

WasteSorted Schools guide



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Acknowledgements

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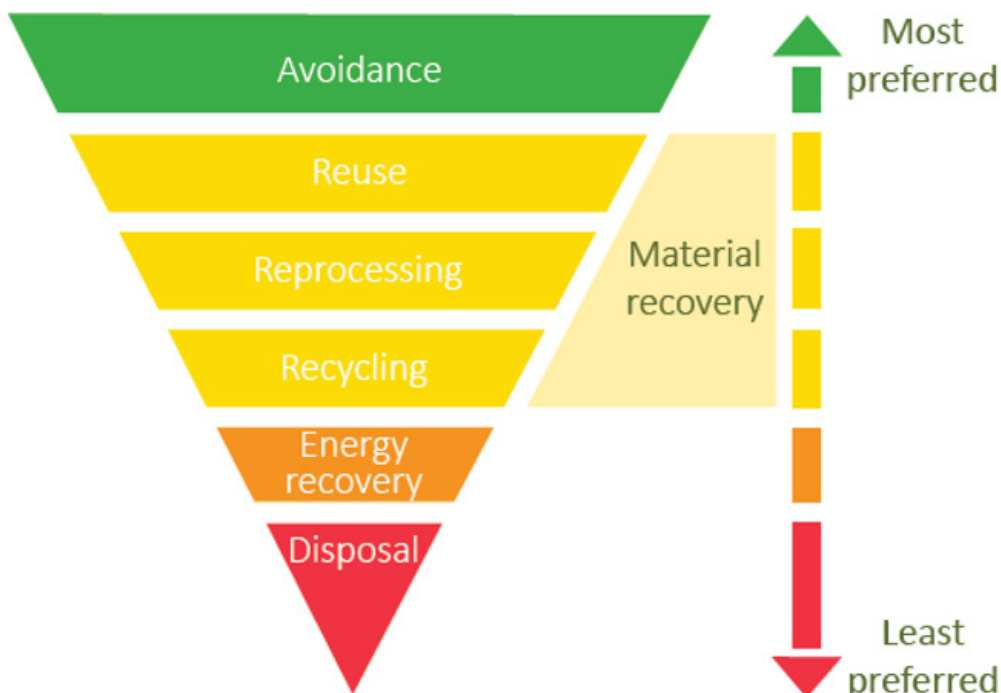
Introduction

The Government of Western Australia, 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.



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:



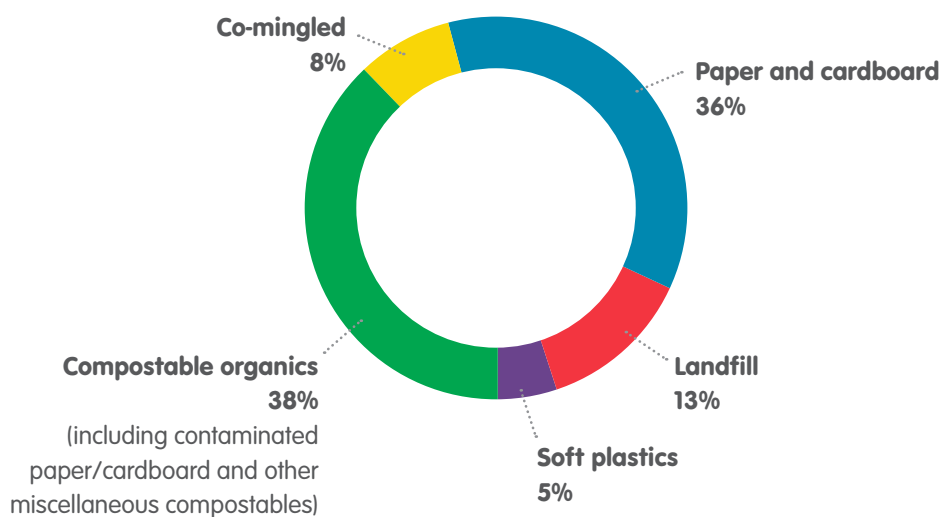
The most preferred option is to avoid waste in the first place. What we cannot avoid we aim to recover through processes such as reuse and recycling. Our last resort is disposal.

Waste in Western Australian schools

Integrating waste avoidance and resource 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



Note: Schools have the potential to divert 87 per cent of their waste from landfill.

The WasteSorted Schools program

WasteSorted 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 resource 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 that successfully implement WasteSorted Schools strategies notice 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.**

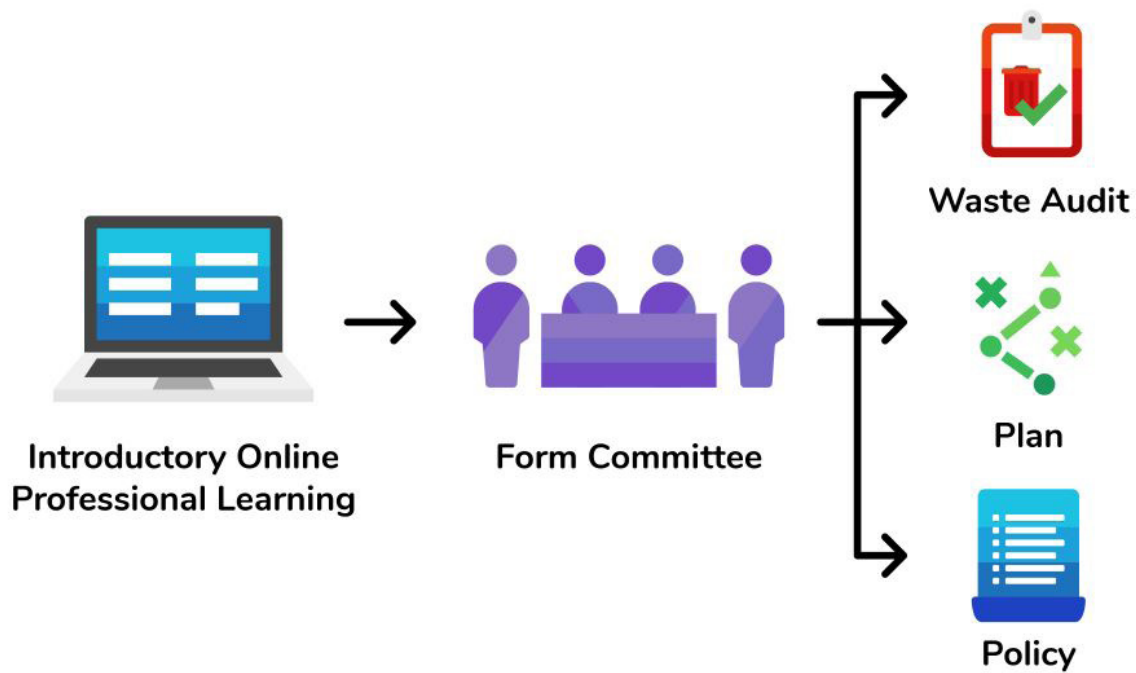
Introduction

Accreditation

Accreditation recognises a school's commitment to reducing waste and provides a framework for planning.

Accredited WasteSorted Schools are eligible to apply for grants to set up waste avoidance and resource 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 steps that follow.



Kids get their school waste sorted.

Getting your WasteSorted

This WasteSorted Schools guide presents simple steps for schools to follow 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.

These simple steps will guide you through the process of becoming a WasteSorted School, including achieving WasteSorted Schools accreditation, setting up better waste management systems and keeping it going.

The guide focuses on the following areas of involvement in the school:

Infrastructure

how your waste is managed, bin collection systems and assessments.

Education

integrating student learning about waste and resource management.

Whole school and community

encouraging a whole-school approach that engages students, teachers, staff and the wider school community.

Schools that start with small changes and slowly build on successful waste avoidance and resource recovery practices have the best success in achieving a whole-school approach.

Students processing organic waste at school.



Becoming accredited



Step 1: Online professional learning module

Learn about the WasteSorted Schools program and complete your first step towards accreditation by completing the [Introduction to WasteSorted Schools](#) online professional learning module.

This module takes about 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 WasteSorted Schools 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, just add waste to the agenda. Consider asking other committee members to complete the online professional learning module.



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. Each provides different types of information which can be entered into your accreditation survey to establish baseline data.

- [School waste system assessment](#)

The purpose of this assessment is to 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 in streamlining bin size and pick-up frequency, ensuring the school is only paying for services needed. Paying for partially empty bins is a common but avoidable cost. It will also help identify other waste streams that can be avoided or recovered. It involves reviewing the school's waste contract information with the assistance of the school business manager.

NOTE: Find out the volume of the school's bins and how often they are collected. There may be two 4m³ skip bins collected monthly. If this is the case, you will be paying for 8m³ 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 downsize to one bin and reduce costs significantly.

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.

Becoming accredited

- [Waste audit](#)

A waste audit will identify the type and quantities of waste generated at your school and is a great educational and behaviour change tool. 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 resource recovery projects. Frequent, or annual, waste audits monitor the effectiveness of the school's waste reduction plans and projects.

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



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 resource 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.

Many schools use the [WasteSorted Schools checklist](#) to help plan and prioritise projects. For long-lasting results, remember to start small and gradually build on your projects each year.

A waste policy states the school's intent and commitment to waste avoidance and resource recovery. It helps to embed WasteSorted Schools 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 resource recovery projects and plans reflect the school's waste values.

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



Sorting waste helps students identify waste to avoid.

Becoming accredited



Step 5: Become accredited

Once these four steps have been completed, your school can apply for WasteSorted Schools accreditation by completing the [online accreditation survey](#). You will need to upload your:

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

Some information from the school's waste contract will be required in the initial accreditation survey, but the full waste system assessment results are optional. However, many schools find this information extremely valuable in reducing school waste costs and providing data to track their progress.

Accredited WasteSorted Schools are acknowledged with a metal sign to display and yearly accreditation renewal stickers for each calendar year. Accreditation renewal is done annually via an online link which is emailed to the WasteSorted Schools 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.

Accredited WasteSorted School



wastesortedschools.wa.gov.au

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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 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 recycling be collected?
- Storage – where will your school store materials for recycling?

Once the school's recycling collection is arranged and a plan is developed for how the recycling system will work, you can set up 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. Many schools use the [WasteSorted](#) school signs and posters that best suit their school's needs.



WasteSorted signs make bins easy to use.

Setting up

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 may have to buy its own. 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.

Monitoring bins regularly – using the [visual bin audit tool](#) – ensures they are being used correctly. Share these results with the school community.



Composting and worm farming

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

[Fact sheets](#) on how to do this in your school are available on the WasteSorted Schools website.

Students add fruit and vegetable scraps to the fridge worm farm.



Setting up



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. Many schools set up 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 should be done gradually to manage change.



Funding your projects

WasteSorted Schools grants provide funding to accredited schools to set up infrastructure for waste avoidance and resource 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 [WasteSorted Schools 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 avoidance and resource recovery projects.



A primary school community recycling hub.

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. WasteSorted Schools recommends starting with paper recycling, as this is usually the largest source of waste in a school. From there, waste streams can be added based on target priorities identified in your waste audit. Schools find that using a step-by-step process to build waste management systems leads to long-term success.

Consider how the day-to-day handling of waste will be managed, 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 WasteSorted Schools 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 the school waste collection systems have been decided, inform the whole school community before you start using them. Make sure students, staff and all involved are clear about correct bin use. Many schools 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. WasteSorted Schools projects provide meaningful context to curriculum outcomes within the cross-curriculum priority of sustainability.

WasteSorted 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.

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



Keeping it going

Area of waste	Infrastructure and facilities	Education	Community
Recycling	<p>The WasteSorted Schools fact sheet helps government schools access recycling services.</p> <p>WasteSorted Schools signage and posters for schools help to communicate how to correctly sort waste and reduce contamination.</p>	<p>The WasteSorted Schools 3Rs curriculum guide contains lessons on reuse and recycling.</p> <p>Cool Australia provides free lesson plans, units, activities and digital media on recycling.</p> <p>ABC Education offers fantastic recycling resources of videos, digi-books, articles and games to support students in class.</p> <p>Planet Ark's Recycle Right Challenge contains activity ideas, lesson plans and school event ideas linked to National Recycling Week.</p> <p>The Imagination Factory matches waste materials to recycled art projects.</p>	<p>Many regional councils (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 WasteSorted Schools specialised recycling list for information.</p> <p>Recycle Right has videos 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 Castaways Schools or Recycle Right's upcycling art.</p>
Plastics	<p>The WasteSorted Schools waste-free lunch toolkit encourages students to bring food without unnecessary plastic packaging.</p> <p>The WasteSorted Schools green canteen fact sheet 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 Redcycle collection point. Check here for what can be recycled.</p> <p>Bye Bye Plastic has a list of tips to help your school go plastic free.</p>	<p>WasteSorted Schools classroom resources:</p> <p>Plastic Free July (PP–Year 6)</p> <p>Message in a Plastic Bottle (Years 7–10)</p> <p>WasteSorted Schools single-use plastic fact sheet.</p> <p>Watch the ABC TV series War on Waste focusing on single-use plastic damage to our waterways and marine life.</p> <p>ABC Splash uses project-based learning to identify the issues with plastic waste and design a solution for the problem, drawing on STEM skills.</p> <p>BTN Plastic Oceans investigates the impact of pollution on marine life.</p>	<p>Use the WasteSorted Schools beeswax wrap fact sheet to hold a parent session at your school.</p> <p>Some local councils 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 Plastic Free July challenge.</p> <p>Join or start a Boomerang Bags community for your school.</p> <p>Join the Tangaroa Blue Australian Marine Debris Initiative – a network dedicated to the removal and prevention of marine debris. Resources and information on how to adopt-a-beach are available.</p>

Keeping it going

Area of waste	Infrastructure and facilities	Education	Community
Food waste	<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>ABC Education has videos and education articles with real-life examples of students reducing food waste in their schools.</p> <p>OzHarvest gets the whole school involved in fighting food waste, using posters and other downloadable resources.</p> <p>Wipe Out Waste (WOW) has videos and a series of lesson plans on food waste.</p> <p>The Nude Food Day lesson plans booklet contains activities specific for foundation, years 1–6.</p>	<p>Love Food Hate Waste 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 OzHarvest.</p> <p>Enter the Switch Your Thinking Young Re-Inventor of the Year competition on future food.</p>
Gardening	<p>Use the WasteSorted Schools planting guide 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 KidsGrow Munch and Crunch garden resource provides a detailed guide on setting up a kitchen garden.</p>	<p>Kids Gardening has a number of free educator resources for incorporating a WasteSorted Schools garden into your school curriculum.</p> <p>Use the video library from ABC Education to learn about sustainable gardens. It contains a wide range of videos suitable for both primary and secondary students.</p> <p>Fizzics Education 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 Perth City Farm to learn about food production (vegetable growing, fruit trees, and medicinal herbs) or animals (chickens, ducks, bees) and their care.</p>
Composting and worm farms	<p>WasteSorted Schools fact sheets give information on composting, worm farming and setting up a fridge worm farm at school.</p> <p>WOW 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>WasteSorted Schools curriculum guides for compost and worms provide hands-on learning activities.</p> <p>Cool Australia 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>ABC Splash resources link to Years 4 and 5 Science with Life in Dirt and Years 6, 9 and 10 Geography and Mathematics with Calculate your compost.</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 WasteSorted Schools values become integrated in school culture and daily practices.

Many schools utilise the different skills and expertise throughout the school community to share the workload and add value to their WasteSorted Schools program. The [WasteSorted Schools checklist](#) contains many ideas for practical ways to involve the whole school and wider community. These include:

- Communication – keeping the whole school community informed of waste plans and results.
- Recognition – for individual, class and whole-school success.
- Student leadership – empowering students by involving them in your WasteSorted Schools 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 WasteSorted Schools projects on a regular basis 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 feedback on what is working well and what needs to be improved. It can also identify other waste streams to be avoided or recovered and further reduce waste to landfill. Consider running bin audits every month or term and share the results with the wider school community.

Schools find it beneficial to repeat the [school waste system assessment](#) annually to ensure bin systems and waste contracts are streamlined, and cost savings are maximised. This information is optional in the accreditation renewal survey but highly recommended as it provides a way of tracking progress.

Surveys are another useful way to monitor changes in student and staff attitudes and behaviours. Some schools conduct 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



WasteSorted Schools provides ongoing support to assist you in planning, implementing and maintaining your waste avoidance and resource recovery projects. We invite you to attend a topic workshop, such as composting, worm farming or grant planning, or one of our networking opportunities where successful WasteSorted 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 wastesortedschools@dwer.wa.gov.au



Students sell worm leachate to the school community.

