

# Organic waste recovery in Victoria 2008–09

The Victorian Recycling Industry Annual Survey 2008–09 collects information on the Victorian reprocessing industry via a voluntary survey. Victorian reprocessors of secondary-use materials (waste material) report on their reprocessing activities over the financial year. The survey, commenced in August 2009, sought data from 90 Victorian reprocessors. A total of 72 out of the 90 reprocessors provided data for the survey, representing an 80% response rate. It is estimated that the respondent reprocessors cover over 90% of the material recovered in Victoria by weight. An additional 36 plastic reprocessors surveyed for the *2009 National Plastics Recycling Survey*<sup>1</sup> were also included in the report findings.

For more information or to download a copy of the Victorian Recycling Industry Annual Survey 2008–09 report, please refer to the Sustainability Victoria website [www.sustainability.vic.gov.au](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au)

The information presented is an extract of the organic waste recovery figures from the report.

## Recovery and trends

The total quantity of organic waste material recovered and diverted from landfill in Victoria during the 2008–09 financial year increased to approximately 802,000 tonnes, up 33% from the previous year. The large increase in organics recovery is not as noteworthy as the figures suggest as it can mostly be attributed to not receiving a survey response last year from a large recycled organics reprocessor.

Figure 1 shows that the majority of organic waste material recovered continues to be in the form of Garden organics (41%), a decrease of 10 percentage points but back to a similar proportion as seen in 2006–07. There was an increase in Wood & timber pallets / packaging in 2008–09 but together with Wood & timber (other than packaging) they make up a similar proportion to the previous year. A large recovery increase was apparent in Sawdust & other forestry residuals with levels back to those reported for the 2006–07 financial year (see Table 1). This is partly due to non-responses in 2007–08. Food organics at 2% continues to be the smallest proportion of organics recovered from the waste stream.

Figure 1 Composition of organic waste (by weight) recovered for reprocessing, Victoria 2008–09

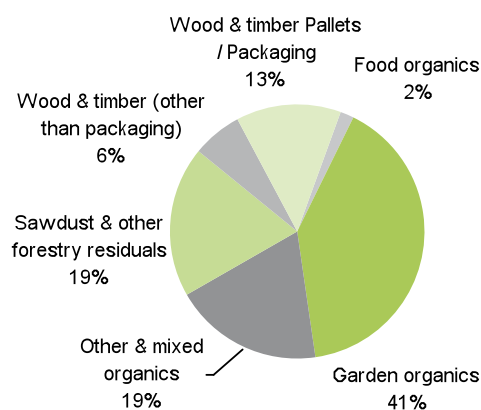
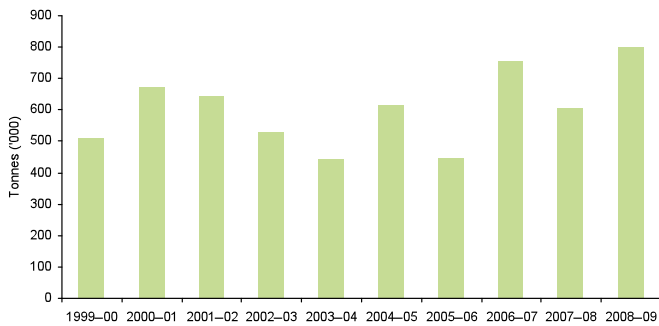


Figure 2 shows that since 2003–04 organics recovery, although fluctuating is generally trending upwards. The trendline does not accommodate the fluctuating data very well and it is difficult to estimate the trend for organic waste recovery. This is not to say that there are no natural fluctuations in organics data as, unlike other material categories, creation of organic waste can be partly linked to environmental factors such as the long-term drought in Victoria and legislated water restrictions.

Figure 2 Organic waste recovered for reprocessing, Victoria 1999–00 to 2008–09



Note: Figures released prior to the 2002–03 financial year include prescribed industrial waste. Garden organics figures for 2003–04 and 2005–06 have been updated to more accurately reflect tonnes recorded in the *Local Government Data Collection Survey 2003–04* and *Victorian Local Government Data Collection 2005–06* reports.

Quantities of garden organics, which is mainly collected through the municipal sector, were at the highest level recorded since the survey began (see Figure 3), while the quantities of food organics recovered dropped again for the second year in a row. The drop in food waste recovery is due in part to the increasingly limited capacity within the compost industry to process food waste. Figure 3 shows that garden organics has trended upwards since 2003–04. During this time, there has been an expansion of the three bin system: one small bin for garbage, one large bin for recyclables and another large bin for green organics. This has encouraged householders to divert green organics from landfill.

Figure 3 Garden organic waste recovered for reprocessing, Victoria 1999–00 to 2008–09



Note: Garden organics figures for 2003–04 and 2005–06 have been updated to more accurately reflect tonnes recorded in the *Local Government Data Collection Survey 2003–04* and *Victorian Local Government Data Collection 2005–06* reports.

1. 2009 National Plastics Recycling Survey, report to the Plastics and Chemicals Industry Association

## Sources of recyclables

The larger proportion of organic waste material received for reprocessing in 2008–09 was sourced from the commercial and industrial sector (see Figure 4). This is due to an increase in the recovery of timber, sawdust and other forestry residuals that are predominantly sourced from this sector. The municipal sector provided an almost equal proportion at 46% comprised predominantly of garden organics (85%) recovered through municipal kerbside collections.

Figure 4 Source sectors organic waste (by weight) received for reprocessing, Victoria 2008–09

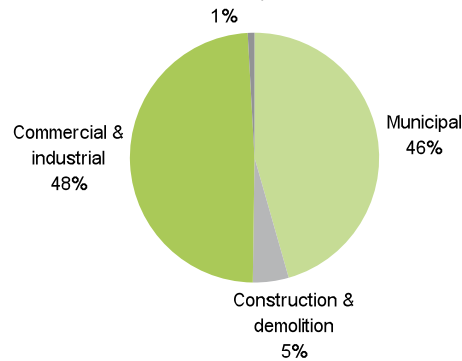


Table 1 Organic waste material recovered in Victoria for reprocessing, Victoria 1999–00 to 2008–09

	Timber	Food organics	Garden organics	Sawdust / forestry residuals	Other	Total organic waste recovered
Tonnes ('000)						
1999-00	49	206	230	21	4	510
2000-01	151	222	273	22	7	675
2001-02	171*	202	213	47	10	643*
2002-03	169	22	217	111	10	529
2003-04	171	14	179*	76	5	445*
2004-05	229	13	310	26	40	618
2005-06	84	26	276*	35	29	450*
2006-07	196	35	302	144	77	754
2007-08	123	29	311	67	76	605
2008-09	158	13	327	155	150	802

\* Evaluation and cross-referencing of reported and actual data has led to an adjustment of previous financial year data.

Note: Food organics recovery data from 2002–03 no longer includes any prescribed industrial waste figures such as meat waste generated from rendering processes or grease traps. Garden organics figures for 2003–04 and 2005–06 have been updated to more accurately reflect tonnes recorded in the *Local Government Data Collection Survey 2003–04* and the *Victorian Local Government Data Collection 2005–06* reports.