be disposed of at a licensed landfill facility to protect the quality of the final compost product and meet environmental requirements.

How is HRLX involved?

As one of Australia's busiest livestock exchanges, the Hamilton Regional Livestock Exchange (HRLX) processes up to one million sheep and 50,000 cattle each year, producing a substantial organic waste stream that has traditionally been costly to transport and dispose of. That material will be converted into commercially certified compost, returning valuable nutrients to agricultural land and supporting a more circular approach to waste management.

Livestock mortalities will form part of the organic material processed once fully decomposed through the facility, as they are a source of organic matter that can be safely managed through the composting process. The decomposition process occurs at another Council licensed site. Material containing mortalities requires an extended decomposition period, with composting and maturation taking at least six months before it can be transported from the site. All finished compost will undergo independent laboratory testing and quality assurance before being released.

Information about the composition and testing of each batch will be available to ensure transparency and provide confidence in the final product. At this stage, the volume of mortalities that may be processed through the facility has not been determined.

Keeping material contained within the site

Organic material will be processed within 24 hours of arrival, reducing the potential for material to be affected by weather conditions. The processing area is being positioned away from the site boundary, and routine site maintenance, including daily litter collection, will help ensure material remains contained within the facility. This approach is designed to minimise the risk of contamination affecting neighbouring properties.

Scan here

To read more and view the layout of the facility.

