

ACTION PLAN TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS



Reth!nk Waste
TASMANIA



Rethink Waste
aims to improve
our efforts at
reducing, reusing
and recycling in
order to significantly
decrease the
amount of waste
that ends up as
landfill and to protect
our environment.

cradle coast
waste services
Operated by Delvevorran Waste Management

 NORTHERN TASMANIAN
Waste Management

SOUTHERN
TASMANIAN
WASTE
MANAGEMENT
GROUP



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Introduction

The Waste Action Plan Toolkit is an operating manual that guides the development and implementation of waste action plans in schools.

The benefits to your school and the broader Tasmanian community of developing and implementing a waste action plan, as well as helping the planet, will include:

- a reduction in the amount of waste your school sends to landfill
- a reduction in the cost of waste disposal
- the provision of learning opportunities which match the Sustainability cross-curriculum priority of the Australian Curriculum

- the education of the entire school community in environmentally friendly waste management practices.

The Waste Action Plan Toolkit has been designed to promote best practice; however, the key is finding what works for your school. This toolkit has been designed to be easily tailored for the needs of individual schools, classrooms and students. Good luck and we hope you enjoy your journey to becoming more waste wise!

The Rethink Waste Team

For more information go to
www.rethinkwaste.com.au

Chapter 1

Getting Started

By now, your school should have completed the Waste Audit Toolkit. This is good, because the results of the waste audit will inform the development of the school wide action plan.

How to set up an action plan

The first step in setting up an action plan to improve waste management in your school is to complete the waste audit.

The waste audit results will highlight the areas to focus on. Perhaps the results show an alarming amount of paper and cardboard is being sent straight to landfill. Perhaps the results show that a disproportionately large quantity of food and garden waste is sent to landfill. Whatever the results for your school, the second step is to decide on some goals and work through the relevant sections of the action plan template.

*Prepare a
school waste
policy*

The action plan template on page 12 has also been provided as a separate editable document, and can be found at www.rethinkwaste.com.au. In the template you will find a list of actions that are recommended to be completed for every area of waste targeted – from paper recycling through to waste management at special events.

You may also wish to write a school waste policy – a simple statement of intent for the entire school which can be displayed in a prominent location to help motivate the school community. A sample school waste policy can be found at www.rethinkwaste.com.au.

It is also worth noting that completing the action plan template can form a part of your school's School Environmental Management Plan.

Monitor, evaluate and trouble shoot

When implementing your action plan it is important to evaluate your procedures and find out if they are working. And if something isn't working, it gives you the opportunity to find out why and change it!

In the spirit of long term evaluation, once you have worked through the action plan, or a maximum of twelve months has passed, it is time to re-do the waste audit. This will allow you to see how well your school is progressing, re-evaluate your goals and congratulate yourself on a job well done.



Chapter 2

Communication is crucial!

It is important to remember that the entire school community has a collective responsibility to reduce waste generation and, in order for the community to be motivated to change their behaviour, they need to know how to do it, why

Keep the school community fully informed

they are doing it and what the results of their efforts have been.

This is why engagement of the whole school community is critical to the

success of any waste management initiative. Effective, ongoing communication is essential for long term behaviour change as it provides motivation through constant reinforcement.

So be sure to let everyone know what is happening!

Options for communication

In a school environment there are lots of opportunities for communication. A list of some of the most common methods for communicating with a school community can be found below.

Classrooms and curriculum

- ☐ Students are your biggest asset. Engaging students in waste management through the sustainability cross-curriculum priority of the Australian Curriculum will help drive the program

School newsletter

- ☐ Include regular progress updates and articles on new initiatives

Assemblies

- ☐ Reward students and classes who have performed in an outstanding way
- ☐ Announce new goals and programs

Posters

- ☐ Display student-created posters to serve as reminders for particular actions, for example, double sided printing
- ☐ Rotate posters regularly

Annual reports

- ☐ Include a chapter or section on your school's waste management efforts

Website

- ☐ Add a page for waste management on your website, and keep it up to date with all the latest news and activities

Intranet articles

- ☐ Regularly update the news section of the school intranet to reflect the latest Rethink Waste news and programs

Parent/guardian - teacher information nights

- ☐ Tell parents and guardians what the school aims to achieve and how they, and their child/ren, can help make it happen

Staff training days

- ☐ As part of any staff induction, all participants should be informed of the school's waste practices and expectations regarding the disposal of waste on site
- ☐ Encourage teaching staff to attend professional development days targeting waste and sustainability education

School events - e.g. awards nights, concerts

- ☐ When advertising, and at the start of each event, tell the community what is expected for waste management – perhaps borrowing the tagline 'Do the right thing, use the right bin'.¹

Social media

- ☐ If your school uses social media, use it to promote the success of current programs and the initiation of new programs.

Staff meetings

- ☐ To help track progress, announce the progress of the program in every meeting.

Email

- ☐ Send out email newsletters concerning the Rethink Waste activities of your school and ask for any ideas to current problems.

Recruit volunteers

- ☐ Parents and friends of the school may be available to help establish a compost system or a worm farm, or assist with a variety of other waste related tasks.

Waste related events - e.g. Zero Waste Food Day, swap days

- ☐ Participating in waste related events is a great way to highlight the importance of your waste reduction, recycling and reuse programs to the broader school community. Try hosting a Nude Food Day once a term, or incorporating a swap meet into your next school fete.

Term themes

- ☐ Have a new focus each term. Perhaps your school will focus on litter (contact Keep Australia Beautiful for resources) or zero waste lunch boxes (search the Tasmanian Department of Health website for ideas)

Letters to parents/guardians

- ☐ In this Action Plan you will find a sample letter that can be used to inform parents/guardians of the waste management program.
- ☐ Letters can also be used to inform parents/guardians when a new project begins, for example worm farms or the results of previous projects.

Chapter 3

Signs, bin lids and colour: why does colour matter?

You will notice when setting up your action plan that there are constant references to the preferred bin and sign colours and, more specifically, to the preferred bin lid colours.

Using standardised colours and locations is important for consistency and easy recognition

coordinating signs ensures increased recycling and waste diversion through consistent and frequent visual reinforcement and colour association. It also means that what happens at school mimics the kerbside system at home – yellow bin for recycling, green bin for organics and red bin for waste.

This is because an Australian Standard for bin colours was established in 2006 (see AS 4123-2006 part 7).





Using standard bin lid colours and



The Australian Standard

Ideally, all the bins used in your school will be uniform and have a neutral colour body with the relevant colour lid.

The table below is based on the current Australian Standards for bin lid colours and will help you plan and purchase bin infrastructure.

Material	Lid Colour	Example
Landfill Rubbish	Red	 Garbage
Paper and cardboard	Blue	 Cardboard
Green waste, food waste and organics	Lime Green	 Garden waste
Recyclables	Yellow	 Recycling

Signs - colours and standardised symbols

To help schools achieve consistency in bin signs, Rethink Waste has designed a series of waste stream signs including garbage, green waste and organics, recycling, paper and cardboard. Rethink Waste recommends the signs be printed in colour on good quality, durable vinyl. To obtain the files, simply visit the Rethink Waste Tasmania website and look at Posters under the Resources section.

Consistency in location

The previous section highlighted the importance of consistency in bin lid colours and sign colours to aid in visual reinforcement. It must also be remembered that consistency in the location of the bins is also important.

Bin stations should be established in permanent locations and, ideally, in the same location. For example, you should try to establish bin stations in the same location in every classroom and office – perhaps to the right of the door, or on the left hand side of the forward facing wall. Locating the bins in this way will allow students, especially as they progress through the grades, and visitors, to effortlessly contribute to waste management as there will be no confusion as to where a bin can be found.

To ensure that the bins are not moved to alternative locations, and to make life easier for students, cleaning and maintenance staff, use coloured tape to mark out the station on the floor. This way, when a bin is removed from the room to be emptied, everyone will know exactly where to return it.



Chapter 4

Sensible investment strategies

As with any other business transaction you want to make sure you get a good deal! The following two sections are designed to help you obtain value for money for your school, as setting up a waste management program in your school will require some financial investment.

Organising waste management contracts

When arranging for new collection services, for example a co-mingled recycling collection, you may wish to:

- approach three contractors for prices
- triple check all contract conditions before signing - for example, is the cancellation clause fair? Are you able to alter collection frequency and is there a cost to do so?
- ask for a copy of all relevant insurances
- notify the contractor of any special conditions unique to either your school or a general school environment - for example, trucks cannot enter school grounds between 8:00am and 4:00pm
- find out whether you can be charged by weight rather than volume, particularly for waste disposal. The more you recycle and reduce waste, the less you will pay if you can secure a weight-based contract. It is better to pay for actual waste disposed rather than total volume of a bin.

Additionally, it is important to periodically check the bins or skips being collected to ensure you are not paying for empty space to be collected. If your bins are regularly collected half full it may be time to negotiate a less frequent collection or a smaller skip. This is particularly necessary with the general rubbish collection because as your school gains momentum in recycling and composting and other forms of waste diversion, the school will likely be sending less waste to landfill.

Purchase of waste infrastructure

When purchasing new waste infrastructure, for example bins or bin stations, you may wish to:

- seek quotes from three different suppliers
- check to see if delivery and assembly (if required) are included in the quoted price
- ask what warranties apply to the products
- consider how easy bins are to move and whether there are heavy lifting issues associated with bin size
- consider how frequently bins are to be emptied

It is important to review your collection contract regularly to ensure you continue to receive value for money

Goals will provide you with a focus and help you shape your decision making.

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Chapter 6

Action Plan Template

Use the template on the following pages, or the editable form available at **www.rethinkwaste.com.au** to create one of your own, to organise the actions necessary to achieve your goals.

Remember to involve the entire school community and keep it relevant.

ACTION PLAN						
Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost: financial and non-financial	Resources
GET STARTED! Create a team, gain support In order to be successful, get the support of the entire school community – especially the principal and maintenance staff. Meet regularly to maintain motivation.						
Conduct a waste audit Make it a fun activity and involve as many people as possible. Repeat every 12 months to help track your progress.	Establish a team. Organise monthly meetings to progress the plan and evaluate your success. Conduct the audit.					Rethink Waste - Audit Toolkit

ACTION PLAN								
GET STARTED!	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost: financial and non-financial	Resources	
Identify target areas Decide what you want to achieve – do you want some easy wins or do you want to target the biggest ‘problem’ wastes? Do you want both? Matching your target area to the categories of the Action Plan will make putting a plan together easier.	Identify at least three target areas. For each area identify how you want to improve - is it to reduce?							
Raise awareness Involve the entire school community – put links on your website, put up posters, write articles for your newsletter, create an awards program, participate in nude food days... The options are endless.	Undertake at least 3 communication activities. Update these communications once a month.							
INFRASTRUCTURE AND SIGNS	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost financial and non-financial	Resources	
Establish waste and recycling stations Outside stations should consist of a red-lidded rubbish bin and a yellow-lidded recycling bin standing side by side. Inside stations should consist of a red-lidded rubbish bin, a yellow-lidded recycling bin and a blue-lidded paper and cardboard bin. There is also an option for a lime green-lidded food and garden organics bin to be added to both the inside and outside stations, depending on where food is likely to be eaten within your school and where food is to be composted.	Identify how many rubbish, recycling, food, paper and cardboard bins are required for the entire school. Order and install the bins. Establish maintenance and cleaning schedules to ensure bins are kept in good condition.							
ACTION PLAN								

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SIGNS	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost: financial and non-financial	Resources
Put up signs Consistency is important. Red should only be used on rubbish signs, yellow should only be used on recycling signs, blue should only be used on paper and cardboard signs and lime green should only be used on food and organics signs.	Identify how many rubbish, recycling, food, paper and cardboard signs are required for the entire school. A good rule is that there should be a sign on each side of each bin - so no matter which direction you approach from you know what the bin is for. Order the signs in good quality, durable vinyl and install.						
PAPER AND CARDBOARD RECYCLING	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost financial and non-financial	Resources
Establish paper and cardboard recycling stations There should be a paper and light cardboard recycling bin in every classroom and office. There should be a cardboard and newspaper recycling bin in every staff room, canteen and administration area.	Install signed bins in consistent locations in every classroom and office - for example, to the right of the door.						
Alter behaviour Reduce paper waste by implementing a double sided printing policy.	Set printer default settings to double sided.						
Empty the bins Assign clear responsibilities and enforce a strict schedule. If Class 5A will be emptying the paper and cardboard recycling bins once a week, schedule it in to make sure it happens.	Establish a bin emptying schedule and procedure for example, once bins are collected and emptied, all bins are to be returned to the designated paper and cardboard recycling bin location.						
ACTION PLAN							

PAPER AND CARDBOARD RECYCLING	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost: financial and non-financial	Resources
Arrange for collection Approach at least three contractors for prices to ensure you get a good deal. Periodically check the bins before collection to ensure you are not paying for empty air space to be collected - if you are, either negotiate a less frequent collection, move to a smaller skip or move to weight-based charging.	Obtain quotes from collection contractors and assign work to the contractor offering the best service and the best value for money. Review this contractor at least every twelve months.						
Raise awareness See Chapter 2 for suggestions.	Undertake at least 3 communication activities. Update these communications once a month.						
MIXED RECYCLING	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost financial and non-financial	Resources
Establish mixed recycling stations Inside and outside.	Install signed bins in consistent locations in classrooms, playgrounds and other selected areas.						
Empty the bins Assign clear responsibility and enforce a strict schedule. If Class 5A will be emptying the mixed recycling bins once a week, schedule it in to make sure it happens.	Establish a bin emptying schedule and procedure for example, once bins are collected and emptied, all bins are to be returned to the designated mixed recycling bin location.						
ACTION PLAN							

MIXED RECYCLING	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost: financial and non-financial	Resources
Arrange for collection Approach at least three contractors for prices to ensure you get a good deal. Periodically check the bins before collection to ensure you are not paying for empty air space to be collected - if you are, either negotiate a less frequent collection or a smaller skip. See page 10 for more information on selecting a collection contractor.	Obtain quotes from collection contractors and assign work to the contractor offering the best service and the best value for money. Review this contractor at least every twelve months.						
Raise awareness See Chapter 2 for suggestions	Undertake at least 3 communication activities. Update these communications once a month.						
ORGANICS	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost financial and non-financial	Resources
Establish organics collection station Organics bins should be located in and near the canteen, in designated 'eating areas' and in the staff kitchen.	Install signed bins in consistent locations near the canteen, in eating areas and the staff kitchen.						
Empty the bins Assign clear responsibility and enforce a strict schedule. If Class 5A will be emptying the mixed recycling bins once a week, schedule it in to make sure it happens.	Establish a bin emptying schedule and procedure for example, once bins are collected and emptied, all bins are to be returned to the designated mixed recycling bin location.						
ACTION PLAN							

ORGANICS	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost: financial and non-financial	Resources
Set up organics processing Collected organic material can be composted, used in worm farms or fed to chickens. Decide what your school wants to do and implement that program. Don't forget to think about the end use for processed organics - a school veggie garden perhaps?	Decide what method of processing best suits your school. Implement the method, involving the broader school community. Evaluate the effectiveness of the processing method every six months.						
Raise awareness See Chapter 2 for suggestions.	Undertake at least 3 communication activities. Update these communications once a month.						
SMART PURCHASING	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost financial and non-financial	Resources
Develop a policy A sustainable procurement policy will help everyone involved in the purchasing of items for the school to decide what is and is not an appropriate purchase For example, buy 100% recycled paper.	Create a sustainable procurement policy concentrating on frequently purchased items and expanding from there.						ecobuy.org.au
Enlist student support When a new item needs to be purchased, for example a refrigerator, as a classroom activity, ask the students to investigate which item best meets the needs of the school and the environment considering the budget available.	Determine which class would benefit most from this activity, and undertake the activity. When the preferred product is selected that meets all required criteria, empower the students involved by purchasing the product they recommended.						
ACTION PLAN							

SMART PURCHASING	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost: financial and non-financial	Resources
Smart disposal As part of a school fete, or open day, hold a 'garage sale' and swap or sell products that are no longer required. For items that are not required at the moment, but may be in the future, establish a storage area to ensure that items are kept in good condition.	Create a disposal plan that prioritises methods of landfill waste reduction for items that are no longer required. The plan should include repairing faulty items, reusing unwanted items either within the school or the broader community and recycling items.						
Raise awareness See Chapter 2 for suggestions.	Undertake at least 3 communication activities. Update these communications once a month.						
SPECIAL EVENTS	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost: financial and non-financial	Resources
Implement a business as usual approach Ensure during special events and public events that the school's waste management programs continue to operate. Roster helpers to manage the bins during the event, and to empty the bins at the end of the day. Consider increasing the number of signs around the school for the day of the event. Ensure all public bins have the correct signs on them for recycling, organics and garbage.	Roster helpers to set the bins out before, empty the bins during and bring the bins in at the end of the event.						
OTHER	Specific actions	Responsible Person	Curriculum Links	Timing	Indicators of Success	Cost: financial and non-financial	Resources
Add conditions to hiring school facilities Ensure parties who hire school facilities are able to participate in your school's waste management programs by incorporating it into any agreement between the school and the hiring party.	Incorporate participation in the schools waste management program into any agreement between the school and the hiring party.						

Chapter 7

Additional Rethink Waste resources

Rethink Waste has a range of resources and support material to assist schools, available from rethinkwaste.com.au.

Additionally, in this Action Plan you will find a sample letter that can be used to inform parents/guardians of the waste management program. And there's also a list of additional ideas that can be used to further improve waste management and sustainability in your school.



Additional Resources

Keep Australia Beautiful Tasmania

www.kabtas.com.au

Keep Australia Beautiful Tasmania offers several resources to schools, including the Litter Less program which was developed to assist schools to reduce litter and increase recycling within the school environment.



Tasmanian Government

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/environmental-management/education-and-awareness-about-waste/schools>

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment has several in-class activities and education resources to support waste education and behaviour change in schools.

ECO-Buy

<http://ecobuy.org.au/>

ECO-Buy provides advice to organisations developing and implementing sustainable procurement policies.



Example letter to inform parents/guardians of the waste management program:

Dear Parent/s - Guardian/s,

Our school is planning to begin a program to reduce the amount of waste created in the school from

.....

This program follows on from the waste audit conducted on

.....

To begin with our school will concentrate on

.....

This waste management program is embedded within our programing and planning for this term and will assist students to obtain the understanding required under the sustainability cross curriculum priority of the Australian Curriculum.

The program also has benefits for the entire school community, as it will assist us to become more aware of the waste we produce and to develop ways to reduce the amount of waste we would normally throw away. Beginning a waste management program is a definite step towards reducing waste in our school and playing our part in making our planet a healthier place to live.

If you have any questions please contact

Thank you for your support

More ideas to consider

The table below contains more ideas that you could consider implementing at your school to further Rethink Waste.

Ideas to consider:

Canteen	
	Work with the canteen to encourage healthy eating, as healthy options often have less packaging.
	Work with and encourage the canteen to provide food options with little to no packaging. The canteen can also look into zero waste food storage options (i.e. containers instead of cling wrap or aluminium foil).
	Suggest the canteen makes some food from scratch in bulk volumes such as pasta bakes or lasagne that can be served in reusable containers/plates, rather than serving individually packaged foods.
	Minimise the use of canteen paper by placing orders onto a white board (use in conjunction with reusable containers or plates/bowls).
	Keep in mind that dirty canteen paper can be shredded and processed through worm farms.
Collection	
	Look into collecting items for a charity organisation. For example, Rotary Australia donates reusable equipment for people in need- see website www.rawcs.com.au
	Collect other items from the community such as batteries, printer/copier cartridges, CFL light globes and old mobile phones - see the Rethink Waste Tasmania website for a list of recycling and collection services.
Organic waste	
	Sell or give away 'worm wiz' and worm castings from worm farms as a plant tonic.
	Look into creating permaculture gardens/beds that may be used in conjunction with compost and worm farms.
	Consider the possibility of having chickens, to feed scraps.
	Keep in mind that dirty canteen paper can be shredded and processed through worm farms.

Recycle	
	Talk to your local council about what can be recycled in your area to avoid confusing the message.
	Organise paper recycling at your school and investigate recycling bins for other materials.
	Paint boxes with bright (obvious) colours to be used as recycling and rubbish bins in each classroom, and allocate students to empty them into larger recycling bins. Stick to red for rubbish, yellow for co-mingled recycling, and lime green for food and garden waste.
Reuse	
	Make paper from 'waste' paper. Homemade paper note pads or cards can be sold to parents and the school community.
	Make and distribute note books from used paper that is blank on one side.
	Obtain a 'reuse shed' where teachers and students can store items that can be reused at a later date (for art, science classes etc.).
	Consider having student groups collect and repair old bicycles that can be sold to the school community or donated to charitable organisations.
Support	
	Form a committee of interested teachers and students to help share the workload.
	Encourage other teachers, groundskeepers and canteen staff to attend a Rethink Waste follow-up workshop.
	If possible, enlist the support and involvement of groundskeepers/gardeners as they can be invaluable to the success of your Rethink Waste activities, especially for composting, veggie gardens and worm farms.
Whole School	
	Publicise the results of the audit in your school newsletter to notify parents and other students about waste generated at school (especially wasted food).
	Create a 'reuse fashion show' as an assembly item to demonstrate and promote reusing.
	Create a display from your waste audit results to put up in a common area and/or show at assembly - include results, pictures, fact sheets etc. You may also want to announce results over the public address (PA) system.
	Hold school swap meets or garage sales, where students can bring in old books, toys and sports gear to swap with one another.

Whole School

Record how much paper you are recycling on a weekly basis (for example, if one tonne of recycled paper saves about 13 trees) - plant a 14th tree in celebration of your efforts. If there is no space to plant a tree on school property, look at working in conjunction with an organisation or community group to have them plant a tree on your behalf.

Contact us about our Rethink Waste School videos, books, props, and resources available to borrow.

Next steps:

Rethink Waste Steps (if not yet completed):

- Use the results from your waste audit to write a waste action plan for your school based on the sample plan provided. This is simply a broad outline of the actions you intend to take and an approximate timeline. Remember, this doesn't have to be complicated. Use the sample plan as a guide and make sure the timeline is realistic!
- Write a school waste policy – this should be a simple statement of intent for the entire school. Feel free to use the sample policy on www.rethinkwaste.com.au for ideas.

Grants

Investigate if there is a community or government grant program that is relevant to your school's waste reduction initiatives.

Advice

- Ask us about schools you can be in contact with for ideas and to start communities of practice.
- Talk to the lead teacher at your nearest Sustainable School.



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www.rethinkwaste.com.au