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**DEVELOPMENT AND TRIAL OF A METHODOLOGY FOR THE QUANTIFICATION AND
EVALUATION OF HOME COMPOSTING IN PALMERSTON NORTH, NEW ZEALAND**



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Abstract

Home composting and commercial composting can be regarded as part of the Municipal Solid Waste Management system. Currently, in Palmerston North and more broadly in New Zealand, home composting plays an important, but an unquantified role in waste diversion. In Palmerston North, the quantity of organic waste diverted from landfill via home composting is not captured in the City's official 'waste assessment' or recorded in the 'waste management and minimisation plan'. Additionally, there appears to be little local social and technical data on why, who, when, what and how well home composting is practised. The aim of this study was to develop and implement a methodology for a mixed-method quantitative-qualitative study for the quantification and evaluation of home composting practices in Palmerston North. The development process for the research methodology drew upon an international literature review of scientific research, a range of municipal best practice guidelines for home composting and referenced elements of the New Zealand composting standard. The data collection for this study involved a combined telephone and door-to-door survey of 300 households (that is, approximately 1% of occupied dwellings, randomly selected from across all 15 suburbs in the City). To support the physical data collection, a novel home composting evaluation tool was also developed and trialled for empirical and quality assurance evaluation. The overall participation rate recorded in the present study (64%) was high and both data collection methods proved to be viable, yielding positive results. 36% of the households who participated in the present study were home composters which could mean that about 10,761 households in the occupied dwellings of the City practise home composting. At the time of the survey, it appears that nearly 4005 tonnes of organic waste was being treated via home composting processes. The results also indicated positive quality assurance of the home composting process and the resulting compost in the City. Whilst most of the study participants have a positive experience towards home composting, nuisance insects, rodents and odour problems were reported as issues. In terms of motivation around current and future home composting practices, a range of support options appears to be available for Councils to encourage and enhance this positive environmental practice.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgement.....	ii
Table of Contents	iv
List of tables.....	x
List of figures	xii
Abbreviations and Acronyms	xv
1.0 Introduction/background	1
1.1 Problem statement.....	3
1.1.1 Scenario description	3
1.1.2 Waste flow in Palmerston North	5
1.1.2.1 Composition of landfilled waste	5
1.1.3 Waste minimisation in Palmerston North	6
1.1.3.1 Organic waste management in Palmerston North	7
1.1.3.1.1 Composting in Palmerston North	8
1.2 Research questions.....	10
1.3 Objectives of the study	11
2.0 Literature review	12
2.1 Municipal solid waste management (MSWM)	12
2.1.1 MSWM trends internationally and within New Zealand	12
2.1.1.1 MSWM in New Zealand	14
2.2 Zero waste and organic waste management	14
2.2.1 Landfilling	15
2.2.2 Open burning and incineration	16
2.2.3 Biological treatment methods	16
2.2.3.1 Vermicomposting	17
2.2.3.2 Composting.....	18
2.2.3.2.1 Commercial composting.....	20

2.2.3.2.1.1 Commercial composting trends internationally and within New Zealand	21
2.2.3.2.1.1.1 Benefits and drawbacks of commercial composting	21
2.2.3.2.2 Home composting	22
2.2.3.2.2.1 Home composting systems	23
2.2.3.2.2.1.1 Benefits and drawbacks of home composting	24
3.0 Materials and method	27
3.1 Research project design process	27
3.1.1 Classification of literature employed in the development of the methodology	28
3.1.1.1 Previous home composting studies internationally and within New Zealand	28
3.1.1.2 International and New Zealand best practice guidelines for home composting management	36
3.1.1.3 Compost standards	39
3.1.2 Development of a methodology for conducting a home composting quantification and evaluation study in Palmerston North	41
3.1.2.1 Methods employed for data collection in previous home composting studies	41
3.1.2.2 Proposed 'Home Composting Evaluation Tool' (HCET)/on-site physical assessment data collection tool	45
3.1.2.2.1 Findings from the review of international and New Zealand home composting best practice guidelines	46
3.1.2.2.2 Insights from NZS4454:2005	47
3.1.2.2.3 Findings from selected home composting studies that assessed compost QA	47
3.1.2.3 Development of the proposed 'Home Composting Evaluation Tool' HCET/on-site physical assessment data collection tool	48
3.1.3 Methodology for a home composting quantification and evaluation study in Palmerston North	49
3.1.3.1 Development of the survey sample	49
3.1.3.1.1 Sampling frame	49

3.1.3.1.2	Sampling methods	49
3.1.3.1.3	Sample size	50
3.1.3.1.4	Sample selection.....	51
3.1.4.	Data to be collected in the present study	55
3.1.4.1	Exploration of home composting operational schemes, awareness and attitude, and problems.....	55
3.1.4.2	Home composting QA evaluation.....	55
3.1.4.2.1	Temperature.....	56
3.1.4.2.2	Moisture content.....	56
3.1.4.2.3	pH	58
3.1.4.1.4	Observation of home composting processes and finished product.....	58
3.1.4.1.5	Methodology for the quantification of the volume and mass of organic waste diverted from landfill via home composting	59
3.1.4.1.5.1	Collection of compost samples.....	61
3.1.4.1.5.2	Determination of the bulk density and mass of compost samples	61
3.1.4.1.5.3	Comparison of the physicochemical properties of home compost sample with commercially produced PNCC compost sample.....	62
3.1.4.1.6	Improvement of the current methodology for future home composting quantification and evaluation studies	62
3.1.5	Methods for data collection	63
3.1.5.1	Pilot-testing of survey questionnaire	63
3.1.5.2	Telephone survey	63
3.1.5.2.1	Interviewers employed for the telephone survey.....	64
3.1.5.3	Door-to-door survey.....	64
3.1.5.4	Home visits	65
3.1.5.4.1	Step-by-step procedure for home visits	66
3.1.5.5	Self-selection sampling of home composters in Palmerston North.....	67
3.1.6	Data Analysis.....	67
4.0	Results	68

4.1 Willingness to participate in the study	68
4.1.1 Participation and refusal rates recorded by each of the two interviewers in the telephone survey	69
4.2 Reasons for declining to participate in the study	70
4.3 Proportion of home composters and non-home composters.....	72
4.3.1 The adjusted actual proportion of home composters and non-home composters in the present study.....	72
4.3.2 Number of years of home composting practice	73
4.4 Reasons given by the home composters for practising home composting.....	75
4.4.1 Categorisation of the reasons for practising home composting in the present study	77
4.5 Exploring the reasons given by the non-home composters for not practising home composting	78
4.6 Home composting systems identified in the present study	81
4.7 The range of feedstock/organic waste inputs for home composting identified in the present study	83
4.7.1 Number of feedstock intake per the three most common home composting systems identified in the present study.....	84
4.7.2 Materials excluded from the compost pile by the home composters.....	85
4.7.3 Use of the commercial composting site and/or landfill by the home composters ...	86
4.8 Management practices undertaken by the home composters in the present study	88
4.8.1 Mixing/turning practices among the home composters	88
4.8.2 Relationship between mixing/turning practices and home composting systems.....	89
4.9 Home composting problems reported by the home composters in the present study...	90
4.9.1 Number of home composting problems chosen per home composter	91
4.9.1.1 The number of home composting problems identified by the users of the three most common home composting system.....	92
4.10 Potential motivation to start home composting	92
4.10.1 Potential motivation to continue/do more home composting	93

4.11 Estimating the volume and mass of organic waste diverted from landfill via home composting	94
4.12 Physicochemical analysis of the compost samples collected during the home visit	96
4.12.1 Analytical results for matured home compost samples from the present study and commercially produced PNCC compost	99
5.0 Discussion	101
5.1 Participation and refusal rates in the present study	101
5.1.1 The use of two interviewers in this survey research context: exploring variation in participation and refusal rates	102
5.2 Reasons offered for declining to participate in the study	103
5.2.1 The critical issue of 'don't do home composting' as a reason for non-participation in the survey	103
5.3 Number of years that home composting has been practised and experience level.....	105
5.4 Home composting awareness and attitude	105
5.4.1 The reasons offered by the home composters for practising home composting	105
5.4.2 The reasons offered by the non-home composters for not practising home composting	106
5.5 Home composting operational schemes and accompanying management practices....	108
5.5.1 Home composting systems.....	108
5.5.2 Feedstock/organic waste inputs and general exclusions	110
5.5.2.1 Use of commercial composting site/landfill by home composters.....	111
5.5.3 Home composting management practices.....	111
5.6 Home composting problems	112
5.6.1 Potential motivation for home composting offered by the surveyed home composters and non-home composters	113
5.6.1.1 Resolving issues with home composting in Palmerston North	114
5.6.1.2 Increasing home composting practice in Palmerston North.....	114
5.6.1.3 Establishment of a kerbside organic collection/food waste drop-off facility in Palmerston North	116

5.6.1.3.1 Pros	117
5.6.1.3.2 Cons.....	117
5.7 Quantity of organic waste diverted from landfill via home composting in Palmerston North	118
5.8 Home composting QA evaluation in Palmerston North	118
5.8.1 Comparison between home compost from the present study and commercial compost from PNCC.....	121
5.9 Home composting processes and finished composts evaluation scores.....	123
5.10 Self-report versus home composting QA observation.....	124
5.11 Key recommendations on how the current methodology can be improved for future studies	124
5.11.1 Comparison of the responses given in the telephone survey and door-to-door survey	126
5.11.2 Choice of interviewers	126
5.11.3 Identification of the proportion of home composters and non-home composters	127
5.11.4 Exploration of single-bin and multi-bin systems used by home composters	127
5.11.5 Estimation of the diversion potential of home composting	128
6.0 Conclusion.....	128
6.1 The survey findings and observations from home composting practices and end products in Palmerston North:.....	129
References	133
Appendices.....	148
Appendix A Survey questionnaire.....	148
Appendix B Proposed HCET/physical assessment data collection tool	149
Appendix C Guidelines for using the proposed HCET/physical assessment data collection tool	150
Appendix D Quantification of organic waste diverted via home composting processes (telephone and door-to-door survey participants).....	151

Appendix E Quantification of organic waste diverted via home composting processes (voluntary participants).....	152
Appendix F Unwanted materials removed from the home compost pile.....	153
Appendix G pH values of fresh, semi-matured and matured feedstock (telephone and door-to-door survey participants).....	154
Appendix H pH values of fresh, semi-matured and matured feedstock (voluntary participants).....	155
Appendix I Home composting evaluation scores (per sample).....	156
Appendix J Home composting evaluation scores (per parameter).....	157
Appendix K Amended survey questionnaire for future home composting studies.....	158

List of tables

Table 1 Functions of the major sectors in New Zealand with regards to waste management and minimisation. Adapted from (MfE, 2010).....	3
Table 2 Total waste flows in Palmerston North during 2011/2012. Source: (Jones & Green, 2012; Wilson et al., 2012).....	5
Table 3 Major components of landfilled waste in Palmerston North during 2011/2012. Source: (Wilson et al., 2012).....	5
Table 4 Waste collection and recycling services in Palmerston North. Adapted from (PNCC, 2015; 2016a; Simmons, 2014; Wilson et al., 2012).....	6
Table 5 Feedstock treated via home composting and their respective functions. Adapted from (Auckland City Council (ACC), 2011; Ayre, 2012; Chen, Moore, & de Haro-Marti, 2012; City of Casey, n.d.; Dundee City Council (DCC), 2016; PCC, 2007; PNCC, n.d.; Rynk et al., 1992; Schwarz & Bonhotal, 2011).	23
Table 6 Differences between homemade and manufactured compost bins.....	24
Table 7 Single-bin and multi-bin home composting systems and the various operational schemes employed in each system	24
Table 8 Potential benefits and drawbacks of home composting. Adapted from (Abeliotis et al., 2016; Badan & Gajendra, 2005; Andersen et al., 2011; Boldrin, Andersen, Møller, Favoino, & Christensen, 2009; Colon et al., 2010; European Bioplastics, 2015; Lleó et al., 2013; Martínez-Blanco et al., 2010; Moore, 2005; Oliveira et al., 2016; Quirós et al., 2014; Tucker, Speirs, Fletcher, Edgerton, & McKechnie (2003); Vaverková, Adamcová, & Zloch, 2014; Vázquez et al., 2015).....	26

Table 9 Overview of home composting studies identified and reviewed from international and New Zealand academic peer-reviewed scientific literature and reports. As previously explained, the highlighted sections of the table represent the types of home composting studies relevant to the objectives of the present study.....	30
Table 10 International and New Zealand best practice guidelines for home composting management. Adapted from (ACC, 2011 (1); Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO, n.d.; (2); Ayre, 2012; (3); Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, 2009 (4); Chen et al., 2012 (5); Christchurch City Council (CCC), 2014 (6); City Of Casey, n.d. (7); DCC, 2016 (8); PNCC, n.d.; (9); PCC, 2007 (10); Pears, 2009 (11); Rynk et al., 1992 (12);University of Illinois Extension, 2016) (13).....	37
Table 11 Survey methods employed for data collection in selected previous home composting studies. The highlighted sections of the table mostly correlate with the objectives and scope of the present study.....	42
Table 12 Common home composting best practice guidelines collated from a review of international and New Zealand best practice guidelines for home composting management .	46
Table 13 Parameters analysed in selected compost QA studies. The highlighted boxes indicate the common parameters analysed in these studies. pH, moisture content, C/N ratio and temperature were the most common parameters analysed and therefore, formed part of the parameters that were assessed for the evaluation of the home composting process and final product QA in Palmerston North.....	48
Table 14 A breakdown of the sampling pool and targeted final sample size for the present study. The total sampling pool was 600. The contact list for the door-to-door survey was 60 households (that is, 10% of the total sampling pool) and the remaining 90% (540) was used for the telephone survey.....	51
Table 15 Proportionality distribution across the fifteen suburbs in Palmerston North used in the present study	54
Table 16 Schedule for the telephone survey. Calling was done throughout the seven days of the week, however, the time for weekdays varied from that of weekends because, according to some residents in Palmerston North, most households pick up their children from school and prepare/take dinner between 4 pm and 6.30pm on weekdays.....	63
Table 17 Participation and refusal rates among the 270 contacts approached via telephone survey.....	68
Table 18 Participation and refusal rates among the 30 contacts approached via door-to-door survey.....	68

Table 19 Participation and refusal rates recorded by each of the two interviewers in the telephone survey.....	69
Table 20 Overall reasons given by the home composters for practising home composting	76
Table 21 Categorisation of the reasons for practising home composting in the present study. Adapted from (Tucker et al., 2003).	77
Table 22 Overall reasons given by the non-home composters for not practising home composting	79
Table 23 Types of home composting systems encountered in the present study and the proportion of home composters who use these identified home composting system types	81
Table 24 Feedstock types composted by the home composters in the combined telephone and door-to-door survey	84
Table 25 Materials excluded from the compost pile by the home composters in the present study	86
Table 26 Home composting management practices undertaken by the home composters in the present study.....	88
Table 27 Home composting problems reported by the home composters in the present study	90
Table 28 Potential motivations to start home composting given by the non-home composters	93
Table 29 Potential motivations to continue/do more home composting among the home composters.....	94
Table 30 Physicochemical properties of compost samples collected from the telephone and door-to-door survey participants in the home visits. The values highlighted in red were not within the respective limits while those in green denote average moisture content values greater than 68%.....	97

List of figures

Figure 1 Commercial composting at the Awapuni composting site (Hot Rot in-vessel composting system (left), garden waste drop-off (middle) and finished compost (right). Source: (Hannon, Hay, City Enterprises, Allen, & Simmons, 2014).	8
Figure 2 Home composting systems containing fresh feedstock (left) and decomposed feedstock (right)	8
Figure 3 Organic waste used as a garden mulch to reduce weeds in garden soil.....	8

Figure 4 Pathways for the composting of household food waste and garden waste in Palmerston North. Both household garden waste and food waste are treated via home composting processes in the City. In contrast, the commercial composting site in Palmerston North accepts only household garden waste.....	9
Figure 5 A graphical overview of the key provisions of NZS4454:2005. Source: (Compost New Zealand, 2007b)	40
Figure 6 A graphical presentation of how the study sample for the present study was developed using probability sampling methods (stratified, simple and systematic random sampling methods).....	50
Figure 7 Steps taken in the present study for random contact selection from the telephone book	52
Figure 8 An illustration of how households' contact information was selected from designated pages in the telephone book. In this case, the household contact that falls on the 1cm mark was selected (that is, O'Connell and Okeeffe) to form part of the list. Odyssey T-shirts was not selected because it was a commercial contact.....	53
Figure 9 Pictorial illustration of some of the procedure employed in the present study to determine the moisture content of compost samples; (a) determination of the wet weight of samples; (b) weighed wet samples; (c) preheating process to reduce the smell of samples; (d) samples in an oven set at 105°C.	58
Figure 10 Step-by-step methodology for the quantification of the volume and mass of organic waste diverted from landfill via home composting in Palmerston North	59
Figure 11 A range of possible formulae for calculating the volume of differing home composting system types anticipated to be encountered in the present study; cuboid (p), frustum (q), trapezoidal prism (r), cylinder (s), cone (t), pyramid (u), sphere (v).....	60
Figure 12 Photographic illustration of volume measurements of a wooden box compost bin during data collection in the present study.....	61
Figure 13 Sieved aggregated home compost samples for the analytical test	62
Figure 14 Apparatus for the collection of compost samples during home visits in the present study. They comprised: temperature probe, two-litre fixed container, zip-lock bags, digging fork, white marker board, camera, gloves, tape measure, identification card)	66
Figure 15 Photographic illustration of compost pile/finished compost examined during home visits in the present study	67
Figure 16 A graphic illustration of the individual (telephone and door-to-door survey) rate as well as the combined overall participation and refusal rates in the present study.....	69
Figure 17 Reasons for refusing to participate in the telephone survey	70

Figure 18 Reasons for refusing to participate in the door-to-door survey	71
Figure 19 Overall reasons for refusing to participate in the study. The proportion of the contacts who gave the reason, ‘don’t do home composting’ (the bars with a red circle) should have formed part of the number of non-home composters and have been addressed in Section 4.3.1.	71
Figure 20 Overall proportion of home composters and non-home composters in the study	72
Figure 21 The adjusted actual final proportion of home composters and non-home composters in the present study.....	73
Figure 22 Number of years of home composting practice among the home composters in the combined telephone and door-to-door survey.....	74
Figure 23 Some types of homemade home composting systems identified in the present study; wooden box (a); wire fence (b); open pile (c); box made from scrap metal and wood (d)	82
Figure 24 Some types of manufactured compost bins identified in the present study; Eco-design (e); Firth (f); Garden Mate (g); Earthmaker (h); Composta (i); Sherlock Melb (j).....	82
Figure 25 Proportion of single-bin and multi-bin systems identified in the present study	83
Figure 26 Single-bin and multi-bin systems identified in the present study; manufactured single-bin system (left), homemade two-bin system(middle) and manufactured three-bin system (right)	83
Figure 27 Number of feedstock intake per the three common home composting systems	85
Figure 28 Use of commercial composting site/landfill by the home composters in the present study. Only a small proportion of the home composters also use the commercial composting site/landfill.....	87
Figure 29 Material types sent to the commercial composting site/landfill by the home composters in the present study.....	87
Figure 30 Proportion of home composters who responded “yes” and “no” to mixing/turning of their compost pile in the combined telephone and door-to-door survey.	89
Figure 31 Relationship between mixing/turning practices and the three most common home composting systems identified in the present study	89
Figure 32 Major home composting problems identified by the home composters in the present study	91
Figure 33 Number of home composting problems chosen per home composter in the combined telephone and door-to-door survey.....	91
Figure 34 Number of home composting problems selected by users of the three most common home composting systems identified in the present study	92

Figure 35 Total average volume of organic waste diverted from the landfill via home composting in Palmerston North (at the time of the present data collection).....	95
Figure 36 Total average mass of organic waste diverted from landfill via home composting in Palmerston North (at the time of the present data collection).....	95
Figure 37 Temperature profile of the compost samples collected in the present study	98

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACC	Auckland City Council
CCA	Chromated copper arsenate
CCC	Christchurch City Council
CO ₂ -e	CO ₂ -equivalent
C/N ratio.....	Carbon-nitrogen ratio
DCC.....	Dundee City Council
DSEWPC.....	Department of Sustainability Environment Water Population and Communities
DOS	Department of Sanitation
GHG	Greenhouse gases
HCET.....	Home composting evaluation tool
IGES.....	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
LCA.....	Life cycle assessment
MfE.....	Ministry for the Environment
MSW.....	Municipal Solid Waste
MSWM.....	Municipal Solid Waste Management
Mt.....	Metric tonnes
NZS4454:2005	New Zealand Standard 4454:2005 - Composts, Soil Conditioners and Mulches
NZWS.....	New Zealand Waste Strategy
PCC.....	Pembrokeshire County Council

PNCC Palmerston North City Council
QA Quality Assurance
RMA..... Resource Management Act
SES..... Socio-economic status
tpa..... tonnes per annum
UNDP..... United Nations Development Programme
UNEP United Nations Environment Programme
WA Waste Assessment
WMA..... Waste Minimisation Act
WMMP Waste Management and Minimisation Plan
ZWNZT..... Zero Waste New Zealand Trust