

Circular Economy and Cost Intelligence

The client

A leading multi-venue hospitality and community organisation in New South Wales operates large-scale commercial kitchens, dining facilities, sporting grounds and member services across several high-traffic sites. With significant food preparation volumes and ongoing grounds maintenance, waste management represents both a major cost centre and a sustainability priority. As a not-for-profit entity, surplus funds are reinvested into facilities and community programs, making operational efficiency and responsible environmental management critical.

The challenge

The organisation faced a range of operational and commercial waste management pressures, particularly around Food and Organic (FOGO) waste. With no commercially viable kerbside collection options available, FOGO was being disposed of as general waste, while dedicated FOGO services were priced at approximately three times the cost of general waste.

Busy commercial kitchens generated significant waste volumes, contributing to vermin and hygiene concerns, while poorly conducted glass collections resulted in noise complaints. Limited space for bin storage and staging created additional operational challenges.

The organisation was also incurring ongoing costs to remove garden waste and grass clippings, while recycling rebates were not consistently being claimed or paid. Compounding these issues was a lack of visibility into actual waste weights, volumes and cost per kilogram, making it difficult to effectively manage performance and costs.



The solution

ERA Group conducted a comprehensive review of the organisation's waste and recycling portfolio, addressing both commercial costs and operational challenges.

The team consolidated the supplier footprint across sites and introduced benchmarking of cost per cubic metre and cost per kilogram to provide greater transparency and support continuous improvement. ERA Group also established a defensible ESG baseline aligned with legislative requirements and potential eligibility for funding grants.

Beyond commercial renegotiation, ERA Group helped implement an innovative circular waste strategy. Food waste, garden waste and grass clippings could be processed on-site to produce sterile compost, reducing reliance on landfill and external FOGO services while creating a resource that could support the local community and suppliers of meat and vegetables.

The result

The engagement delivered a 65% reduction in waste management costs while improving operational standards across the organisation. Vermin and hygiene risks were reduced, noise complaints were mitigated through improved service scheduling, and the bin footprint was optimised despite limited space. ERA Group also helped recover and implement recycling rebates while reducing dependence on landfill and external FOGO services.

The environmental impact was equally significant. The new approach resulted in:

- **264 m³ of landfill avoided annually**
- **66 kilolitres of leachate prevented annually**
- **251 tonnes of CO₂ emissions avoided annually**
- **Greater diversion from landfill through separation at source**

Overall, ERA Group's Cost Intelligence methodology transformed a fragmented waste portfolio into a more transparent, compliant and continuously optimised system. Through structured review, commercial renegotiation and an innovative waste strategy, the organisation strengthened financial governance, improved operational performance and delivered measurable environmental benefits—all without disrupting hospitality service delivery.

