CITY OF
TEA TREE GULLY
Naturally Better

Lift the right lid

Teaching & learning resource

Childcare centres,
kindergartens &
schools (Reception through to Year 2)

Welcome

This Teacher and Learning Resource has been developed by the City of Tea Tree Gully to support educators in fostering sustainable waste management practices among students.

We extend our sincere thanks to the education institutions, industry partners, government agencies, peak bodies, and Council staff who contributed their time and expertise to the development of this resource.

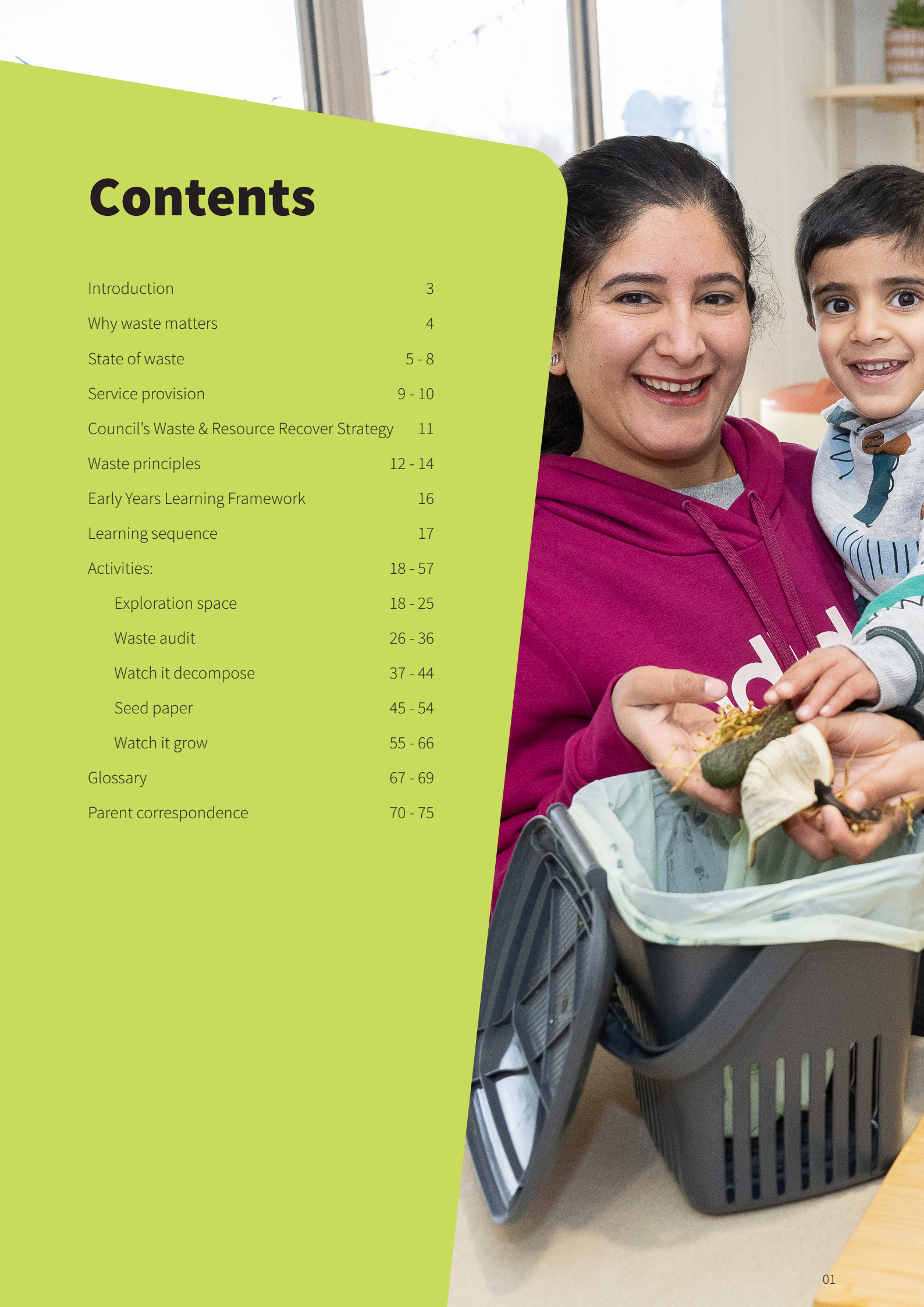
While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information at the time of publication, the City of Tea Tree Gully does not guarantee its completeness or accuracy and accepts no liability for any errors or omissions.

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Contents

Introduction	3
Why waste matters	4
State of waste	5 - 8
Service provision	9 - 10
Council's Waste & Resource Recover Strategy	11
Waste principles	12 - 14
Early Years Learning Framework	16
Learning sequence	17
Activities:	18 - 57
Exploration space	18 - 25
Waste audit	26 - 36
Watch it decompose	37 - 44
Seed paper	45 - 54
Watch it grow	55 - 66
Glossary	67 - 69
Parent correspondence	70 - 75




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FOOD &
ORGANICS

Introduction

Waste is a growing global issue, with significant environmental, economic and social consequences. Educating the youngest members of our community about its impact is an important step in building a more sustainable future.

This teaching and learning resource is designed to help early years educators deliver meaningful learning experiences that inspire curiosity, encourage critical thinking and problem-solving, and deepen students' understanding of waste and its impact on their community and world around them.

Aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), this resource provides practical lesson ideas, simple strategies, and engaging prompts to seamlessly integrate waste education into daily routines. It also supports educators in meeting their reporting obligations.

The structured sequence of interactive and engaging activities help young learners connect students everyday actions to broader environmental outcomes, with guiding questions included to spark meaningful conversations and reflection.

This initiative is part of the City of Tea Tree Gully's commitment to a sustainable future—one where waste is minimised, valuable materials are diverted from landfill, and both the community and environment are protected from the negative impacts of waste.

By embedding waste education into early childhood learning, we aim to empower the next generation to become mindful consumers and environmental stewards.

Together, we can reduce waste, conserve resources, and build a culture of sustainability that extends beyond the classroom.

Why waste matters

Every time we throw something away, we rarely stop to consider its impact. But waste isn't just waste. Many discarded items - glass, plastic, paper, batteries, electronics, food and garden waste - hold untapped value. Often these items, when recovered, can be transformed into new products, reducing our reliance on natural resources and minimising environmental harm.

From a young age, children begin to learn about the world around them. One of the most valuable lessons we can teach them is how to care for the environment. Waste plays a significant role in this.

Our waste management practices directly impact our community and the environment. By teaching children about the life cycle of waste and responsible resource use, we can help them build lifelong sustainable habits.

Waste isn't just rubbish, it holds value. Discarded materials, like glass, plastic, paper, metal, batteries, and food scraps, can be recycled, composted or repurposed to make new products. Recycling common waste items helps conserve natural resources, reduces water and energy consumption and minimises pollution.

If waste isn't managed properly, it can have serious environmental consequences:

- Recyclable and compostable materials often end up in landfill due to incorrect disposal. When these materials are sent to landfill, they take up valuable space and contribute to pollution.
- Plastics can end up in our rivers and oceans, posing a threat to wildlife and ecosystems.
- Food waste in landfill creates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change.

The actions students take every day, such as sorting waste correctly, composting food scraps, and choosing to reduce, reuse and recycle, may seem small, but they are part of a much larger solution. By developing these habits early, students begin to understand how their choices can reduce environmental impacts and contribute to positive change both locally and globally.

The local context

As our community grows and changes, so does the amount of waste and recycling they create. More people, busier lifestyles, and new habits all affect how much waste we produce.

City profile

Total land area:

9,521 hectares

- 66% urban area
- 33% rural area

Open space:

1,305 hectares

Parks and reserves:

606

Trees:

500,000+

Sealed roads:

578 km

ECONOMIC PROFILE

Registered businesses:

5,499

Jobs in CTTG:

25,879

Residents employed

50,906

Community profile



- 0–14 years (17.3%)
- 15–34 years (22.6%)
- 35–59 years (32.7%)
- 60–84 years (24%)
- 85+ (2.4%)



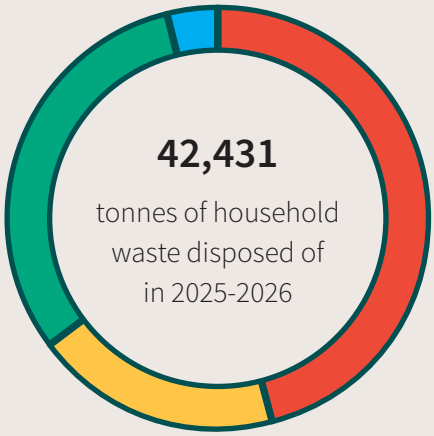
- Couple family with children (12,389)
- Couple family no children (11,535)
- Lone person household (9,292)
- One parent family (4,480)
- Multiple family (1,068)
- Group household (757)
- Other family (328)



- Separate house (36,721)
- Medium density (4,734)

Understanding waste in the city of tea tree gully

In 2025-2026, households disposed of about 42,431 tonnes of waste. Alarmingly, nearly half of this waste was sent to landfill.



- Landfill - 18,680 tonnes
- Recycling - 7,204 tonnes
- Organics - 15,321 tonnes
- Hard waste - 1,132 tonnes



404 kg
of waste disposed of per person in 2025-2026.



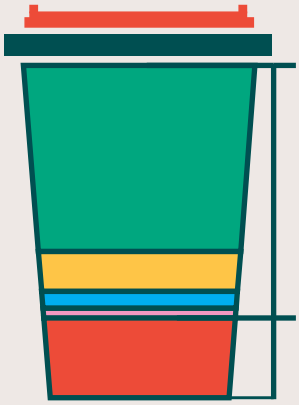
44%
of household waste was sent to landfill.



9.0 kg
The average weight of the red-lid landfill bin per collection.

The red-lid landfill bin

Many items found in the red-lid landfill bin could be recycled or do not belong in the bin at all. In fact, about 72% of the items found in this bin could be diverted from landfill.



72%
of what goes in the general waste bin does not belong in this bin.

28%
of what goes in the general waste bin belongs in this bin.

- 54% Food an organics
- 16% Recyclables
- 1% Hazardous items
- 1.5% Other items
- 32% Landfill items

This means around 13,450 tonnes of reusable resources were sent to landfill unnecessarily in 2025-2026. The disposal of this organic, recyclable and hazardous material cost our community about $2.2 million in solid waste levy charges. That's money that could have been invested in improving our city.

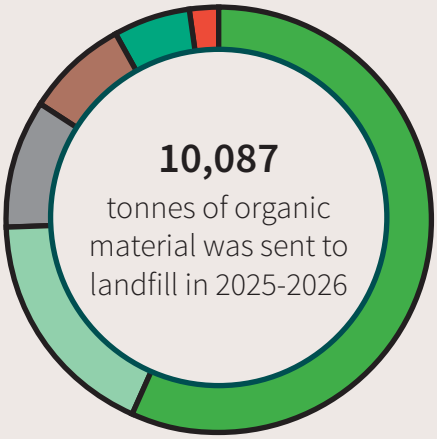
The organic opportunity

While all recycling is an important part of reducing waste, the greatest opportunity for impact lies in food and organic waste.

In 2025-2026, about 54% of the red-lid landfill bin was organic material such as food scraps, uneaten food, pet waste, garden waste and compostable paper. That's 10,087 tonnes of organic material that could have been placed in the green-lid food and organics bin and used to make compost.

Putting these items in the green-lid food and organics bin could have saved the community about $1.7 million is solid waste levy fees.

By focusing on food and organic waste first, we can make the biggest and fastest impact. Simple actions like using the green-lid bin for food scraps can significantly reduce landfill reliance, lower waste management costs and return valuable nutrients to the soil through composting.



- 29% Food scraps
- 9% Uneaten food
- 5% Compostable paper
- 4% Pet waste
- 3% Garden waste
- 1% Compostable food and drink ware

The green-lid food and organics bin

In 2025-2026, about 15,321 tonnes of organic material was collected through the green-lid food and organics bin. That's about 146 kg of organic material per person.

Garden material makes up about 92% of the organic material recycled through the green-lid food and organics bin. Just over 4% is food waste.

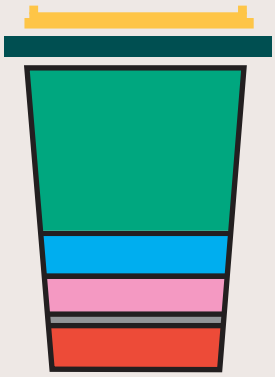


- 92% Garden organics
- 4% Food waste
- 2% Compostable paper
- 2% Contamination

The yellow-lid recycling bin

In 2025-2026, about 7,204 tonnes of recyclable material was collected through the yellow-lid recycling bin. That's about 69 kg of recyclable material per person.

About 14% of what is placed in the recycling bin does not belong in this bin. This mainly includes plastic bags and clothing.



- 56% Paper & card
- 19% Paper
- 13% Glass
- 13% Plastic
- 4% Metal
- 14% Contamination

While this resource focuses on waste in our local community, it is important for students to understand that waste is a global issue. The way we manage waste has far-reaching impacts on the environment, economies and communities around the world.

South Australian context

In 2022-2023, South Australia produced approximately 5.16 million tonnes of waste. However, through strong recycling and resource recovery efforts, 82.3% of this waste was diverted from landfill (Green Industries SA, 2023). This resulted in significant environmental benefits, including:

- Avoiding approximately 1.67 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions
- Saving 19.4 thousand terajoules of energy
- Conserving 6.4 thousand megalitres of water.

Despite these achievements, 914,000 tonnes of waste was still went to landfill in 2022-2023, much of which could have been avoided or better managed. Additionally, even the recovered materials could be processed more efficiently to support a truly circular economy. For example, glass bottles can be recycled indefinitely into new glass products, yet not all glass waste is being captured effectively.

South Australia is also leading the nation in banning single-use plastics, with legislation phasing out plastic straws, cutlery, and polystyrene food containers (Green Industries SA, 2023). However, continued efforts are needed to improve plastic recycling infrastructure and encourage businesses to adopt more sustainable alternatives.

Global context

As the world's population approaches 10 billion, the demand for resources continues to grow, and global waste generation is projected to increase by around 70% (World Bank, 2018). This puts increasing pressure on natural systems, contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and accelerates environmental degradation.

Service provision

The City of Tea Tree Gully provides one of the most comprehensive waste and recycling services in metropolitan Adelaide.

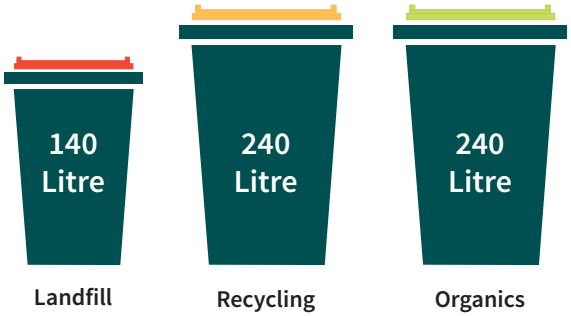
Beyond the three-bin kerbside system, Council provides a range of waste management services, including hard waste collection, drop-off facilities, illegal dumping removal, litter management in public spaces, waste planning for new developments and community waste education.

Waste management is among Council's most expensive services, representing around 10% of total revenue. A significant cost is the Solid Waste Levy, a state government fee Council must pay for landfill disposal. This levy accounts for approximately 30% of the total annual cost of collecting and processing household waste. Much of this expense could be avoided by correctly sorting waste into the appropriate bins.

Importantly, Council does not pay the Solid Waste Levy on materials placed in the yellow-lid recycling or green-lid food and organics bins.

Kerbside collection services

Residential properties and some businesses receive a three-bin kerbside collection as part of their standard rateable entitlement.



The red-lid general waste bin is collected weekly, with alternating fortnightly collections for the yellow-lid recycling bin and green-lid food and organics bin.

Additional bins are available upon request.

Mini munchers

Households can request a free Mini Muncher kitchen caddy with a year's supply of compostable liners. Extra liners are available for free at the City of Tea Tree Gully Civic Centre. All new dwellings receive a kitchen caddy and liners as part of their bin system.

Hard waste and mattress service

Residents are entitled to two free hard waste or mattress collections per year for bulky items unsuitable for kerbside bins. A limit of two cubic metres per collection applies.

Enviro care

Council runs about 20 Enviro Care events annually, offering free green waste drop-off for leaves, lawn clippings, and branches (up to 20 cm in diameter) on select Wednesdays and Sundays.

Hazardous household waste

Residents can dispose of hazardous waste like paints, chemicals, gas cylinders, and oils at free metropolitan drop-off locations. The nearest sites for City of Tea Tree Gully residents are:

- NAWMA Resource Recovery Centre
- Campbelltown Works Depot

Batteries, mobile phones and printer cartridges can be recycled at the Tea Tree Gully Civic Centre.

Public place services and litter

Council maintains more than 500 public waste bins in streets, parks and reserves. To enhance waste management, compactor bins have been introduced at certain locations. Council also provides regular street sweeping and cleaning of parks, reserves and sporting fields.

Illegal dumping

Illegal dumping includes large waste items such as mattresses, furniture, white goods and building materials, often found at parks, charity bins and public spaces. This issue harms the environment and public amenity. each year, Council cleans up numerous incidents, ensuring as much material as possible is recycled.

Incentives and rebates

To promote waste reduction and reuse, Council offers rebates on cloth nappies, reusable sanitary products and composting equipment.

Waste education

Council provides waste education programs to help residents, schools, and businesses reduce waste and recycle effectively. These workshops, school visits, community events and hands-on activities promotes efficient resource use and responsible waste management.

Council's waste and resource recovery strategy

The City of Tea Tree Gully's Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy outlines our 10-year journey toward a more sustainable future, aiming to reduce waste, divert valuable materials from landfill, and protect both the environment and the community.

This strategy aligns with our vision for a strong, vibrant city and supports the state government's commitment to divert all waste from landfill where it is feasible to do so.

Central to the strategy is the need to redefine our community's relationship with waste. Shifting away from waste being viewed as an inevitable consequence of modern living to an opportunity for innovation and resource conservation is key to realising the kind of change we seek to make.

The strategy is built on the waste management hierarchy, which prioritises actions based on their environmental impact. This includes waste avoidance, reduction, reuse, recycling and energy recovery, with landfill disposal being the least preferred option. It is also informed by the national commitment to a circular economy and our state's progressive transition toward this model.

Key to the success of this strategy is education and community engagement. Our approach will support and empower learning institutions and students alike with the knowledge and tools needed to make informed choices about waste and resource use, ensuring a more sustainable future for the community.

Waste principles

Our Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy is guided by two principles that we believe best capture what our community has told us they want, what our City needs and what the national and state policy frameworks are driving towards. These principles are the waste hierarchy and circular economy.

Waste hierarchy

The waste hierarchy serves as an aspirational guideline for efficient and sustainable resource utilisation and underpins waste management policy, decision making and practice in Australia.

It places the highest priority on waste avoidance and reduction, with landfill disposal considered the least preferable option. Disposal should therefore only occur where other waste management options, such as recycling, are not possible.

In applying the waste management hierarchy and protecting the environment, Council seeks to:

- Encourage the best use of recovered resources.
- Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and ending up in our environment.
- Reduce environmental harm.



More information: www.epa.sa.gov.au/environmental_info/waste_recycling

Circular economy

A circular economy focuses on maximising resource efficiency and minimising waste by keeping products, materials, and resources in use for as long as possible. Instead of being discarded, resources are continuously recycled, reused, or re-purposed.

The circular economy is based on three key principles, which are internationally recognised:

- Design out waste and pollution
- Keep products and materials in use at their highest value
- Regenerate natural systems

This approach contrasts with the traditional linear economy, which follows a 'take, make, dispose' model of production.

By closing the loop on resource use, the circular economy aims to reduce environmental impacts, conserve natural resources, and foster a more sustainable and resilient economy. It also creates opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and long-term environmental sustainability.

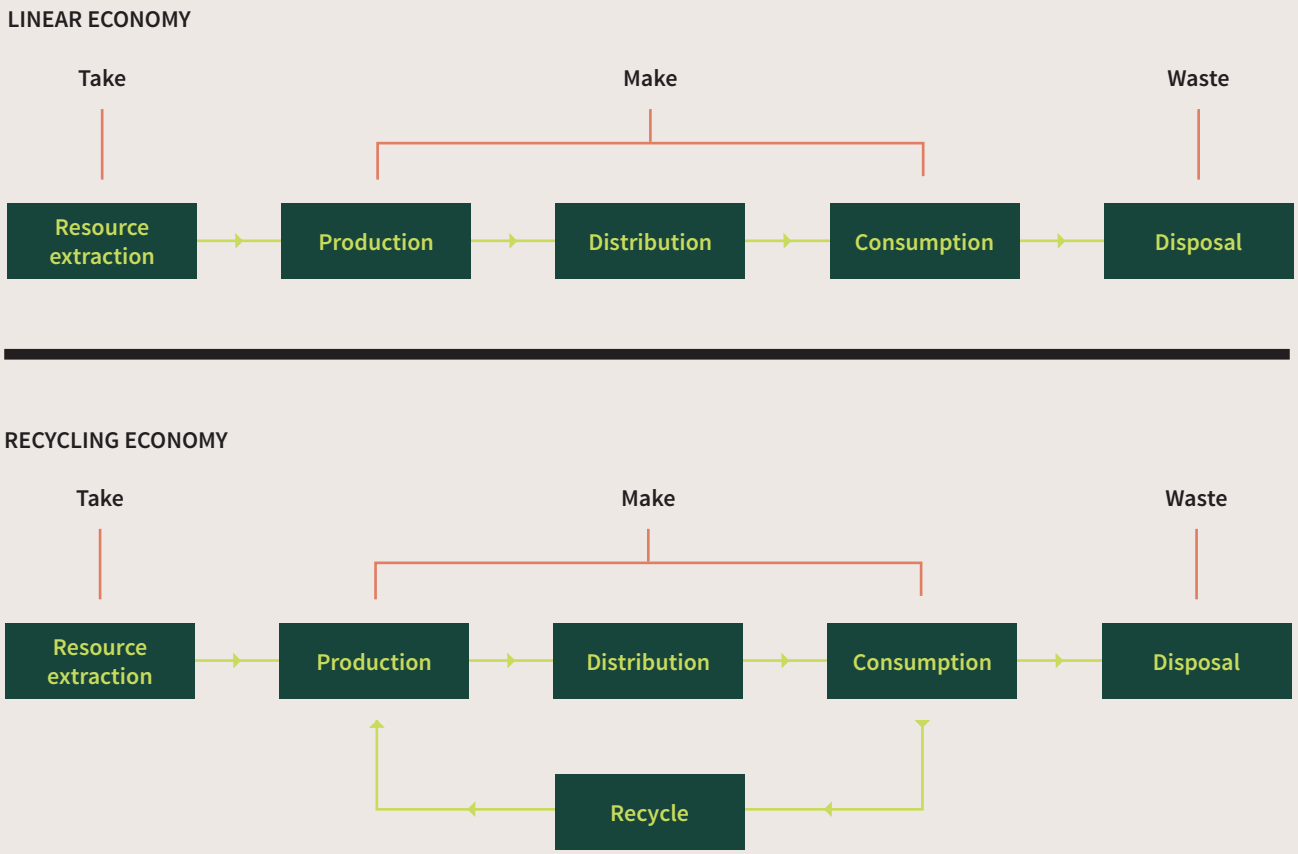
Transitioning to a circular economy involves the following actions:

- Developing and implementing policies, regulations, and incentives that promote circular practices.
- Creating circular business models and supply chains that optimise resource use, encourage transparency, and share best practices.
- Using renewable resources and materials that are easy to recycle or re-purpose.
- Designing products for durability, repairability, and recyclability to extend their life cycle.
- Promoting systems of sharing and reusing to reduce demand for new products.
- Developing effective recycling systems and technologies to recover valuable materials from waste.
- Designing energy-efficient processes and systems that minimize resource use.
- Implementing sustainable production and consumption practices to reduce waste generation.
- Encouraging behaviour change to support more sustainable consumer habits.

By embracing these principles and strategies, the transition to a circular economy can drive environmental, social, and economic benefits on a global scale.

More information: www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au/driving-the-circular-economy

Figure 4: *Linear, recycling and circular economy models*




RECYCLING

Early Years Learning Framework

Humanity and the planet we share with all living things face some big challenges. Educators and children have important and active roles to play in creating and promoting sustainable communities.

Council's waste education program aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)—Australia's national framework for early childhood education. The EYLF supports children's learning through play-based experiences, holistic development, and a strong sense of community and belonging.

Waste education naturally fits within the EYLF by encouraging environmental responsibility and fostering sustainable habits from a young age.

This program enables educators to support children's learning through:

- Teaching concepts like reducing waste, recycling, and composting to develop environmental awareness.
- Engaging children in sorting waste, gardening, and up-cycling to reinforce sustainability.
- Encouraging critical thinking by exploring where things come from, how long they are used for, where they go after we are finished with them and how they can be reused.
- Using hands-on activities like nature play, composting, and arts and crafts with recycled materials to encourage exploration, re-purposing and problem-solving.
- Modeling sustainable behaviors such as using the green-lid food and organics bin, avoiding single-use plastics, and reducing food waste to support intergenerational learning.
- Connect sustainability to children's identity and sense of belonging through cultural and community waste practices.

Early exposure to waste management concepts and practices builds a foundation for responsible habits in later life. By embedding waste education in EYLF-aligned activities, students learn they have the power to make a difference, shaping an environmentally conscious future generation.

More information: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/belonging-being-becoming-early-years-learning-framework

Learning sequence

This structured yet flexible learning framework delivers engaging, hands-on learning experiences through bite-sized activities that can be easily integrated into daily routines. It helps make sustainability part of everyday thinking, learning and action.

This sequence introduces students to the concept of waste—where it goes, why sorting matters, and how it fits into a circular system. Through real-world activities like waste audits and decomposition experiments, students develop critical thinking and responsible decision-making skills while building lifelong sustainable habits.

Aligned with early years and primary education frameworks, the program connects to key curriculum areas, including science, sustainability, and personal and social development. It supports inquiry-based learning, problem-solving, and collaboration, helping children observe, predict, and reflect on real-world challenges.

Designed for flexibility, this program seamlessly integrates into daily routines, adapts to different learning paces, and can be tailored to suit your site's unique needs.

1. **Exploration space**
   Begin your waste education journey by creating a designated space where students can explore the world of waste.
2. **Incursion**
   Spark student's natural curiosity with an interactive incursion conducted by Council's Waste Education Officer.
3. **Waste audit**
   Conduct a waste audit and identify the types of waste that generate on site and explore ways to reduce it.
4. **Watch it decompose**
   Watch the decomposition process in real time and explore how organic and non-organic materials break down.
5. **Seed cards**
   Give waste a second life! Create plantable seed cards and transform used paper into something meaningful.
6. **Watch it grow**
   Take reuse to the next level by transforming food scraps and old containers into a thriving new plant.

1 Exploration space

Spark curiosity, foster engagement and build life-long skills with an interactive, hands-on space where children can learn about waste through play and discovery.

Learning intentions

This area provides opportunities to:

- Encourage hands-on exploration
- Foster student-initiated play, problem-solving and creativity
- Teach waste related concepts through open-ended and guided activities
- Reflect on key learnings, fostering deeper understanding and long-term behaviour change.

Success criteria

This is evident when:

- Actively explore, ask questions, and engage in both guided and open-ended activities.
- Use waste materials inventively and experiment with re-purposing.
- Articulate learnings, suggest waste-reducing actions, and apply knowledge in daily life.

An exploration space is a dedicated area where students can explore, experiment and reflect on waste-related concepts. The space is designed to facilitate both structured and unstructured learning, promoting exploration and discovery through play-based learning.

Creating an exploration space

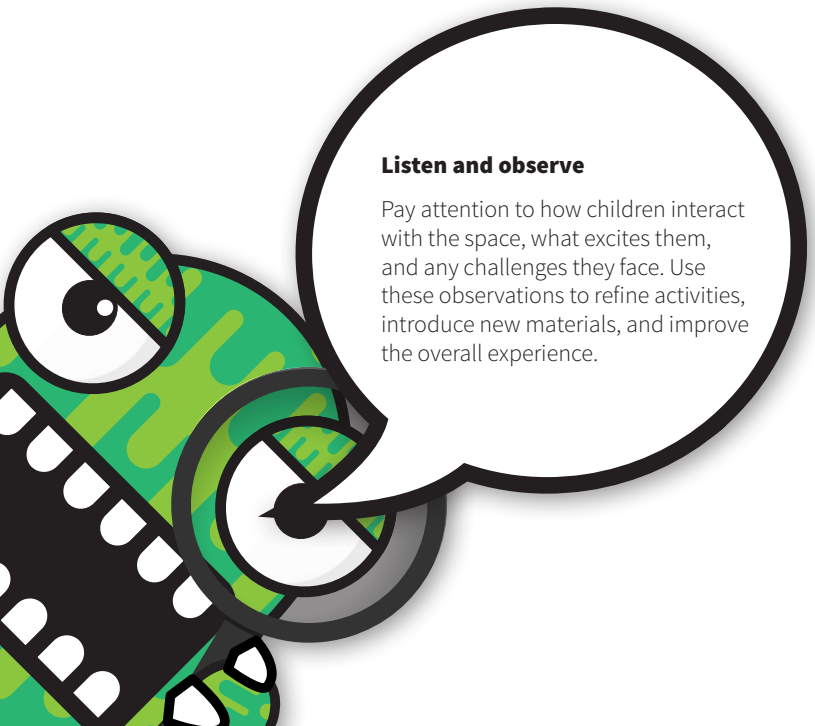
- **Identify the best location**
  Select a dedicated corner of the classroom, with easy-to-clean surfaces and shelves or containers for storage.
- **Design the space for engagement**
  Create designated areas to support different types of play and learning. Within the exploration space, set-up separate areas for:
  - **Exploration:**
    To promote open-ended learning and help students see value in materials that might otherwise be discarded.
  - **Directed activities:**
    To encourage the integration of waste related concepts through structured play.
  - **Observation and reflection:**
    To allow students to reflect on their learnings, ask questions and observe the progress and outcomes of activities.

- **Essential setup items**
  - A collection of recyclable and re-purposed materials - eg paper and cardboard, plastic bottles, aluminium cans, fabrics and organic items such as leaves and twigs.
  - Clearly labeled and colour-coded sorting containers for recyclables, food and organic material and landfill.
  - Waste diversion guide
  - Open shelving or containers for storage.
  - Tables and chairs for activities.
  - Protective gear such as aprons and gloves.
  - A magnifying glass for closer examination.
  - Games, activities, books, posters and other waste-related prompts.
  - Council provided resources to decorate the area, making it bright and colourful.

- **Maintain and expand the space**

  It's a good idea to adjust the layout, rotate materials and change the activities to keep things fresh, engaging and relevant throughout the year

  Educators can enrich student learning by using the 2025 Waste Education Planner to schedule themed months or set monthly challenges. Events like National Recycling Week, Plastic Free July, and Compost Awareness Week provide great opportunities to refresh the exploration space, helping students connect their learning to real-world sustainability efforts.



Listen and observe

Pay attention to how children interact with the space, what excites them, and any challenges they face. Use these observations to refine activities, introduce new materials, and improve the overall experience.

Activating the space

- **Waste education kit**

  The Waste Education Kit engages young learners in hands-on, interactive activities that make exploring waste management fun and meaningful. Through games, challenge cards, posters, and activities, children will discover key waste concepts while develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

  This kit includes versatile resources that can be adapted to different learning environments. Educators can:

  - Use **challenge cards** to spark discussions and encourage critical thinking about waste.
  - Set up **sorting games** to lift the right lid and develop positive waste disposal habits.
  - Display **posters** as visual reminders of key sustainability messages.
  - Encourage **role-play activities** (eg "Recycling Ranger" or "Compost Captain") to reinforce key messages and concepts, and instill a sense of responsibility.
  - Incorporate **art and craft projects** using recycled materials to inspire creativity and reuse.

- **How to use this kit**

  Through play-based learning, students will:

  - Develop a deeper understanding of the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle, recover, treat, dispose).
  - Build confidence in discussing and practicing waste-conscious behaviours
  - Learn to identify, sort, and dispose of waste correctly.
  - Explore the journey of waste and its environmental impact.
  - Discover practical ways to reduce waste in daily life.
  - Understand the role of composting and nature's recycling process.

- Connect waste management concepts to real-world actions at home and in the community.
- Develop a strong sense of environmental responsibility and sustainability

- **Ideas wall**

  The ideas wall is a dynamic classroom tool designed to foster creativity, and student-led action around waste reduction. It provides a structured yet flexible way for students to contribute ideas, reflect on sustainability, and build habits that make a difference.

  How It works

  After a waste-related lesson or activity, students contribute their own ideas for reducing waste. These might be small actions, creative solutions, or fun challenges. They might write their idea on the wall or draw a picture of it.

  At the end of each week, month or term the class votes on their favorite idea to explore in more depth. This idea then becomes a class-wide focus with discussions, activities, or experiments. It could also become a project, campaign, or ongoing commitment to reduce waste.

  Why It works

  - Encourages student ownership and decision-making.
  - Reinforces key sustainability concepts through repetition and action.
  - Creates a structured but flexible way to build sustainable habits.

Fostering student-initiated learning

- Allow students to choose materials and activities.
- Provide prompts, provocations and challenges but let them lead the learning.
- Encourage curiosity through questions rather than direct instruction.
- Use the ‘See, Think, Wonder’ posters as a visual guide for inquiry based learning and reflection.
  - What do you see?
  - What do you think is happening?
  - What does this make you wonder?

Encourage long-term engagement

Regularly revisit the exploration area to reinforce learnings, monitor experiments, track progress against sustainability goals, showcase student work and acknowledge their contributions.



Teacher prompts

Q: Can you sort these items into the correct bins—recycling, organics, or landfill?

Why do you think this item belongs here?

A: A plastic bottle goes into the recycling bin because it can be turned into new plastic products.

A banana peel goes into the compost bin because it breaks down naturally and helps plants grow.

A chip packet goes into the waste bin because it can't be recycled or composted.

Q: After we put these materials in the recycling bin, what do you think happens to them?

A: We sort items so that the valuable materials they are made of can be recovered and reused. Doing so reduces our reliance on the earths natural resources. Composting also helps the environment by making the soil healthy.

Q: Let's pretend we're waste detectives! Where does this piece of waste go after we throw it away?

A: Recycling is taken to a special facility where machines and people sort the materials.

Plastic bottles might be turned into new bottles, clothes or park furniture!

Paper gets turned into new paper products.

Glass can be turned into new jars or even roads.

A tin can in the recycling bin might become a brand-new can.

A food scrap in the organics bin are turned into compost.

Q: How can we reduce waste in our early learning centre or classroom? What are some simple changes we can make to use fewer resources?

A: We can use reusable containers instead of plastic wrap.

We can recycle paper and cardboard.

We can bring our reusable water bottles.

We can share supplies.

Q: Do you know what can go into the green-lid food and organics bin? Let's sort our food scraps and talk about how composting helps the environment.

A: Fruit and vegetable scraps, uneaten food, seafood shells and meat bones, eggshells, tea bags, coffee grounds, hair, used tissues and paper towel and even shredded paper. Garden items like twigs, pruning, leaves, grass clippings are also good to go in the green-lid food and organics bin.

Composting helps by keeping food waste out of landfills and turning it into healthy soil for plants to grow.

Q: Can we create something useful or beautiful from recycled materials? What can we make with what we might normally throw away?

A: We can turn old magazines into collages, egg cartons into organisers and plastic bottles into planters. By reusing materials creatively, we give them a new purpose instead of throwing them away.

Q: How does wasting water or energy relate to waste? Let's think about ways we can save water and energy, and reduce waste at the same time.

A: Turning off lights, using less water, and choosing reusable items help save energy and reduce waste at the same time.

Q: What kind of waste does nature create? How can we learn from nature to reduce the waste we create?

A: Nature doesn't make waste that lasts forever! Leaves fall from trees and decompose naturally, becoming nutrients for the soil. Animal waste also breaks down and helps nature grow.

We can learn a lot from nature by choosing biodegradable materials and composting food scraps.

Q: What are some sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic? Can we come up with our own eco-friendly solutions for everyday items?

A: Let's think of a few everyday items we use and how we can switch to eco-friendly versions. Instead of plastic straws, we can use paper, metal or bamboo straws. Instead of plastic bags, we can bring reusable fabric bags. We can use beeswax wraps instead of plastic wrap.

Q: Have you ever heard someone say that recycling doesn't make a difference? Let's explore why recycling is important and how it really helps the planet.

A: Some people think recycling doesn't work, but it actually saves resources and keeps materials out of landfill. Aluminium cans and glass can be recycled over and over again. Paper and plastic can be made into new products. If we recycle properly, it really does make a big difference.

EYLF connections

The links provided below show how this activity supports one or more of the five learning outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Use them to guide planning, teaching, and reflection. Outcomes may overlap—use your judgement to adapt or extend learning based on children's needs and interests.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

1.3 Children develop knowledgeable, confident self-identities and a positive sense of self-worth.	• Through hands-on sustainability activities, children develop confidence in their ability to care for the environment. • By participating in recycling, composting, and re-purposing materials, they take pride in their role as active contributors to a more sustainable world, strengthening their sense of identity and belonging within their community. • Sharing their knowledge with peers and family fosters leadership and strengthens their identity.

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

2.1 Children develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities and an understanding of their reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens.	• By engaging in sustainability practices such as composting, recycling, and waste reduction, children connect with their community and understand their responsibility to care for the environment. • Participation in local, national or global events like National Recycling Week or Clean Up Australia Day help children see their impact. • Understanding shared responsibility encourages children to contribute positively to their world.
2.4 Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment	• By interacting with the natural world through composting, gardening, and recycling, children learn to respect and care for the environment. • They begin to understand the cycles of nature and the importance of minimising their impact on the planet. • Hands-on activities instill respect for the environment and a sense of responsibility.

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of well-being

3.1 Children become strong in their social, emotional and mental wellbeing.	• The waste exploration space provides opportunities for children to engage in hands-on problem-solving and experimentation. • Sorting waste, monitoring composting, and re-purposing materials foster inquiry-based learning, where children explore how their actions can directly impact the environment. • Working collaboratively on tasks fosters teamwork and resilience.
3.2 Children become strong in their physical learning and wellbeing	• Through composting and gardening activities, children develop a deeper connection to food systems and the environment, understanding how their actions support their health and well-being. • Caring for plants and participating in sustainable practices can contribute to a sense of accomplishment. • Learning about food systems encourages healthy eating habits and an appreciation for fresh food. • Engaging with natural environments supports physical coordination and strength. • The hands-on nature of the exploration space and associated activities promotes fine and gross motor development, contributing to physical well-being.
3.3 Children are aware of and develop strategies to support their own mental and physical health and personal safety.	• Engaging in activities like gardening, composting, and handling materials for creative projects helps children build physical skills. • Engaging in hands-on sustainability tasks builds independence and responsibility.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

4.1 Children develop a growth mindset and learning dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.	• By exploring sustainability topics and engaging in waste-related activities, children develop curiosity and creativity. Whether it's through re-purposing waste for art projects or experimenting with composting, children are encouraged to think outside the box and persevere in finding sustainable solutions.

4.2 Children develop a range of learning and thinking skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.	• The waste exploration space provides children with opportunities to make decisions about their learning. • Open-ended exploration of waste management concepts promotes critical thinking. • Children make predictions, test ideas, and observe real-world environmental impacts.
4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.	• As children participate in the waste exploration space, they transfer skills learned about recycling and composting into other areas of their lives. • They begin to see the broader implications of waste management and apply these principles to their everyday routines, both at home and in the community. • Children become advocates for sustainability, sharing knowledge with family and friends.
4.4 Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials	• Children interact with real-world materials, tools, and digital resources to deepen learning. • Collaboration with community members enhances understanding. • Using technology supports engagement with sustainability concepts.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.	• While interacting with the exploration space, children communicate their sorting decisions, composting observations, and recycling ideas with peers and educators. These discussions foster verbal communication skills as children learn to explain, describe, and justify their actions. • Group activities encourage cooperation, turn-taking, and respectful dialogue.
5.3 Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.	• Through creative activities children are encouraged to express their ideas visually and verbally. These activities develop communication skills, creativity, and critical thinking as children engage with various media to convey their understanding.

3 Waste audit

Learn about waste production and management by identifying the types and amounts of waste created at your centre and developing strategies to reduce waste.

Learning intentions

This activity provides students opportunities to:

- Recognise different types of waste
- Understand how different types of waste are disposed of and their environmental impact
- Explore the consequences of landfill and improper waste sorting
- Develop strategies to reduce waste
- Engage in teamwork and problem solving

Success criteria

This is evident when students:

- Identify different waste types and how to dispose of them correctly.
- Understand the consequences of improper waste disposal.
- Comprehend the impact of waste to the environment and discuss ways of helping to avoid or minimise them.

This activity highlights the importance of waste sorting and offers hands-on experience in making sustainable waste choices. You'll sort through waste collected from your educational facility, determining which items belong in the red-lid landfill bin, green-lid food and organics bin, or yellow-lid recycling bin.

Using your knowledge of waste diversion and the provided guide, you'll practice sorting items correctly. This is a valuable opportunity to understand how each waste type is managed and how small actions can have a positive impact on the environment!

Duration

45-60 minutes

Essential set up items

- Tarp with labeled sections for each waste stream
- Buckets to collect waste material
- Gloves and tongs for each student
- Buckets to collect waste material
- Waste diversion guide to ensure waste is sorted correctly
- Laminated waste audit tally sheet to record findings
- Camera or smartphone for documenting results

Instructions

Decide what to audit and gather materials

- Decide what to audit:
  - Single room or classroom
  - Entire school or early learning centre.
- Gather all the essential set up items.
- Collect the waste items to be audited.

Set up the sorting area

- Lay out a tarp with clearly labeled sections:
  - Red for landfill.
  - Green for food and organics.
  - Yellow for recycling.
- Place corresponding buckets next to the tarp for sorting.

Assign roles

- To promote teamwork and accountability you may like to assign student roles:
  - Waste sorters - Sort items into the correct buckets.
  - Tally recorders - Keep track of each item of each item in each category.
  - Safety checkers - Ensure safety guidelines are followed.

Discuss personal and group safety

- Talk about personal and group safety, including:
  - the importance of wearing gloves
  - washing hands before and after
  - avoiding touching the face.
- Ask students why these practices help keep them safe to ensure understanding.

TIP - Role-play a safety scenario, showing students what to do in certain situations. For example, if a student finds a sharp object like glass they should avoid touching it and tell an educator immediately. This reinforces help-seeking behaviours.

Review the waste diversion guide

- Review the waste diversion guide with the group, discussing which items belong in each bin.
- Before sorting, ask students to predict which type of waste will be the most common.
- Record their predictions for comparison.

Sort the waste

- Ensure all students have their personal protective equipment on and understand safe waste handling practices.
- Dump the waste in the centre of the tarp.
- One at a time, take an item from the tarp and decide where it belongs:
  - The red-lid landfill bin
  - The yellow-lid recycling bin
  - The green-lid food and organics bin.
- For a more detailed audit, sort the waste into subcategories - eg soft plastics, food scraps, metal and glass.
- Continue until all the waste is sorted.
- If you identify eligible drink containers with a 10c refund label, set them aside to take to a local recycling depot. Engage students by tallying these containers and discussing potential earnings.

Data collection

- Record the results using the waste audit tally sheet to keep track of how much waste falls into each category.
- Take photos of the sorting process, the individual waste items and the final results for documentation and further discussion.

Clean up

- Once the audit is complete, clean up the area and dispose of the waste appropriately.

Analyse the findings

- Discuss:
  - Any surprises or challenges from the audit.
  - The type and amounts of waste found.
  - The items placed in the wrong bins.
  - How much waste could have be diverted from landfill and the importance of proper waste sorting.
  - What contributes to waste generation.
  - How can the student reduce the amount of waste they generate.
- Compare the predictions made at the start of the audit with the actual results.

Set a reduction goal

- Use the waste goal poster to set a group target.
- As a group, decide:
  - Which waste item to focus on.
  - How much to reduce the item by.
  - How progress will be tracked.
- This gives them a motivator - eg we want to reduce wasting <insert item> by <insert amount> by <insert time frame>.

Brainstorm solutions

- Use the ideas wall to explore ways to reduce, reuse and re-purpose the selected item.
- Encourage creativity—start with fun and silly ideas, then refine them into practical solutions.
- You may wish to split students up into small groups to brainstorm ideas.
- Help students evaluate their ideas by asking a few questions.
- Create an action plan using the best ideas.

Track progress

- Regularly check in on the goal.
- Discuss progress as a group.
- Adjust the plan if needed.

Extension - Display audit photos

Leverage the waste exploration space as an engaging visual learning tool by showcasing before-and-after photos from the waste audit. Use these images to highlight key findings, such as reductions in food waste, improved sorting accuracy, or unexpected contamination issues.

- Encourage students and parents to explore the photos, spot patterns and chat about what they can do differently at home and the educational facility.
- Make a chart or infographic to highlight key results from the audit, making it easier for students to see the impact of their waste habits at a glance.
- Feature testimonials or short stories from students who made significant changes based on the audit findings, reinforcing positive behavior change.

Extension - Encourage home audits

Take waste awareness beyond the classroom by encouraging families to conduct their own waste audits at home.

- Send a letter explaining the purpose of a home waste audit and providing step-by-step guidance on how to conduct one. Letter templates can be found on page 71 of this document.
- Include a checklist or simple worksheet to help families categorise their waste, identify avoidable food waste, and assess their disposal habits.
- Offer a small reward or recognition for families who participate and share their findings, such as a certificate or a feature in the school newsletter.
- Create a shared space where families can post their results, share insights, and celebrate their successes together.



Teacher prompts

Pre-audit

Q: What is waste?

A: Waste is anything we decide don't need anymore.

Q: Where does it go after we throw it away?

A: When we throw items away, they go into bins. Some waste gets buried in the ground (landfill), some gets turned into new things (recycling), and some can become soil (compost).

Q: Why do we sort waste?

A: We sort waste so that things go to the right place and the item we discard can be reused to create something new.

Q: How do different types of waste affect the environment?

A: If we put food scraps in the compost, they turn into soil. If we recycle bottles and paper, they can be made into new things. But if we mix everything together, it can make a big, stinky mess and hurt nature.

Q: What do you think we throw away the most? Why do you think that happens?

A: We throw away lots of food scraps, plastic wrappers, and paper. Sometimes, people don't finish their food, or they use things just once and toss them.

Q: What is a waste audit?

A: A waste audit is like being a waste detective! We look at our waste to see what's inside, then figure out how to throw away less.

Q: How do you think a waste audit can help us reduce waste?

A: It can help us improve how we manage our waste.

Q: How can we prepare for a waste audit?

A: We need gloves, tongs, bags, and a big sheet to sort the waste. We also need to wash our hands after touching trash!

Observing and data collection

Q: What types of waste do you see the most in your sample? Can you count them?

A: There are lots of food scraps, paper, and plastic wrappers!

Q: Who guessed that landfill would be the biggest pile? How about recycling? Food and organics?

A: It looks like <insert> is the biggest.

Follow up with a few exploratory questions:

- Why do you think this is?
- How can we make this pile smaller next time?

Q: How much of this waste could have been recycled or composted?

A: A lot! Food scraps should go in the compost bin, and clean paper and bottles can be recycled.

Q: What else can we do with our food scraps?

A: We can do lots of cool things with our food scraps! Put them in the green bin or a compost pile to turn them into healthy soil for plants. Some food scraps, like veggie peels, can be fed to chickens or worms in a worm farm. Grow new plants – Some scraps, like carrot tops or potato peels, can also grow into new plants!

Q: Are there any items that don't belong in the landfill bin? What should have happened to them instead?

A: Yes! A banana peel should go in the green bin, and a juice box should go in recycling.

Q: How is the waste in the classroom, lunchroom, and playground different?

A: The lunchroom has the most food waste, the classroom has lots of paper, and the playground has snack wrappers.

Q: Are there items that could have been reused instead of thrown away?

A: Yes! A plastic spoon could be washed and used again, and a paper bag could be used for craft projects.

Analysis and reflection

Q: What surprised you the most about what we found?

A: There were so many things in the wrong bin. And a lot of food that could have been eaten.

Q: How much of the waste was unnecessary? Could it have been avoided?

A: A lot! If we ate all our food and used less plastic, we wouldn't have so much waste.

Q: What waste items are most common? Why do you think they are frequently thrown away?

A: Plastic wrappers, juice boxes, and food scraps. People use them every day and don't think about where they go or what happens to them.

Q: How do our waste habits compare to what we expected?

A: We thought we were throwing away less, but we actually waste a lot!

Q: What do you think our school is doing well in waste management?

A: We have different bins, and some people recycle really well!

Q: What if we made a big pile of rubbish like we did today, and added to it every single day—how big do you think the pile would get?

A: It would get really, really big—maybe as big as a house! We don't always see how much waste we create because the garbage truck takes it away. But if it stayed in one place—like in your backyard, at the park, or on the beach—it would be very messy. That's why we should try to create less rubbish. We can do that by using things again, putting rubbish in the right bin, and thinking of ways to use less. That helps keep our world clean and beautiful!

Problem solving and action planning

Q: What changes could we make to reduce waste in our school?

A: We can pack lunch in reusable containers, eat all our food, and use both sides of the paper.

Q: How can we encourage more students and staff to sort waste correctly?

A: We can make fun signs, remind our friends, and have a recycling competition!

Q: What alternatives could we use to reduce single-use items?

A: Instead of plastic straws, we can use metal or bamboo ones. Instead of plastic bags, we can use lunch boxes.

Q: How can we share our audit results with others to promote better waste habits?

A: We can make a poster, tell our families, and have a class presentation.

Q: What actions can we take at home to reduce waste?

A: We can use a green bin for food scraps, recycle our bottles, and use a lunchbox instead of plastic wrap.

Waste diversion guide

Feed your green-lid food and organics bin:


All food scraps (raw and cooked)


Meat, bones & seafood


Compostable food containers & cutlery


Tea bags and coffee grounds


Shredded paper, nail clippings and hair


Small prunings & cuttings


Paper towel serviettes & tissues


Lawn clippings, leaves, flowers & weeds


Pet poo (loose or in a compostable bag)

Feed your yellow-lid recycling bin:


Paper & cardboard


Rigid plastic containers


Milk & juice cartons


Glass bottles & jars

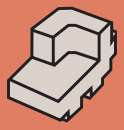

Tins, cans & empty aerosols


Fruit punnets & biscuit trays

Feed your red-lid landfill bin:


Crockery & glassware


Old clothing & used rags


Foam & polystyrene


Plastic bags


Nappies

For more information, visit **cttg.sa.gov.au/waste** or **whichbin.sa.gov.au**

EYLF connections

The links provided below show how this activity supports one or more of the five learning outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Use them to guide planning, teaching, and reflection. Outcomes may overlap—use your judgement to adapt or extend learning based on children's needs and interests.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

1.2 Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and agency.	• Conducting a waste audit allows children to take initiative in identifying and sorting waste, fostering a sense of ownership and autonomy. • Children learn that their actions—such as placing food scraps in a green bin instead of landfill—directly impact the environment. • When children make small but meaningful changes, they develop confidence in their ability to create positive change.
1.3 Children develop knowledgeable, confident self-identities and a positive sense of self-worth.	• When children participate in waste audits, they see themselves as problem solvers and contributors to their early learning centre, school and community. • Understanding waste systems fosters a deeper appreciation for the environment, helping them identify as responsible, environmentally aware individuals.
1.4 Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy, and respect.	• A waste audit teaches children to care for their environment and community, encouraging respect for shared spaces. • They collaborate with peers to sort waste correctly.

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

2.1 Children develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities and an understanding of their reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens.	• A waste audit provides a real-world experience where children work together towards a common goal—waste reduction. • They develop an understanding of waste as a shared responsibility that affects not just them but their families, community, and the environment.

2.4 Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.	• Sorting waste and understanding landfill, compost, and recycling processes help children develop a strong sense of environmental responsibility. • They learn to minimise waste, conserve resources, and think critically about sustainable choices - eg using reusable lunch containers instead of single-use plastic bags. • Ongoing participation in waste reduction activities reinforces lifelong sustainable habits.

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of well-being

3.2 Children become strong in their physical learning and wellbeing.	• Children learn that reducing waste leads to a cleaner, healthier environment, reducing pollution.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

4.1 Children develop a growth mindset and learning dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.	• Children ask questions about waste, investigate solutions, and develop problem-solving skills. • They collaborate with peers to sort waste correctly and reflect on how they can improve their habits.
4.2 Children develop a range of learning and thinking skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.	• Conducting a waste audit is inquiry-based learning—children explore what happens to waste and why proper disposal matters. • They engage in problem-solving by identifying contaminated waste bins and brainstorming solutions to improve sorting.
4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.	• Children can apply their knowledge at home by encouraging their families to recycle and compost correctly. • Lessons about waste extend beyond the classroom into everyday choices, such as bringing a reusable water bottle instead of using disposable cups.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.	• Children discuss their observations from the audit with peers and educators, learning how to express ideas and collaborate effectively.
5.2 Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.	• Reading signage on waste bins and visual guides on recycling strengthens literacy skills.
5.3 Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.	• Children can create posters, drawings, or simple digital presentations to share what they've learned about waste sorting.
5.5 Children use digital technologies and media to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking.	• Children may take photos of their waste audit and compare before-and-after results, engaging in digital storytelling. • They might use videos or interactive games to deepen their understanding of waste sorting.

Australian Curriculum connections

The curriculum connections provided below highlight how this activity supports learning areas and capabilities from the Australian Curriculum. They help link early learning to foundation-level expectations and guide continuity into school. Use them to inform planning and show clear learning intent.

Design and technology

AC9TDE2P01 Generate and communicate design ideas through drawing or modelling, including digital tools.	• Students brainstorm ideas for reusing materials found during the waste audit.
AC9TDE2P02 Use materials, components, tools, equipment, and techniques to safely make designed solutions.	
AC9TDE2P03 Evaluate the success of design ideas and solutions based on personal preferences and sustainability.	

Mathematics

AC9M1ST01 Acquire and record data for categorical variables in various ways, including using digital tools, objects, images, drawings, lists, tally marks, and symbols.	• Students participate in the waste audit by helping to record and tally the results. • Students create graphs to represent the waste audit data and compare different graph types.
AC9M2ST01 Represent collected data for a categorical variable using one-to-one displays and digital tools where appropriate; compare the data using frequencies and discuss the findings.	• Students deepen their understanding of the waste audit by creating a visual display, such as a bar chart, to represent and compare the data.

AC9M2ST02 Create different graphical representations of data using software where appropriate; compare the different representations, identify and describe common and distinctive features in response to questions.	• Students create graphs to represent waste audit data and explore the differences between graph types.

Health and physical education

AC9HPFP02 Practice personal and social skills to interact respectfully with others.	• Students work together in teams during the waste audit, practicing respectful communication and cooperation.
AC9HPFP05 Demonstrate protective behaviours, name body parts, and rehearse help-seeking strategies that help keep them safe.	• Students follow safe handling procedures and practise good hygiene during the waste audit.
AC9HP2P02 Identify and explore skills and strategies to develop respectful relationships.	• Students work as a team and interact respectfully throughout the waste audit process
AC9HP2P05 Identify and demonstrate protective behaviours and help-seeking strategies they can use to help them and others stay safe.	• Students demonstrate safe handling and hygiene practices when working with waste materials

4 Watch it decompose

This simple activity allows you to see the decomposition process firsthand, while learning how composting can reduce waste and benefit the planet.

Learning intentions

This activity provides students opportunities to:

- Explore how decomposition works and discover how organic waste can be transformed into a valuable resource.
- Investigate how different materials breakdown, comparing organic and inorganic material.
- Discover how composting can reduce waste and help the environment.

Success criteria

This is evident when students:

- Can describe, in their own words how things break down (decomposition) and how food scraps turn into compost.
- Can tell the difference between things that break down (organic) and things that don't (inorganic).
- Can describe the changes they see during the experiment.

Ever wondered what happens to your rubbish after it's collected by the garbage truck? This experiment demonstrates how different materials decompose, emphasising the importance of lifting the right lid and putting the right items in the right bin.

By creating a mini decomposition chamber in a sealed bottle, you'll observe how organic items break down into valuable compost, while inorganic materials remain unchanged.

By tracking these changes, you'll gain a deeper appreciation for natural cycles, the problem of landfill waste, and the vital role composting plays in creating a sustainable, circular economy. Get ready to witness the power of decomposition and challenge your understanding of "waste!"

Duration

- 30-45 minutes
- Regular observation 6 weeks post activity

Essential set up items

- Clear two litre plastic bottle
- Scissors, tape and marker
- Soil - Enough to fill the bottom of the bottle
- Food scraps and garden organics
- Non-compostable items
- Water for moistening the contents
- Tray or dish to catch any mess
- Paper towel

Instructions

Preparation

- Using scissors or a utility knife, carefully cut the top off each bottle. Be sure to cut them in a way so that the top half can fit over the bottom half like a lid–this will help trap moisture and heat.

TIP: This is a great way to re-purpose bottles found during your waste audit!

- If you want to improve airflow, you can poke a few holes in the bottom of the bottles. This prevents the compost from getting too soggy. For younger students, an educator should handle this step.
- Place the bottle on a tray to catch any drips or spills.

Layering the materials

- Add a layer of soil to the bottom of the first bottle, about 1-2 inches deep. This will be the base where your food scraps will decompose.
- Start with a layer of brown waste (eg - shredded paper or leaves) and lightly spray with water.
- Add a layer of compostable food scraps (eg - fruit peels, vegetable scraps, eggshells, coffee grounds) and spray lightly with water.

TIP: Break down larger items into smaller pieces to speed up decomposition.

- Repeat the layers until the bottle is three quarters full.
- Repeat the same process for bottle two. But instead, add small amounts of non-compostable items (eg - plastic, metal, wrappers). This will allow you to compare how compostable materials break down differently from non-compostable items.

Moisten the compost

- Lightly water the contents of the bottles to keep them moist, but not too wet. Compost needs moisture to break down, but excess water can cause it to rot. It's also good to give it a shake every now and then, to loosen it all up or aerate it.

Seal and label the bottle

- Place the top half of the bottle (remove the lid) back over the bottom half to create a contained environment. You may want to leave a small gap to allow air to circulate.
- Add a thin piece of paper towel to keep moisture contained within the bottle and reduce odour.
- Use a pen or marker to mark the starting level of the waste and add the date.

Observe and discuss

- Place the bottles in a warm area where they can get some light. Over the next few weeks, observe and record the changes. Student can use a magnifying glass for a much closer look at the decomposition process.
- Watch how the food scraps break down and compare the progress with the non-compostable materials, which will not decompose.
- Take notes or photos to track how the compostable items break down over time.
- After a few weeks, reflect on the differences you observed and consider how composting can help reduce waste and benefit the environment.

Wrap up

- Hopefully you've made some compost. You'll know if it looks like dirt, but a bit darker and most of the things inside have broken down.
- You can either use this in future activities, spread it on the garden or give it back to kids to take home for their parents to use.

Teacher prompts

Setting up the experiment

Q: Why are we using a bottle instead of a bowl?

A: We need to keep it moist inside, like a little rain forest, so the tiny bugs that eat the food are happy! These tiny bugs are called microbes.

Q: Do you think food scraps or paper will break down faster? Why?

A: It depends on the scraps, for example an orange peel takes around 6 months to decompose, whereas paper waste takes around a month. Some vegetable scraps can break down as quickly as 5 days.

Q: What do you think would happen if we cut the food scraps into smaller pieces?

A: It's like making tiny bites for the little bugs! It helps them eat faster, and improves air flow.

Q: What happens to food waste if it doesn't get air?

A: It rots and turns to mush.

Q: What do think we'll see in the bottle after a week? Two weeks? Six weeks?

A: Help them visualise - After one week, it will look a little different. After two weeks, more different! After six weeks, it will look very different, like it's turning into dirt.

Observing and analysing

Q: What do you see happening inside the bottle?

A: Encourage observation - Look! Is the colour changing? Is it getting smaller? Is there wet stuff?

Q: How does compost help the environment?

A: It's like magic dirt. It's full of organic material that is great for plants. It also reduces the amount of food waste that ends up in landfill, which reduces methane emissions (gases that are harmful to the environment).

Q: What else can we do with our food scraps?

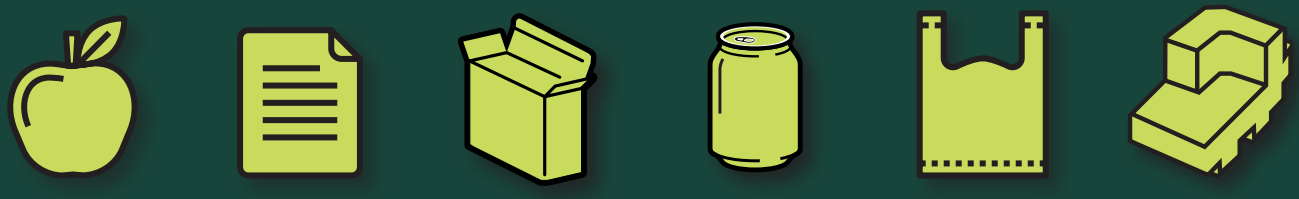
A: There are so many things we can do with food scraps, including feeding them to animals, using them to make broth, or using them to grow new plants.

Q: Do you remember any of the food scraps we put into the bottle a few weeks ago? I can't seem to find the banana peel, what do you think happened to it?

A: It turned into tiny pieces and mixed with everything else! It has become what we call compost, which is like dirt that is tasty for plants.

Decomposition rates

How quickly something decomposes depends on many things, like temperature, moisture, sunlight, and if it's buried or not. Tiny living things, like bacteria, also play a big role. Similarly, not all items - like plastic bottles - are made in the same way or with the same materials, so they break down at different rates. Here's a guide to how long some common items take to break down:



Food waste	Paper	Cardboard	Aluminium	Plastic bag	Styrofoam
<1 MONTH	**2-6 WEEKS**	**2 MONTHS**	**100 YEARS**	**1,000 YEARS**	**NEVER**

SOURCE: https://stacker.com/stories/environment/how-long-it-takes-50-common-items-decompose

Extension - Gassy banana

Did you know that food waste in landfills produce methane, a powerful greenhouse gas? In this experiment, you'll use plastic bottles, balloons, and banana peels to see methane production in action! By comparing bottles with and without food waste, you'll discover how organic waste breaks down and why composting is a better choice for the environment. Get ready to explore the science behind food waste and its impact on our environment!

Duration

- 30-45 minutes
- Regular observation 2 weeks post activity

Essential set up items

- 2 clear plastic bottles - 500mL or larger
- 2 balloons
- 2 banana peels or other food scraps
- Warm water
- Spoon or small funnel
- Permanent marker to label the bottles
- Rubber bands for securing balloons (optional)



Instructions

Label the bottles

- Label one bottle "with food waste" and the other "without food waste."

Prepare the bottles

- Place mashed banana, including the peel (cut into small pieces), or food scraps into the "with food waste" bottle.
- Leave the "without food waste" bottle empty.
- Fill both bottles three quarters with water - enough to dampen the contents.
- Stretch a balloon over the mouth of each bottle, ensuring a tight seal.
- Use rubber bands if needed.

NOTE: During decomposition, the banana releases a gas called methane. This gas will build up inside the bottle and inflate the balloon.

Observe

- Place the bottles in a warm spot and observe over several days.
- Watch as the balloon on the "with food waste" bottle begins to inflate due to the slow release of methane gas as a result of decomposition. Compare it to the "without food waste" bottle, which should remain unchanged. The inflating balloon visually demonstrates how methane gas forms in landfills, highlighting the impact of food waste on the environment.
- Encourage students to use a magnifying glasses to take a closer look at what is happening inside both bottles.

Reflect and discuss

- Why did only one balloon inflate?
- What does this tell us about methane production in landfills?
- How can we reduce methane emissions?
- Can composting reduce these emissions?

EYLF connections

The links provided below show how this activity supports one or more of the five learning outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Use them to guide planning, teaching, and reflection. Outcomes may overlap—use your judgement to adapt or extend learning based on children's needs and interests.

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

2.1 Children develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities and an understanding of their reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens.	• This activity fosters a sense of responsibility towards the environment, a shared community space. • Students learn that their actions, such as composting, contribute to the well-being of their environment and community. • Discussions about how waste impacts the environment and how reducing waste benefits everyone strengthens their sense of belonging and community responsibility.
2.4 Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.	• This hands-on activity fosters children's understanding of how nature breaks down organic materials and transforms them into something useful, like compost. By observing this natural process, children develop an appreciation for the environment and learn why it is important to care for it—starting with simple actions like using the right bin. • Through sorting materials, observing decomposition, and experimenting with composting, children build skills in observation, prediction, and problem-solving. These experiences help them understand that their actions have an impact and that they have the power to care for and positively influence their environment.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

4.1 Children develop a growth mindset and learning dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.	• The activity ignites curiosity about natural processes and encourages students to explore and experiment. • Working together on composting activities fosters cooperation and teamwork. • Making predictions and observing changes builds confidence in their ability to understand and investigate the world around them. • The open ended nature of the experiments, and the lack of a defined 'right' answer encourages imagination.

4.2 Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.	• The activity provides opportunities for students to engage in scientific inquiry through observation, experimentation, and data collection - eg recording changes in the compost. • Identifying waste reduction strategies and finding ways to reuse materials develops problem-solving skills. • Students are encouraged to make hypothesises about what will happen to the waste materials, making comparisons between organic and non-organic materials.
4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.	• Students can apply their understanding of composting and waste reduction to other contexts, such as their home environment or community settings. • They can transfer their skills in observation and investigation to other areas of learning
4.4 Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural processed materials.	• Children learn through collaborative investigation and interaction with knowledgeable individuals. • Children utilise everyday materials, natural and processed, to understand the process of decomposition. • Students connect with their environment, understanding the impact of waste. • Students are encouraged to ask questions, and seek out the answers through experimentation. • They use tools to document, research, and aid their investigation. • They directly observe and learn from the natural process of decomposition. • This empowers children to actively explore, learn through experience, and become resourceful learners.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.	• Children communicate their observations, ideas, and understandings through discussions, drawings, and other forms of expression. • They learn to listen to and respond to the ideas of others, fostering collaborative learning.

Australian Curriculum connections

The curriculum connections provided below highlight how this activity supports learning areas and capabilities from the Australian Curriculum. They help link early learning to foundation-level expectations and guide continuity into school. Use them to inform planning and show clear learning intent.

Science

AC9SFU03 Recognise that objects can be composed of different materials and describe their observable properties.	• Students observe how organic and inorganic materials (eg food scraps, paper, plastic) break down or persist, comparing properties such as texture, size, and visible changes over time.
AC9S1U02 Describe daily and seasonal changes in the environment and how they affect everyday life.	• Students discuss how environmental factors like temperature, moisture, and air affect the rate of decomposition.
AC9S2U03 Recognise that materials can be changed physically without changing their material composition and explore the effect of different actions.	• Students explore how shredding and layering materials can speed up decomposition without altering the material's composition
AC9SFH01 Explore how people make and use observations and questions to learn about the natural world.	• Students use observation, questioning, and recording to investigate decomposition as a natural process.
AC9SFI01 Pose questions and make predictions based on experiences.	• Students make predictions about how different materials will decompose and compare the speed of decomposition over time.

Humanities and social sciences

AC9SDI04 The features of familiar places, why some are special, and how they can be looked after.	• Students discuss how composting reduces waste in familiar settings, such as homes and schools, and supports environmental care.

AC9SFI05 How places change and how they can be cared for by different groups, including First Nations Australians.	• Students are introduced to the concept of caring for places through waste management and consider how groups like families and schools can use composting to help protect the environment.

Mathematics

AC9M2M01 Measure and compare objects based on length, capacity, and mass using informal units.	• Students measure the height of compost layers weekly and track changes over time.
AC9M1M02 Measure the length of shapes and objects using informal units.	• Students record the initial and final heights of compost layers to observe decomposition progress.
AC9M1ST01 Acquire and record data for categorical variables using lists, tally marks, and symbols.	• Students record compost changes using tables, drawings, and tally marks.
AC9M2ST01 Acquire data for categorical variables through surveys and experiments; sort and display data.	• Students collect and compare data on decomposition rates across different groups.
AC9M2ST02 Create graphical representations of data; compare and describe features.	• Students create graphs or drawings to compare how different materials decompose (eg composted food vs a plastic bottle in landfill).

5 Seed paper

Recycle old scrap paper into plantable seed paper, learning about sustainability, waste reduction, and how compost helps plants grow from seed.

Learning intentions

This activity provides students opportunities to:

- Learn how to recycle paper into an eco-friendly, reusable product.
- Understand the connection between waste reduction, recycling and sustainability.

Success criteria

This is evident when:

- Follow the steps to create seed paper with minimal assistance.
- Explain how recycling helps reduce waste and benefits the environment.

In this activity, you'll recycle paper to make your very own seed paper - handmade paper embedded with seeds that can be planted to grow new plants. It's a great way to explore sustainability and see how waste can be transformed to support environmental regeneration.

You'll also learn how compost enriches the soil, helping seeds sprout and grow into healthy plants.

Get hands-on and create something beautiful and beneficial for the future!

Duration

- 60-90 minutes

Essential set up items

- Two old picture frames
- Fine mesh or screen
- Used paper - Shredded non-glossy paper or cardboard like printer paper, napkins, paper towel and tissues
- Water
- Plantable seeds - eg herbs or wildflowers
- Towels to absorb excess moisture
- Rolling pin or flat object for flattening the paper
- Bowl or container for mixing the paper pulp
- Optional: Craft materials for decoration - Eg tea leaves, coffee grounds, flower petals, pencil shavings and watercolour pencils
- Non-toxic glue.

Instructions

Preparation

- Begin by gathering students for a brief discussion. Explore these key ideas:
  - What happens to the things we discard.
  - The hidden value in these items - eg all the time, effort, and resources used to make them.
  - How recycling turns ‘waste’ into new and useful products.
  - The importance of recycling in preserving natural resources and our environment.
- Discuss how the seed paper will grow into plants that can be used for food or to attract pollinators, like bugs and birds

Make the pulp

- Gather the paper products. To reinforce the concept of recycling, use the scraps you found during the waste audit.



TIP: Avoid glossy, heavily painted or contaminated paper or cardboard.

- Tear the paper or cardboard into small pieces. The smaller the pieces, the better.
- Soak the torn material in water to soften it.
- If you’re using a blender, blend the soaked paper with water until it becomes a pulp.
- If you’re not using a blender, just mash the soaked paper with your hands thoroughly.



TIP: Split the pulp into small batches and add food colouring to created coloured cards.

Add the seeds

- Stir a few handfuls of plantable seeds into the pulp. Be gentle so the seeds don’t get damaged, and make sure they are evenly distributed throughout the pulp.
- Herbs such as parsley, chives, basil and coriander are great for easy growing and can be used in cooking.
- Wildflowers such as daisies and sunflowers are great for encouraging pollinators like bugs and birds. Plus they’ll add a sprinkle of colour to the garden.

Make the mould

- Remove the backing and glass from both picture frames.
- Cut a piece of fine mesh or window screening to match the size of the frame.
- Attach the mesh to the back of one of the frames using staples or tacks, then secure it with duct tape for added safety.
- Trim any excess mesh for a clean finish.

Make the seed paper

- Stack the empty frame on top of the mesh-covered frame to make a ‘sandwich’. Hold them tightly and dunk them into the pulp mixture.
- Shake gently underwater to evenly distribute the pulp across the screen.
- Slowly lift the frames straight up out of the pulp, letting the water drain naturally.
- Carefully remove the top frame, leaving the pulp on the screen frame with the mesh screen.
- Place the frame face down on to a clean towel or cloth.
- Use a sponge to press the back of the screen and absorb as much water as possible.
- Gently lift the frame, leaving the paper on the towel or cloth.

Drain, dry and cut

- Allow the paper to dry for 24 to 48 hours, depending on thickness and humidity.
- If the paper feels damp on the bottom, flip it over after the top has dried to ensure it dries fully.
- Once the paper is dry, carefully peel it off the towel or cloth and cut the cards to the desired size

Cut and decorate

- Let students add their personal touch to their cards! The challenge is to use only compostable items for decoration.
- Use natural items that can be turned into compost like flower petals, leaves, or pencil shavings for decorations. You can also decorate with watercolour pencils as they are better for the soil than things like textas or crayons.
- Use non-toxic glue for adding the decorations.



TIP: Use cookie cutters to make different plantable shapes

Plant Your Paper

- Demonstrate how to plant the seed paper.
  - Place the seed paper flat on soil in a garden or pot
  - Cover lightly with more soil
  - Water regularly and keep the soil moist until the seeds sprout. After sprouting, reduce watering to only when necessary.

Note: Different seeds will have different requirements, so check the seed packet.

Recording the instructions

- After the demonstration ask students to record the planting instructions on the back of their seed card. For younger students, ask them to explain the steps for the educator to record.

Reflect and discuss

- Guide students in a reflective discussion on the transformative nature of recycling, exploring how discarded paper becomes a living gift, and how students can communicate the planting process to others.



TIP: Even the edges and scraps are plantable! Plant them in an empty patch of garden perhaps near your compost or recycling bins. This creates a living display where students can see the results of their work and how their seed paper transforms."

Teacher prompts

Cut and decorate

Q: What natural things can we use to decorate our cards that will break down when we plant them?

A: We can use flower petals, dried leaves, small pieces of fruit peel (like orange zest), natural fibers like cotton or wool thread, and even natural food coloring to decorate. These things are all from nature, so they'll break down and become part of the soil.

Q: Our last activity was making compost in a bottle. Which of things that we put in our bottle could be used decorate our cards?

A: We put things like fruit and vegetable scraps, eggshells, leaves, flower petals and coffee grounds in our compost bottle. They will break down just like they did during our experiment.

Plant your paper

Q: If you give this card to someone, what would you tell them to do with it?

A: Test students comprehension - eg I would tell them to put it on top of soil, cover it with a little more soil, and water it gently. Then, they'll see a plant grow! I feel proud that we made something that will turn into a plant.

To encourage student learning, ask students to explain the process to their families.

Reflect and discuss

Q: What do you think happens to the seeds once they are in the soil?

A: The seeds start to sprout! They use the water and nutrients from the soil to grow tiny roots and stems. Eventually, they'll grow into a plant.

Q: How does watering help them grow?

A: Water helps the seeds absorb nutrients from the soil. It also softens the outer layer of the seed, making it easier for the sprout to break through. Plants also need water to carry food and nutrients throughout their stems and leaves.

Q: Why is this seed paper card a special gift?

A: It's special because it's a gift that keeps on giving – it grows into a plant! It helps reduce waste because instead of throwing away old paper, we're turning it into something useful and beautiful. It also helps to grow more plants, which is good for the environment.

Q: How does it feel to know that the paper we were going to throw away is now a gift that can grow into a plant?"

A: Encourage students to share their thoughts - Eg It makes me feel happy! It's like we're giving the paper a new life. It's cool to know we're helping our planet."

Q: We chose to use herb seeds for our plantable cards. Why is growing our own food such a good thing to do?

A: Growing our own food helps us reconnect with nature and understand where our food comes from. When we see the time and care it takes to grow something, we value it more—and that means we're less likely to waste it. It's a simple way to be more mindful, reduce food waste, and care for the environment.

EYLF connections

The links provided below show how this activity supports one or more of the five learning outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Use them to guide planning, teaching, and reflection. Outcomes may overlap—use your judgement to adapt or extend learning based on children's needs and interests.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

1.2 Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and agency.	• By engaging in recycling and creating something new, they learn that their actions can make a difference in the world.
1.3 Children develop knowledgeable, confident self-identities and a positive sense of self-worth.	• Children build confidence in their ability to create and problem-solve while developing an awareness of their role as future environmental stewards.
1.4 Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect	• The process of making seed paper encourages cooperative learning, where students share materials, take turns, and help one another follow the steps. This reinforces social skills like patience, teamwork, and active listening. • Students learn the importance of caring for their environment and each other by sharing materials and ideas during the activity. • Through personalising their designs, children express their individual preferences and creativity, developing a sense of agency and decision-making. By considering the unique qualities of their gift recipient, they strengthen their ability to recognise and appreciate others' perspectives, fostering respectful and thoughtful relationships.

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

2.1 Children develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities and an understanding of their reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens.	• By participating in the seed paper activity, children understand they are part of a community that cares for the environment. They learn that their actions, like recycling, contribute to a healthier planet. Discussions can focus on how everyone can help reduce waste in their homes and community spaces, allowing students to connect their personal actions with broader environmental impacts, such as reducing landfill waste. • Students can share their learning with their families by taking their seed paper home, explaining the process, and planting it together. This encourages intergenerational learning and strengthens community ties by promoting sustainable habits beyond the learning environment.
2.4 Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment	• Students learn how to respond to the needs of a plant by watering it, and placing it in a sunny position. They see the direct impact of recycling and composting, developing a lifelong appreciation for sustainability.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

4.1 Children develop a growth mindset and learning dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.	• The hands-on nature of making seed paper promotes problem-solving, creativity, and perseverance in following steps and refining their approach.

4.2
Children develop a range of learning and thinking skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.
	• Students problem solve when they realise that their seed paper pulp is too wet, or too dry.
	• Student engage in inquiry by exploring the recycling process and experimenting with different compostable materials for decoration.
	• Students actively investigate the transformation of paper into seed paper and hypothesise about the growth of their plants.
	• Students develop skills in observation and prediction through open ended questions such as:
	  • What will happen when we plant the paper?
	  • How can we make sure our seeds grow?

4.4 Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials	• They connect with materials by handling recycled paper and compostable decorations. • They connect with place by planting their seed paper in the school garden or a pot at home. • Students connect with people by sharing their seed paper and knowledge with their peers and families.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.	• Students communicate their observations and ideas through discussions and associated activities about recycling, plant growth, and the seed paper making process. They use non-verbal communication, such as pointing and gesturing, to share their discoveries. • Students ask questions of the educator and their peers.
5.3 Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.	• Students express their creativity and understanding through the design and decoration of their seed paper cards.

Australian Curriculum connections

The curriculum connections provided below highlight how this activity supports the subject learning areas from the Australian Curriculum. Use them to inform planning and show clear learning intent.

English

AC9EFLY07 Create and deliver short spoken texts to report ideas and events to peers, using features of voice such as appropriate volume.	• Students give an oral presentation explaining their creative process and personal choices in making their plantable seed card, including decoration, purpose, and recipient.
AC9E1LY06 Create and re-read to edit short written and/or multimodal texts to report on a topic, express an opinion or recount a real or imagined event, using grammatically correct simple sentences, some topic-specific vocabulary, sentence boundary punctuation and correct spelling of some one-and two-syllable words.	• Students write a short message to include with their plantable seed cards. This may describe what the card is, how to plant it, the type of seed used, and how it was made.
AC9E1LY07 Giving short oral presentations about areas of interest or content area topics, speaking clearly and with appropriate volume.	• Students recount/explain in an oral presentation to the class their own personal story of what they did in creating their plantable seed cards, how they decorated it, and who they'll be giving it to. The method of how they differ being an expression of their individual areas of interest.
AC9E2LY07 Create, rehearse, and deliver short oral and/or multimodal presentations for familiar audiences and purposes, using text structure appropriate to purpose and topic-specific vocabulary, and varying tone, volume, and pace.	• Students share their personal story in an oral presentation about the process of making their plantable seed card, including their decoration choices and intended recipient, highlighting their individual interests.
AC9EFLY02 Interact in informal and structured situations by listening while others speak and using features of voice including volume levels.	• Students practise active listening during group activities and when engaging with their peers.

AC9EILY02 Use interaction skills including turn taking, speaking clearly, using active listening behaviours, and responding to the contribution of others and contributing ideas and questions.	• Students practise interaction skills by asking follow-up questions about the seed card process during group activities.
AC9E2LY02 Use interaction skills when engaging with topics, actively listening to others, receiving instructions, and extending own ideas, speaking appropriately, expressing and responding to opinions, making statements, and giving instructions.	• Students practise interaction skills by asking follow-up questions about the seed card process during group activities.

Science

AC9SFU03 Recognise that objects can be composed of different materials and describe the observable properties of those materials.	• Students explore the different materials used in the seed card process, such as paper, seeds, and water.

Design and technology

AC9TDEFK01 Explore the purpose of familiar products and how their design meets the needs of users.	• Students discuss how seed paper is both eco-friendly and functional.
AC9DEFP01 Generate, communicate and evaluate design ideas, and use materials, equipment and steps to make a solution for a purpose.	• Students design the appearance of their plantable card using creative ideas and a variety of materials.
AC9TDE2K01 Explore the purpose of familiar products and how their design meets users' needs.	• Students explore the environmental benefits and practical use of seed paper in sustainable card-making.

Mathematics

AC9MFSP01 Sort, name and create familiar shapes; recognise and describe familiar shapes within objects in the environment, giving reasons.	• Students experiment with different shapes for their plantable cards using cookie cutters and explain why they chose those shapes. • Students decorate their plantable cards creatively, exploring how different shapes and materials influence design and meaning.
AC9M2M01 Measure and compare objects based on length, capacity, and mass using appropriate uniform informal units, and smaller units for accuracy when necessary.	• Students estimate and measure the amount of paper required for the pulp-making process, comparing estimates with actual amounts used. • Students measure the amount of pulp required to fill the seed card mould, comparing estimates with actual amounts used.
AC9M1M02 Measure the length of shapes and objects using informal units, recognising that units need to be uniform and used end-to-end.	

Visual arts

AC9AVAFC01 Create art works that communicate ideas	• Students design and create plantable seed cards to communicate messages about sustainability and recycling. • Students present their seed card designs and explain how they reflect sustainability principles
AC9AVAFD01 Use play, imagination, arts knowledge, processes and/or skills to discover possibilities and develop ideas	• Students use nature-based materials to decorate their seed cards and explore creative design ideas.
AC9AVA2D01 Experiment and play with visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials.	• Students experiment with materials such as paper pulp and seeds to create eco-friendly artworks.
AC9AVAFP01 Share their artworks with audiences	• Students share their decorated plantable seed cards with peers and explain their design choices and the sustainability aspects. • Students respond to questions about the materials and decoration choices used in their seed cards.
AC9AVA2P01 Share artworks and/or visual arts practice in informal settings.	

6 Watch it grow

This activity encourages creativity and sustainability by transforming food scraps and recycled containers into a thriving new plant.

Learning intentions

This activity provides students opportunities to:

- Understand what plants need to grow and thrive (sunlight, water, soil, and air).
- Recognise the effort, time, and resources involved in growing plants and food.
- Make connections between plant growth, composting, and reducing food waste to help the environment.

Success criteria

This is evident when students:

- Identify and explain the four basic needs of a plant.
- Describe how composting helps plants grow and why it is important.
- Observe and describe the changes in their growing plant.
- Make real-world connections between plant growth, food production, and reducing waste.

By up-cycling recyclable containers, planting seeds from food scraps, and using compost-enriched soil, students will transform everyday waste into a thriving mini garden, witnessing firsthand how waste can be turned into new life.

This activity helps children appreciate the time, effort, and resources required to grow food while connecting to broader sustainability practices like composting and waste reduction. By exploring the plant life cycle—seed to plant, plant to food, and food back to compost—children learn that food is part of a continuous cycle that relies on care and responsible resource management.

Through this experience, children develop a deeper understanding of how sustainable actions, such as composting and seed saving, help protect the environment and reduce landfill waste. Depending on the plant choice, they can observe growth over time—from sprouting in days to harvesting in weeks or even saving seeds for future planting.

Duration

- 45-60 minutes

Essential set up items

- A re-purposed container - eg yogurt cup, tin can, egg carton or milk carton
- Soil or compost from your garden or the ‘compost bottle’ activity
- Seeds from the seed card activity or food scraps - eg tomato, pepper, avocado, citrus seeds or herb cuttings
- Spray bottle with water
- Small gardening tools or a spoon (optional)
- Marker and labels for labeling plants (optional)

Instructions

Preparation / Set the scene

- Begin by gathering students for a brief discussion about recycling and composting.
- Encouraging students to share what they remember from previous activities like the waste audit, compost bottle, and plantable cards.
- Use guiding questions:
  - Can we reuse materials from our waste audit to grow plants?
  - What do plants need to grow? (sunlight, water, soil, and air)
    Show a simple visual of the plant life cycle: seed → plant → harvest → seed again to help students understand the process.
- Show a time-lapse video of a seed growing into a plant. This will help students visualise how seeds grow, from roots spreading for nutrients to the formation of leaves and beans.
- Discuss what they observed and connect it to their upcoming planting activity.

Prepare the container

- Choose a clean, re-purposed or recyclable container for planting.
- If using a solid container, poke small drainage holes at the bottom.

Fill with soil

- Add soil or compost until the container is about three-quarters full.

Plant your seeds or cuttings

- If using seeds, place them gently into the soil about 1-2 cm deep and cover lightly.
- If using herb cuttings, plant them so the roots or stem are covered with soil.



TIP: You can use the scrap offcuts of your plantable cards to see how they grow.

Water with care

- Place the container in a sunny spot, such as a windowsill or garden area.
- Lightly water the soil to keep it moist but not soggy.
- Assign rotating roles for watering and daily observing.

Observe and nurture

- Check daily for growth and water as needed.



TIP: If your seeds don't sprout, try growing micro greens! They grow quickly and can be harvested in just a few days.

- Once the plant grows big enough, consider transplanting it into a pot or garden bed
- Let some plants go to seed so you can replant them next season.

Reflect and discuss

- Discuss the time, effort, and resources needed to grow food, comparing their experience to a farmer's work.
- Extend the conversation to food production and waste.

Extension activities

Extension 1 - Plant Journal

Students can track their plant's growth each week by drawing or writing in a plant journal. They can create a growth chart on a wall or large piece of butcher paper, marking the progress of their plants over time. Encourage students to predict how the plant will grow based on the resources provided, and then compare those predictions with the actual results as the plant develops.

Extension 2 - Water usage chart

Have students measure the amount of water used to grow the plant by using a container from the waste audit as a measuring cup. Each time the designated student waters the plant, they will mark a tick on a water usage chart. After three weeks, educators can assist the students in calculating the total amount of water used.

Begin by having students predict how many containers of water will be needed over the three-week period, and compare their predictions with the actual total.

For example: If the class uses 50 plastic takeaway containers of water (each containing 150ml), that totals 7500ml, or 7.5 liters. With 30 plants being grown, the total water usage would be 225L, which is equivalent to a 15-minute shower.

This activity can be followed by a discussion about the time, effort, and resources required to grow plants. Students will recognise that wasting food also means wasting the water, land, time, and effort involved in producing it.

Extension 3 - Harvest celebration

Once the plants have matured, celebrate their growth by showcasing the plants and harvesting any edible parts. This can be a fun, engaging way for students to experience the rewards of their efforts.

Extension 4 - Seed collection

Allow some of the plants to go to seed. Once the seeds are ready, students can help collect and store them for future planting. This reinforces the concept of sustainability and the ongoing cycle of food production, as they contribute to the life cycle by saving seeds for the next year's planting.

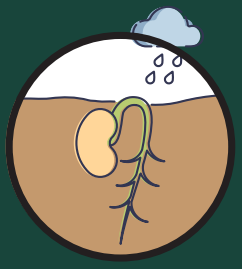
Stages of plant growth

Plants, like all living things, go through distinct stages of growth. Understanding these stages can help us appreciate the amazing journey from seed to mature plant. By observing these stages, children can learn about the life cycle of plants and the importance of providing the right conditions for growth.



Seed Stage

It all begins with a seed. Inside, a tiny plant embryo waits to sprout. When conditions are right (warmth, moisture), the seed germinates.



Germination

This is when the seed begins to sprout. The first root emerges, followed by a tiny shoot.



Seedling Stage

The shoot grows upwards, developing leaves. Roots continue to grow downwards, anchoring the plant. The seedling relies on its first leaves for food production.



Vegetative Stage

The plant focuses on growing its roots, stems, and leaves. It's building a strong foundation for future growth and reproduction. This stage is when the plant grows the most.



Flowering/Fruiting Stage (for flowering plants)

The plant begins to produce flowers, which are essential for reproduction. Flowers attract pollinators (like bees) that help with pollination. After pollination, flowers develop into fruits. Fruits contain seeds, which can grow into new plants.



Mature Plant

The plant has reached its full size. The plant can reproduce, and the cycle starts again.

Teacher prompts

Q: What is your container made of?

A: Plastic, metal, or paper.

Q: Why is reusing better than throwing it away?

A: Reusing reduces waste and gives materials a second life.

Q: What does compost feel and smell like?

A: Soft, crumbly, and sometimes a little damp. It smells earthy and rich.

Q: How does compost help plants grow?

A: It provides nutrients, helps soil hold moisture, and improves plant health.

Q: How much water do plants need?

A: Enough to keep the soil damp but not soaking—too much or too little can harm them.

Q: Why is it important to keep the soil moist?

A: Seeds need water to sprout, and plants need it to grow strong and healthy.

Q: Why do plants need sunlight and air to grow?

A: Sunlight helps plants make food (photosynthesis) and air gives them the carbon dioxide they need.

Q: What different parts of the seed can you see?

A: The outer shell, roots, stem, and leaves as it grows.

Q: What happens if a plant doesn't get enough water or sunlight?

A: It may grow weak, turn yellow, or stop growing altogether.

Q: What food scraps can grow into new plants?

A: Things like carrot tops, potato peels, onion roots, celery bases, and some seeds from fruits.

Q: How does up-cycling containers reduce waste?

A: It keeps materials out of landfill and gives them a new purpose.

Q: What happens to food scraps if we don't plant or compost them?

A: They go to landfill and create methane gas which is harmful to the environment.

Q: How does growing food from scraps help the environment?

A: It reduces food waste, saves resources, and helps create healthy soil.

Q: What happens to food after it's grown?

A: It's harvested, processed, packed, transported, sold, and finally eaten.

Q: How would you feel if your plant didn't grow?

A: Sad or disappointed, but I'd try again and learn from my mistakes.

Q: Why is it important to take care of plants?

A: They give us food, oxygen, and help the planet stay healthy.

Q: What happens to food scraps if we don't compost them?

A: They rot in landfill and waste valuable nutrients.

Q: If you were a farmer and saw food wasted, how would you feel?

A: Frustrated or sad because I worked hard to grow it, and it could have fed someone.

EYLF connections

The links provided below show how this activity supports one or more of the five learning outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Use them to guide planning, teaching, and reflection. Outcomes may overlap—use your judgement to adapt or extend learning based on children's needs and interests.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

1.2 Children develop their emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience and agency.	• The hands-on nature of the activity fosters children's growing autonomy. By choosing their containers, planting the seeds, and watering them, they take ownership of the project. These small responsibilities build their independence and confidence. • As children observe the plants' growth, they also learn about resilience, discovering that their care and patience directly impact the outcome, which helps them relate to the effort required for success.
1.3 Children develop knowledgeable, confident self-identities and a positive sense of self-worth.	• The process of growing plants provides children with an opportunity to connect their actions to outcomes, reinforcing their sense of identity. • As they see their plants grow and change, they develop a more confident and knowledgeable self-identity, seeing themselves as capable caretakers who can create positive change. • Students begin to see themselves as learners who can engage with complex ideas, such as the life cycle of plants.

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

2.1 Children develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities and an understanding of their reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens.	• This activity encourages children to recognise their role in environmental stewardship. By reusing containers and using compost in the planting process, they learn how waste can be turned into valuable resources. The idea of recycling and composting helps them become aware of the impact of their choices on the environment, making them socially responsible in their actions.
2.2 Children respond to diversity with respect.	• Throughout the activity, children will engage with different materials (such as soil, compost, and plant seeds). They also begin to see how different plants grow and respond to care, helping them appreciate the diversity of the natural world. This fosters respect for different plants and natural processes, and the practice of working with these diverse materials encourages acceptance of nature's variations.

2.3 Children become aware of fairness.	• As children discuss concepts like food waste, composting, and sustainability, they learn about the importance of fairness—how resources should be used responsibly to ensure a future for everyone. The activity emphasises how fair use of natural resources, like water and soil, contributes to sustainability and benefits the broader community.
2.4 Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment	• The activity reinforces the idea of respect for the environment by demonstrating practical actions like composting and reusing materials. These practices show children how their small actions can help make a difference in the world, teaching them that they can be part of the solution to reduce waste and create a sustainable environment. • Through this activity, students develop an understanding of the importance of putting waste in the green bin, as they come to appreciate the effort that goes into growing plants. They broaden their awareness of the world around them, recognising that as community members, they have a responsibility to make environmentally conscious choices. • By actively participating in plant maintenance, they understand how resources like water are needed for growth, making them more aware of the resources spent on plants and amplifying their understanding of the impact of waste on the environment.

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

3.1 Children become strong in their social, emotional and mental wellbeing	• The joy of planting and caring for a plant supports children's emotional wellbeing. Watching the plants grow and flourish gives children a sense of accomplishment, which can improve their overall emotional health. • The act of nurturing something also builds their confidence and sense of safety in their environment.

3.2 Children become strong in their physical learning and wellbeing	• As children engage in the physical tasks of planting, watering, and caring for their plants, they learn to take responsibility for the wellbeing of the plants. This process teaches them how their actions contribute to the health and growth of the plants, and they begin to see the importance of caring for living things. These responsibilities are linked to children's understanding of the importance of maintaining their own health, as it teaches them the cause-and-effect relationship between care and growth.
3.3 Children are aware of and develop strategies to support their own mental and physical health and personal safety	• The gardening activity involves physical movement—digging, planting, and watering—which encourages children to be active. They become aware that physical activity is not only important for their own health but also essential for the growth and care of plants, which in turn promotes environmental health.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

4.1 Children develop a growth mindset and learning dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.	• The gardening activity sparks curiosity in children as they explore how plants grow, what they need to survive, and how waste materials can be turned into something useful. Their enthusiasm to observe the process of plant growth deepens their engagement and natural inquiry. • As children care for their plants, they build resilience, patience, and a sense of responsibility. These skills are vital for their overall physical and emotional health. • Additionally, they learn the importance of consistency and routine as they water and care for their plants daily, reinforcing positive habits that support their wellbeing.
4.2 Children develop a range of learning and thinking skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating	• Children will encounter challenges, such as waiting for their plants to grow or figuring out the correct amount of water for their seeds. These challenges encourage problem-solving and critical thinking. By responding with confidence and patience, children learn that persistence and care are necessary for growth—both in plants and in themselves.

4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.	• The knowledge and experiences children gain through this activity can be transferred to other learning areas. For example, children who understand how seeds grow can apply similar principles to other types of plants or explore ways to reduce food waste at home. They will also begin to transfer concepts from the environment to other parts of their lives, understanding the broader impact of sustainability practices.
4.4 Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials	• The hands-on nature of gardening engages children with both natural materials (soil, compost, seeds) and tools (containers, watering cans). It provides them with opportunities to resource their learning by connecting with the natural world, the tools needed for the activity, and the concepts of recycling and environmental care.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.	• As children observe their plants and discuss their observations with peers, educators, and families, they practice verbal and non-verbal communication. They may describe the changes they see, ask questions, and explain what they've learned. These interactions help children develop communication skills that are necessary for social and academic success.
5.2 Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.	• Children engage with visual aids (such as plant life cycle diagrams) and digital resources (like videos showing plant growth). These resources help children make sense of the process of plant growth and the importance of sustainability. The video content also engages them in visual literacy, as they interpret the stages of plant development. • Educators can introduce books, posters, and videos about recycling, composting, and plant growth to enhance literacy and comprehension skills.
5.3 Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.	• Throughout the activity, children may use different media to express their ideas and observations, such as drawing pictures of their plants, writing about the plant life cycle, or using photographs to document their growth. They express their learning through creative methods, reinforcing their understanding of the subject matter.

5.4 Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.	• The plant life cycle diagram, as well as the concepts of recycling, composting, and sustainability, help children begin to understand symbols and patterns. They start to recognise how these systems work together to create a sustainable environment, promoting critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Australian Curriculum connections

The curriculum connections provided below highlight how this activity supports learning areas and capabilities from the Australian Curriculum. They help link early learning to foundation-level expectations and guide continuity into school. Use them to inform planning and show clear learning intent.

Science

AC9SFU01 Observe external features of plants and animals and describe ways that can be grouped based on these features.	• Students use magnifying glasses to closely observe and identify external features of plants, including seeds, flowers, fruits, and roots.
AC9SFH01 Explore the ways people make and use observations and questions to learn about the natural world.	• Students explore the natural world using scientific tools and observation methods, such as magnifying glasses.
AC9SFI01 Pose questions and make predictions based on experiences.	• Students predict how their plant will grow based on available resources.
AC9SFI04 Compare observations with predictions with guidance.	• Students compare their plant growth predictions with actual observations over time.
AC9SFI05 Share questions, predictions, observations, and ideas with others.	• Students share their findings and questions with peers, practising communication and idea-sharing in the scientific process.
AC9S1U01 Identify the basic needs of plants and animals, including air, water, food or shelter and describe how the places they live meet those needs.	• Students discuss the basic needs of seeds—soil, water, and sunlight—for healthy growth.
AC9S1U02 Describe daily and seasonal changes in the environment and explore how these changes affect everyday life.	• Students reflect on changes in their plant's growth and discuss how environmental factors like air, water, light, and soil influence it, making connections to how plants grow and produce food.

Humanities and social sciences

AC9HSFK03 The features of familiar places they belong to, why some places are special and how places can be looked after.	• Students discuss how reducing waste and planting seeds supports healthier, more beautiful environments.

AC9HS1K04 How places change and how they can be cared for by different groups including First Nations Australians.	• Students explore the connection between food sources, waste reduction, and environmental care, identifying where food comes from and where waste goes.
AC9HS2K03 How places can be spatially represented in geographical divisions from local to regional to state/territory, and how people and places are interconnected across those scales.	• Students investigate how the food they eat is linked to different places and how those places can be represented. • Students discuss the interconnectedness of food sources and the geographical locations they come from. • Students explore the journey of everyday items—from production to disposal—and understand how each stage is connected to people and places.

Mathematics

AC9M2M01 Measure the length of shapes and objects using informal units, recognising that units need to be uniform and used end-to-end.	• Students use informal units of measurement to observe and record plant growth over time.
AC9M1M02 Measure and compare objects based on length, capacity, and mass using appropriate uniform informal units, and smaller units for accuracy when necessary.	• Students measure and record plant growth and water usage, then compare their findings to familiar objects or experiences.

Glossary

This glossary provides clear, concise definitions of key terms used throughout the educator's handbook. It supports shared understanding and consistency in language across planning, teaching, and reflection.

Alternative fuels

Fuels that aren't coal, gas, or petrol. Some are made from waste.

Anaerobic digestion

Tiny creatures called bacteria break down food scraps without air and make gas that can be used for energy.

Avoidable Food Waste

Food that gets thrown away even though it could have been eaten.

Beneficial use

When something is used again in a way that helps the environment.

Biodegradable

Things that break down naturally over time.

Biogas

A type of gas made when food or plants rot without air.

Circular economy

A way of using things wisely so we don't waste them. Instead of throwing things away, we reuse and recycle them over and over again.

Circular procurement

Choosing to buy things that can be reused or recycled.

Climate change mitigation

Actions to reduce pollution that harms the planet.

Closed loop recycling

Recycling something to make the same thing again.

Co-mingled recycling

Recycling different things (like plastic and paper) in the same bin.

Compost

A special kind of soil made from food scraps and garden waste.

Compostable organic waste

Food and plant scraps that can turn into compost

Composting

The process of turning food and garden waste into compost.

Container deposit scheme

A program where you return bottles and cans for a refund.

Contamination

When the wrong things go in the bin, making recycling harder.

Disposal

Getting rid of waste by burying, burning, or storing it.

Diversion

Sending waste somewhere useful instead of landfill.

Downcycling

Recycling something into a lower-quality product.

Energy recovery

Turning waste into energy like heat or electricity.

E-waste

Old or broken electronics like phones, tvs and computers.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

When companies have to take care of their products even after people are done using them, like making sure they can be recycled.

Feedstock

Raw materials used to make new things.

Fogo (food and garden organics) bin

A bin for food scraps and garden organic waste.

Food Insecurity

When people don't always have enough food to eat.

Food Rescue

Saving extra food from stores and giving it to people who need it.

Food waste

Food that is thrown away instead of being eaten.

Garden waste

Grass, leaves, weeds and branches that can be composted.

General waste

Rubbish that can't be reused or recycled and goes to landfill.

Greenhouse gases

Gases that trap heat in the air, making the earth hotter eg carbon dioxide and methane.

Hazardous waste

Waste that can be dangerous to people and the environment.

Highest value reuse

Using things in the best way to reduce waste

Incineration

Burning waste, sometimes to create energy.

Kerbside collection

When trucks collect bins from homes.

Landfill

A place where rubbish is buried.

Life cycle Assessment (LCA)

A way to check how much energy and materials are used to make, use, and throw away things.

Materials recovery facility

A place where recycling is sorted and prepared

Material Recovery Rate

The amount of waste that is saved and turned into something new instead of being thrown away.

Methane

A gas from rotting food and plants that affects the climate.

Microplastics

Tiny plastic pieces that pollute water and land.

Municipal solid waste (msw)

Household and community waste collected by councils.

Organic waste

Waste from plants and food.

Product stewardship

When companies take responsibility for their products, even after they are used.

Prohibited landfill waste

Things that should never go in landfill because they can be reused.

Public place recycling

Recycling bins in parks and shopping centres.

Raw materials

Natural materials used to make things.

Recycle/recycling

Turning old things into new things instead of throwing them away.

Recycling stream

The part of waste that can be recycled.

Reduce

Using less, like bringing a water bottle instead of buying plastic ones.

Refuse

Saying “no” to things we don’t need, like plastic straws.

Refuse derived fuel

Fuel made from waste instead of coal or gas.

Repair

Fixing broken things instead of throwing them away.

Residual waste

Waste left after recycling and composting.

Resource recovery

Taking useful things from waste and using them again.

Right to repair

People should be able to fix their broken things instead of buying new ones.

Reuse

Using things again, like bringing your own shopping bag.

Sharing Economy

When people share things instead of each person buying their own, like borrowing books from the library.

Up-cycling

Making something new from old things, like turning a jar into a flower pot.

Waste hierarchy

The best ways to deal with trash: Use less → Share and fix → Recycle → Turn into energy → Throw away last.

Parent correspondence

The following template letters are designed to help educators encourage families to get involved in your facility's waste eduction efforts. Feel free to adapt them to suit.

Waste exploration space

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

We're excited to launch our new Waste Exploration Space, created in partnership with the City of Tea Tree Gully. This hands-on, creative hub will help students explore sustainability, waste, and the circular economy in engaging and meaningful ways.

Throughout the year, the space will feature themed activities and displays aligned with national and local environmental events, giving students the opportunity to see how small everyday actions can make a big difference.

To help bring this space to life, we invite you to get involved by:

- Collecting and donating materials for recycling and reuse activities.
- Supporting your child's learning at home by encouraging conversations and actions around waste and sustainability.

This initiative is more than just a learning space—it's a chance for students to:

- Discover how waste can become a valuable resource.
- Experience the impact of community collaboration.
- Take part in real-world sustainability practices.

Together, we can inspire our children to create positive change through small, collective actions. Thank you for being part of this journey—we look forward to seeing early learning centre/kindergarten come together to celebrate creativity, sustainability, and shared responsibility.

Kind regards

[Educator's Name]
[Education Facility Name]

Wast audit

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

As part of our waste education program, we will be conducting a waste audit on <Insert date>. This hands-on activity helps students understand the types and amounts of waste we produce—and how we can reduce, reuse, and recycle more effectively.

Students will help sort waste into categories (eg - recyclable, compostable, landfill), measure the amounts, and work together to come up with ideas to reduce the amount of waste we generate and send to landfill.

The audit will take place in a safe, supervised environment. We encourage students to wear old clothes on the day, and if you have spare reusable gloves at home, please send them in to support broader participation. Parent volunteers are also very welcome!

This is a great opportunity for students to reflect on their habits and see how small changes can make a big impact. We also encourage families to try a home waste audit:

- **Collect:** Save a day's worth of household waste or a sample from your kitchen bin.
- **Sort:** Use a tarp or sheet to separate items into recyclable, compostable, and landfill.
- **Measure:** Count or weigh each category. Which has the most?
- **Take action:** Choose one area to improve—like composting food scraps.

We'd love to hear how your home audit goes and compare it with our results!

If you have questions or would like to assist with the audit, contact <insert name and contact details>

Thank you for supporting your child's learning and our shared goal of reducing waste.

Kind regards

[Educator's Name]
[Education Facility Name]

Watch it decompose

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Each year, households in the City of Tea Tree Gully generate around 40,000 tonnes of waste—with 18,000 tonnes going to landfill. Alarmingly, over two-thirds of that could have been recycled simply by using the correct bin.

Almost half of what ends up in landfill each week is food and organic waste. When this material breaks down in landfill, it produces harmful greenhouse gases. But when placed in the green-lid food and organics bin, it's transformed into nutrient-rich compost by Jeffries, which is then used to grow food and improve our local parks and gardens.

Next week, students will take part in a hands-on activity using food scraps from our recent waste audit to build mini compost systems. Over the following six weeks, they'll observe how organic materials break down and learn how composting benefits the environment.

If you would like to start composting at home and live in the City of Tea Tree Gully, you can get up to 80% off compost bins, worm farms, or bokashi systems via Council's Home Compost Revolution program. Learn more at https://compostrevolution.com.au/teatreegully/

Composting helps divert food waste from landfill, reduces harmful greenhouse gas emissions and helps food keep your plants and garden healthy.

Together, small actions at can make a big difference.

If you have any questions or would like help getting started, please contact <insert name and contact details>.

Kind regards

[Educator's Name]
[Education Facility Name]

Seed card

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

At <insert facility name>, we're committed to helping students—and their families—learn how to reduce waste and make more sustainable choices.

Next week, students will be making their own plantable cards—handmade paper infused with <insert seed name> that can be planted at home. This fun activity encourages students to appreciate where food comes from and the resources needed to grow it.

To help bring this project to life, we're asking for donations of:

- Old paper and towels (to use in the paper-making process)
- Old or unused blenders in working condition (to pulp the paper)

These items not only support the activity but also teach students how everyday materials can be reused in creative and practical ways.

If you have questions or would like to assist with the audit, contact <insert name and contact details>

Thank you for supporting your child's learning and our shared commitment to reducing waste.

Kind regards

[Educator's Name]
[Education Facility Name]

Kitchen caddy

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Each year, households in the City of Tea Tree Gully send more than 9,000 tonnes of food and organic waste to landfill—that's nearly the weight of the Eiffel Tower.

At <Insert Facility Name>, we're committed to helping students—and their families—learn how to reduce waste and make more sustainable choices. One simple yet impactful action is placing food and garden waste in the green-lid food and organics bin instead of the red-lid landfill bin.

To make this even easier, the City of Tea Tree Gully offers residents a free kitchen caddy along with a year's supply of certified compostable bags. These handy tools make it simple to collect food scraps in the kitchen and transfer them to your green bin.

To request a free caddy, visit: cttg.sa.gov.au/muncher

By making small changes like using a kitchen caddy and composting food waste, we can significantly reduce the amount of waste going to landfill—and help protect our environment for future generations.

Kind regards

[Educator's Name]
[Education Facility Name]

Nappy and sanitary rebate program

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Each year, Australians send around 450,000 tonnes of disposable nappies and sanitary items to landfill—a major environmental challenge we can all help reduce.

At <Insert Facility Name>, we're passionate about nurturing not only the growth of our little ones but also the health of the environment. That's why we're excited to share a fantastic initiative from the City of Tea Tree Gully that supports local families in making the switch to reusables—while saving money.

The City of Tea Tree Gully offers residents are eligible for:

- 50% rebate (up to $150) on reusable cloth and swim nappies, reusable liners, wipes, wet bags, and nursing pads.
- 50% rebate (up to $50) on reusable pads, menstrual cups, leak-proof underwear, and wet bags

To apply, visit cttg.sa.gov.au/rebate. Terms and conditions apply.

By making small changes—like switching to reusables—you can reduce waste, save money, and support a more sustainable future for our community.

Kind regards

[Educator's Name]
[Education Facility Name]


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