

## **FOOD ORGANICS AND GARDEN ORGANICS**

*Statement by Minister for Environment*

**MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment)** [1.15 pm]: I have news for all members who have an interest in FOGO—food organics and garden organics—in their communities or who want to encourage councils to take up that option in their communities. It is very interesting information.

I recently had the opportunity to view the results of a remarkable trial showing how our poor sandy soils can be significantly improved, increasing water retention, nutrient availability and, ultimately, plant growth. The findings have substantial implications for agricultural practices and land management.

In May this year, the Western Australian and Australian governments announced investments under the food waste for healthy soils fund totalling \$11.25 million for three organic recycling infrastructure projects. The projects will divert up to 270 000 tonnes of Western Australia's food organics and garden organics waste from landfill each year and convert it into compost.

GO Organics processes organic waste into soil conditioners, mulches and potting mixes for our soils and received \$3.5 million in co-funding to expand its existing facility near Gingin. The funding will enable GO Organics to increase its processing capacity of organic waste by 75 000 tonnes a year to up to 124 000 tonnes a year, producing rich materials to benefit our soils. A pot trial conducted by Murdoch University, with support from CSIRO, has used GO Organics compost products combined with clay and achieved impressive results in improving the water and nutrient-holding capacity of Gingin's sandy soils. The benefits of compost and clay amendments in agriculture and horticulture were shown clearly through this trial, presenting a potential sustainable and cost-effective solution for enhancing productivity.

The value in our food and garden waste is clear, and improving the health of our sandy soils is enormously beneficial to our wellbeing and productivity. Importantly, diverting FOGO from landfill also prevents the generation of a significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions.

The state's *Waste avoidance and resource recovery strategy 2030: Western Australia's waste strategy* contains a target for all local governments in Perth and the Peel region to offer a three-bin kerbside collection system that separates and recovers FOGO by 2025. The Waste Authority administers a \$20 million program to assist local governments with the cost of rolling out this system. The increase in GO Organics' processing capacity will help to support the FOGO rollout. It is imperative that we recover the value that is in our waste, and the recovery of FOGO is vital to our soils and to our climate. I might just add that in Gingin, non-arable land was converted to productive land by this trial.