

A. Entity responses

In accordance with Section 64 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, the Queensland Audit Office gave a copy of this report with a request for comments to:

- Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation
- Brisbane City Council
- Council of the City of Gold Coast
- Sunshine Coast Council.

We also provided a copy of the report to the following entities and gave them the option of providing a response:

- Premier and Minister for Veterans
- Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation
- Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers.

This appendix contains the responses we received.

The heads of these entities are responsible for the accuracy, fairness, and balance of their comments.

Comments received from Director-General, Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation

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Department of the
Environment, Tourism,
Science and Innovation

Our reference: CTS 16931/25

21 AUG 2025

Ms Rachel Vagg
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office
PO Box 15396
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Ms Vagg

I refer to an email of 4 August 2025 regarding the Queensland Audit Office's report titled '*Reducing organic household waste sent to landfill*' (the Report).

I can advise that I have reviewed the Report and support all five recommendations. Please find enclosed the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation's (the department) management responses to each of the recommendations.

I appreciate the positive and constructive approach our organisations and officers have taken during this audit. The timing of the review aligns well with the work the Queensland Government is doing to finalise a new Queensland Waste Strategy later this year, and the recommendations from the audit will be helpful in informing this work.

Consistent with other audits, the department will monitor implementation of the recommendations and ensure their timely completion. I look forward to keeping you informed on progress.

Should your officers require any further information, they may contact

Yours sincerely

Patricia O'Callaghan
Director-General

Encl. (1)

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Website www.detsi.qld.gov.au
ABN 46 640 294 485



Responses to recommendations



Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation

Reducing organic household waste sent to landfill

Response to recommendations provided by Ms Patricia O'Callaghan, Director-General, Department of Environment, Tourism Science and Innovation on 21 August 2025.

Recommendation	Agree/Disagree	Time frame for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
1. We recommend that the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation in collaboration with local councils and industry assess whether the objectives, goals and targets in the organics strategy are achievable, and use this information to inform its approach going forward. This should include assessing the value and priority of actions based on progress to date, known risks and relevant performance information.	Agree	Q2 2025-26	A new Queensland Waste Strategy – <i>Less landfill, More recycling</i> , is being developed by the Queensland Government. Consultation on a draft Strategy occurred in May and June 2025. In developing the final Queensland Waste Strategy, the department will consider opportunities to review and incorporate organics targets in order to measure progress going forward. Actions specific to reducing organic waste will be developed and will take into account the targets set, learnings to date and feedback from stakeholders.
2. We recommend that the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation provide clarity about how it intends to manage the risk of PFAS in compost. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly communicating with local councils, industry and relevant stakeholders the departments approach going forward to manage per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) risk in compost continue monitoring PFAS risks in organic waste 	Agree	Q3 2025-26	The department has communicated with industry and councils that it will not be imposing PFAS limits on licences, but instead will work collaboratively with the compost industry to develop guidance to manage PFAS risks in compost. A monitoring program is also being developed to assist in the identification of potential upstream sources of PFAS contamination in feedstocks.
3. We recommend that the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation strengthen its risk management practices. This should include:	Agree	Q3 2025-26	The department will continue to report quarterly on risks associated with delivery of strategies and action plans and ensure key risks are escalated into the department's enterprise risk management system. This will include reporting on implementation of the final Queensland Waste Strategy, once released.

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Time frame for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regularly identifying risks to achieving the objectives of the organics strategy, assessing their likelihood and impact and clearly stating the departments risk appetite implementing effective mitigation controls and continuing to assess the effectiveness of controls where risks do materialise 			
<p>4. We recommend that the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, in collaboration with the key stakeholders improves access to funding for infrastructure and organic waste initiatives. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewing existing grant funding guidelines and processes to identify opportunities to give greater flexibility and improve timely access finalising planning activities and decisions to support the expansion of organic waste processing activities in line with key priorities. 	Agree	Q4 2025-26	<p>As part of developing and implementing the final Queensland Waste Strategy, the department will review its approach to investment and funding, including existing programs and guidelines.</p> <p>For example, the GROW FOGO program guidelines will be further reviewed to consider opportunities to fund other initiatives (e.g. home composting etc).</p> <p>The department will also look to streamline requirements and improve timeliness of contracting across a number of its programs, including GROW FOGO.</p> <p>The department will also continue to work with DSDIP, the Australian Government and SEQ councils to roll out City Deal funding to increase organics processing capacity in SEQ.</p>
<p>5. We recommend that the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, in collaboration with local councils, improves how it monitors, evaluates and reports performance against the organics strategy and action plan. This should include:</p>	Agree	Q3 2025-26	<p>Consultation on a draft new Queensland Waste Strategy – <i>Less landfill, More recycling</i> occurred in May and June 2025.</p> <p>In developing the final Queensland Waste Strategy, the department will consider opportunities to review and incorporate organics targets in order to measure progress going forward.</p> <p>As part of implementation of the <i>final</i> Queensland Waste Strategy, the department will implement changes to its approach to performance and delivery monitoring, evaluation and reporting, which will include improved reporting on organic waste.</p>

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Time frame for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">collecting reliable organic waste data that will enable it to measure progress against the objectivesassessing whether existing targets are appropriatemonitoring performance against the objectives, performance measures and targetsregularly assessing the effectiveness of actions and using this information to inform its approachregularly reporting performance information to key decision makers, including the status of actions, key issues, and performance against the strategy's objectives and targets.			

Comments received from Acting Director-General, Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers

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FOR QUEENSLAND**



Department of
**Local Government,
Water and Volunteers**

Our ref: CTS 18041/25
DGBN25/460

25 AUG 2025

Ms Rachel Vagg
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office

Email: qao@qao.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Vagg *Rachel*

Thank you for your email of 4 August 2025 providing a copy of your draft report to Parliament - *Reducing organic household waste sent to landfill* (the draft report) for the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (DLGWW) to review.

I note that the area of focus included in the draft report examined how effective the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) and the three selected South East Queensland councils - Brisbane City Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council and the Gold Coast City Council strategies have been in reducing the amount of household organic waste sent to landfill.

I was pleased to note your comments that each of the three councils have developed waste management plans aligning with the South East Queensland Waste Management Plan and the Queensland Organics Strategy 2022-2032 and that the councils have also implemented a range of programs and services to reduce the amount of household organic waste sent to landfill eg. increasing green lid bin services for residents and delivering educational and other behavioural change programs.

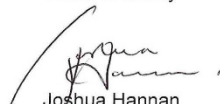
Additionally, I acknowledge the five recommendations provided to DETSI in the draft report which I understand currently do not directly impact DLGWW.

Thank you again for giving DLGWW the opportunity to review the draft report.

If you require any further information, please contact

[redacted] who will be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely


Joshua Hannan
Acting Director-General

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ABN 51 242 471 577

Comments received from Chief Executive Officer, Brisbane City Council



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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www.brisbane.qld.gov.au

20 August 2025

Ms Rachel Vagg
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office
qao@qao.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Vagg

Thank you for your email of 5 August 2025 seeking a formal response to the Queensland Audit Office's (QAO) proposed report, *Reducing organic household waste sent to landfill* (the Report).

Council is committed to reducing the amount of organic waste sent to landfill and welcomes the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of our recent waste reduction initiatives.

I can confirm Council has reviewed the Report and is supportive of its recommendations. I would like to thank the QAO for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Report prior to its completion.

Should you require any further information, please contact [REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process.

Yours sincerely

Kerrie Freeman
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ref: CO09372-2025

Brisbane City Council acknowledges this Country and its Traditional Custodians.
We pay our respects to the Elders, those who have passed into the dreaming;
those here today; those of tomorrow.



Comments received from Chief Executive Officer, Council of the City of Gold Coast

Date: 18 August 2025
Contact: [REDACTED]
Location: [REDACTED]
Telephone: [REDACTED]
Our reference: A113843847

CITY OF
GOLDCOAST.

Ms Rachel Vagg
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office
53 Albert Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Ms Vagg

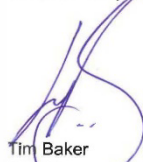
PROPOSED REPORT – REDUCING ORGANIC HOUSEHOLD WASTE SENT TO LANDFILL

The City of Gold Coast Council (the City) thanks the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) for supplying the *Reducing Organic Household Waste sent to Landfill* proposed report and the opportunity to provide feedback.

The City appreciates the opportunity to participate in the audit and provide input into the development of the report. We recognise the efforts of QAO in preparing a comprehensive document which highlights the range of challenges and opportunities facing Local Governments in capturing and diverting organics from landfill efficiently and cost effectively.

The City supports the report and welcomes the recommendations that have been included, particularly those related to clarity of regulatory direction and improving access to funding for infrastructure and organic waste initiatives. We believe the implementation of the audit recommendations will contribute significantly to continued improvement of reducing the amount of organic waste sent to landfill.

Yours faithfully



Tim Baker
Chief Executive Officer
Council of the City of Gold Coast

Council of the City of Gold Coast
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Customer Services Centres
Find the closest centre or online service
at cityofgoldcoast.com.au/contactus

City Panel – Have your say
Register at gchaveyoursay.com.au

Comments received from Manager Waste & Resources Management, Sunshine Coast Council



Contact Officer:
Email:
Phone No:



21 August 2025

Attn:
Rachel Bagg
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office
53 Albert Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
By email to: gao@gao.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Bagg

Re: Reducing Organic Household Waste Sent to Landfill Audit

I am writing in relation to your correspondence to the Sunshine Coast Council Chief Executive Officer, John Baker, dated 4 August 2025, regarding the reducing organic household waste sent to landfill proposed report. As this is an operational matter which sits under my responsibility in Council, the CEO has asked me to provide a response.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the audit process and provide comment on the proposed report. Sunshine Coast Council supports the findings and recommendations outlined in the proposed report, noting that our suggestions for consideration itemised in our previous submission to the draft report have been addressed in the proposed report.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate and contribute to this important matter.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Hogg".

John Hogg
MANAGER WASTE & RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL

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