

LET'S GET SORTED

AND BEAT CONTAMINATION



Student resource booklet



CAMPBELLTOWN



Did you know?

Most waste created at school is made up of:

- Lunch packaging
- Food waste
- Paper and cardboard
- Recyclables
- Classroom and office waste

Waste in many schools simply goes to landfill; which is a big hole in the ground where it is buried forever. Landfills in Sydney are filling up very fast and then there won't be anywhere to dispose of the waste. Landfills also create greenhouse gases, which contribute to climate change.

Part 1 - first steps

What is waste?

There are many ways in which waste can be defined, here are a couple:

'An item or material that no longer has a use or purpose'

'A resource with an unknown use'

'An unwanted or unusable material'

Waste Hierarchy

When people talk about waste they often also talk about the waste hierarchy. It's like the food pyramid; the pointy end is what we need to avoid and the wide end is what we need most.

To reduce waste we need to follow the Waste Hierarchy (upside-down triangle):

Avoid Waste

Reduce Waste

Recycle Waste

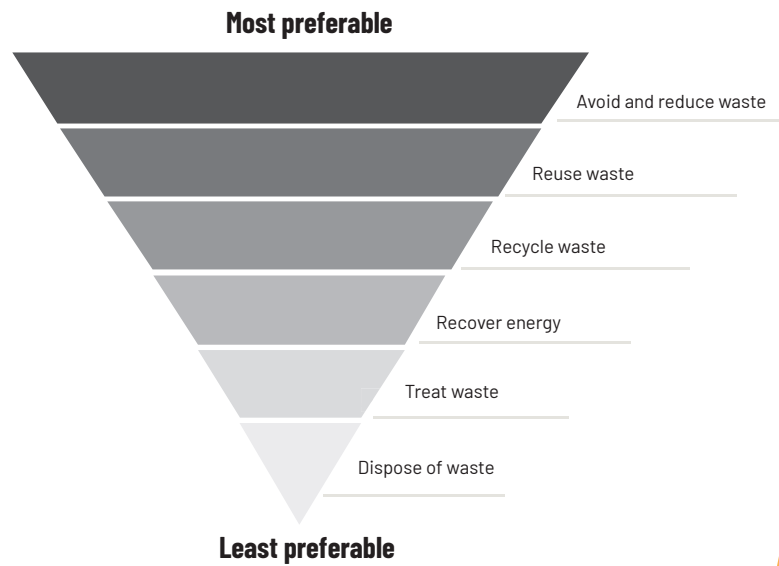


Figure 1: The Waste Hierarchy. NSW EPA. NSW Government

What can we do?

Based on the waste hierarchy we have the 5 R's:

- Refuse
- Reduce
- Repair
- Reuse
- Recycle

Everyone can follow any of these R's to help reduce waste.

How re-use and recycling is important

By reusing and recycling the waste that is created, we can keep it going around and around again. This is called a circular economy. The Garden Organics bins provided at your home is an example of this:



Where does our waste currently go?

There are a number of places we put our waste, including the rubbish bin, recycling bin, compost bin or donation to a charity for reuse.

Unless a school has arranged a recycling service, the waste that goes into the bins around the school (playground, classrooms, etc) is usually sent to landfill. Most school waste will follow a similar journey to your home kerbside bins.

The waste collected from Campbelltown residents currently goes to the SUEZ Resource Recovery Park at Spring Farm, where it undergoes the following processes:

Recycling (yellow bin): The items in the bin are sorted and baled into products that are the same as each other. For example all the aluminium cans are sorted out from all the other recyclables and baled as a separate 'product' for on-sale, and so on for each other material. Other companies then purchase the bales to make new products. If there is too much of the wrong stuff in the recycling (garden waste or rubbish), it affects the sale of the bales, which means that some of it may not be recycled at all.

Garden organics (green bin): the contents are delivered to the Organics Facility where it is made into compost. Compost is sold back to the community for use in gardens, returning organic material to the soil and diverting waste from landfill.

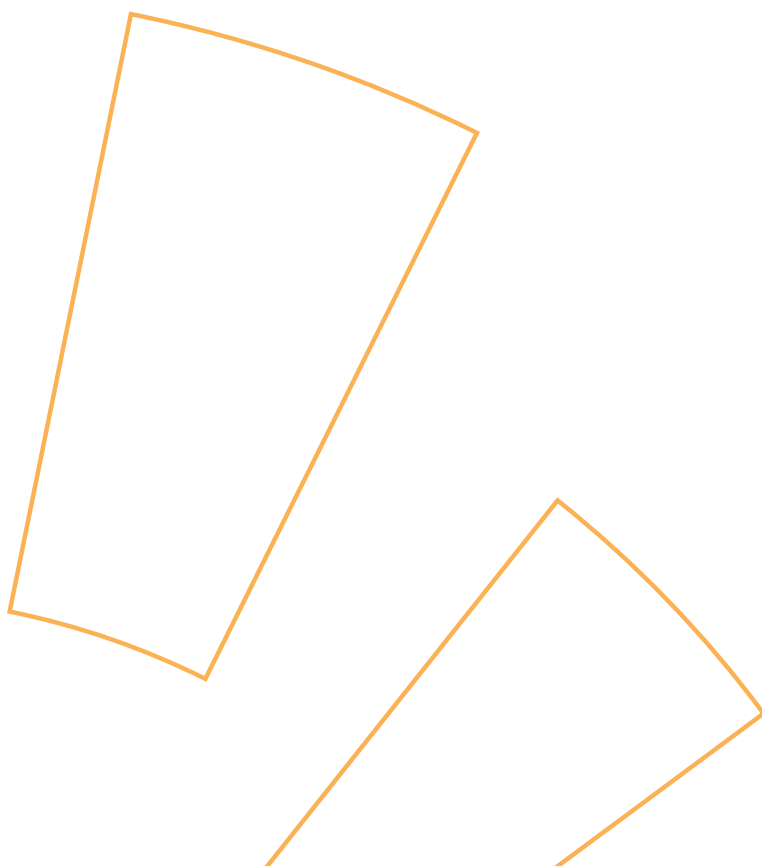
General waste (red bin): the items in the bin are delivered to the Transfer Station, this is where the waste is loaded into larger truck and transported in bulk directly to landfill. A landfill is a where unwanted materials (rubbish) are sent to be buried underground. Although there are a lot of new technologies in a modern landfill, the concept of burying our rubbish is one of the oldest forms of waste disposal and is still one of the most common practices of waste disposal in the world.



Sometimes people don't get rid of their waste correctly. Can you list some ways that waste can be disposed of in the wrong way?

What happens when waste ends up in the wrong place?

When waste is not disposed of correctly it can harm our planet. What are some of the ways you think waste can harm our planet? list them below.



The waste audit

What is a waste audit?

A waste audit is when you sort through all your waste and separate it into piles of different types of waste.

By completing a waste audit your school will discover two things:

1. How much waste your school produces
2. What type of waste is produced

This information provides a starting point to begin your journey of waste minimisation in your school by highlighting some important questions, such as:

1. What are we sending to landfill that can actually be recycled, composted or reused?
2. How can we reduce the amount of waste we create?
3. How can we increase the amount we recycle?

The audit results are a valuable measuring tool and can be used as a baseline (the starting point) for making changes to reducing waste at your school.

What can you achieve from a waste audit?

There are many benefits to carrying out a waste audit in your school. A waste audit can benefit the environment, help to make your school a happier, healthier place, and reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill. A waste audit can:

- Reduce the school's impact on the environment;
- Improve how the school looks (pride); and
- Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and create a range of activities to involve all the students and staff.

What to look for during the audit

There are some key things to keep in mind during the audit

1. Identify the source of the waste (for example - lunches, classroom work, canteen)
2. Identify the different waste types
3. Identify what can be done with the waste if it's collected separately
4. The audit is an opportunity to evaluate your school's current waste practices and see what can be improved

Getting ready for the audit

Current activity review

What does your school currently do to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill?

Where you want to be (goals) and how will you get there (objectives)

It's one thing to decide that you want to reduce the school's waste creation and disposal – but another thing to actually do it. Writing down your goals and objectives for the audit will assist you and the school to understand how to improve the way you look at waste and how you manage it.

Goal: Where you want to be, what you hope to achieve

Objective: How you will get there? What can you measure to make sure you can reach your target?

Sample goals (where you want to be):

25% increase in Return and Earn containers collected by end of year

Have two 240L compost bins in use by mid next year

50% reduction in food waste

Sample objectives (how will you get there):

Establish Return and Earn drop off locations around the school

Separate food waste by providing dedicated containers to collect it

Create posters, short videos and presentations about waste separation

Increase recycling across the school by providing a range of options for collecting recyclables

Develop a plastic free snack booklet for parents and students

Educate students and staff about waste reduction, recycling and disposal



Insert your goals and objectives below

Goal	
Objective	
Objective	
Objective	

Goal	
Objective	
Objective	
Objective	

Goal	
Objective	
Objective	
Objective	

Goal	
Objective	
Objective	
Objective	



Part 2 - audit time

Your teacher will assign each student to a waste audit role, so you know what your job will be during the audit. These roles may be rotated so you can experience different parts of the audit process.

Remember – everyone must be wearing gloves, enclosed shoes and a face mask so that you don't end up with any of the rubbish on your skin.

The following the roles are needed to complete the audit:

Sorters

Students will sort through the waste placed on a central tarp and separate the waste types into buckets (one for each different waste type). Label each bucket with the type of waste you are placing in it.

Weighers/Volumer (not a real word)

As the waste is sorted students will either weigh each of the waste types or measure the volume of each waste type. If you are weighing, weigh in sections then total the waste type at the end.

Scribes

Students will write down and record the waste types, weights, volumes and make comments on what is being found as the audit is being conducted.

Counters*

Count the number of items in each category where possible e.g. straws, drink containers, sandwiches, whole fruit, etc.

*Note: How many 10c containers are you throwing away? If you want to know how many eligible containers under the Return and Earn scheme you are throwing away (i.e. potential money going into the bin) make sure you get your counters to record this.

Data analyst

A student who is good at entering the data for closer examination in the post-audit stage.

Audit recorder

This is a great step your school is taking to reduce its impact on the natural environment. So make sure to record this wonderful collaborative event for future promotion and to use in potential future grant applications (include photos, or even video if you like).

Data recording sheets will be supplied separately at the beginning of the audit to record the waste collected. The following section is for you to complete during the audit or as soon as possible after the audit.

Snap shot on the day

This section is to take notes on the day and write down any ideas you may have for the different waste types. This is really helpful for when you head back to the classroom to go through your results.

Organics

Recyclables

Soft plastics

Landfill

Other

Reduce or Avoid – what waste created here can be reduced or avoided? What are your suggestions or ideas?



Part 3 – post audit

Check the goals and objectives

Once the audit is finished and you have the results it is a good idea to have a look at the goals and objectives that you created before the audit; you may want to change them or leave them the same. Then you can plan your actions to start making a difference in your school. Below is a table that can be filled out to make your waste reduction plan.

Just as a reminder

Goal: Where you want to be, what you hope to achieve

Objectives: How you will get there, what can you measure to make sure you are reaching your goal?

Copy your original goals and objectives to the section below:

Goal	
Objective	
Objective	
Objective	

Goal	
Objective	
Objective	
Objective	

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Objective	

Goal	
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Objective	
Objective	

Now re-write your goals and objectives if you want to change anything from the pre-audit phase. There may not be any changes, this is simply a chance to review and make sure your original ideas still fit with the results from the audit.

Goal	
Objective	
Objective	
Objective	

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Objective	

Waste reduction plan

The Waste Reduction Plan will identify what actions you need to take to achieve the goals and objectives that have been created. It is also important to split your activities into the short term (easy ones to complete) and those activities that may take more time to prepare for and complete (long term). This helps you identify what to do first.

Follow the smart framework

The actions you develop should follow the SMART framework:

Specific achieved	Know what has to be achieved
Measurable	Know how to show the results
Agreed	Agree on what and how
Realistic	Know that it can happen
Time-based	Know when it is to happen by

Tips to help the development of your waste reduction plan

The idea of the plan is to help the school avoid and reduce waste. This could be done by:

- Selecting items with the least packaging or that have recycled packaging
- Avoiding disposable or single-use items
- Buying products that are recycled, recyclable, repairable, refillable, re-usable or biodegradable
- Taking left over lunches home to feed to pets, or compost (it also lets parents know that you may not like what they packed!).

When waste cannot be avoided the best option is reusing items without further processing, which avoids the cost of energy and other resources required for recycling. Reuse can include repairing something, reusing it in a

different way, selling it or donating to a charity. At school you might reuse paper that is printed on one side for artwork or simple notebooks.

Sample actions

- Install bins (or collection containers) to separate different wastes in the playground or classrooms.
- Create signage/posters around the school to help students and staff sort their waste.
- Hold zero waste lunch day (Nude Food Day).
- At school assembly provide updates to take the entire school on the waste reduction journey.
- Establish compost or worm farming areas. Great for your veggie garden!
- Work with the canteen to reduce single use plastic items. Can alternatives like bamboo or compostable material be used instead? Or could you have a return system for cutlery items?
- Fix it day: hold 'fix it' events with the aim of reducing the amount of stuff that is thrown out.
- Reusable Art and Craft competition: encourage fun activities like a reusable art and craft competition that sees students repurposing items that would otherwise be thrown in the bin. Display the artwork as a point of pride in the front (administration) office.
- Use school newsletters to get your great waste work out to the wider community (Mums and Dads).
- Holding a school fete? Organise a clothes swap stall as an example of reuse and reduction of waste to landfill, assess how food stalls may be able to be waste free or low waste and encourage stalls to have simple waste plans in place to meet the school's new waste reduction focus.

