**WHEN:** Whenever suits your class for at least 6 weeks and beyond....

We recommend from Week 2 (or 3) to Week 8 (or 9) of a term.

**WHY:** Information in the following pages outlines the areas where school and preschool sites can most easily reduce the volume of materials being sent to landfill. Saving material from landfill helps the environment and also saves money for families and sites!

**HOW:** Suggestions for reducing material to landfill can be found in;
- this support material
- the WOW website : www.wow.sa.gov.au

**WHAT YOU WILL FIND / NEED:**
- record sheets and tally sheets (download from WOW website)
- WOW mini bins (we will send the number that your site requires)
- Optional Resource: WOW DIY Audit Kit (download from WOW website)

**TIP:**
Use careful language as an important tool in helping your class with this challenge! Referring to items as ‘materials’ or ‘resources’ rather than ‘rubbish’ or ‘garbage’ (which very few items are), has proven to be very effective in helping students and staff think more carefully about where to place items (eg recycling, reuse, compost, landfill).
Wipe Out Waste Bin Materials Audits have been conducted at over 200 sites since 2005. Audits involve sorting material from landfill bins into 15 categories to assess how well existing separation systems are working and to identify any opportunities to separate and collect many of the valuable resources going to landfill.

The results above (4 main categories) suggest that with effective recycling, composting and reuse systems in place, the opportunities for resource recovery and savings are significant (up to 70% diversion from landfill - by volume).

The **volume** results below (all 15 categories) show that 25% of all material going to landfill from sites is food and drink packaging, so much of the material provided with the Less to Landfill Challenge focuses on Waste Less (or Nude Food) recess and lunch options. Changing daily packaging behaviour has positive impacts on the family budget and on the environment, as well as the cost savings to sites for having less material collected for landfill. Other areas to focus on are: **recycling** - especially paper/cardboard collection, and collection of material for **composting** (including food scraps, hand towel and tissues). If you don’t currently have collection systems for these at your site, the Challenge is an opportunity for participating classes to demonstrate how many resources could be collected and used or recycled at your site.

While we appreciate that collection services do not exist everywhere, please read the one page suggestion sheets on the following pages for **reducing Landfill items**, **recycling Recyclables**, **recycling Compostables** and **reusing Reusables** for ideas that you can do at your site or in collaboration with local recyclers. Suggestions demonstrate how easy it is to change daily behaviour, the positive impact of this behaviour change on the family budget and on the environment, as well as the cost savings to sites for having less material collected for landfill.

By the categories on the chart below, the challenge can be broken down into:

- **Reduce** - food and drink packaging, ziplock bags, small tubs, ‘other’ material
- **Reuse** - single sided paper for scrap paper, and reusable items
- **Recycle** - paper and cardboard, 10c containers, kerbside recyclables, use **composting** systems
**REDUCE** landfill items

This includes:

- **Food and Drink Packaging:** (21% of total volume) chip, biscuit, cheese snack wrappers, plastic wrap, alfoil. So called ‘convenience’ food in small packages is usually the most expensive way for families to purchase food items. Another hidden cost in ‘convenience’ foods is that when they are sent to school/preschool, the management and collection costs of the packaging is borne by the site. With increasing landfill levies, this economic cost will continue to increase.

- **Ziplock bags:** (2% of total volume) have their own category as so many of these supposedly ‘reusable’ items are binned. The state average (to date) is one per person/day - enough to line the road from Adelaide to Ceduna and back! If one student uses 1 ziplock bag/day for their school career, that totals 2 600 bags or up to $260 (equivalent to purchasing a $20 lunchbox every year).

- **Small tubs and squeezies:** (2.4% of total volume) from yoghurt, fruit, custard and jellies may be recycled at home, but usually retain too much residual food at school for safe recycling to occur. Squeezie/ sucker containers can NOT be recycled.

- **Other:** (4% of total volume) material that can only go to landfill eg; broken pens, pencils, crockery, and other non-recyclable items. If this is the only material going to landfill, you may only need a couple of wheelie bins collected each term! This may be the only material that will go in your mini Less to Landfill Challenge bin each day.

What can we do about this?

**Food and Drink Packaging, Zip Lock Bags and Small Tubs:** are all items that we can work to reduce. The audit results chart on the previous page show that 25% of all material being sent to landfill from school sites is made up of food and drink packaging. For this reason, much of the material provided with the Less to Landfill Challenge focuses on Waste Less (or Nude Food) recess and lunch options.

Resusable **Waste Less or Nude Food lunch boxes/wrappers** are ways to reduce packaging, (a sample letter to parents is included in this resource pack). If food and drink packaging can be replaced with durable, reusable containers that may last students from pre-school through to high school, the long-term cost savings and environmental benefits will be enormous. Less packaging often encourages healthier food choices, so links to healthy eating and improved learning outcomes may also occur.

A number of primary schools have removed outdoor bins from their sites. The indoor bins are managed by classes and only emptied when needed and packaging is taken home by students and staff. This means that grounds and cleaning staff time can be spent on more productive activities.


These websites have some great ideas and fundraising options for sites.

**REUSE** reusable items

This includes:

- **Single-sided paper:** (1% of total volume) is blank on one side and could be reused for scrap paper, this may include partially used exercise books.

- **Laminate:** laminated material including charts or cards, could be reused by another person or kept in storage for use at a later time.

- **Craft:** Scrap pieces of fabric, wool, coloured card and brenex paper that could have been used for craft activities.

- **Stationery:** pencils, pens, rulers and whiteboard markers that still function well.

- **‘Lost items’:** Occasionally there are ‘lost items’ such as hats, water bottles, netball bibs, staff cups, lunch boxes, etc.

What can we do with these items?

A whole site approach to ensuring that all items are used efficiently and only discarded when there is no other way they can be used. Consider a communal sharing area where unwanted but reusable items are placed so that other members within the site community are able to reuse. This can save money as less stationery needs to be purchased if staff and students are sharing reusable resources.

**Single-sided paper:** can be reused for scrap paper collected in a designated scrap paper box for other class or site members to use the paper to its full potential before being discarded for recycling.

**Stationery:** material such as posters and charts may be able to be reused by others or used again at a later time. Unwanted or unused stationery could also be reused by another school member, rather than being thrown-in the landfill bin. Both these items could be reused by establishing a designated area to collect these for other people in the school community to use when needed. This may include offering items no longer useful for staff to parents or students.

**Craft:** a scrap paper box in classrooms, art rooms, home economics areas etc. where items like coloured paper/card, material scraps, etc. may be collected for future use.

**‘Lost items’**: ensure that the school community, including cleaning and ground staff, know where lost property items can be placed. This may require a waterproof outdoor container for collection, or an allocated box in the office, with regular reminders for students and parents to check for items (at least once per term).
RECYCLE compostable items

This includes:

- **Food scraps**: (12% of total volume) crusts, fruit, veg and food scraps
- **Compostable paper**: (14% of total volume) handtowel/papertowel, tissues and paper lunch/canteen/bakery bags
- **Garden materials**: (2% of the total volume) flowers, leaves, grass cuttings, small twigs and branches
- **Uneaten food**: (7% of the total volume) while uneaten food is included in the compostable category, it is an area to work on reducing (and eliminating!) given the wastage in food and $ value of fully-wrapped food being placed in landfill bins.

What can we do with these items?

**Food scraps**: options will depend on what systems exist at your site. Many sites composting systems (bins, bays, bokashi or worms) to feed gardens. Some sites collection buckets are taken home by students or staff with chickens, animals or big compost systems. A simple and effective collection system is a reused caterers bucket with lid, and clear colourful signage about what can go in it. These may be decanted daily (or regularly) by monitors, a class or student group. This system works best if it is available inside classrooms (especially primary schools and preschools), and if buckets outdoors are placed adjacent to landfill bins. In some council areas you may be able to place food scraps in your council organics bin or if you are a large site with too many scraps to manage on site, consider a commercial collection through your contractors, or food ‘waste’ specialists. These collections cost less than landfill collections, and the material is then sent to a commercial composter to become a valuable product for horticulture and garden use.

**Compostable paper**: is important in absorbing moisture from food scraps. This can be collected with food scraps, or in a separate container if placed in staff toilets, art or science areas, or spaces where there is likely to be hand towels, tissues, and paper bags with food residue attached. As with food scraps, this could then be collected regularly and emptied into the compost collection.

**Uneaten food**: is more common in preschools and primary schools and can be reduced with monitored eating time in conjunction with parental support. Audit results indicate that students may eat highly-packaged snack foods first, with many pieces of whole fruit and unwrapped sandwiches binned. Consider fruit/veg time which may align well with healthy-eating strategies, and encouraging uneaten food, especially fruit, to be taken home or added to a class collection to be cut and eaten at a healthy-snack time. Encourage students to take uneaten food home and talk to parents about how much food they need and what foods they are most likely to eat.
**RECYCLE recyclable items**

This includes:

- **Paper and cardboard:** often up to 60% (by volume) of the material coming out of education sites. (20% of total volume of audit materials)

- **10c refundable containers:** (5% of total volume) a valuable $$ fundraiser for many sites, especially Secondary sites and Area schools. Many smaller sites and preschools have collections that encourage collections from the community.

- **Kerbside / Depot recyclables:** (5% of total volume) for areas with kerbside collections or local recycling depots that accept a range of items, this category includes; clean rigid plastic containers, metal cans, glass bottles and jars, and liquid paperboard cartons (eg milk cartons). Some areas may also be able to accept other items such as clean soft plastic, so check with your local provider to find out exactly what they can accept in your collection system.

- **Clean soft plastics:** (2% of total volume) Soft plastics (no food residue) can now be collected and taken to selected supermarkets for recycling. Some collection contractors also offer this as a separate service. Consider a bag for collection on the back of the classroom door and encourage a collection in the staff room, admin areas, library etc.

- **E-materials:** (0.3% of total volume) This includes computers and computer accessories (mouse, keyboard), phones, printers, fax machines and anything with a cord or battery. These items are now banned from landfill (penalties apply) and need special disposal through an organised contractor or drop off location.

**What can be done with these items?**

This will depend on services in your area, however a range of collection options are possible, and clear, colourful pictorial signage will help ensure systems are used correctly.

**Paper/card:** provide a box, tub or suitable container in all classes and admin areas. To make best use of your resources, consider using a recycling box (for paper used on both sides) and a reuse box (for paper used on one side only that is still good for drafts, drawing etc..) Paper is a big budget item for schools, so it’s essential to make maximum use of it!

**10c containers:** small open buckets, cages or crates placed next to landfill bins work very well; they allow users to see what should go into the container and for any contaminants to be removed quickly before posing OHS&W risks (which can be the case in lidded wheelie bins used for 10c collections that are only emptied when full). If a class or student team can decant items daily from a tubs/buckets/crates into bins or bales, this helps increase ownership by students, in turn increasing the success of the system.

**Kerbside/Depot recyclables:** Some sites may already have a kerbside collection if they are offered to schools/preschools—contact your council. If you have no kerbside collection but excellent recycling depots, discuss the best way of managing recycling streams. It may be that items are collected in bales and taken to the local depot by staff, a parent or via a senior student roster. The items collected in a kerbside or depot system are most likely to come from the staff room, home economics, OSHC and canteen areas where there is access to water to ensure they are clean.
The simplest student-made containers are likely to most successful and in creating the containers and signage, they will know exactly what goes where.

The most effective systems are those where all bin/container choices can be seen at once. This makes the decision about which container an item should go in easier for the person with an item to dispose. While providing sufficient floor space for all the containers to be placed together can be a challenge, if they can be located within close proximity to each other, and are clearly signed with reminders as to where the containers for various recycling streams are located, students, staff, parents, relief staff and cleaning staff will be able to use them effectively.
OUTDOOR SEPARATION SYSTEMS
Glossary:

**REDUCE**
- **Food and Drink Packaging:** encourage students to bring foods in reusable containers and consider ‘Nude Food’ days for the classroom or whole school.
- **Ziplock Bags:** encourage the reuse of ziplock bags when brought to school, and send letters to parents to encourage them to also purchase reusable containers to save $$ in the long term.
- **Small tubs:** buying items in bulk rather than single serve is not only cheaper, but better for the environment as there is less packaging involved. Food can then be placed in reusable containers to be brought to school. Consider school ‘yoghurt’ or ‘soup’ days as a fundraiser.
- **Other:** to avoid the amount of materials sent to landfill, try to reduce, reuse, and recycle as many items as possible.

**REUSE**
- **Reusable Items:** set up communal areas where unwanted items can then be reused by others in the school community before going in the bin. This will also save $$.
- **Single-sided paper:** set up a scrap paper system in every room so that students are able to put or take paper that is no longer needed but still able to be used on one side. Encourage a culture of reusing items as much as possible.

**RECYCLE**
- **Food scraps:** collect in classrooms, staff rooms, home ec, OSHC, canteen for on site composting, or emptying regularly into a green organics bin for commercial or council collection.
- **Compostable paper:** can also be placed in classroom food scraps bin to make an excellent compost mixture. Collection bins in areas with handtowels (eg. art rooms, science labs, staff bathrooms, canteens) is a great way to this paper for composting.
- **Garden materials:** smaller items can be placed in the green organics kerbside bin for composting, or returned to a designated garden area.
- **Uneaten food:** can be taken home for students to eat later. Support students in talking to parents about what food they like and how much food they need at school, could reduce the amount of uneaten food during the school day.

**RECYCLE**
- **Paper and cardboard:** collection systems will prevent valuable resources going to landfill and enhance the reuse of single sided paper. Paper/card bins next to landfill bins and clear signage will help students understand and make the most of this system.
- **10c refundable containers:** crates or tubs placed next to outside landfill bins work best for this system as liquids and residue are able to drain from the containers and smaller crates are easier to decant into larger bins/bales to be taken to a recycling depot.
- **Kerbside/Depot recyclables:** a well signed, coloured tub is often best for this collection, placed next to landfill bins in staff room, home ec, canteen and OSHC where these clean and rinsed materials can go.
- **Clean Soft Plastics:** encourage a collection in the staff room, admin areas, canteen, library etc and take to local supermarkets or sites with collection points.
- **E-materials:** These need special disposal through an organised contractor or designated drop off location. All E-materials are now banned to landfill and penalties apply. Check with your local council or Zero Waste SA website for information.