



COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT



This project is funded by the Waste Authority through the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account

Contract number:	778
Organisation:	Northam Farmers Market (Auspice Northam Chamber of Commerce)
Project Title:	Reduce Plastic Use - It's all in the bag
Grant Amount:	\$13,184 excl GST



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ORGANISATION & PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- A brief overview of your organisation/group.
- A detailed description of the project, including your anticipated goals and outcomes /achievements.

The Northam Chamber of Commerce (NCC) has approximately 150 members from both within the Shire of Northam and those based outside of the Shire but operating within the Avon Valley. It also includes the very proactive group of women business owners known as the Northam Women in Business (NWIB).

The NCC and NWIB recognise the importance of reducing and better managing waste and saw this project as an excellent opportunity to promote reduced plastic use in our community via our existing Northam Farmers Markets and other opportunities.

The Northam Farmers Markets noticed that people weren't coming to the markets prepared with their own bags and felt that there was an important education opportunity to value add the 'Farmers Markets' theme, to encourage reduced plastic use, reusing and recycling in our community.

Workshops were regularly held at the Northam Farmers Markets and Toodyay Local Growers' Market. The workshop facilitators engaged people by asking their knowledge of current recycling systems in their community. Answers were varied and there were many misconceptions about which bins to use and what to put in your recycle bin. Information on what rubbish goes where was displayed on boards along with the Waste Authority logo. Making bags from recycle T-shirts held interest, was fun and provided the opportunity for further conversation.

Many exciting conversations and actions resulted from these opportunities as you will read about in the grant acquittal.



EVALUATION / RESULTS - DATA

What kind(s) of project data/information did you collect?

The project was managed by 2 different project managers over a period of 6 months. During that time the project gained exposure through:

- Northam Farmers Markets - stall every 2 weeks for 4 months (approx. footfall of 300 + per market)
- Toodyay Famers Markets - stall every month for 4 months (approx. footfall of 800 + per market)
- Northam PCYC workshops (attendance of 25 per workshop)
- Northam Scouts Group (attendance of 25 per workshop)
- Several articles in local paper
- Dedicated window in the main street
- Dedicated area in 'Bunch of Dreams' shop

Please explain how you recorded / measured your results, and include all the data you've collected, whatever it may be!

The T-Shirt bags are very distinct, and we see them around town regularly as people go about their shopping.

At the workshops, conversations around what can and can't go into recycling bins, and the preference for 'reusing' created some very beneficial results. People would share examples of what's available in town to be recycled and ideas would expand from there, often ending up with conversations on social media. For example, a local pharmacy had the perfect foam boxes for creating worm farms.

A local cafe had disposable items that were available on a regular basis – they would clean them and deliver them to the collection point. The community also dropped off sheets and other unused fabric. Then a local craft business DC Hook used the cooking oil drums and old sheets to develop crochet stools to sell.

One day a local indigenous family were outside the collection point looking at the collection boxes started by the Men's Shed. The daughter said 'I know what that's about, it's recycling. We learnt it at PCYC! She was referring to one of the workshops organised by this grant.

Was your project successful in the way you expected?

Did you achieve what you set out to do? If not, what happened?

YES

NO

Our project had 2 distinct stages to it, which was probably due to the project managers at the time.

For the 1st 4 months or so the focus was on remaking Tshirt bags and spreading the word about reusing reducing and recycling. There were several articles in the paper, live feeds from the Farmers market. We held a presentation at the local Northam Women in Business meeting and several local businesses got on board and starting re thinking their operations in relation to reducing waste.

Our Project Officer who wrote the application and started the workshops left to accept a full-time position working in waste management. A new project officer was appointed who continued running the workshops and having many different community connections, was able to achieve a broader range of 'recycling and reuse' objectives.

In some ways it took on a life of its own because of the 'space' these workshops create for dialogue.

Bunch Of Dreams held regular workshops and being a permanent presence in the main street became a central point for this project as like-minded people and those curious about reusing, reducing waste had somewhere central to meet.

We significantly raised the profile of reducing waste in the community AND made an impact on hundreds of local people. It would not have been possible without this grant initiating the conversation.



Bunch of Dreams shop - Northam



Do you feel your project made a positive difference in your community and why?

YES

NO

The project definitely made a difference in the community. Highlighting the need to stop and think about what we use.

Workshops were held at Northam Farmers Markets and Toodyay Local Growers' Markets. They were popular with attendees. The workshop facilitators engaged people by asking their knowledge of current recycling systems in their community. Answers were varied and there were many misconceptions about which bins to use and what to put in your recycle bin. Information on this was displayed on boards along with the Waste Authority logo. Having the focus on making bags from recycling T-shirts held their interest and provided the opportunity for further conversation...

Another complimentary workshop demonstrated how to make a simple worm farm and making wax wraps. Participants demonstrated that they were keen to change their habits but needed the inspiration and hands-on guidance and learning opportunity to take steps forward.

Workshops on reducing plastic use and making the T-Shirt bags were presented to young people at the Northam PCYC, and the Northam Scout Group. The T-shirt bags were popular as young people could choose their color and style with the bonus of the sleeves making great headbands... they loved that!

Workshops were also held at Bunch of Dreams (a local produce and workshop space). Participants were creative and made extra bags that became boomerang bags for the Shop. Local Men's Shed members, after attending one of the workshops, went back to their workshop and created a large wooden crate on wheels as a collection box for cans (a fundraising project that they do) and another for collecting jars and egg cartons to share with other home producers. These were positioned outside the shop as a local drop-off point. They were very popular.

A book borrowing library was also created and as Bunch of Dreams was located next to an Op Shop, it was arranged so that things like kitchen equipment that they couldn't take, became part of a borrowing library too.

These extra activities show the flow-on effect when conversation and space is created for learning about recycling and reusing. Many older participants shared knowledge at workshops on ways they reuse, mend, preserve and share and felt valued that their knowledge was once again in fashion.

Metal straws and cleaning brushes were given to participants who attended the workshops.



How many people in total do you think your project has reached/affected?

Stalls at Northam Farmers Markets and the Toodyay Local Growers Markets, workshops at the Northam PCYC and with the Northam Scouts, plus a series of workshops at Bunch of Dreams - hard to know as a log wasn't recorded, but at least 1000 people reached and 100 affected directly.

However the waste reduction message was much more wide reaching throughout our community. The initiative funded by the grant had a knock-on effect of creating dialogue amongst the community in business groups, other sporting volunteer groups. The initial message reached those who attended the workshops, parents of children who attended the workshops, those who saw the stalls at the markets. Those people then took that message with them and used it in other areas of their lives.

For example it was no coincidence that the local netball association canteen stopped handing out plastic straws every Saturday. The attendance at Saturday netball averages about 800 people with 500+ players. Over a season of netball the message about no plastic straws being offered anymore was certainly initiated by the canteen managers attendance at a one of our workshops. This is just one of the ripple effects this grant has made which has made an accurate estimation of numbers affected a challenge.

Since the presentation with the Northam Women in Business, every business meeting no longer uses plastic plates and cutlery. No more plastic glasses or straws. These monthly meetings have approximately 40 attending.

A local bank Board meeting I attend used to arrange 15 plastic bottles of water for refreshments. Not any more, now jugs of water are provided due to the education I picked up through this grant.

Small wins but the ripple effect continues.

The Northam Chamber of Commerce has 150 members and this message continues daily. Cafes are actively promoting the responsible café message.

The social media post about the recycling coffee cups received enquiries from regional ABC radio who did an interview with the CEO of the Chamber Esther Bliss acknowledging the grant and the message we were promoting.

LESSONS LEARNT

What lessons were learned through the project – what worked and didn't work?

What, if anything, would you do differently if you were to do the project again?

What worked - Given the success of engagement during the project, and the flow-on and variety of activity it inspired, we can see that it was a worthwhile investment for inspiring change in mindset and action for reducing waste.

What didn't work - A formal data documentation process was not created at the start and has made it very difficult to report objectively on the success of the project. Participant details were not collected so we have been unable to survey and measure individual change as a result of participation in the project.

As the CEO of the Northam chamber of Commerce I can see that the reducing waste message is not strictly part of our core business and so created additional work and resources. Something I learnt was a potential problem at a recent "How to apply for grants" workshop.

Saying that I am extremely glad we received the grant and can see the huge benefit it has made to our community.

Using the lesson learnt on 'applying for grants that reflect your core business' there has already been discussion with those in the community that have better resources to manage future grants about building on this projects success.

Did you encounter any problems/challenges in carrying out the project? If so, what were they?

The initial project officer wrote the application and had passion and experience in delivering the project. They were capable of running both operations and meeting reporting requirements. However half way through the project she was successful in gaining fulltime employment and moved away.

This did cause some disruption and loss of flow in the project.

An alternative project officer was sourced as we did not want the project to stall when it was being received so well by the community.

However in hindsight the new project officer had the passion in waste reduction but their skills in project management weren't there when needed for reporting requirements. Their 'circle of genius' was spreading the message of waste reduction. Writing reports, collecting data and being accountable was not high on their priority and possibly outside of their skillset.

This situation has been an extremely useful learning experience in realising that every future grant and project needs both the passion and the skills to be 100% successful.



What advice would you give to other groups considering undertaking similar projects?

Make sure that you have a formal documentation process for collecting data throughout your project. This is not only necessary and important for reporting, but also a way to celebrate your achievements along the way.

We assumed (dangerously) that it would be collected by our project officers, but this was not the case. Regardless of staff turnover, there needs to be consistent documentation of hard data for reporting.

We were seeing and getting great verbal feedback on the difference the grant was making, so improving data collection next time will give us the hard data to back it up when presenting back to funding group.

- Ensure you are very clear with your volunteers what you expect of them.
- Document everything.
- Roles and responsibilities are written and referred back to
- Timelines – set them, keep to them refer to them constantly
- Be clear on how to measure project success.
- Ensure those that WROTE the application communicate to those that actually deliver on the project.
- Regular updates between those who are “DOING” and those that are “MANAGING” These will identify problems early on.
- Identify early on those that can be called on to assist should someone not be able to deliver on their commitments.
- Ask for help if you run into problems. I would possibly be under a table with a sheet over my head if it weren’t for the Grants Officer and her support / advice.
- Get a proof of any press articles you send out prior to print.
Even when requesting acknowledgement sometimes it becomes lost in translation

News articles

<https://www.avonadvocate.com.au/story/5568175/farmers-market-awarded-funds-for-waste-management-education/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT / PROMOTION

Does your organisation (or project) have a website or Facebook page?
(please provide the link(s) to your organisation's site and/or the project page)

The workshops were promoted on the Northam Farmers Market Facebook page and complimentary recycling 'posts' encouraging the desired behaviour at the Farmers Markets.



Picture 1 Northam Chamber of Commerce promoting the successful grant



Picture 2 Northam Farmers market page promoting the message

How did you acknowledge the Community Grants Scheme funding you received?

Verbal recognition

- All presentations were started with the acknowledgement of the funding source
- Radio interviews always included the message that the project was only possible due to funding from the Waste Authority

Printed material

The Waste authority logo and acknowledgement message were included in:

- Press releases
- Workshop handouts
- Posters pinned on the board at the markets
- Flyers promoting the workshops and market stalls

Social media

This was extremely effective in delivering the message as interesting posts were created and shared. It was a very useful tool in creating events for the workshops and communicating the message.

Social media posts included the Waste Authority and logo when possible.

Did you purchase any capital equipment with your grant money? (this includes things like sheds and large pieces of equipment)

No we didn't buy any capital equipment.

Were there any promotional / media opportunities for the project? (newspaper articles, photos) If yes, please ensure you attach copies or include screen prints

YES

NO

Did you produce any promotional material for the project? (flyers, brochures even screen prints of online promotion – Facebook posts etc) If yes, please ensure you attach copies or include screen prints

YES

NO



Picture 3 Flyer advertising the workshops



VARIATIONS & EXTENSIONS

Were you able to complete your project in the approved timeframe?

YES

NO

If there were variations or extensions, what were the cause(s)?

There was an approved budget reallocation request in August 2018 – to buy more shirts to make into bags, instead of the large amount of metal straws we had allocated funding for.

There was an approved extension request in February 2019 due to project officer turnover, with the second project officer requiring additional time to collate data and project information.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Did any opportunities or ideas arise during the project?

YES

NO

Do you now have ideas for other future projects?

The project stimulated lots of exciting ideas for moving forward.

People were generally unaware of any person or group that they could support and lobby for changes to current waste disposal systems.

Having an 'unexpected' trial in this project of a community collection point for recyclables showed good community support and provided an education point and access to social media for discussion and information sharing. A continuation of this model (or similar) would work well in Northam. It was an exciting spin-off of the "Make a T-Shirt Bag" workshops which encouraged community dialogue around the topic and innovative and practical ideas growing from there.

Many community members expressed concern over how little is recycled in our community and that recycling is sent out of town. Other small towns in the wheatbelt have tip shops but Northam doesn't. That would be a wonderful feature to encourage in Northam.

Northam Farmers Market would like to thank the Waste Authority for the opportunity to explore ways to reduce waste in our community. We know this is something our community wants and needs - having a dedicated position and space to provide ongoing education, support and opportunity to reduce, reuse and recycle locally where possible would be tremendous.



We have learnt that people respond to incentives to initially attend something new eg free metal straws and taking home the T-Shirt Bag.

People also enjoy being part of the solution.

At the temporary collection point, donations were received daily of jars and egg cartons and really had more than we could handle. Evidence that this was embraced by the community was often seen on social media. For example, someone would put on a request for an item on the community page and others would suggest going to the collection point to find the item. Winning!

We are aware that funding is out there for sustainable projects that promote waste reduction and we believe we received a great response in the Northam community to this grant. We would welcome opportunities to keep making positive change in this space. Please let us know of any other incentives we can be part of.

PROJECT PHOTOS



Picture 4 Signage always up at workshops promoting the grant



*Picture 6 Bags of old t-shirts ready to be recrafted!
Signage always up at workshops promoting the grant*



Picture 5 Straws funded by the grant received



Picture 7 All ages enjoyed the workshops, learning about reducing plastic, waste reduction and making their own shopping bags.



Picture 8 Bags to suit every personality! One of the workshops held at Bunch of Dreams



Picture 9 War on Waste workshop at the Northam PCYC



Picture 10 Snapshot of some of the workshops



Picture 11 Love the headband 'bonus'! War on Waste workshop at the Northam PCYC

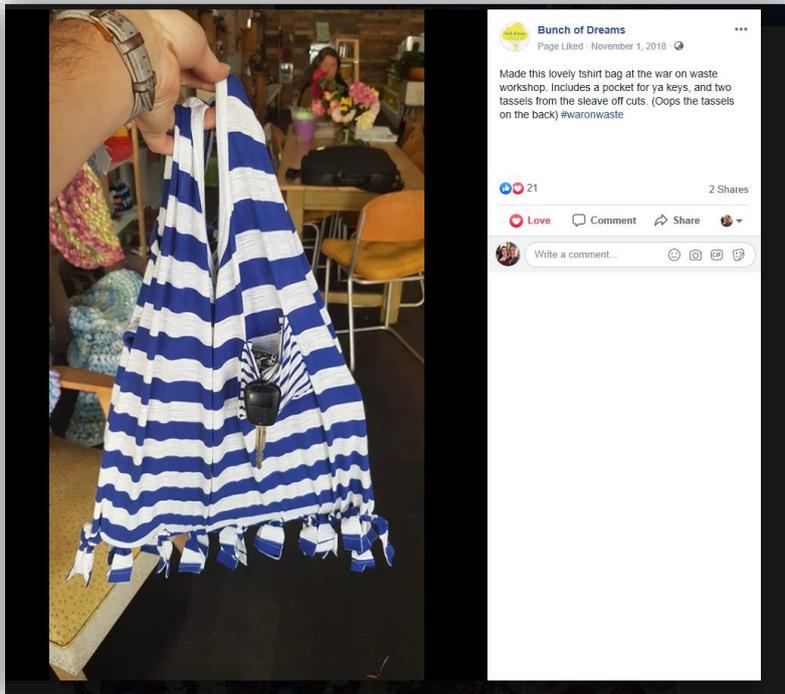
Date	Event Name	Location
DEC 8	War on Waste	Village Green
DEC 8	Northam Farmers Markets	Village green Northam.
NOV 24	Northam Farmers Markets	Village Green Fitzgerald st N...
NOV 21	War on Waste at Northam PCYC	Northam PCYC Northam
NOV 8	War on Waste at Bunch of Dreams	Bunch of Dreams Northam
NOV 1	War On Waste	Bunch of Dreams Northam
OCT 13	War on Waste	
OCT 13	Northam Farmers Market	
OCT 10	War on Waste	Bunch of Dreams Northam



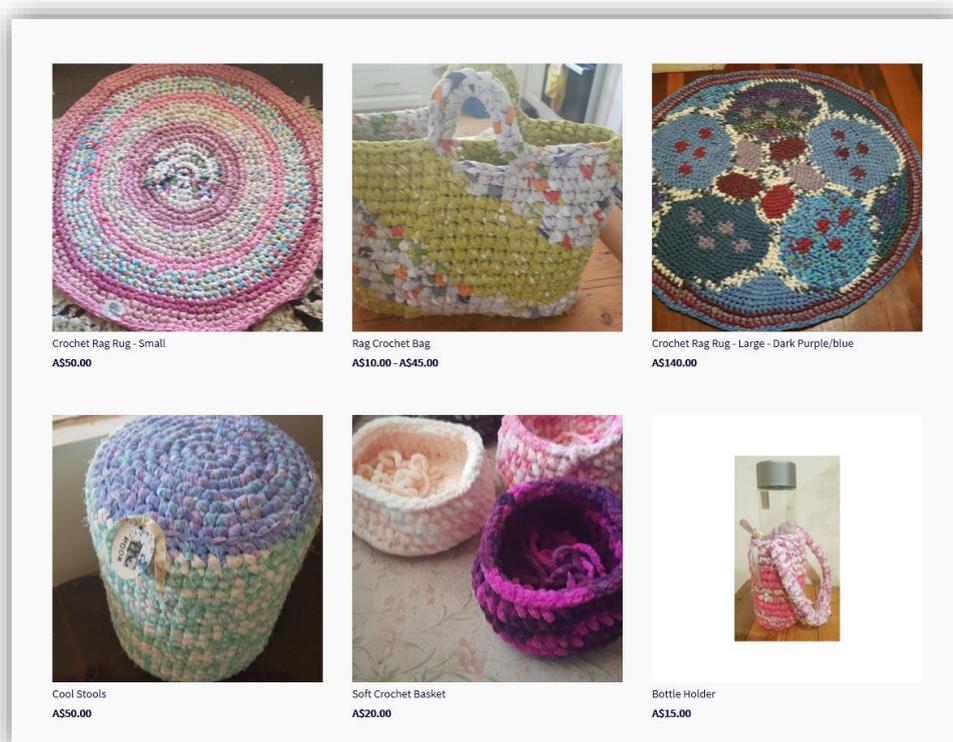
Picture 12&13 Workshops advertised through social media



Picture 13 Posts continuing the theme of the grant



Picture 15 A lovely bag made during one of the workshops held at Bunch of Dreams.



Picture 16 DC Hook (local business) took inspiration for the 'Cool Stools' from one of the workshops. Talking about waste in our community and how it can be used – old sheets and café cooking oil drums = cool stools!



Picture 14 Continuing the message by practising what we preach

Picture 18 A presentation at the local Northam Women in Business meeting encouraged other businesses to get involved in promoting the message

