



Getting our WasteSorted

# 10 steps to getting our



A Waste Authority Program



GOVERNMENT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



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## Acknowledgements

Waste Wise Schools would like to acknowledge the sharing of resources and information by Sustainability Victoria, and other state and local governments, to support school efforts in waste avoidance and recovery.

# Introduction

The Western Australian Government, together with the Waste Authority, has a vision to make our state a sustainable, low-waste, circular economy in which human health and the environment are protected from the impacts of waste. This is supported by the *Waste avoidance and resource recovery strategy 2030* (the waste strategy) which encourages Western Australians to work towards three objectives – avoid, recover and protect – and sets targets that underpin these objectives.

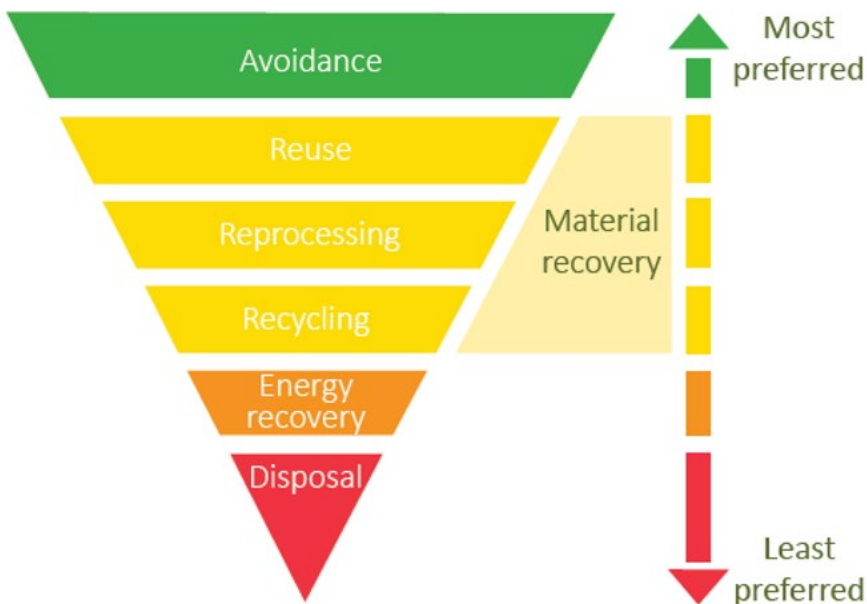
**Avoid** – Western Australians generate less waste

**Recover** – Western Australians recover more value and resources from waste

**Protect** – Western Australians protect the environment by managing waste responsibly

## Waste hierarchy

The waste strategy applies the waste hierarchy, which is a widely accepted decision-making tool. It ranks waste management options in order of their general environmental desirability:



The most preferred option is to avoid waste in the first place. What we cannot avoid we aim to recover through processes such as reuse and recycling. Our last resort is disposal.

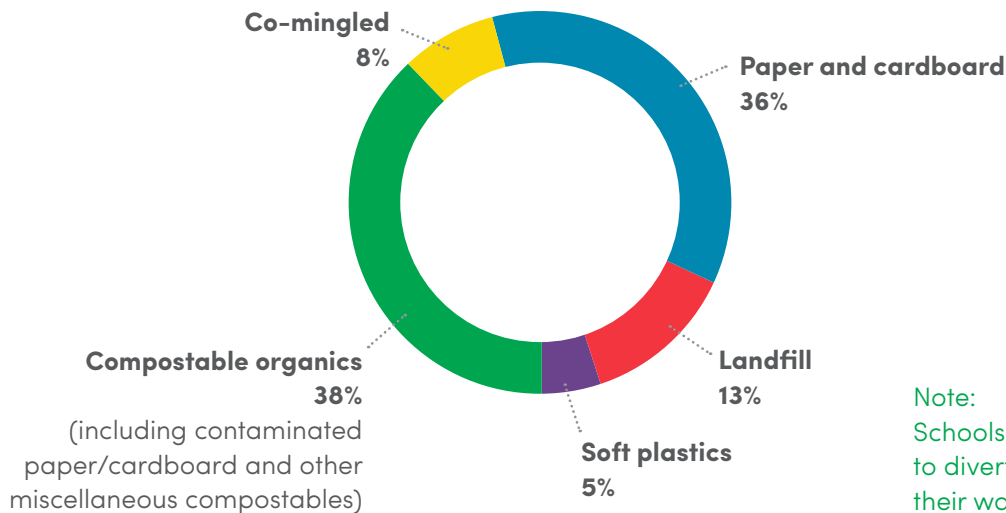
The preferred option when managing waste is to avoid it in the first place.

## Waste in Western Australian schools

Integrating waste avoidance and recovery into all aspects of school life not only benefits our environment, it also helps schools reduce costs and improves quality of life for the school community.

The following chart shows a typical breakdown of waste in Western Australian schools:

### Waste in Western Australian schools 2015



## The Waste Wise Schools program

Waste Wise Schools, a program of the Waste Authority, provides support to schools across Western Australia to promote better waste management practices and behaviours, with a focus on waste avoidance and recovery. It also develops positive environmental values in students and the whole school community.

The program offers resources such as professional learning, curriculum materials and in-school support to plan, implement and maintain waste avoidance and resource recovery projects such as recycling, composting and worm farming.

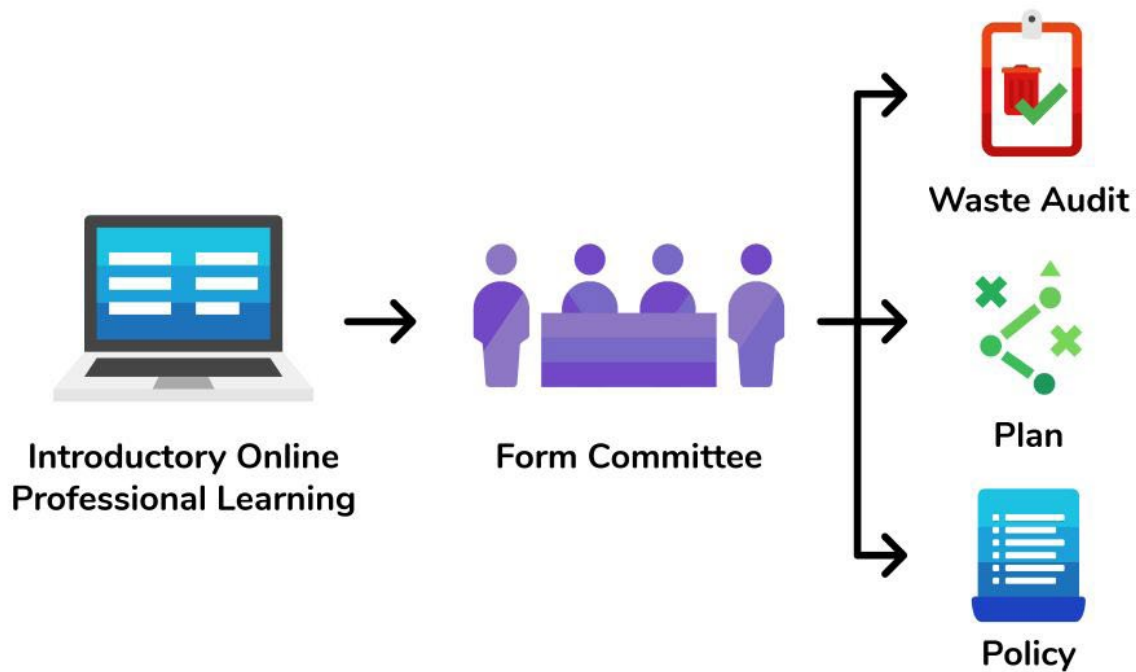
Besides reducing waste sent to landfill and helping to protect our environment, schools who are successfully implementing waste wise strategies have noticed the following benefits:

- reduced waste-related costs
- cleaner school grounds that are free from litter
- healthier lunches for students
- parental involvement and positive community building.

The program is free and available to all schools in Western Australia.

## Accreditation

Accreditation provides recognition of a school's commitment to reducing waste. Accredited Waste Wise Schools are eligible to apply for grants to set up waste avoidance and recovery infrastructure. Schools become accredited by completing the process outlined in the flow diagram below. Further details about the accreditation process are provided in the 10 steps that follow.



Students take paper recycling bins to be emptied into the skip bin.

# 10 Steps to getting our WasteSorted

The Waste Wise Schools 10 steps have been designed to foster positive waste attitudes and behaviours that are embedded in a school's principles and philosophy, integrated into the curriculum and incorporated in the culture and daily practices of the whole school and wider school community.

The 10 steps address three areas of involvement in the school:

1. **Infrastructure** – how your waste is managed, bin collection systems and assessments.
2. **Education** – integrating student learning about waste and resource management.
3. **Whole school and community** – encouraging a whole school approach that engages students, teachers, staff and the wider school community.

Schools are encouraged to start with small changes and slowly build on successful waste avoidance and recovery practices until a whole school approach is achieved.



Students processing organic waste at school.

## Step 1: Online professional learning module

Learn about the Waste Wise Schools program and complete your first step towards accreditation by completing the *Waste Wise Schools 10 steps to getting our WasteSorted* online professional learning module.

This module takes approximately one hour to complete. It is divided into sections with a short quiz at the end of each section. You will receive a certificate upon completion that can be used towards professional learning.

## Step 2: Form a committee

Forming a committee is integral to the success of task allocation and goal setting. A committee will help share the responsibility of coordinating and planning a waste wise program. Include a good cross-section of the school community with an interest in waste minimisation including the principal, teachers, administrators, gardeners, canteen staff, cleaners, parents and students.

If your school already has a sustainability committee you can just add waste to the agenda.

Consider asking other committee members to complete the online professional learning module.



Sorting waste helps students identify waste to avoid.

## Step 3: Assess your school waste

It is important to understand the current waste situation at your school, including how your school's waste services work and are managed, and the waste streams currently being produced. The following two tools will give you a good picture of what is happening with waste at your school. Once completed, you can enter the information into your accreditation survey to establish baseline data.

- Conduct a [school waste system assessment](#)

This assessment will help you review the existing waste management system at your school and inform changes that could deliver positive waste and financial outcomes for your school.

It will examine waste types, volumes and costs and assist you to streamline your bin size and pick up frequency, ensuring you are only paying for services you need. Paying for partially empty bins is a common but avoidable cost. It will also help you identify other waste streams that can be avoided or recovered. You will be required to review your waste contract information with the assistance of the school business manager.

Government schools in the metropolitan area are required to use the service providers listed in the Waste and Recycling Common Use Arrangement (CUA). Review the CUA, including the contractor and price lists, to see what services are available. Private and regional schools may use any service provider of their choice. See the [fact sheet](#) for further information.

- Conduct a [waste audit](#)

A waste audit will identify what type and quantities of waste are generated at your school. Students participate in the waste audit by classifying the types of waste found and recording weights and/or numbers of each type. Results from a waste audit are an ideal starting point for identifying problem areas and initiating waste avoidance and recovery projects. Frequent, or annual, waste audits monitor the effectiveness of the school's waste reduction plans and projects.

Visit the Waste Wise Schools [website](#) to view the waste audit video or contact us to organise a waste audit if you are a Perth metropolitan school.

**TIPS:** Find out the volume of your bins and how often they are collected. You may have two 4m<sup>3</sup> skip bins collected monthly. If this is the case, you will be paying for 8m<sup>3</sup> each month.

Over the course of 2–3 months on the day they are collected, record how full they are. This will give a very good indication of how much waste the school is generating. If the bins are only half full at collection, there is potential to down-size to one bin and reduce costs significantly.



## Step 4: Set goals, form a plan and write a policy

Use the results of your school waste system assessment and waste audit to set some achievable waste avoidance and recovery goals with your committee. Write a plan of how you will achieve these goals; assign a committee member to lead each activity; and set realistic timeframes (monthly/annual) to complete them. A detailed plan will allow you to track progress towards your goals.

Use the [Waste Wise Schools checklist](#) to help you plan and prioritise projects for your school. For long lasting results, remember to start small and gradually build on your projects each year.

A waste wise policy states the school's intent and commitment to waste avoidance and recovery. It helps to embed waste wise values in the school and community, fosters a whole school approach, informs daily practices, and includes priorities for implementation. It is signed by the school principal and holds the school accountable for ensuring that waste avoidance and recovery projects and plans reflect the school's waste values.

Download a sample [waste wise plan](#) and [waste wise policy](#).

## Step 5: Become accredited

Once you have completed steps one to four, your school can apply for Waste Wise Schools accreditation by completing the online accreditation survey. You will need to upload each of the following:

- copy of committee meeting minutes
- waste audit results
- waste policy signed by the school principal
- your school waste plan.

Please email [wastewise@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:wastewise@dwer.wa.gov.au) to receive your school's accreditation link.

Waste Wise Schools are acknowledged with a metal sign to display and yearly accreditation renewal stickers for each calendar year. You can renew accreditation annually via an online link which is emailed to the school's waste wise representative at the start of the year.

The Waste Authority and Minister for Environment acknowledge achievement of five and 10 years of accreditation in November each year.

A waste wise policy states the school's intent and commitment to waste avoidance and recovery.

## Step 6: Set up infrastructure

Now that you understand your school's waste streams, have set some realistic goals and have committed to them by becoming accredited, it is time to plan your waste and recycling systems. Choosing suitable infrastructure, such as the right colour bins and signage, will help students and staff correctly use the systems to avoid contamination.

### How to set up recycling at school

- Use the data from your school waste system assessment and waste audit to help determine what type, size and quantity of recycling bins will suit your school.
- Consider your budget – how much will the recycling service cost? Costs can sometimes be offset against savings in your general waste collection because there is less waste to collect.
- Access – are there any restrictions in terms of timing and vehicle access to your school site?
- Frequency – how often will your recycling be collected?
- Storage – where will your school store materials for recycling?

Once you have arranged for your school's recycling to be collected and have developed a plan for how the recycling system will work, you can set up your collection points.

### Bin signs and locations

To make recycling collection as easy as possible:

- position recycling bins as close to the source of waste as possible, for example place a paper recycling bin next to the photocopier or printer
- put recycling bins and rubbish bins next to each other so there is no extra effort to recycle
- ensure fruit and vegetable scraps or food waste collection bins are close to where students eat.

It is important to label recycling bins clearly, so that everyone knows where they are located and what should go in each one. You can use the WasteSorted school signs and posters that best suit your school needs.

## Step 6: continued

All waste collection bins must use the Australian Standard bin colours. The WasteSorted posters will match these.

Bin type	Bin lid colour
General waste (landfill)	Red
Recycling (co-mingled)	Yellow
Paper and/or cardboard only	Blue
FO (food organics), GO (garden organics) or FOGO (food organics and garden organics)	Lime-green

Your school may be provided with smaller recycling containers by your service provider, or you may have to buy your own. You will need to consider who will empty the materials from your internal recycling containers into external bins, how it will be done, what equipment is needed and how often it will be collected (see step seven).

You will need to monitor bins regularly – using the [visual bin audit tool](#) – to ensure they are being used correctly and let the school community know these results.



## Step 6: continued

### Composting and worm farming

Should you choose not to use the FO, GO or FOGO bin systems or if these bins are not available in your area, you may wish to set up composting systems or worm farms to process fruit and vegetable scraps generated daily at your school. The benefit of this resource not leaving the school grounds is food waste being returned as compost, castings and worm leachate into a waste wise school garden and closing the loop on organic recycling.

Fact sheets on how to do this in your school are available on the Waste Wise Schools website.

### Other waste streams

There are many different materials that can be recycled in schools – some which apply to the school as a whole and others that are area specific, such as the school office or canteen. You may like to consider additional collection points for items such as printer cartridges, batteries, stationery, e-waste and soft plastics.

Schools can also serve as a community collection point for many items that cannot be recycled through co-mingled recycling services such as glasses, mobile phones, bread tags, plastic bottle tops and so much more. Many of these initiatives are straightforward and simple to implement, but they should be done so gradually to manage change.

### Funding your projects

Waste Wise Schools grants provide funding to accredited schools to set up infrastructure for waste avoidance and recovery projects. You may wish to access these funds to assist your school in reducing waste to landfill and educating the whole school community about sustainable waste practices.

For full details on [waste wise grants](#) visit our website.

Other funding opportunities may also exist through your school's parents and friends committee, local council and other sustainability grants programs. Many schools save enough money by streamlining their waste services to fund additional waste wise projects.



## Step 7: Communicate and implement infrastructure

Implementing all forms of waste separation and recycling at once may not be feasible, affordable or practical for your school. Waste Wise Schools recommends starting with paper recycling, as this is usually the largest source of waste in a school. From there you can add waste streams based on target priorities identified in your waste audit. Using a step by step process to build your waste management systems is more likely to lead to long-term success.

Consider how you will manage the day to day handling of waste, such as emptying the classroom paper collection bins into the external skip bin and taking food scraps to the compost and worm farms.

Getting students involved in the running of your waste wise program is essential. A great way to do this is through rosters and delegation of tasks. Allocating a waste stream to each class or using a student **Green Team** distributes the workload and encourages student ownership of the program.

Download an example primary school roster [here](#).

Once you have decided on your school waste collection systems you will need to inform the whole school community before you commence using them. Make sure students, staff and all involved are clear about correct bin use. You may wish to have the student Green Team present at a whole school assembly and monitor bin usage during the first week.

## Step 8: Education

Education plays a key role in supporting positive behavioural change. The next step towards a whole school approach is providing learning opportunities about waste production, consumption and management. This can be done on a whole school level and by integrating waste education into the curriculum. Waste wise projects provide meaningful context to curriculum outcomes within the cross-curriculum priority of sustainability.

Waste Wise Schools has several curriculum resources available through our website which provide hands-on, practical learning experiences linked to the Western Australian Curriculum. Topics such as recycling, plastics, gardening and organics can be easily integrated into the key learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities and Social Sciences. They are listed in the following table along with some other useful resources that address the areas of school involvement.

Area of waste	Infrastructure and facilities	Education	Community
<p><b>Recycling</b></p>	<p>The <b>Waste Wise Schools fact sheet</b> helps government schools access recycling services.</p> <p><b>WasteSorted signage</b> and posters for schools help to communicate how to correctly sort waste and reduce contamination.</p>	<p>The <b>Waste Wise Schools 3Rs curriculum guide</b> contains lessons on reuse and recycling.</p> <p><b>Cool Australia</b> provides free <b>lesson plans</b>, units, activities and digital media on recycling.</p> <p><b>ABC Education</b> offers fantastic <b>recycling resources</b> of videos, digi-books, articles and games to support students in class.</p> <p><b>Planet Ark's Recycle Right Challenge</b> contains activity ideas, lesson plans and school event ideas linked to <b>National Recycling Week</b>.</p> <p><b>The Imagination Factory</b> matches waste materials to <b>recycled art projects</b>.</p>	<p>Many <b>regional councils</b> (RMC) offer educational tours of their recycling and landfill facilities as well as incursions and support for schools. Check your local RMC website for more information.</p> <p>Host a recycle drive to support a charity or become a community collection point for recycling at your school. See the <b>Waste Wise Schools specialised recycling list</b> for information.</p> <p><b>Recycle Right</b> has <b>videos</b> that show what happens at a material recovery facility as well as worksheets to promote correct sorting of recyclables.</p> <p>Enter a local recycled art competition, such as <b>Castaways Schools</b> or Recycle Right's <b>upcycling art</b>.</p>
<p><b>Plastics</b></p>	<p>The <b>Waste Wise Schools waste-free lunch toolkit</b> encourages students to bring food without unnecessary plastic packaging.</p> <p>The <b>Waste Wise Schools green canteen fact sheet</b> gives tips on establishing a green canteen at your school to avoid single-use plastic.</p> <p>Set up a soft plastics collection point at school and take to your nearest <b>Redcycle</b> collection point. Check <b>here</b> for what can be recycled.</p> <p><b>Bye Bye Plastic</b> has a list of <b>tips</b> to help your school go plastic free.</p>	<p><b>Waste Wise Schools</b> classroom resources:</p> <p><b>Plastic Free July</b> (PP-Year 6)</p> <p><b>Message in a Plastic Bottle</b> (Years 7-10)</p> <p><b>Waste Wise Schools</b> single-use plastic <b>fact sheet</b>.</p> <p>Watch the <b>ABC TV</b> series <b>War on Waste</b> focusing on single-use plastic damage to our waterways and marine life.</p> <p><b>ABC Splash</b> uses <b>project-based learning</b> to identify the issues with plastic waste and design a solution for the problem, drawing on STEM skills.</p> <p><b>BTN Plastic Oceans</b> investigates the impact of pollution on marine life.</p>	<p>Use the <b>Waste Wise Schools beeswax wrap fact sheet</b> to hold a parent session at your school.</p> <p>Some <b>local councils</b> offer workshops on reducing your plastic waste by making home made products like beeswax wraps, toiletries and food products. Check your local council website for information.</p> <p>Sign up your class or school for the <b>Plastic Free July challenge</b>.</p> <p>Join or start a <b>Boomerang Bags community</b> for your school.</p> <p>Join the <b>Tangaroa Blue Australian Marine Debris Initiative</b> – a network dedicated to the removal and prevention of marine debris. Resources and information on how to adopt-a-beach are available.</p>

Area of waste	Infrastructure and facilities	Education	Community
<b>Food waste</b>	<p>Research has shown that food waste can be reduced by structuring the school day so that play time occurs before eating time (that is, play before lunch).</p> <p>Studies have shown that letting students pack their own lunch reduces food waste.</p> <p>Similarly, encouraging students to take home leftovers reduces food waste. Consider this as a school policy.</p>	<p><b>ABC Education</b> has videos and education articles with real life examples of students reducing food waste in their schools.</p> <p><b>OzHarvest</b> gets the whole school involved in fighting food waste, using posters and other downloadable resources.</p> <p><b>Wipe Out Waste (WOW)</b> has videos and a series of lesson plans on food waste.</p> <p>The <b>Nude Food Day lesson plans booklet</b> contains activities specific for foundation, Years 1–6.</p>	<p><b>Love Food Hate Waste</b> provides practical tips and recipe ideas for reducing food waste that can be shared with your school community.</p> <p>Set up a food rescue operation. Collect food scraps from the canteen and donate to a local food rescue charity such as <b>OzHarvest</b>.</p> <p>Enter the Switch Your Thinking Young Re-Inventor of the Year competition on future food.</p>
<b>Gardening</b>	<p>Use the <b>Waste Wise Schools planting guide</b> to set up a school vegetable garden and close the loop on organic recycling. The guide contains ideas on what to plant and maintenance tips based on the school year.</p> <p>The <b>KidsGrow munch and crunch garden resource</b> provides a detailed guide on setting up a kitchen garden.</p>	<p><b>Kids Gardening</b> has a number of free educator resources for incorporating a waste wise garden into your school curriculum.</p> <p>Use the video library from <b>ABC Education</b> to learn about sustainable gardens. It contains a wide range of videos suitable for both primary and secondary students.</p> <p><b>Fizzics Education</b> has lesson ideas to use in the school garden for STEM.</p>	<p>Involve parents in the set up and running of your waste wise garden.</p> <p>Hold market days to sell produce from the garden to the school community.</p> <p>Arrange an excursion to <b>Perth City Farm</b> to learn about food production (vegetable growing, fruit trees, and medicinal herbs) or animals (chickens, ducks, bees) and their care.</p>
<b>Composting and worm farms</b>	<p><b>Waste Wise Schools</b> fact sheets give information on composting, worm farming and setting up a fridge worm farm at school.</p> <p><b>WOW</b> has other tips for managing organic waste onsite.</p> <p>Create a roster for students and classes to manage the running of these areas.</p>	<p><b>Waste Wise Schools</b> curriculum guides for compost and worms provide hands-on learning activities.</p> <p><b>Cool Australia</b> offers lessons in Science and English for Years 1 and 2 to learn about the compost cycle and Year 7 science looking at organic waste.</p> <p><b>ABC Splash</b> resources link to Years 4 and 5 Science with <i>Life in Dirt</i> and Years 6, 9 and 10 Geography and Mathematics with <i>calculate your compost</i>.</p>	<p>Many local and regional councils offer workshops on composting and worm farming, including visits to schools to set up stations. Check your local or regional council website for details.</p> <p>Arrange an excursion to your regional resource recovery facility to see how household organic waste is turned into compost.</p> <p>Sell your school compost and worm leachate to the school community at market days.</p>

## Step 9: Involve the whole school and community

Building a whole school approach to waste management is the best way to ensure long-term success. It also means that waste wise values become integrated in school culture and daily practices.

Utilising different skills and expertise throughout your school community not only shares the workload but also adds value to your waste wise program. The [Waste Wise Schools checklist](#) contains many ideas for practical ways that you can involve the whole school and wider community. These include:

- Communication – keeping the whole school community informed of your waste wise plans and results.
- Recognition – for individual, class and whole school success.
- Student leadership – involving students in your waste wise program.
- School community involvement – inviting parents and members of the school community to assist in planning and implementing actions of the waste plan.
- Community partnerships – participating in waste activities in the broader community.

## Step 10: Monitor and evaluate

It is important to monitor and evaluate your waste wise projects on a regular basis to enable you to review and build on your plan.

Use the [visual bin audit](#) tool to quickly assess if staff and students are demonstrating positive waste behaviours and disposing of items in the correct bins. The bin audit will identify any issues with contamination and give you feedback on what is working well and what needs to be improved. It can also help you identify other waste streams that can be avoided or recovered to further reduce your waste to landfill. Consider running bin audits every month or term and share the results with the wider school community.

Repeat the [school waste system assessment](#) annually to ensure that your bin systems and waste contracts are streamlined, and you are maximising your cost savings. This information will be required for your annual accreditation survey and provides a way of tracking your progress.

Surveys are another useful way to monitor changes in student and staff attitudes and behaviours. You may also like to consider a home survey to engage parents and the wider school community.

Building a whole school approach to waste management is the best way to ensure long-term success.



## Going forward

Waste Wise Schools provides ongoing support to assist you in planning, implementing and maintaining your waste avoidance and resource recovery projects. We encourage you to attend a topic workshop, such as composting, worm farming or grant planning, or one of our networking opportunities where successful Waste Wise Schools share their knowledge and experience. For upcoming events please check our [website](#).

Connect with us on [Facebook](#) for handy tips and school success stories. Please get in touch with us for any questions – our dedicated team is here to help so send us an email at [wastewise@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:wastewise@dwer.wa.gov.au).

Students sell worm leachate to the school community.



We encourage you to start with small projects and gradually build on these to develop a whole school approach and become a Waste Wise School.