

Waste Wise Hospitality in Healthcare Implementation Toolkit

Healthcare Facility Guide



A step-by-step guide to
avoid, reduce and manage
food waste generated by
hospitality outlets operating
within healthcare facilities

Why Food Waste?

Food waste has economic, environmental and population health impacts.



Economic impact

Wasting food wastes money.



Each year Australians waste around **7.6 million tonnes of food** across the food supply chain.



312kg

This equates to **about 312kg** per person.

The cost of food waste to the Australian economy is **\$36.6 billion** a year.



SOURCE: FIAL, 2021



Environmental impact

Food waste fuels climate change.

A landmass the **size of Victoria** is used to grow food that **goes to waste** in Australia. 25 million hectares.



Food waste accounts for about **3%** of Australia's annual greenhouse gas emissions.

SOURCE: FIAL, 2021

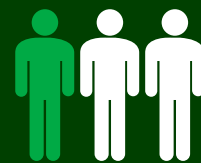


Population health impact

Nourish people, not landfills.

More than

1 in 3



Australians have experienced **food insecurity** in the past 12 months.

SOURCE: Foodbank Hunger Report, 2023

Reduce food waste to save!

A Cost Impact Study completed by NSW EPA in 2025 demonstrated that businesses can expect to see cost savings when they separate food waste from general waste. Reducing 100kg of food waste per year can save a business \$50 per week!



1 x 240L general waste bin
= \$1,855
per annum



1 x 120L general waste bin +
1 X 120L food waste bin
= \$1,624
per annum

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Waste Wise Hospitality in Healthcare Implementation Toolkit

Introduction

Food waste in healthcare is complex and has three main sources:

- Hospital kitchen food waste (including patient plate waste)
- Staff food waste
- Hospitality outlet food waste

The **Waste Wise Hospitality in Healthcare** (WWHH) project specifically targets food waste generated by hospitality businesses operating within healthcare facilities, aiming to establish a circular economy model that mitigates food waste and embeds food waste management systems into business-as-usual practice.

Importantly, hospital kitchen food waste, patient plate waste and staff food waste are **not** within the scope of the WWHH project.

Context

The WWHH project was initiated by [Hunter New England Local Health District \(HNELHD\)](#), in partnership with [Go Circular](#), with funding from the [NSW EPA's Business Food Waste Grant Program](#).

The project was developed, piloted and implemented by the five hospitality outlets operating within the John Hunter Hospital with support from the HNELHD Sustainability Project Team, John Hunter Hospital Facility Management and HealthShare NSW Operations Team.

Prior to the implementation of WWHH, there were no mechanisms in place to divert food waste from the hospitality businesses operating within the hospital and consequently, all food waste generated by the five hospitality outlets at John Hunter Hospital was sent to landfill.

As well as establishing and operationalising downstream food waste management practices at John Hunter Hospital, the WWHH project worked closely with key stakeholders to raise awareness of the importance of upstream food waste mitigation solutions.



NSW Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) Mandates

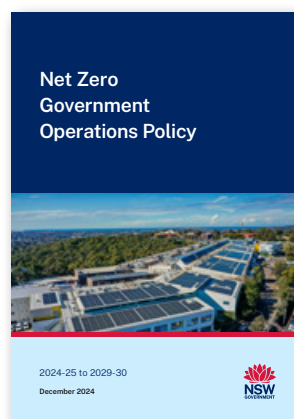
In February 2025, NSW Parliament passed legislation to mandate FOGO collection services for households by July 2030, and for businesses and institutions in stages from July 2026.

Relevant premises including supermarkets, institutions and hospitality businesses will be required to have a source-separated food waste waste collection service in place, starting with the largest generators from 1 July 2026 and staggered to 2030 depending on how much waste they send to landfill each week.

Hospitals, including public hospitals, private health facilities and mental health facilities are captured under the legislation. Businesses can face maximum penalties of up to \$500,000 with a further \$50,000 per day for continuing offences. On the spot fines of up to \$5,000 can also be issued. The NSW EPA and local councils will share enforcement responsibilities under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*.

NSW Government Policy

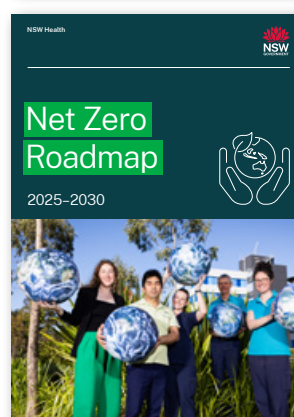
Several NSW Government Policy documents stipulate that source separation of food waste will be a necessary step towards achieving the statewide carbon and waste reduction targets:



Net Zero Government Operational Policy



NSW Government Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy



NSW Health Net Zero Roadmap

Overview

The WWHH Implementation Toolkit aims to support hospitality businesses operating within healthcare facilities to implement and sustain upstream and downstream food waste management practices into business-as-usual operations.

In addition to supporting the hospitality businesses operating within healthcare facilities, the WWHH Implementation Toolkit provides practical step-by-step guidance for healthcare facility managers, sustainability managers and waste management teams to support a successful place-based implementation.

The WWHH Implementation Toolkit considers the complexities and nuances of managing food waste in healthcare facilities and aims to provide a clear, comprehensive and flexible 3-stepped approach to implementation.

Included in the WWHH Implementation Toolkit are a suite of standardised resources and promotional materials specific to hospitality businesses operating within healthcare facilities.

In a circular economy, we prioritise upstream interventions. Upstream solutions trace a problem back to the root cause and tackle it there. Rather than working out how to deal with waste, we work to avoid waste in the first place. For waste that cannot be mitigated upstream, we rely on downstream interventions to responsibly manage materials.



3-Stepped Approach

The Toolkit takes a 3-step approach to avoiding, reducing and managing food waste in hospitality businesses operating within healthcare facilities.





Healthcare Facility Guide

Overview

The Waste Wise Hospitality in Healthcare (WWHH) Implementation Toolkit's Healthcare Facility Guide will assist healthcare facilities to coordinate, implement and sustain best practice food waste management systems in partnership with the hospitality outlets operating within the healthcare facility.

The Healthcare Facility Guide aims to support a range of key internal stakeholders within healthcare facilities including:

- Service Managers
- Facility Managers
- Sustainability Managers
- Waste Contract Managers
- Waste Management Teams.

3-Stepped Approach

The Healthcare Facility Guide supports a successful place-based implementation using a practical 3-stepped approach to best practice food waste management.



Tip!

Appoint a project lead to coordinate and manage the WWHH implementation.



Phase 1: Engage

Crucial to the success of the WWHH project is early stakeholder engagement with key partners.

Endorsement

Endorsement from the relevant leadership teams must be obtained prior to commencement. This includes:

- Healthcare Facility General Manager and/or Service Manager and/or Facility Manager
- Waste Management Sector Manager and Site Supervisor
- Hospitality Vendor Owner

Ensuring the project is accountable to pre-existing governance structures, for example the waste management committee, is important for the projects long term success.



Tip!

Clearly articulating the relevant NSW Government legislation and policy is essential for executive leadership support and buy in.

[Net Zero Government Operational Policy](#)

[NSW Government Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy](#)

[NSW Health Net Zero Roadmap](#)

Develop a WWHH Project Plan

A detailed project plan with clear step-by-step objectives, actions, and outcomes will play an essential role in steering the rollout of the project.

Assigning roles and responsibilities will foster a sense of ownership and accountability and will ensure delivery timelines are adhered to. For best results, develop the project plan in conjunction with the pre-existing waste management committee at the site.

Stakeholder Mapping

Effective implementation of the WWHH project requires extensive collaboration and a broad array of stakeholders. Many of the internal stakeholders will be captured by the site's waste management committee, however the stakeholder mapping exercise will assist in identifying other people and groups essential to the delivery of this work.

Stakeholder mapping is vital to identifying:

- who needs to be involved,
- what their roles are,
- when they need to be engaged, and
- how they influence the WWHH project.

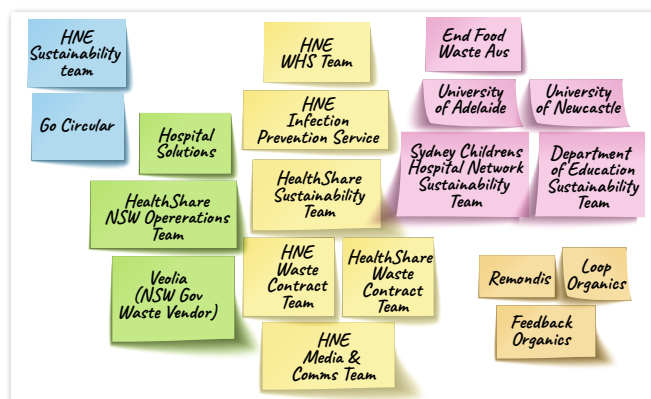
Mapping stakeholders ensures a shared understanding of responsibilities and highlights opportunities for collaboration, influence and communication. It also helps to anticipate potential barriers and secure early buy-in from key decision makers.

By involving the right people at the right time, healthcare facilities can design practical food waste solutions that integrate smoothly into existing operations and be sustained in the long term.

An easy guide to stakeholder mapping

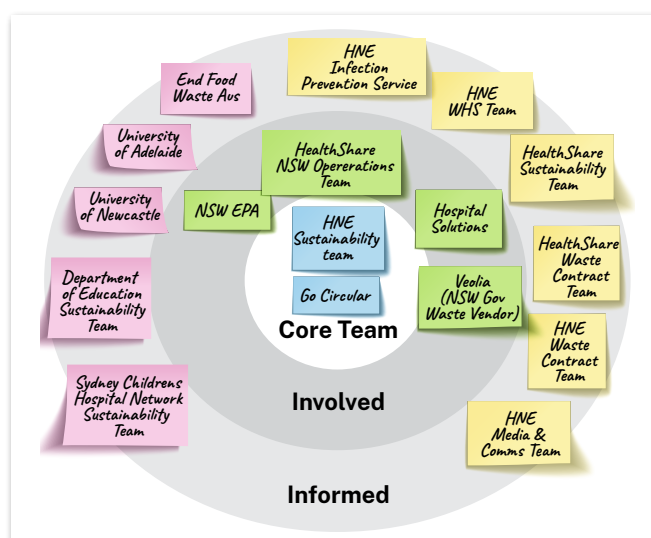


1. Brainstorm all possible individuals, teams and external partners who may impact or be impacted by the implementation of the WWHH project.



2. Map these stakeholders according to their influence and involvement in the project as follows:

- **Core Team:** Actively involved in planning and delivering the project
- **Involved:** Support the implementation and contribute feedback but are not leading delivery of the project
- **Informed:** Need to stay updated on progress but are not directly involved in the delivery of the project

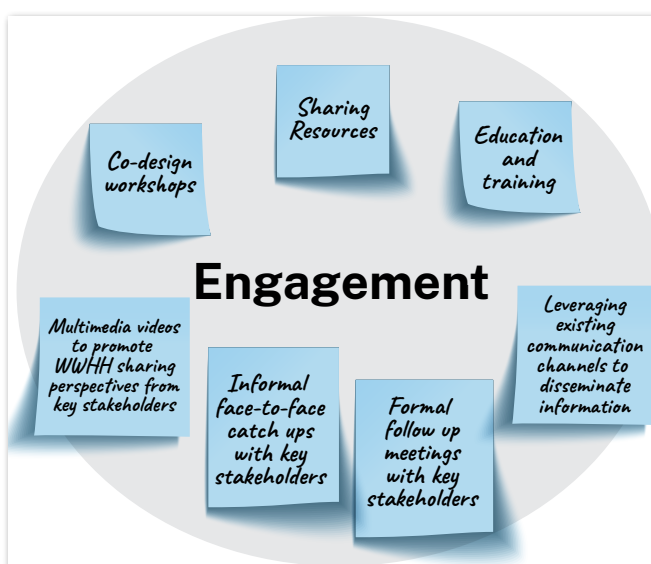


3. Plan targeted engagement activities to ensure all stakeholders are included in the project.

Activities might include:

- **Co-design workshops** for the core team: to explore current practice and opportunities for improvement. Co-design workshops can be useful for collaboratively considering key operational elements including logistics, staffing, equipment and impact to workflow. Involving core staff in early co-design workshops fosters a sense of ownership and helps to design a fit-for-purpose solution that reflects the needs of the real-world.
- **Surveys and Interviews:** to explore motivations and barriers for all stakeholders. These findings can help to design customised education and training resources that meet the needs of each stakeholder group.

- **Briefings and training sessions** for the involved stakeholders: to disseminate information, invite consultation and encourage active decision making.
- **Posters, newsletters and articles** for the informed stakeholders: to generate support and momentum.



Viability

Establishing the availability of a food waste collection service at the facility is crucial and will directly inform the implementation.

To understand what food waste collection services are available at your site, liaise with the waste management committee and/or your waste contract manager. Key questions to consider:

- Is a food waste collection available under the current waste contract?
 - If yes, how often can food waste be serviced? What bins are available under the contract? Is weight-based billing offered?
 - If no, does your local council offer a food waste service? Is there another waste vendor that can offer this service?
- Can the site procure technology that can process food waste onsite to reduce collection frequency and minimise waste disposal costs?
- Does the current waste contract offer a food waste bin washing service?
 - If yes, how often can the food waste bins be washed?
 - If no, is there another bin washing company that can offer this service? Does the site have bin washing facilities available?



Tip!

Engage with your waste contract manager to ensure that you meet the requirements and obligations of your waste contract.



Checklist for Phase 1: Engage

- ☐ Endorsement from leadership
- ☐ Develop a Project Plan
- ☐ Map the key stakeholders
- ☐ Viability of food waste collection service



Phase 2: Pilot

Pilot Planning

Baseline Data Collection

To reduce food waste effectively, it is important to first understand how much waste is currently being produced by the site as a whole and by the individual hospitality businesses that operate within the facility.

Healthcare Facility

Liaise with the waste contract manager and sustainability manager to obtain waste data for the facility. This data can be utilised to set a baseline from which to measure progress against.



Tip!

It is expected that general waste volumes will reduce as food waste mitigation and management practices are integrated into business-as-usual operations.

Hospitality Business

It will be essential to collaborate with the hospitality businesses to understand the types and volume of waste being generated within the outlets. It is recommended that the project lead works closely with the hospitality vendors during the baseline data collection process to establish an understanding of current practice and estimated food waste volumes.

Collecting and analysing the baseline data is critical to informing targeted waste planning and operational strategies, enabling the development of measurable goals and practical sustained interventions. This data will ultimately influence work-flows and resourcing requirements for waste management teams.

Procurement of Waste Management Equipment

In preparation for the commencement of the pilot, waste management equipment will need to be organised. Using the information collected from the viability assessment in Phase 1, and the baseline data collection in Phase 2, determine what waste management equipment the healthcare facility will require.

Key questions to consider when determining how the healthcare facility will manage food waste collections:

- Will the food waste bins be procured under the waste contract? Will the bins be purchased by the healthcare facility or rented?
- What size food waste bin will work best for the operation? Can you minimise double handling of food waste by asking the waste vendor to service the food waste bins directly?
- Will the site be utilising certified compostable bin liners for the external bins?
- Where will the food waste bins be stored? Can the food waste bins be moved directly from the hospitality outlets to the loading dock for collection? If not, is there space in a disposal room or holding area nearby to the hospitality outlets?
- Will the waste management team require specialised equipment (i.e. manual or electronic bin trolleys, bin lifters etc) to safely move the food waste bins to the loading dock for collection? Can existing equipment be repurposed or does the site need to procure new equipment?
- Will bin washing be outsourced under the waste contract? If not, does the waste management team have the equipment to safely wash the food waste bins on site? Can the waste vendor offer a bin swap out system that replaces full food waste bins for clean empty food waste bins and therefore eliminate the need for bin washing by the site?
- If the site is planning to process food waste onsite, what food waste technology is the most appropriate option? Consider expected food waste volumes as well as space and power requirements.

Education and Training

Engaging education and training for staff will be critical to the success of the pilot and long-term viability of the initiative.

It is essential that education and training is tailored to suit the specific needs of each stakeholder (i.e. waste management staff will require different training to dock supervisors).



Tip!

Food waste is dense and therefore can be very heavy. Work closely with your Work Health and Safety team to determine the most appropriate bin size to keep your staff safe.

Key themes for food waste education and training for operational staff within healthcare facilities include:

- Why food waste? It is important that all stakeholders understand the motivations for reducing food waste.
- Downstream food waste management processes and logistics including standardised bin colours and signage and changes to bin placement, bin movements and collection schedules.

Education and training can be delivered in several ways including:

- Workshops
- Team meetings
- Toolbox Talks
- Tailored resources including posters, flyers, video recordings, webinars
- Staff competitions including knowledge tests and quizzes
- Staff on boarding.



HealthShare Toolbox Talk

Set the date!

All of the above sorted? Collaborate with the hospitality businesses to establish a date for the pilot to commence. To set the healthcare facility up for a successful pilot phase, make sure:

- Existing communication channels are used to keep staff informed of the commencement date and to provide ongoing education and training.
- The site is organised and prepared for the changes (i.e. waste contractor has delivered assets and has set a service schedule, new waste management equipment set up and signposted).
- Staff are given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

Communications Campaign

An engaging communications campaign is essential for wider project adoption and support!

To promote the WWHH project and raise awareness of the upcoming pilot and implementation, work with your internal media and communication team to develop an engaging communication plan that leverages pre-existing platforms such as:

- Internal staff newsletters
- Promotional videos
- Social media posts.

Commence Pilot

Commence solution testing

The primary aim of the pilot phase is to test the proposed upstream and downstream food waste solutions. A 4-6 week pilot period is recommended to test assumptions, refine solutions and inform long term implementation.

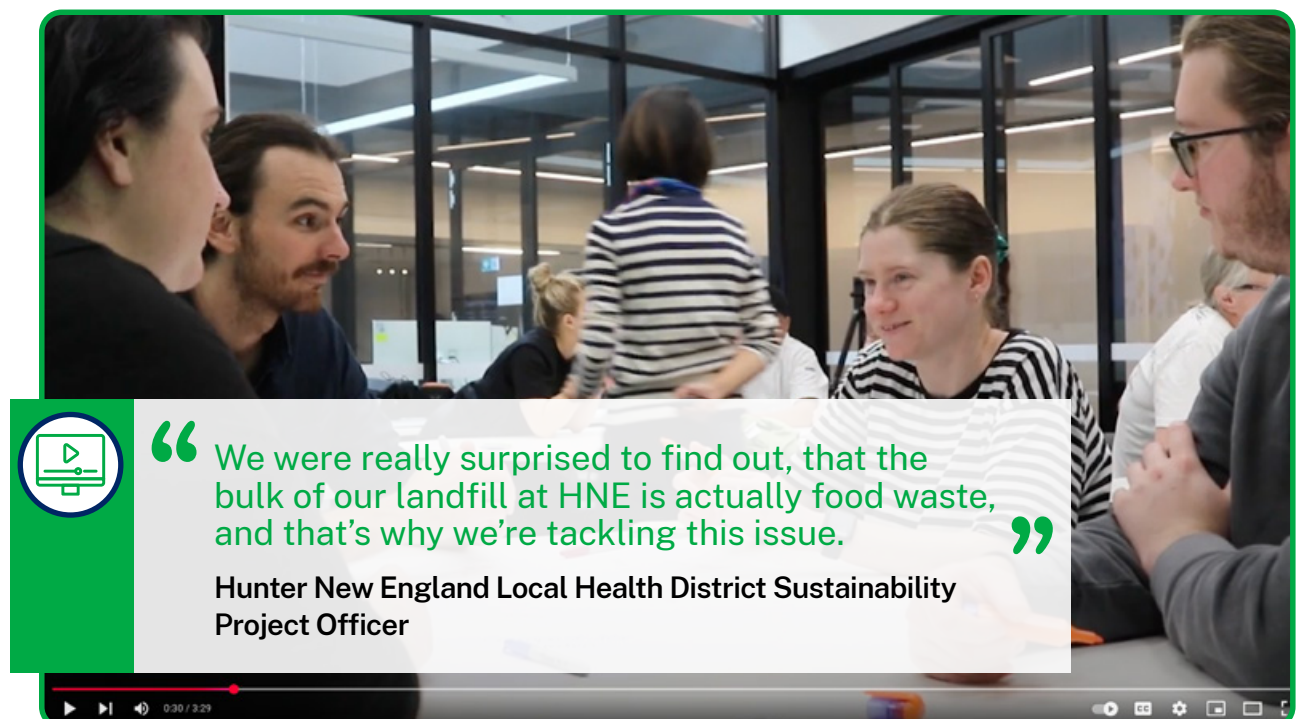
Monitoring, feedback and evaluation

To evaluate the impact of the project and provide continued relevant support to stakeholders, it is essential to closely monitor the pilot phase.

Analysis of data collected during the pilot phase will inform the long-term implementation and highlight opportunities for future scale up.

Focus areas for monitoring:

- Audit waste runs to establish impact of newly implement food waste collection on other waste streams
- Monitor waste contractor schedules to ensure servicing is meeting demand
- Feedback mechanisms (i.e. suggestion box, Q&A sessions, surveys).



[Watch: Waste Wise Hospitality in Healthcare-HNELHD](#)

Continued support, education and training

During the pilot phase, it is important to provide ongoing support to stakeholders to incentivise active participation and foster a sense of ownership.

Ongoing education and training that responds to feedback in real time is essential to reinforce behaviour change.

Ideas for continued support, education and training may include:

- Provision of project updates via existing communication channels (i.e. notice boards, social media channel, team meetings).
- Incentives and reward schemes.
- Appoint a waste champion that can provide peer support and informal education and training.



Checklist for Phase 2: Pilot

Pilot Planning

- ☐ Baseline data collection
- ☐ Procurement of waste management equipment
- ☐ Education and training
- ☐ Set the date
- ☐ Communications campaign

Commence Pilot

- ☐ Test solutions
- ☐ Monitor, evaluate and adjust
- ☐ Continue support, education and training

Case Study

Moving food waste safely

When the John Hunter Hospital waste management team prepared to introduce food waste collections, they recognised the need for comprehensive testing to ensure seamless integration into existing operations. Understanding that food waste presents unique challenges due to its density, the team conducted trials of various waste management equipment to find the safest solution.

The testing phase involved evaluating different bin sizes and establishing optimal fill levels.

The team determined that using 120L bins with a maximum fill level of 75% was the sweet spot for safe handling, all while maximising collection efficiency. This approach prevented bins from becoming unmanageably heavy and ensured cost-effective waste removal.

Staff feedback proved invaluable during the trial period. Comprehensive surveys revealed that the original trolleys used to move the 120L bins were awkward to use. Based on this feedback, an alternative trolley system better suited to the weight and handling requirements was introduced, maximising operational efficiency and staff safety in the transition process.





Phase 3: Implement

Embedding new processes into business-as-usual

Ongoing success depends on building a strong culture of sustainability and creating a 'new normal'.

Consistent communication and visible commitment to sustainability will help to embed sustainability into the core values and operational practices of the healthcare facility.

Key strategies to clearly integrate downstream food waste management practices into the operations of the healthcare facility:

- Include food waste management as a standing item in the healthcare facility's waste management committee meeting.
- Update policy and procedure documents and schedules of duty to reflect the changes in practice.
- Update orientation/onboarding processes for new starters to include best waste management practices.
- Update staff training packages to reflect the changes in practice.

Celebrating achievements by recognising staff contributions and publicly promoting your food waste management efforts is important and can strategically position your healthcare facility as a leader in this space.



Ideas for keeping momentum

Make it relevant

Continue to promote the link between best practice food waste management and the core values of NSW Health.

Recognise and reward efforts

Share stories of success and acknowledge passionate sustainability champions.

Lead by example

Continue to report progress publicly to demonstrate transparency, promote accountability and encourage broader uptake.



Continuous improvement

Implementing best practice food waste management processes is not a 'set and forget' activity. Adopting a continuous improvement mindset is essential to long term success.

Key considerations include:

- Find opportunities for feedback loops.
- Integrate ongoing staff training and development into your operations to upskill and innovate.



Ideas for continuous improvement

Conduct regular check ins with the waste management team to monitor changes.

These findings will help to guide discussions with the waste contractor to ensure servicing is meeting the changing demands of the healthcare facility.

Food Organics

- Is there a need to add more food waste bins?
- Is there a need to increase the frequency of food waste runs?

General Waste

- Is there scope to reduce the number of general waste bins?
- Is there scope to reduce the size of general waste bins?
- Is there scope to reduce the frequency of general waste runs?
- Based on the contents of the general waste bins, are there opportunities for further waste streaming?

Scale up

Once you implement the WWHH project at your facility, consider how you can replicate the success across your network:

- Continue to work with your internal media and communication team to promote the successful implementation of WWHH in your facility across pre-existing internal and external communication platforms. Consider:
 - Creating regular promotional videos to showcase staff engagement and behind the scenes progress.
 - Nominating the WWHH project for sustainability awards within the health setting and externally.
 - Sharing metrics and progress publicly via social media, websites and conference presentations.
- Collaborate with other facilities within your health district to amplify the impact of the initiative.
- Encourage key stakeholders to share learnings, offer peer support and disseminate resources to drive system-wide transformation.



Checklist for Phase 3: Implement

- ☐ The new normal
- ☐ Continuous improvement
- ☐ Scale up

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Developed by Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD) in collaboration with Go Circular and NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).



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