

COMMUNITY EDUCATION



INTRODUCTION

For a long time, education strategies to pick up after our dogs have worked. The dog poop has been picked up, but we failed to act on the “then what”! Sending dog waste to landfills is not sustainable.

Simple and accurate messages will support communities and pet owners who want to do the right thing. With persistent effort, project champions can increase public awareness, knowledge and understanding about the “whys” of diversion, appropriate bag use and transforming options. Social media, websites and surveys are great ways to engage pet owners and support them with better pet waste practice.

There are a variety of community groups that are interested in playing a role in better pet waste management. Community groups include:

- Dog owner, dog walking and dog park groups.
- Animal shelters and rescue organisations.
- Home-owner associations and residential groups.
- Local town improvement associations and country and town “Keep Beautiful” groups.
- Environment, sustainability and circular economy groups.

How to reduce your dog's carbon paw print

-  **01** Avoid plastic bags for dog poop collection going to trash unless re-using plastic bags.
-  **02** Learn how to identify the North American BPI symbol for choosing compostable bags.
-  **03** At home use tongs, scoops, paper or compostable bags.
-  **04** Away from home, pack it out. Use a strong plastic container with a screw on lid & a stick for scooping.
-  **05** Check with your water treatment plant to see if they have the capacity to accept flushed unbagged dog poop.
-  **06** Check to see if you can put compostable bags & dog poop in your community organics bin
-  **07** Set up your own home compost system for dog poop

Enviro Pet Waste Network epwn.org 

An Australian, Canadian and American survey in 2022/23 of over 400 dog owners, recorded that three out of four dog owners indicated they are very willing to change their current dog poop collection and disposal method if it is not good for the environment (even if not as convenient)!

These recent surveys of dog owners have shown that making eco-friendly choices is hindered by their lack of awareness and knowledge of options that suit their circumstances and location.

“I would love to have better ways for disposing!”

“Better public education and knowledge would be good, so people know what bags they are using”. “I thought biodegradable was compostable”.

“Compostable symbol needs more marketing and awareness”.

“I did not know I could put dog poop in my green organics bin which then gets composted commercially”.

“I know in some regions dog poo can be flushed”

Quotes
collected
along
the way

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FIRST EXAMPLE OF COMMUNITY GETTING MORE DOG POOP OUT OF LANDFILL

Heather Gardens Green Team (Colorado, US) example.

The largest senior living community in Aurora, Colorado started a project to reduce un-scooped dog poop in their community.

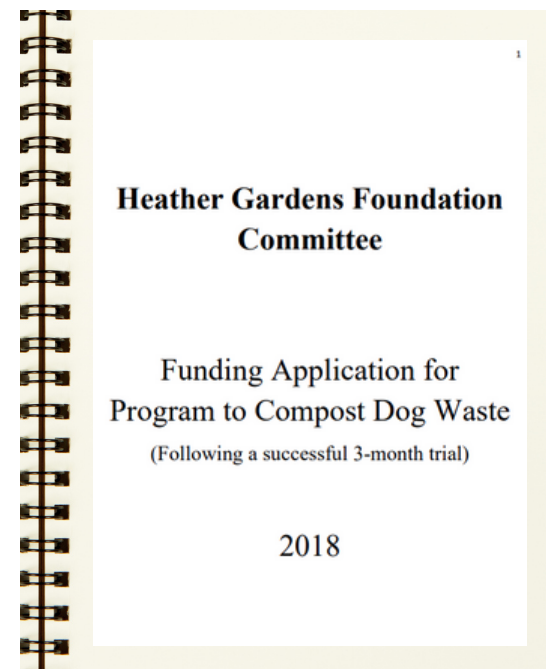
They wanted something better for the environment than wrapping dog poop in plastic and trashing it. Pet parents that sign up got a free supply of certified compostable dog waste pick-up bags every month from the Green Team.

The extensive walkways of the centre have 26 collection bins for "Dog Poop in Compostable Bags Only." The citronella sticker cups inside bin lids were a clever addition to help eliminate odors. The dog waste ends up at a composting facility with the help of the ground's maintenance crew and a Pet Scoop partner.

The Green Team did some online research, drew up a plan with help from Envirowagg and calculated the cost of bins, signs, compostable bags, transport and composting services. They were successful in getting a Neighborhood Beautification grant to cover expenses such as bins and compostable bags for 3 months.

To entice sign-ups, they designed a program that would be voluntary, free and easy to access. They aimed for 50 dog owners and got 80 (95 dogs, and since the trial now have 160 dogs registered)! The trial helped them secure Heather Gardens Foundation funds plus a second city grant to continue and expand their services. They estimate they are diverting about 22 tons of dog waste per year from the local landfill.

The program has led to less dog poop along the walkways and grounds and compost that will help to fertilize flowers and trees. Heather Gardens grant pdf [application](#).



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SECOND EXAMPLE OF COMMUNITY GETTING MORE DOG POOP OUT OF LANDFILL



Port Elliot Dog Park (Australia) example.

A dog park 'friends' group were successful gaining a council community environment grant (\$1,581) to fund a trial in their local dog park auspiced by the local town association. Community in-kind efforts was estimated at 450 hours.

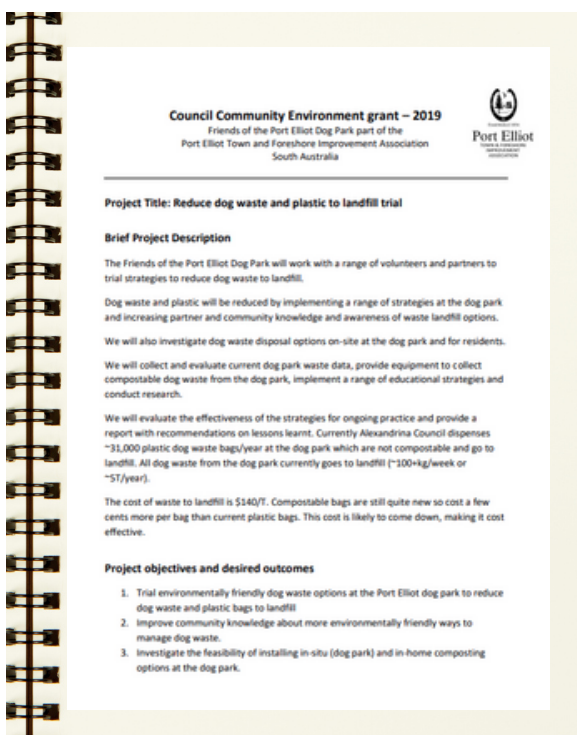
Along with the community group, the local council and local waste authority were both project partners with representation at meetings and the roles of each partner was agreed to and made clear in the project's terms of reference.

For 12 weeks two green bins just for dog poop were placed in their large dog park (70x140metres) and compostable bags provided at all three park bag dispensers. The local waste service collected the waste each week via the organics truck, and it was taken to a commercial waste facility to become one of the ingredients in their compost.

In 12-weeks, 2568 bags and 201 kilograms of dog waste was diverted from landfill (~2,250 bags/year and 870kg of dog poo). At the end of the trial, one bin remained, and the collection service has continued.

The project also included a dog owners survey, used social media and posters on the dog park fence to explain the project and help dog owners learn how to recognise the Australia certified compost symbol, and the project trial results shared with waste educators.

Port Elliot environment grant pdf [application](#).



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MESSAGES FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

Simple and accurate messages will support communities and pet owners who want to do the right thing.

Messaging:

- Assist dog owners to learn the certified compostable symbol for their region and importance of this for the environment.

Have you seen these logos before?



- Share information about different pick-up bag options.
- Encourage dog owners to boycott fossil-based non-renewable pick-up bags.
- Provide dog owners with information about the most eco-friendly waste disposal options for their circumstances and location (for example check if local household green waste bins accept pet waste, compost waste at home, flush waste if okayed by your sewerage service).
- Conduct community pet waste composting workshops.
- Fund raise or gain grant funds to do your own research project or work with local university students to learn more about this topic, for example how does compost using pet waste perform compared to regular compost?
- Provide certified compostable bags in dog off-lead areas and dog runs.
- Fund raise or gain grant funds to purchase and fund compostable bags, green compost bins and a waste collection service that composts green waste in key locations in your town.



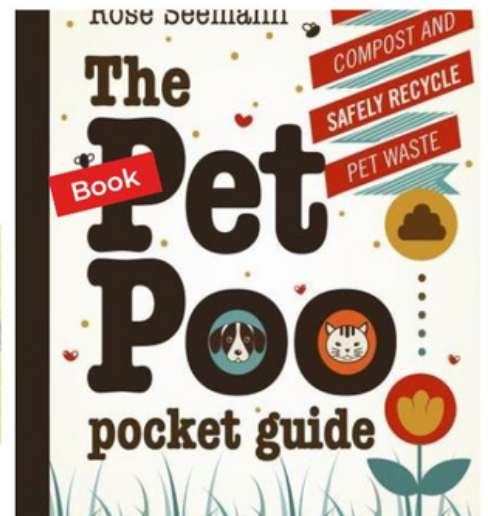
Provide eco-friendly pet waste information and options to residents via websites, social media and newsletters.

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EDUCATION MESSAGES EXAMPLES

- Dog Pick Up bags “The Good, Bad and Ugly!” brochure by EPWN.
- Pet Poo pocket guide by Rose Seemann, a terrific 160-page easy to read booklet about how to safely compost and recycle pet waste.
- 2-page brochure about becoming an eco-friendly dog poop manager.
- An education event “Sip and Munch” held in a dog park – enticed by offer of free bikkies and beverage (non-alcoholic).
- 3-minute video by university student about “Dog Poo down the Loo”
- Dog owner surveys – which included education messages about compostable bags “How to reduce your dog’s carbon paw print” and information about the certified compostable symbols.



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EDUCATION MESSAGES - MORE EXAMPLES

- Creation of cartoon dog character to use on education posters.
- Signage at a community park inviting dog owners to help fund a project to divert dog poo from landfill.
- Brochure about how to choose the right bin for pet waste.
- Display for council foyer for 'Plastic Bag Free' month.
- Posters and flyers created for social media by university students "Step 1, Step2, Step 3", dog waste disposal options promotion "The Doggie Doo Movement".
- A small flyer about compostable bags and green bins sent to dog owners with their dog registration renewal notice

