

MEDIA RELEASE

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Innovative recycling drive to reduce food waste sent to landfill

The East Gippsland Food Cluster has joined forces with East Gippsland Shire Council, East Gippsland Water and the John Monash Innovation Institute for an innovative recycling drive aimed at cutting the amount of food waste sent to landfill by reusing it to generate fuel.

The partnership has just signed a Statement of Intent to actively explore opportunities to reuse food and other organic waste. Utilising technology available to East Gippsland Water to convert it into methane fuel is a key area being targeted, as is the beneficial reuse of treated waste in the farming industry as a soil improver.

The initiative has the potential to be a win-win for everyone involved, reducing the cost of transporting and disposing of food and other organic waste at landfill, relieving pressure on the environment and generating income from the sale of methane fuel and farm products.

Said Dr Nicola Watts, Executive Officer of the East Gippsland Food Cluster, representing food producers and processors across the region: “Whilst it is the objective of every food manufacturer to avoid food waste, it is unfortunately inevitable that this occurs as part of the manufacturing process. We are however very keen to avoid food waste just ending up in landfill, and are keen to explore how we can actually derive some further local beneficial use from it. This is why we are looking at energy production and products for farm application.”

Looking at the area of fuel production, East Gippsland Water’s Managing Director, Bruce Hammond, added: “There is considerable interest in exploring methane production, using anaerobic digestion processes, and we are currently refurbishing one of our digesters for use in this initiative. Methane clearly has value as a fuel and the John Monash Innovation Institute team are about to do some lab simulations that will help us understand the potential for optimising methane production from adding food waste to our existing waste processing systems.”

Acting CEO of East Gippsland Shire Council, Chris Waites said: “We are very pleased to be involved in this collaborative project that reinforces our waste minimisation strategy and our commitment to divert waste from landfill; especially considering how landfills contribute to greenhouse emissions.”

Said Professor Tony Lupton, Director of the John Monash Innovation Institute: “This is a great example of researchers and students participating in an area of social, economic and scientific importance. We are looking forward to contributing scientific rigour to the initiative and delivering value for all the parties involved through innovation, collaboration, and the sharing ideas and information.”

More follows/...

The signing of the Statement of Intent coincided with a presentation by Jacobo Bouzada Rodriguez, an international expert in the digester field. He operates three digester sites in Spain, which utilise the waste of municipalities and food manufacturers.

Ends



(Pictured from L-R) - United in their drive to recycle waste are: Monash University Gippsland PhD student, Emily Scholes; East Gippsland Water's Chairperson, Gail Morley; Professor Tony Lupton, Director of the John Monash Innovation Institute; East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Bruce Hammond; Dr Nicola Watts, Executive Officer for the East Gippsland Food Cluster; Chris Waites, Acting CEO for East Gippsland Shire; East Gippsland Shire Mayor Dick Ellis; and, Grant Leyden, East Gippsland Food Cluster Board Member and General Manager Manufacturing for Patties Foods.