



# Mainstreaming the WOW factor

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Maintaining the WOW factor

#### **Engaging Young People**

*"Students need to feel a part of the process, involved at all levels of decision making. With meaningful involvement comes a sense of pride, commitment, the desire to make things work because you feel you are a part of it. A school cannot expect students to have drive and enthusiasm if they are not truly involved. And not just 'involved', ... students must be meaningfully involved."*

**Nicola Simpson and Rachel Cain,**  
Youth Environment Council of SA mentors,  
EQ Australia, Summer 2005 issue





# Wipe out Waste



## Mainstreaming the WOW factor

A WOW program starts with a number of questions about waste in your school:

1. What do we know and what are we doing now?
2. What do we need to do and how can we do it?
3. How can we sustain it?

Answering these questions will give you:

- ▼ an overview of how your school is performing in learning about waste issues
- ▼ an indication of the effectiveness of current waste management systems
- ▼ a benchmark against which you can measure the effects of any changes introduced
- ▼ assistance in identifying where improvements can be made.

### 1. What do we know and what are we doing now?

Gathering information on existing waste systems and learning is essential when beginning the WOW program. This information can be collected in a number of ways.

#### Waste Rubric

Rubrics are tools frequently used for learners, educators and whole school communities to specify learning criteria and assess, monitor and evaluate performance.

An overarching Waste Rubric has been developed for school waste systems and learning. This rubric may be used or adapted to monitor progress at your site. Engage your whole school community in assessing where your site currently sits and where you want to move to.

Similar rubrics have also been developed for individual waste streams in schools (recyclables, organic materials, packaging) and may also be adapted to monitor progress at your site. These are included in **Section 4: WOW in Curriculum**.

Tailor the rubrics to suit your site by adapting or adding indicators in each column.

Regularly review your rubric/s to continuously monitor and improve your achievements.



**Aim to continuously improve whole school waste management systems and behaviour to move your school up the waste hierarchy towards the preferred practices of avoiding and reducing waste!**



## Waste Minimisation

### Avoid, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Level of Achievement ►	Beginning	Planning and Developing	Implementing	Achieving
<b>Overarching actions ►</b>	Waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling identified as a priority issue for the school	Investigating waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling principles and practices and developing action plans	Implementing waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling principles and practices across the school community	Waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling practices are successfully embedded in learning, decision-making and operations throughout the school community
Area ▼	Indicators			
<b>Whole School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste issues raised / identified by staff, students and/or community</li> <li>School governing council informed and involved</li> <li>Consultation occurring with staff, admin, parents, canteen, grounds and cleaning staff</li> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul>	<p>Collecting baseline data on current practices and sharing with whole school community, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveying school community attitudes and behaviours</li> <li>Auditing waste streams at site</li> </ul> <p>Developing, documenting and promoting whole-school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision, principles, action plans</li> <li>% waste reduction targets and timelines</li> <li>Policies and strategies</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring, recording and promoting achievements</li> <li>Evaluating outcomes and adjusting policies, targets and strategies</li> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling are incorporated into all school policies and plans</li> <li>Outcomes are documented, promoted and acknowledged</li> <li>Waste reduction, reuse and recycling have become part of school culture</li> <li>Student participation in decision-making is supported</li> <li>Ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure continuous improvement.</li> </ul>
<b>Management Systems</b>	<p>Understanding that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>waste management systems can reduce waste to landfill</li> <li>Significant cost savings can be made with waste minimisation practices</li> <li>Recycling can generate funds for school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Auditing waste streams at site</li> <li>Assessing systems and procedures</li> <li>Researching options for improvement</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring, recording and promoting achievements</li> <li>Engaging external service providers to support waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular evaluation occurs to ensure continuous improvement</li> <li>Targets are achieved and exceeded</li> <li></li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum / Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classes are exploring school waste issues</li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul>	<p>Reviewing curriculum framework to identify where learning about waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling best fits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Auditing waste streams at site</li> <li>Exploring waste through integrated learning programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning outcomes demonstrate improved understanding and actions for positive change</li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling are integrated across the curriculum</li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community is informed</li> <li>Community support is gathered</li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying relevant community resources and support</li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involving and engaging local community stakeholders / external service providers</li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best practice in waste minimisation is modelled for the wider community</li> <li>Students share their learning through actions with the wider community</li> <li>Student participation in community and environmental forums is supported</li> </ul>

## Gathering Waste Data

The collection of baseline data is essential before beginning (or improving) a waste management and learning program. Participating WOW schools will provide data annually to WOW staff at KESAB.

Data can be collected in a number of ways on:

- ▼ where waste issues currently sit in the curriculum
- ▼ current waste management systems operating in the school
- ▼ types and volumes of waste generated within the school
- ▼ cost of waste or recycling collections
- ▼ funds raised through recycling collections.

Suggested methods of collecting data are included below.

### Curriculum Review

Identify where waste learning is currently included in your school curriculum in the following areas:

- ▼ Specific Faculties
- ▼ Cross-curricula themes / topics
- ▼ Elective / Environmental subjects
- ▼ Events / Fairs / Festivals / Forums
- ▼ Competitions eg Wakakirri
- ▼ Camps / Excursions

Make recommendations for including waste learning opportunities in the curriculum.

### Solid Waste Audit

This is a 'hands-on' audit involving students and staff in identifying and assessing current waste practices.

A Solid Waste Audit involves creating a waste 'snapshot' by mapping, collecting, sorting, analysing, evaluating, reporting and making recommendations for improving your waste systems. The 'snapshot' may be from one day's waste or from a particular waste stream at your site.

Schools that have conducted waste audits found it a valuable learning opportunity which clearly places school waste issues in context for the whole school community.

**Collective Solid Waste Audit data gathered in 2005 is shown on the following page.**

## Section 6: Resources

Includes a Solid Waste Audit Guide  
and Solid Waste Census proforma.



### Solid Waste Census

This census involves students and staff in collecting waste data.

A Solid Waste Census uses existing information from waste contracts, invoices and visual assessments of bins by students and staff. Photographs of the volume and type of material in bins and skips are an excellent way of regularly recording this information. While this provides less specific information than a waste audit, it is another starting point for regularly gathering waste data.



*Preparing for a Solid Waste Audit*





# Wipe out Waste



## School Solid Waste Audit Results

### Data from Audits conducted at 10 School sites from Kindergarten to Secondary schools

In 2005, comprehensive solid waste audits were conducted at 10 school sites (metropolitan and regional), including 2 primary schools, 3 secondary schools, and 3 R-12 schools, to obtain data on the types and volumes of waste found at various school sites.

The data in the accompanying chart and graphs shows waste collected by volume. This is considered to be the most relevant form of measurement for schools, as volume is the critical factor that determines when bins or skips require emptying. (Weight data was also collected.)

Chart 1 shows that **half of the material sorted from bins destined for landfill could be recycled, composted or reused!** This indicates that with effective reuse, composting and recycling systems in place, schools could potentially reduce the volume of waste to landfill by half and reduce the cost of their current waste collections.

**With over 1200 school sites across SA, significant resource recovery and savings can be achieved.**

Graph 1 shows findings from items sorted in the general waste to landfill (rubbish) stream. These are divided into the following categories:

- **Rubbish** - items found that were suitable for landfill only
- **Compostables** - any organic materials that were suitable for composting
- **Recyclables** - items that could be placed in a collection for recycling
- **Reusables** - items found in the waste stream that appeared to still be functional.

*The unit of millilitres/person/day gives a comparable indication across all sites. This figure includes the number of students and staff per school site.*

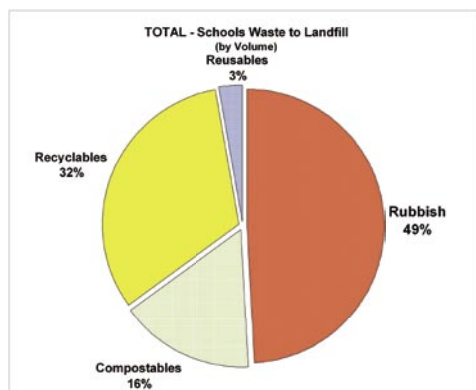
For sites where Paper and Cardboard recycling was in place, this waste stream was audited separately as it represents over 60% of waste generated in schools. Totals from seven sites that collected paper / cardboard are shown in Graph 2.

The following categories were recorded:

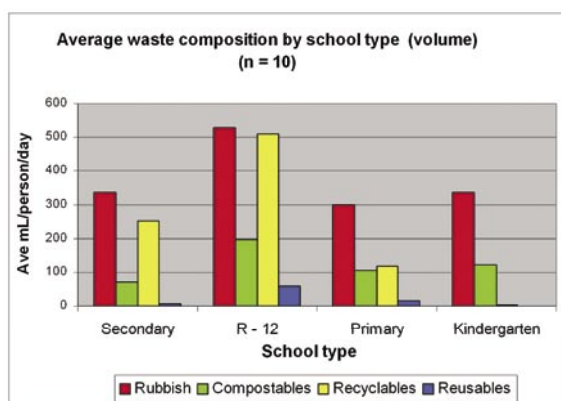
- **Recyclables** - paper / card items that have been used to maximum efficiency
- **Reusable** - materials that had the capacity to be reused before being placed in the recycling collection (commonly paper used on one side only)
- **Contamination** - any materials that contaminate the paper / cardboard recycling process and should not be placed in the paper / cardboard recycling collection.

Further details available at [www.wow.sa.gov.au](http://www.wow.sa.gov.au)

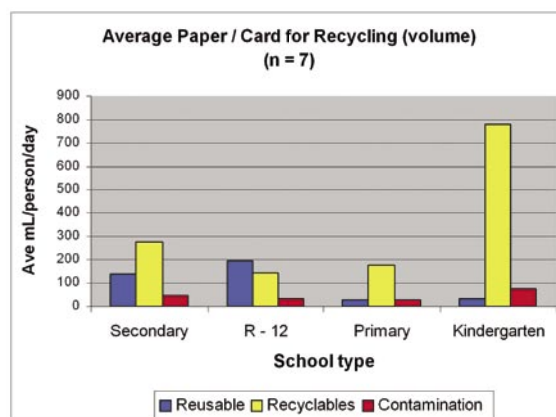
Chart 1



Graph 1



Graph 2

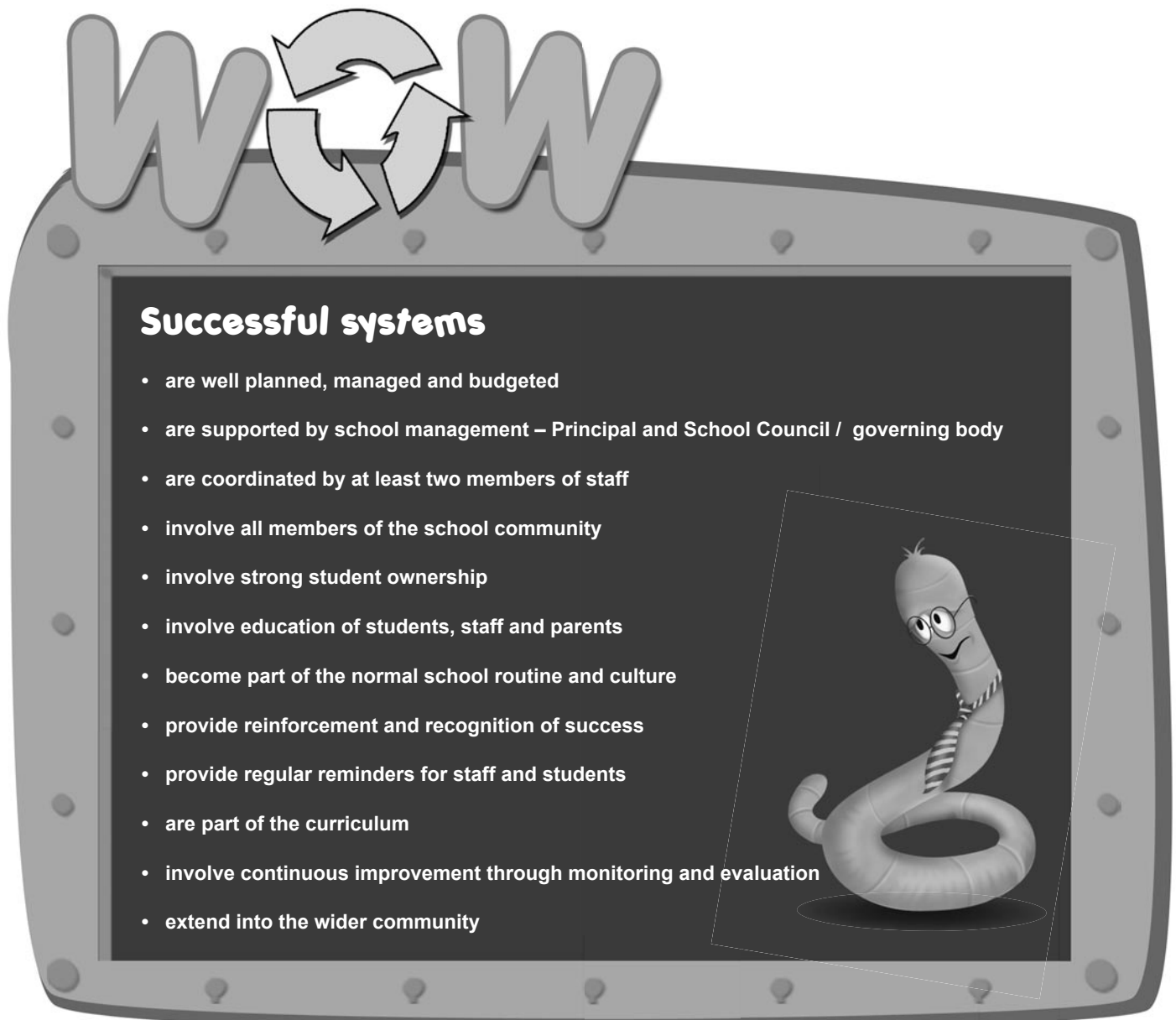


## Mainstreaming the WOW factor

### 2. What do we need to do and how can we do it?

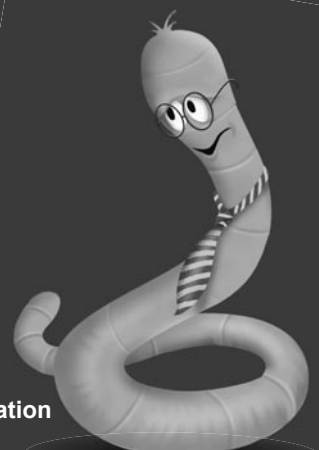
The whole school community is encouraged to develop a School Waste Action Plan (SWAP) based on recommendations made from data gathered using Rubrics, Solid Waste Audit, Solid Waste Census, WOW Actions Checklist and other tools.

A SWAP can be as comprehensive or as simple as your school community decides. The suggestions for successful waste minimisation strategies (in this section) can be used alone or incorporated into a SWAP, either simultaneously or progressively over a period of time.



**Successful systems**

- are well planned, managed and budgeted
- are supported by school management – Principal and School Council / governing body
- are coordinated by at least two members of staff
- involve all members of the school community
- involve strong student ownership
- involve education of students, staff and parents
- become part of the normal school routine and culture
- provide reinforcement and recognition of success
- provide regular reminders for staff and students
- are part of the curriculum
- involve continuous improvement through monitoring and evaluation
- extend into the wider community





## School Waste Action Plan (SWAP)

**This process requires commitment from school management and significant consultation with and participation from the whole school community.**

**Suggested steps in developing a SWAP are:**

### 1. Form a Planning Group

This group has membership and commitment from the whole school community: eg principal, staff (teaching, administration, ancillary, grounds), students, parents and school council / governing body.

### 2. Research current practices

Conduct a school Curriculum Review and Solid Waste Audit or Solid Waste Census.

**Section 4: WOW in Curriculum** also includes student data-gathering activities about school waste systems.

Survey waste attitudes, practices and behaviours of the whole school community. Develop your own survey methods or use / adapt the sample survey in **Section 6: Resources**.

A WOW Actions Checklist with suggested practices for various areas of the school is included in **Section 6: Resources**.

### 3. Begin to develop a Waste Minimisation Policy

A policy may precede or follow the development of an action plan. Policy development may take some time but is essential for mainstreaming and maintaining effective waste practices at your site.

A policy can be as short or long as your school requires but it must:

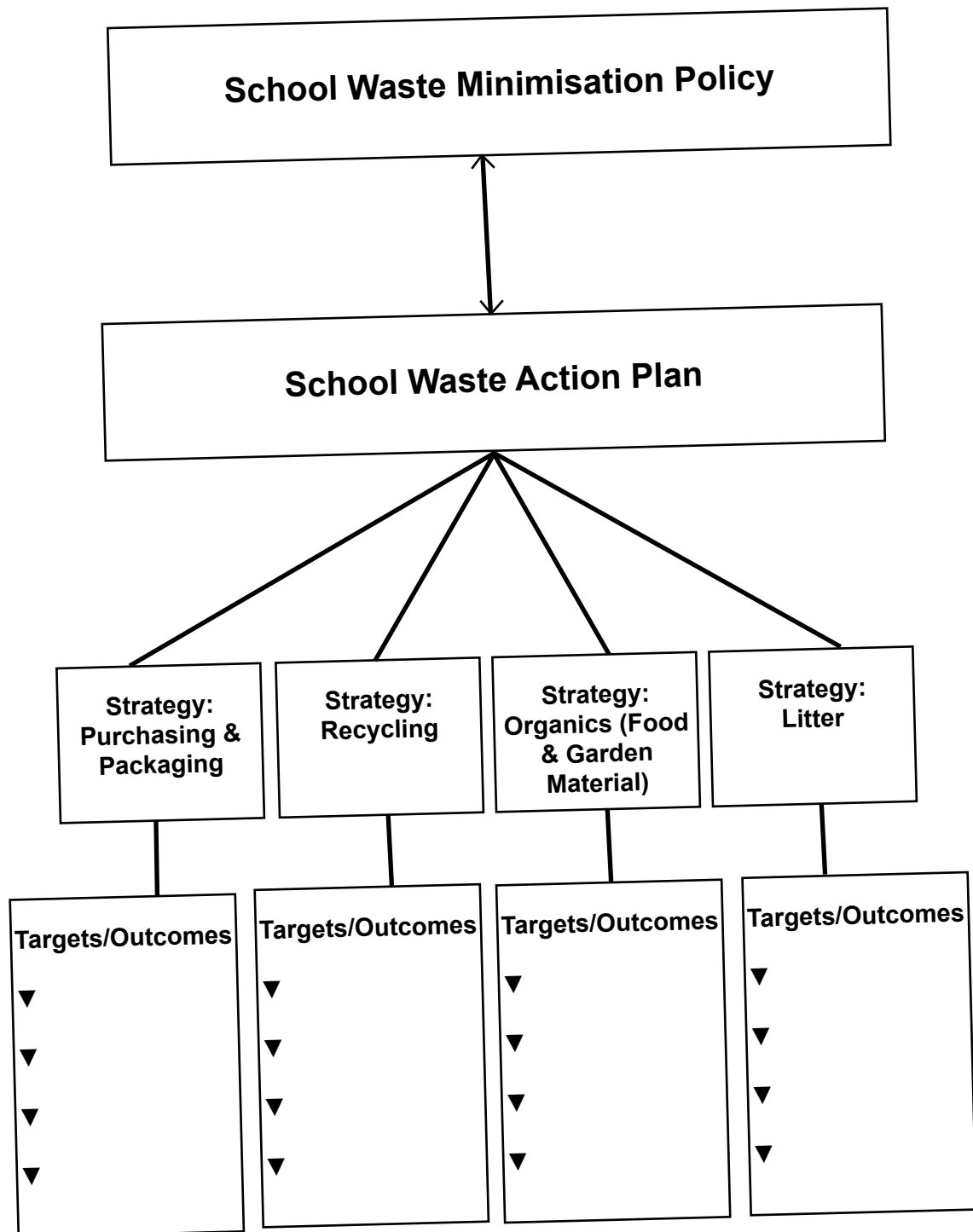
- have a clear purpose
- identify what outcomes are expected to be achieved through its implementation
- include procedures and approaches to achieve the objectives
- identify monitoring and evaluation strategies.

**Steps to consider in developing a school waste minimisation policy include:**

- gaining whole school community support for the development of your waste policy
- identifying supporters across the school community to help develop and publicise the waste policy, ensuring involvement of key people who will be critical in implementing the policy
- using the results of your Solid Waste Audit or Solid Waste Census to develop an understanding of current practice and to make recommendations for improvement
- developing a draft policy
- consulting with the whole school community by promoting the draft policy and requesting feedback that will be incorporated into it
- presenting the draft policy to the school council / governing body for sign off
- incorporating the policy into the school's Site Plan or Mission Statement



Policy development may take some time but is essential for mainstreaming and maintaining effective waste practices at your site.





#### 4. Prepare a draft School Waste Action Plan (SWAP)

It is critical that all policies are supported by an Action Plan. After the planning group has met and information has been collected, it's time to incorporate your recommendations into a SWAP. All responsibilities relating to OHS&W policies and risk management must be followed in developing a SWAP.

Your Plan may include all, or some, of the following:

- an overview of goals
- priority actions
- predicted benefits and / or cost savings
- resource and budget requirements (eg paper / cardboard collection; **Section 7: Contacts & Service Providers**)
- strategies for particular material / waste streams within the plan (eg purchasing, packaging, organics or litter strategy)
- how to implement the strategies (WOW Actions Checklist; **Section 6: Resources**)
- skills required to achieve outcomes
- staff, student and parent involvement and roles
- targets and timeframes for the SWAP that could be short term or long term (eg reduction of 10% in school paper in first 6 months)
- monitoring of your school waste system
- ongoing promotion plan (within and beyond school)
- OHS&W issues and a risk management plan
- insurance needs for your activities (eg volunteer insurance or arrange insurance cover in the event of a paper / cardboard recycling container fire)
- curriculum planning (eg a sequential learning plan across all year levels or a method appropriate for your site - see **Section 4:2**).

#### 5. Circulate, Consult and Finalise the SWAP

It is important that the planning group presents the draft SWAP to staff, students, parents and the school council / governing body and invites feedback. Encourage broad-based support. Consult with your local council and recycling operator/s about how they can assist your school. Make any changes required before finalising the SWAP and securing sign-off by all parties.

#### 6. Promote and Publicise the SWAP

The planning group can then involve the whole school community in promoting the SWAP via school newsletters, assemblies and posters in the school.

You may like to:

- consider launching the SWAP on a special day eg Clean Up Australia Day, World Environment Day, National Recycling Week. A 'Launch' ensures that everyone is fully aware of what is to be expected of them and why
- involve local media, local council, local MP, KESAB, Zero Waste SA, Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH), Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), Catholic or Independent school offices, etc.

## 7. Implement, Monitor, Evaluate, and Modify the SWAP

Now that a lot of hard work has been done, it is time to implement the SWAP. It is important to record your progress and ensure ongoing monitoring while acknowledging and promoting the improvements.

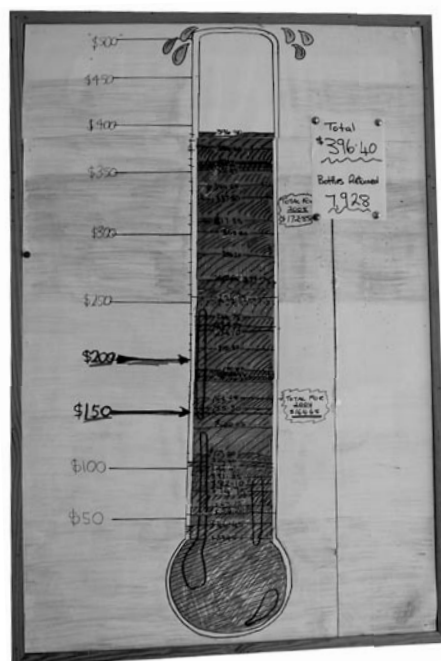
Evaluate the SWAP on a regular basis against targets and timelines. Invite feedback from the whole school community about your progress and modify your SWAP if necessary. Adopt a continuous improvement approach.

## 8. Celebrate success!

It is important to regularly recognise and give incentives for achievements. This may be on an individual, class/es or whole school community level.

You may like to:

- use charts or 'fund-o-meters' in public areas to indicate targets achieved
- provide incentives for a class or students showing initiative eg incentives for displaying good litter habits, starting a worm composting system, preparing a brochure for parents on composting
- invite the whole school community to a 'waste-free' celebration when a target is reached
- highlight progress or achievements in the school newsletter
- enter your school in environmental awards or recognition programs (eg KESAB Tidy Towns, WOW events).



Star of the Sea School  
'Fund-O-Meter' indicating funds raised  
from 5c container collection



## Strategies for Waste Minimisation

### Suggested steps for a successful strategy

1. Form a Planning Group from the whole school community
2. Research current practices relating to the particular Strategy
3. Prepare a draft Strategy
4. Circulate, Consult and Finalise the Strategy
5. Promote and Publicise the Strategy
6. Implement, Monitor, Evaluate, and Modify the Strategy
7. Celebrate Success!
8. Add the Strategy to the SWAP



### Suggestions for Success

The following pages provide suggestions for developing successful strategies to deal with these waste / material streams:

- ▼ Purchasing & Packaging
- ▼ Recycling
- ▼ Organics (Food and Garden material / waste) including Composting / Worm Composting
- ▼ Litter

These suggestions have been adapted from the Victorian Waste Wise Schools program.

Schools may initially adopt one strategy then build on success with additional strategies.

A rubric for each of the strategies is included in **Section 4: WOW in Curriculum**.



Gathering data with a Solid Waste Audit

**Student involvement is critical to developing successful strategies. Students can contribute through:**

- ▼ research / data gathering
- ▼ sharing information / reporting findings
- ▼ debating options
- ▼ decision-making
- ▼ implementing strategies
- ▼ monitoring, evaluating, modifying
- ▼ celebrating.



# Suggestions for Success: Purchasing & Packaging

Schools purchase vast quantities of material, every year. Much packaging from items purchased by the school, or items regularly brought to or sold at school (particularly in relation to food and beverages), becomes waste. Schools incur a cost for disposal of this waste.

Before purchasing items, consider introducing or extending school programs that reduce the need for annual purchases, particularly items such as text books and coloured pencils.

## When making purchasing decisions consider:

- ▼ the need for the item. When given careful consideration, you may already have an item or something that is nearly as good as a new one and often the need is only short-lived
- ▼ buying only the amount needed for the task
- ▼ recycled content (of item) and it's recyclability or end use / disposal
- ▼ embodied / embedded energy. Buy local wherever possible
- ▼ alternative products and their cost comparison
- ▼ durability
- ▼ ongoing maintenance (eg can it be repaired?)
- ▼ whether it is refillable (eg pens, pencils, cartridges, toner)
- ▼ items with minimal packaging
- ▼ whether items may be available through ROSES (DECS reuse scheme for schools) or other reuse schemes, including CRS (Computer Recycling Scheme) see **Section 7: Contacts & Service Providers**
- ▼ bulk buying. This reduces cost and packaging.



*Waste-free lunch and recess!*



*One day's waste from food & drink packaging*

## For regularly purchased items with packaging issues, consider:

- ▼ investigating whether a take-back scheme by suppliers exists (for polystyrene, cardboard, pallets, etc.)
- ▼ developing a recycling program for regular items with recyclable packaging
- ▼ selling a reusable lunchbox with school logo as part of school uniform
- ▼ using refillable water bottles at school.

## Consider auditing materials purchased by the school including:

- ▼ stationery (pens, pencils, paper, classroom and faculty needs)
- ▼ text books
- ▼ toilet items (toilet paper, hand towels)
- ▼ crockery, cutlery for use at school and for school events
- ▼ staff room food / drink supplies
- ▼ cleaning products / practices (eg non-toxic products, use of cloths versus paper towel).

Also consider 'non-disposable' packaging for school-based events (eg sports day, excursions). On excursions, students of all ages can carry a lunch box and water bottle in a small bag or back pack which models best practice to the wider community.





## Suggestions for Success:

# Recycling

School Solid Waste Audits conducted in 2005 indicate that many schools are involved in recycling some of the materials listed below. However, over 30% of material found in school waste could have been recycled (excluding food waste). Recycling reduces waste, saves money and can create fundraising opportunities.

### Recycling streams in schools may include:

- ▼ Paper / Cardboard. On average, this represents over 60% of school waste. Confidential items should be shredded, and may be collected separately for recycling
- ▼ 5c Containers. These should be empty (preferably rinsed) with no straws or lids
- ▼ Printer / Copier / Fax Cartridges
- ▼ Kerbside recyclables
- ▼ E-waste; electrical and electronic items including appliances and computers
- ▼ Bread Tags
- ▼ Ring Pulls
- ▼ Stamps
- ▼ Film plastic (non-rigid plastic wrapping)
- ▼ Corks

To find recycling options for the above items see **Section 7: Contacts & Service Providers**.

### Before collecting recyclable items investigate:

- ▼ whether it can be collected in your area and by whom. If not, can it be reduced or reused within the school?
- ▼ whether the material will be collected from the school or must be delivered to a site outside the school
- ▼ any payment / costs to the school (eg payment for recyclable materials, cost of wheelie bins)
- ▼ storage containers (ie bags, wheelie bins, skips, bales) and space required
- ▼ how to present the material / product (eg rinsed 5c containers, squashed or not?)
- ▼ the minimum quantity of material that must be collected by the school before pickup
- ▼ the preferred collection containers. Recycling collection containers must be visible; convenient and accessible; well organised, clean and tidy; have clear instructions / signage for use; be safe and secure
- ▼ the frequency of pickup (ie on-call or regular timetable)
- ▼ convenient and accessible locations for the whole school community (ie classrooms; staffrooms; administration areas, photocopy rooms, library / resource centre, canteen, eating areas)
- ▼ how much money the school might save / raise through enterprise opportunities.

### Recycling collection systems may use:

- ▼ colour-coded bins
- ▼ different collection containers (ie cardboard boxes for paper, ice cream containers or buckets for food scraps, and small wheelie bins or round 44 litre bins for rubbish)
- ▼ clear signage on each container (using pictures, photos) indicating what can go into the container (eg clean white or coloured paper only, food scraps, 5c containers).



*Making 5c container recycling fun!*

## Suggestions for Success: Recycling continued...

### Main collection / storage areas

Decide on a central collection area for each material. There may be more than one area depending on the type of material and the size of the school. These collection points must be:

- ▼ convenient for students and staff
- ▼ accessible to collectors' vehicles
- ▼ secure from wind, rain, theft and vandalism (eg in a locked enclosure or shed away from school buildings).

Decide on the best container for the materials within this central collection area. Some examples of containers include:

- ▼ wire cages or crates (eg for 5c deposit items)
- ▼ 240 L wheelie bins (eg for paper and cardboard)
- ▼ skips.

### Problem Solving

- ▼ Anticipate challenges when establishing new systems and accept these as whole school learning opportunities.
- ▼ If a problem arises, deal with it quickly to ensure the success of the program. For example, if contamination of a particular recycling stream is an ongoing issue, find out where and why this is occurring. Further promotion of the system or signage on containers may be required, or collection containers may not be appropriate or in the appropriate location.
- ▼ From time to time there may be difficulties in obtaining cost-effective collection services for recyclable materials. In South Australia most areas have recycling depots. Many depots accept a range of recyclable material in addition to 5c deposit containers. If there are no recycling facilities in your area, consider how to reduce this material in your school waste stream.



*Clearly labelled classroom bins for recycling and worm food*

### Maintaining the program

- ▼ Use money saved or funds raised through recycling to maintain, upgrade and improve school programs in consultation with students.
- ▼ Involve the whole school community in ongoing management, monitoring and evaluation of the system (eg correct use, frequency of emptying, cleanliness and ease of use).



*Placing recycling and rubbish bins together creates a 'user-friendly' system*



## Suggestions for Success: **Organics**

### **(Food and Garden material / waste)**

#### **including Composting / Worm Composting**

Data from 2005 School Waste Audits indicate that food and garden materials in school waste comprise 51% of total waste by weight and 16% by volume. Much of this material could be reduced in quantity or used for composting or worm composting. If your school has animals (eg chickens, pigs, etc.) some food waste may be used as animal feed.

Suggestions based on the experiences of a number of schools and trials conducted by education groups are included below.

#### **Before collecting food and garden material consider:**

- ▼ how can the quantity of food wasted at school be reduced?
- ▼ how much of the school's waste can be composted? (Fruit and vegetable scraps, leaves or grass clippings)
- ▼ how will materials be collected? Consider providing specific containers for classrooms, staffroom, canteen and eating areas. Containers must be visible; convenient; accessible; well organised, clean and tidy; have clear instructions for use; be safe, secure and vermin proof.
- ▼ who will manage the collection? Consider monitors for regular emptying, cleaning and the return of these containers.
- ▼ what OHS&W precautions need to be taken?
- ▼ what are the potential cost savings, or fund raising opportunities through enterprise activities?

#### **Before selecting composting / worm composting systems consider:**

- ▼ which composting method is best for the school? Composting systems include bokashi, bins or bays, trenching, tumblers and worm composting
- ▼ the most appropriate systems (containers /bins / enclosures) to suit the size of the school, budget, type of organic material to be composted and number of students / staff involved. What will they cost? How many are needed? Where should they be placed? Are they vermin proof?

- ▼ at least 2 - 3 bins / enclosures. A total volume of about 3 - 5 cubic metres is generally required, depending on the amount of organic material generated by the school
- ▼ larger, open, timber / brick / stone enclosures for garden waste and enclosed containers (geddies bin, bokashi, worm composting, tumblers) for food waste
- ▼ the OHS&W precautions that need to be taken?
- ▼ other items needed for this project and their cost? (eg spades, forks, gloves, masks, aprons, hoses, buckets, ash, lime, dolomite)
- ▼ who will coordinate the composting / worm composting system?
- ▼ who will maintain the system, particularly during holiday periods?

#### **Problem Solving**

- ▼ Anticipate challenges when establishing new systems and accept these as whole school learning opportunities.
- ▼ If a problem arises, deal with it quickly to ensure the success of the program. For example, if worms in a worm compost system die, find out why, and what can be done to prevent it happening again.
- ▼ Ensure that there is a use for the compost produced (eg vegetable gardens).

#### **Maintaining the program**

A variety of strategies can be used to maintain successful programs, including:

- ▼ cross-age tutoring
- ▼ growing plants including vegetables
- ▼ enterprise activities eg sell compost, worms, worm castings, vegetables and produce as an enterprise activity to the whole school and wider community
- ▼ gardening club
- ▼ curriculum integration eg integrate a healthy eating program and / or school garden with the composting program.

# Suggestions for Success:

## Litter

Litter is often perceived as a problem in schools and public places. School litter issues can be managed by reducing packaging, developing systems that focus upon litter prevention rather than control and creating a sense of school pride.

Student initiated research into school litter is an effective way of addressing litter issues. Further suggestions are included in **Section 4: WOW in Curriculum**.

### Litter Research

- ▼ Conduct a litter survey / audit to identify what types of litter are found on site, whether litter items are generated from school or home, and where litter hotspots are within the school.
- ▼ Conduct a bin survey including the type and placement of bins.

### To reduce litter consider:

- ▼ consulting with staff at your site to identify successful strategies they have observed in other schools
- ▼ providing positive incentives for students modelling responsible litter behaviour (eg canteen vouchers, placing names in a weekly prize draw and extended lunch time). Avoid using litter collection as a punishment, particularly for breaches of discipline that are not related to littering. Using litter pick-ups as a form of behaviour management is not recommended
- ▼ ensuring student ownership. If litter is caused by student behaviour, involve them in developing strategies to reduce the problem (eg loss of certain canteen items or shortened lunch time, whole school litter pick-ups)
- ▼ allocating an area for each class to monitor. Students may design signage to place in their area to encourage other students to use bins or reduce waste.

### For an effective rubbish collection system:

- ▼ analyse bin design to determine whether improvements can be made to reduce litter. Provide lids for bins (to prevent loss of rubbish due to wind or birds)
- ▼ consider using 44 litre lidded bins with holes in the top, or 120 litre wheelie bins
- ▼ involve students in decorating bins to increase their visibility and usage. This avoids bins blending into the environment so well that they are hard to see



*Placing litter and recycling bins together works well*

- ▼ provide sufficient bins (in reasonable condition) in areas that may be badly littered (eg around the canteen, student eating areas, near grassed areas and playgrounds)
- ▼ place bins in the same position each day (eg paint circles on the ground) and / or provide a means for keeping the bins in place (eg bin frames)
- ▼ provide different bins for recyclables, food scraps and general rubbish
- ▼ consider a 'no bin' policy. Students take food and related waste home.

### For effective bin management systems:

- ▼ involve students in waste management by collecting bins and emptying them directly after lunch and placing them out in the morning
- ▼ consider the link between bin design and the frequency and time of collection (eg open bins may need to be collected immediately after lunch to reduce the chance of their contents being dispersed / lost)
- ▼ consider daily collection to reduce odours and insect problems
- ▼ consult with students, teachers, grounds staff, and out of school hours users, to ensure that the bin collection meets all needs.

### Problem Solving

- ▼ Anticipate challenges when establishing new systems and accept these as whole school learning opportunities.
- ▼ If a problem arises, deal with it quickly to ensure the success of the program. If litter issues persist, revisit the issue with SRC / student groups, Canteen managers and other users of school facilities and grounds.

### Maintaining the program

- ▼ Involve the whole school community in ongoing management, monitoring and evaluation of the system (eg correct use, frequency of emptying, cleanliness and ease of use).





## Mainstreaming the WOW factor

### 3. How can we sustain it?

It is crucial to involve the whole school community in the planning, implementation and ongoing maintenance of the program. This helps maintain enthusiasm and shares the work involved.

Keep the whole school community informed of progress and provide opportunity for feedback. Regular opinion surveys sent to all members of the school community will allow input about the strengths and weaknesses of your WOW program.

### Maintaining the WOW factor

Once your WOW program is in place the following factors will help to maintain momentum and enthusiasm.

#### Networking

- ▼ Place waste education on the agenda of existing networking groups, such as Principal Associations, Cluster School groups, Subject areas (eg SOSE, MASA, SASTA), Canteen, Grounds / Facilities or Parent Associations to allow sharing of your experiences with others.
- ▼ Maintain regular contact with the Waste or Environment Officer at your local council.
- ▼ Encourage staff, students and parents to attend WOW events in your region.
- ▼ Find out what other schools are doing via WOW workshops, gatherings, conferences, forums, website.

#### Ongoing Education and Information

This is necessary when:

- ▼ new students and staff come into the school. Include waste practices in information documents given to new students (their families), staff and TRT staff
- ▼ new practices are introduced (eg new paper recycling boxes). New information may be announced at assemblies, placed on noticeboards, in staff memos or newsletters
- ▼ ongoing issues are identified (eg contamination in recycling streams).

**Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, promotion and publicity are critical for success in maintaining whole school community programs.**

#### Incentives

Incentives used in schools may include:

- ▼ recycling certificates (eg 'Recycling Champs' presented for special achievements)
- ▼ on the spot recognition for students who demonstrate positive waste actions (eg used a hankie, picked up litter, used refillable pen / pencil)
- ▼ 'Golden Dustbin / Dustpan' for the cleanest designated areas of the school
- ▼ casual day or other reward if a target is reached
- ▼ awards for individuals, classes or houses
- ▼ using money saved from waste collections for a 'green fund' which students decide how to spend.

#### Awards / Competitions / Grants

Entering awards and applying for grants encourages the documentation and recording of achievements and assists in evaluating progress.

- ▼ Contact your local council to identify award / grant programs for schools.
- ▼ Regularly visit the WOW website for updates of award and funding opportunities.
- ▼ Consider involvement in KESAB Tidy Towns (regional areas only), local government recognition / awards, WOW events, Landcare and other grant programs.

#### Remember that:

- ▼ embedding waste into policy, curriculum and whole school community culture will take time
- ▼ an annual review of action and learning plans will help ensure that systems and curriculum remain current and relevant for students, staff and the whole school community
- ▼ continuous improvement and innovation will require an ongoing budget for training and development, participation in forums and WOW events
- ▼ annual reporting against original baseline data assists in recognising and celebrating the achievements at your site over time.