

Bin Trim Hunter Hospitality Circularity Network

Hospitality Food Waste Reduction Toolkit



GOCircular



The Hospitality Food Waste Reduction Toolkit (the Toolkit) is a step-by-step guide to prevent, avoid, reuse, and recycle food waste generated by hospitality venues. The Toolkit was developed by Go Circular for the Hunter Joint Organisation as a part of the Hunter Hospitality Circularity Network project.

Acknowledgement

The Hunter Hospitality Circularity Network is brought to you by the NSW Government through the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

MOA Coffee Co.

Contact us at admin@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au or visit www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au
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Bin Trim Hunter Hospitality Circularity Network

The Hunter Hospitality Circularity Network was a program that was designed to establish or enhance circular economy networks amongst Hunter businesses who share similarities in location, supply chain, industry sector or waste materials.

The program involved working with hospitality small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Hunter to embed practical waste avoidance and circular economy initiatives into their operations.

This project was funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) Bin Trim Networks Program grant and hosted by the Hunter Joint Organisation in partnership with local circular economy advisory, Go Circular.

Why food waste?

Why 1: The business food waste mandate

The NSW Government has committed to halving organic waste being disposed of in landfill by 2030 under the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041. This commitment is part of the broader Australian Government's net zero commitment.

NSW Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) Mandate

Under new laws, from 1 July 2026 businesses or institutions that sell or handle food, like supermarkets, cafes, restaurants and hotels, must separate food waste from general waste.

From 1 July 2026



A key policy reform is to mandate a separate food waste collection by 2030 for businesses in NSW that sell or handle food (see page 25 of the [NSW Government Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy](#))

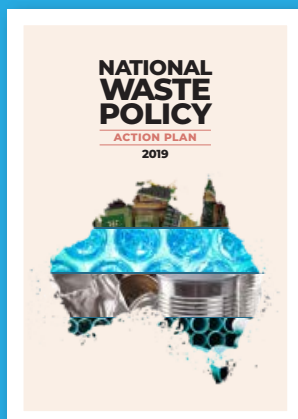
This will help NSW achieve Australia's targets in the [National Waste Policy Action Plan 2019](#) including:

- halving food waste to landfill by 2030
- achieving net zero emissions from organics in landfill by 2030.

When organic waste, including food waste, ends up in landfill, it breaks down anaerobically (in the absence of oxygen) and produces methane. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas with a global warming potential 28 times higher than carbon dioxide.

Diverting food waste away from landfill helps to reduce its contribution to global warming, but also allows for the valuable nutrients to be recycled into products like compost, fertiliser, and biofuels.

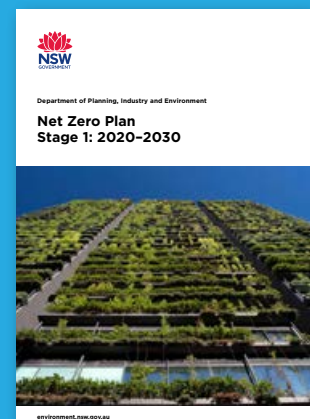
National Waste Policy Action Plan



NSW Government Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy



NSW Government Net Zero Plan



Get ready

FOGO mandates

Under laws enacted in 2025, businesses who sell or handle food must separate food waste from general waste. The mandates requiring separation of food waste will happen in stages from 1 July 2026, based on weekly general waste bin volumes:

- Relevant premises with weekly general waste capacity \geq six 660L bins, or $\geq 16 \times 240L$ bins, or any combination of bins $\geq 3,960L$ must comply by **1 July 2026**
- Relevant premises with weekly general waste capacity \geq three 660L bins, or $\geq 8 \times 240L$ bins, or any combination of bins $\geq 1,980L$ must comply by **1 July 2028**
- Relevant premises with weekly general waste capacity ≥ 660 litres in a single bin, or \geq three 240-litre bins, or ≥ 720 litres in total for any combination of bins, must comply by **1 July 2030**

View the [Protection of the Environment Legislation Amendment \(FOGO Recycling\) Act 2025](#).

Find out if and when your business needs to source separate using the [NSW EPA FOGO calculator](#).

Exemptions from the FOGO mandates

Under the new rules, a business that fits into one of the above thresholds for food waste recycling will need to seek an exemption from the EPA if they choose not to use a separate bin and collection service. Your business will need to demonstrate that no food waste is going to landfill through your onsite processing practices.

The NSW EPA has established a set of time limited exemptions. These exemptions are designed to give businesses flexibility as they build the infrastructure, systems, and capability needed to meet the mandates. The EPA may amend or revoke exemptions earlier if needed.

For example, businesses using alternative methods for food waste recycling, such as insect farms or other circular technologies, can apply for an exemption from the mandates. The application must demonstrate that the alternative method achieves equivalent or better environmental outcomes.

Visit [NSW EPA Exemptions from the FOGO mandates](#) for more information and exemptions application form.

Assess your waste and set up your food waste collection

Talk to your waste service provider for information and advice on setting up a separate food waste collection. This Toolkit offers a step-by-step guide for collection your waste data, including the use of the NSW EPA Bin Trim App.



NSW EPA Bin Trim App

[NSW EPA Bin Trim App](#) is a free tool funded by the NSW EPA to help businesses track and reduce waste. The app allows you to conduct audits, record waste volumes, and develop an action plan to better manage waste.

Why 2: Reduce costs

By managing food waste, your business could save money by reducing food costs and spoilage, increasing menu efficiency, and decreasing waste collection costs.

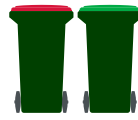
Reduce food waste to save!

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



Autumn Rooms, Newcastle

Why 3: Build your business brand

For many hospitality owners, a focus on sustainability, sourcing local and seasonal produce, and creating innovative ways to use every part of ingredients has shaped their business culture and delivered unique customer experiences.



Autumn Rooms

Located on Darby Street in Newcastle, Autumn Rooms is a brand that goes beyond coffee and food.

The café is a community anchor. Sustainability is not presented as a marketing feature; it is embedded in the culture of the business. The team sees environmental responsibility as part of being a good neighbour and a responsible community member.

Autumn Rooms' identity centres on inclusion and shared purpose. Staff take ownership of sustainability practices and waste reduction is not driven by management alone. The team is engaged, aware, and proactive, and this shared responsibility strengthens culture and reinforces the brand's promise.

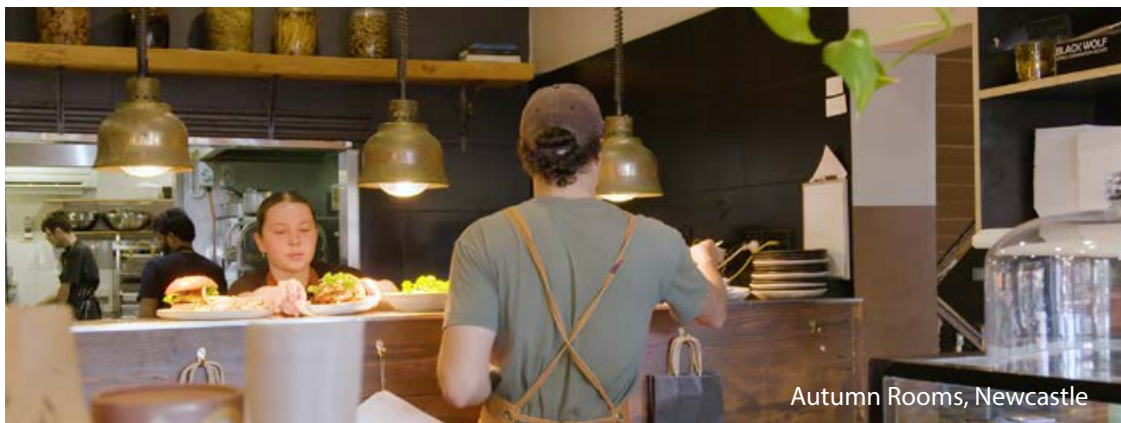
At Autumn Rooms, sustainability is visible and tangible. Food waste is separated onsite, allowing the team to see the volumes generated. This transparency creates accountability and drives behaviour change, helping to reduce both waste and operational costs over time.

Autumn Rooms has implemented practical systems that align with its values, including:

- Use of a milk keg system to eliminate single use dairy milk bottles
- Engaging staff in reducing plastic use across operations
- Implementing clear food waste separation processes
- Food waste is separated and collected by a commercial food waste collection provider for composting.

The café demonstrates that brand, culture, and operational practice can all seamlessly coexist. Customers experience a welcoming environment while also engaging with a business that acts on its environmental commitments.

Autumn Rooms shows that community cafés can play a leadership role by embedding sustainability into daily routines and team culture. They have created a model where environmental responsibility feels normal, visible, and shared.



Autumn Rooms, Newcastle

3-step approach

The Toolkit takes a simple, 3-step approach to data collection, upstream innovation for food waste prevention and avoidance, and downstream innovation for food waste management.

In a circular economy, we prioritise upstream solutions that 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 avoided upstream, we rely on downstream interventions, like food waste recycling, to responsibly manage materials.

1



Food Waste Review

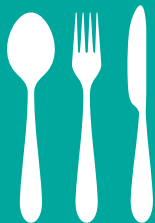
Understand your current food waste profile

Separating and measuring food waste (even roughly) helps you to understand your waste profile. Awareness is the first step towards action.

A Food Waste Review enables your business to:

- Determine how much waste can be attributed to prep, plate or spoilage.
- Decide where to focus efforts to make the most impact.
- Track progress and measure improvement over time.
- Choose the most suitable waste separation, treatment and disposal options.

2



Upstream Innovation

Maintain value and minimise waste

Upstream innovation is about tracing a problem back to its root cause and tackling it there. It means that rather than working out how to deal with food waste, we prevent it from being created in the first place.

Consider:

- Culture, education and awareness.
- Local and seasonal sourcing.
- Procurement.
- Agile menu design.
- Food preparation.
- Food preservation.
- Storage.

3



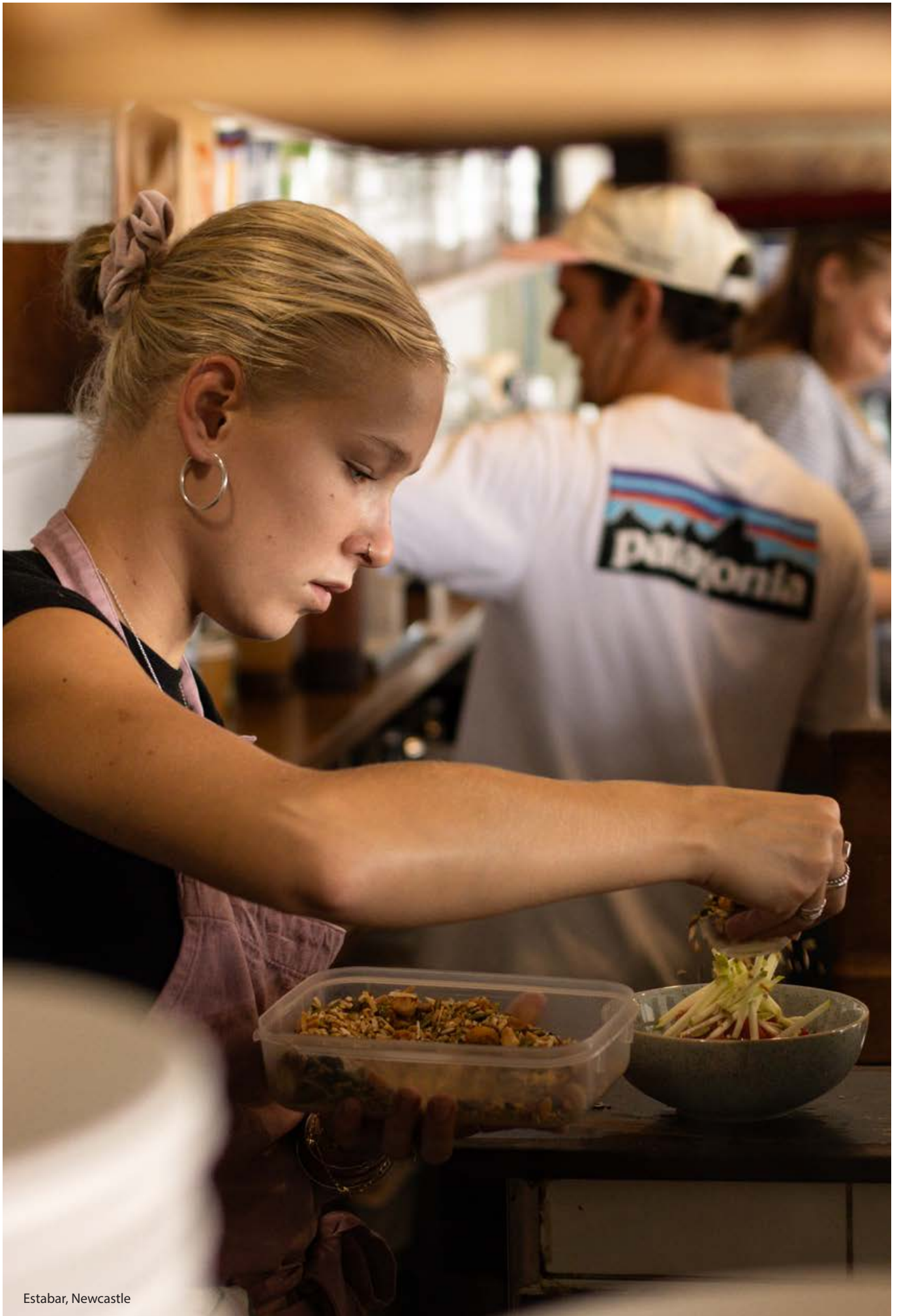
Downstream Innovation

Create value and minimise cost

Downstream innovation focuses on what happens to food waste.

Consider:

- Food donation.
- Animal feed.
- Compost/worm farms.
- Food dehydration.
- Energy recovery.
- Commercial recycling.



Estabar, Newcastle

Step 1: Understand your current waste profile

Complete a waste review

Why is this important? It makes the invisible visible. Separating and measuring food waste (even roughly) helps you to understand your waste profile clearly and help you identify waste you may not have noticed before. Awareness is the first step toward action.

A waste review enables your venue to:

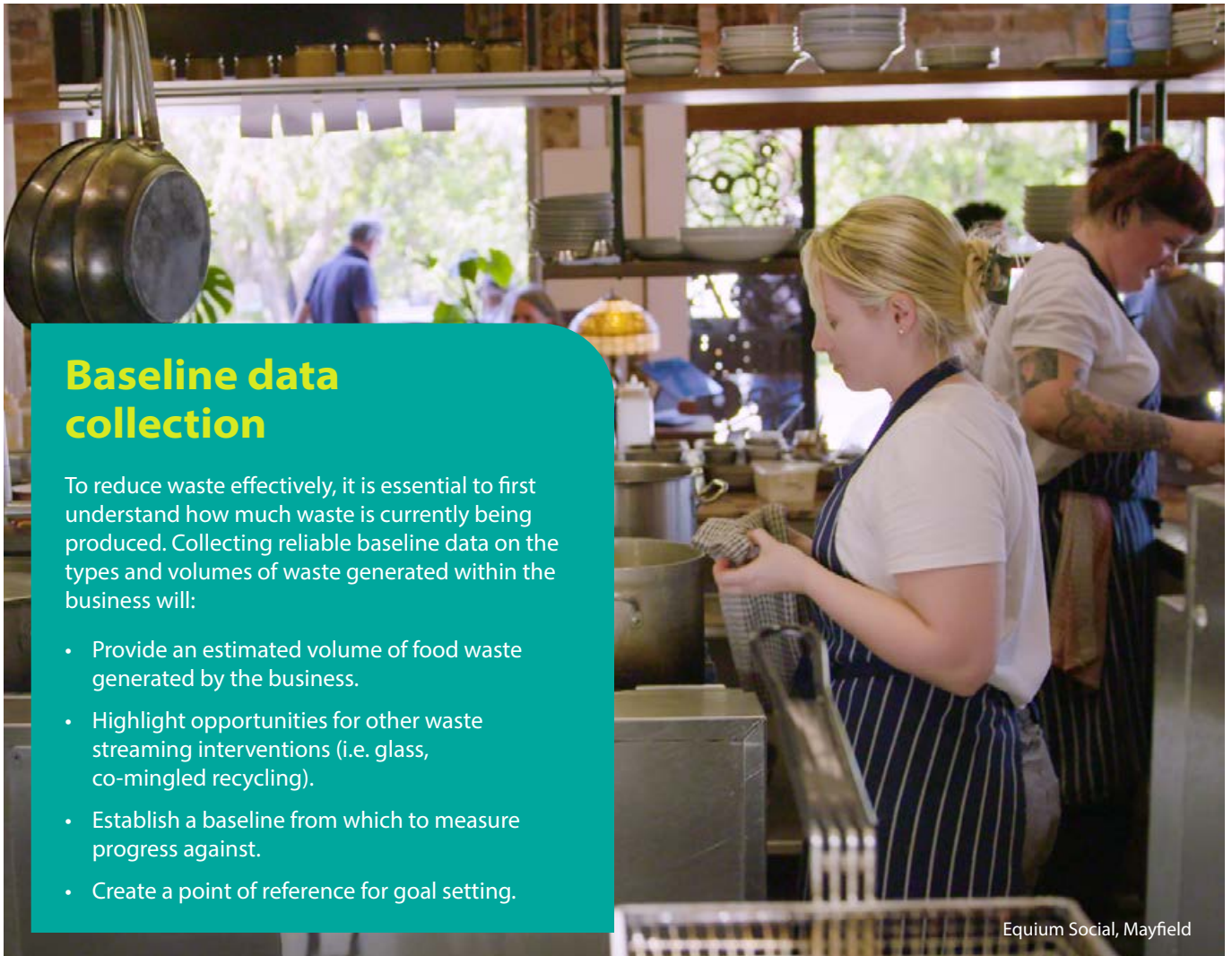
1. Determine how much food waste can be attributed to prep, plate or spoilage.
2. Decide where to focus efforts to make the most impact.
3. Explore reusable packaging options.
4. Track progress and measure improvement over time.
5. Choose on-site and commercial collection service and disposal strategies.

How to

There are two main types of data collection that businesses can use to manage their waste:

1. Procurement records; such as invoices and purchase orders, which show what is being purchased and brought into the business.
2. Collecting waste data; measuring the type and volume of food being thrown away, and assessing where it is being generated from, such as preparation waste through to plate waste.

This Toolkit focuses only on your waste data. However, businesses seeking a complete picture of their inputs and outputs are encouraged to review procurement data.



Baseline data collection

To reduce waste effectively, it is essential to first understand how much waste is currently being produced. Collecting reliable baseline data on the types and volumes of waste generated within the business will:

- Provide an estimated volume of food waste generated by the business.
- Highlight opportunities for other waste streaming interventions (i.e. glass, co-mingled recycling).
- Establish a baseline from which to measure progress against.
- Create a point of reference for goal setting.

Equium Social, Mayfield

Visual waste audit

A visual waste assessment is a practical and less resource intense method for measuring waste. This method involves estimating waste volumes based on visual cues and bin fullness levels, e.g. in a 60L bin, 60% of waste is food waste, 20% is paper towels; 10% is plastics; 10% is gloves or packaging.

1

Prepare equipment

Have clipboards or audit sheets or tech ready for recording observations.

2

Define audit scope

Decide on the duration of the audit (daily is suggested for the first 4-6 weeks);
Choose the bins or collection points to assess (kitchen, back of house, front of house)

3

Observe and estimate

1. Bin size (e.g. 75 litre bin)
2. Estimate bin fullness (e.g., bin is 75% full), to calculate approximate total waste volume.
3. How many times bins are emptied daily (e.g. 3 times over the weekend, or twice a day during the week).
4. Estimate the percentage split by waste type (e.g., 50% food waste, 30% cardboard, 20% plastics).
5. Record observations: document bin fullness and waste composition % for each bin.
6. Record any notable items (high levels of preparation waste; function waste).

4

Repeat and monitor audit data

Repeat and monitor audit data for 4-6 weeks and analyse the data to identify patterns, peak waste times (i.e.; wedding seasons, school holidays; identify contamination issues.)

5

Review and communicate findings

Use finding to identify reduction opportunities such as menu adjustment, preparation waste management or stock management improvements.

Visual Waste Audit

Date:

| Bin Size | Bin Fullness | Times emptied | Contains |
|----------|--------------|---------------|---|
| 75 litre | 75% | 3 times | 50% - food waste 30% - cardboard 20% - plastics |

TOTAL: $75 \times 0.75 \times 0.5 \times 3 = 84L$

NOTES: high levels of preparation waste; function waste



Example of a visual waste audit

Kitchen preparation bin:

75 litre bin, 75% full, emptied 3 times daily, includes 50% food waste, 30% cardboard, 20% plastics.

This would indicate 84 litres of food waste being generated per day from the kitchen preparation bin ($75 \times 0.75 \times 0.5 \times 3 = 84L$).

NSW EPA's Bin Trim App

The NSW EPA's Bin Trim App provides a platform to input, analyse, and track data and create visual displays. It is a free support provided to NSW businesses to help avoid and reduce waste. You can use the NSW EPA Bin Trim tool to help assess your waste and identify easy actions to avoid and reduce it.

Visit bintrim.epa.nsw.gov.au to access the Bin Trim App and find instructions on how to enter your waste audit data.

Review and analyse data

Once the data is collected, you need to review and understand what it means for your business. By finding out where most food waste types are generated, you can direct actions to reduce waste in that area. For example, if your business generates a lot of plate waste, your chefs can explore portion sizes and menu design options. If you have large amount of milk bottle waste, you may consider [The Udder Way](#) keg system.

Review the data to identify:

- What types of waste are being observed in the bins?
- How much of each waste type is being disposed of?
- Which bin (e.g. general waste, recycling, food waste) are these materials being observed in? Are they in the correct bin?
- For food waste, identify what types of food are being thrown away:
 - Visually assess food types e.g. look in bins to see if there are large volumes of a single ingredient.
 - Ask staff what they throw away most. Your kitchen team will be able to speak to prep and spoilage waste and your service staff will be familiar with items often left on customer plates.

Other questions to ask when analysing the data:

- Are there times of the week or events that produce excessive waste?
- What is the cost associated with your food waste? Weigh the food waste and compare it with cost of food procurement to find estimates of the cost of food waste.
- What is the disposal cost of your waste streams? Check with your waste collection service company and ask how much each waste stream costs. Do they charge per service, per bin lift, or are they weight based?

Replacing single-use dairy milk bottles

Many cafés like Autumn Rooms and Equium Social have replaced single-use dairy milk bottles with The Udder Way keg system

While there was a higher initial cost to set up, the owner and staff are happy with reducing milk storage and reducing single-use dairy milk bottles waste. Equium Social owner has shared this success with neighbouring businesses and many have followed suit, leading to less plastic waste and greater cost savings.



Equium Social, Mayfield



Identify solutions

Developing solutions is an opportunity to engage your team in innovative and creative problem solving. Based on the food waste data review, you can:

- Organise appropriate recycling services: If you have a large amount of food waste, consider a food organics recycling service.
- Collect and donate food scraps or coffee grounds to local farms, community gardens or gardeners.
- Consider donating it to a food rescue charity like Oz Harvest or Second Bite if you have large amounts of unspoiled surplus food.
- Provide designated food waste separation bins (additional to regular bins) in the right locations to collect:
 - Prep waste
 - Plate scrapings
 - Spoilage
- Train all team members (kitchen, front of house (FOH), cleaning) to use the food separation bin system to reduce contamination. (Or display posters in bathrooms showing what foods can and cannot be recycled).
- Ensure that waste is being disposed of in the correct bin, e.g. that recyclable packaging is being placed in the recycling bin.

Other waste solutions

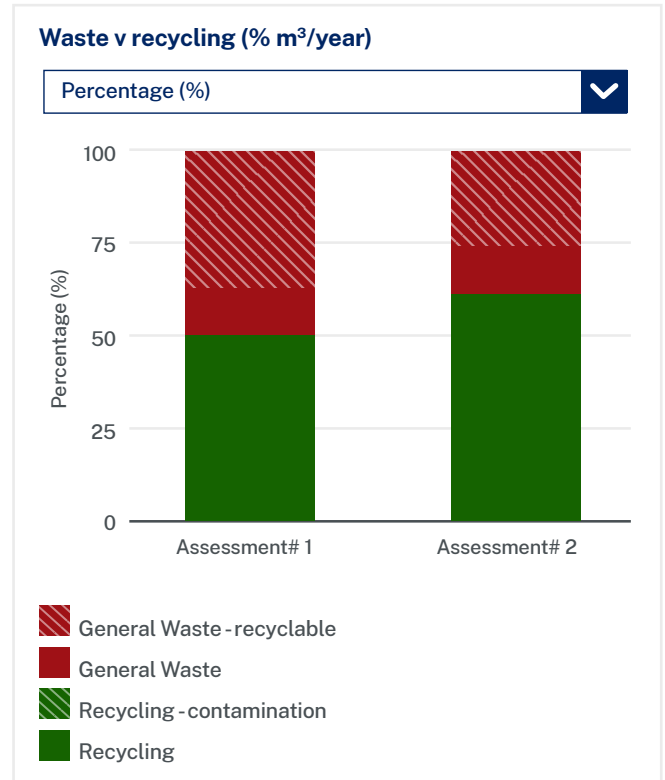
- Packaging: work with suppliers on packaging take back or returnable options
- Single-use items: replace disposable cups, introduce reusable containers.
- Place recycling and general waste bins where waste is generated.

You can build reviewing waste and identifying solutions into your team culture via on-going dialogue between kitchen and service staff, team meetings and other existing or new communication channels.



Baseline waste profile solutions

The Bin Trim App will give you a summary of your waste audit results to guide your action plan.



Replacing single-use containers

Many venues have replaced single-use containers with reusables and cryovac bags. While cryovac is still a waste stream, it does reduce waste volume and can minimise food waste by enabling better portion control and extended shelf life.



Implement solutions

Once you have identified potential solutions to avoid, reduce, or recycle waste, it is time to put them into practice.

If you have used the Bin Trim App, you may now be eligible to apply to the Bin Trim Equipment Rebates Program. The rebates range from \$1,000 up to \$50,000 and cover up to 50% of the capital cost of small-scale, on-site recycling equipment or technology that avoids, reduces, reuses, or recycles waste. For example, if you want to use a milk keg system to reduce your single-use milk bottles, you can apply to the Equipment Rebates Program for assistance with costs.

Find application, and funding process and guideline for applications on the [EPA website](#), or by emailing Bintrim.rebates@epa.nsw.gov.au

To help guide your decision when choosing a piece of recycling equipment for your business, view the [small scale recycling equipment catalogue](#). Eligibility is subject to application approval by the NSW EPA.

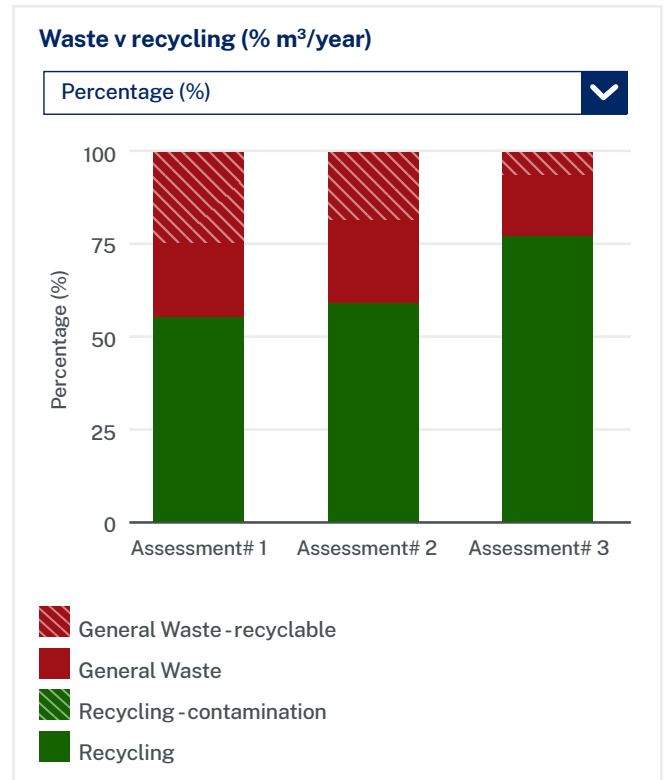


Estabar, Newcastle

Your waste profile over time

Continue to record changes to your waste profile over time in the Bin Trim App to guide future action plans.

We understand cafés can be busy and short of staff, however, by introducing solutions gradually, you can still record actions in the Bin Trim App and keep your waste profile up to date. The image below shows that a café's recycling increased from 55% to 80%, and the general waste dropped from 20% to 10%.



Tips

Great news! All data, solutions and actions can be recorded on the [NSW EPA Bin Trim App](#). The dashboard will give your business a clear waste profile.

Measure your waste on an ongoing basis or at particular points like the introduction of a new menu.

For more information about **Bin Trim Equipment Rebates Program** including how to apply and the list of equipment that you can apply for, visit the [EPA website](#)

Please **do not purchase equipment before the approval** of your application. Purchases made before approval are not eligible for funding.

Step 2: Use upstream innovation to retain value and minimise waste

Circular economy (CE)

In a circular economy, upstream innovation is about tracing a problem back to its root cause and tackling it there. It means that rather than working out how to deal with food waste, we prevent it from being created in the first place.

Upstream innovation

Rethinking products and services at the planning and design stages, with the aim of eliminating waste. Creating a team culture that values resources and minimises waste can also boost team engagement, encourage innovative ideas, and ensure solutions are successfully implemented.

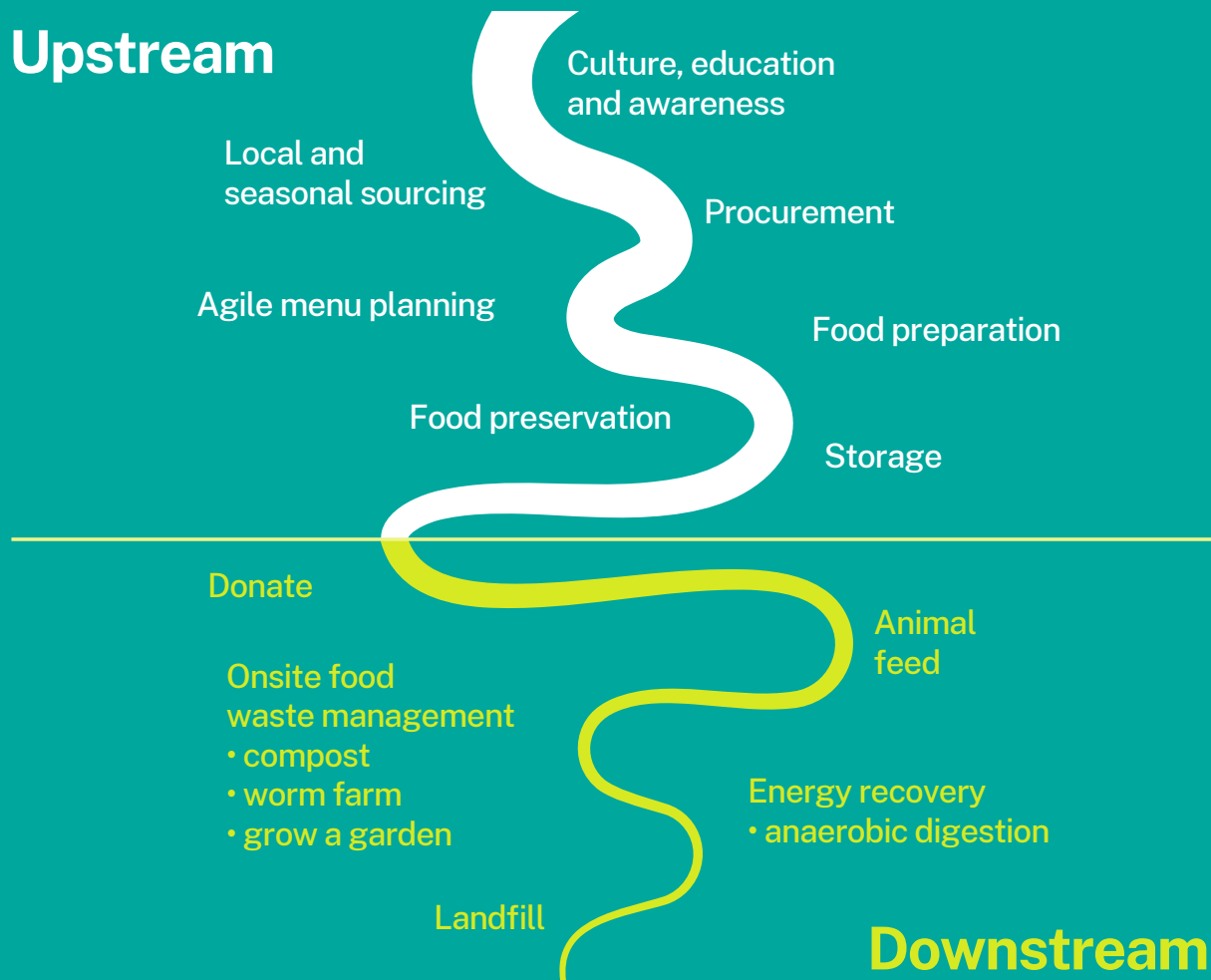


What is a circular economy

“ An economic system that uses a systematic approach to maintain a circular flow of resources, by recovering, retaining or adding to their value, while contributing to sustainable development. ”

ISO: The International Organisation for Standardisation: ISO 59004

Upstream



Downstream

Culture, education and awareness



Educated, resourced, and engaged hospitality teams have the power to ignite innovation, drive profitability, transform menu design, and deliver an elevated customer experience. Below are the three top characteristics observed from businesses excelling in sustainable practices and food waste recycling. It is more than a just practice, it is part of the culture.

- **Integrate waste awareness into recruitment and training:** Minimising waste is an on-going conversation. Routinely identify and review practices and expectations that help design out food waste.
- **Build a culture of resourcefulness:** Foster values that prioritise resources and embrace innovative solutions for minimising waste. Celebrate team achievements and waste champions and share wins to maintain momentum.
- **Equip teams for success:** Provide appropriate training, equipment and source separation facilities so staff can confidently and effectively reduce waste.

Equium Social



Holding its ground on Maitland Road, Mayfield East, Equium Social aims to provide a space where people can escape to, to feel relaxed and inspired to connect.

With a seasonally focused menu, Equium is proud of their sustainability efforts, although they see it as a fundamental part of their business. This café is diverting their food organics away from landfill using a collection provided by a local composting business, and has a zero-waste milk supply via a keg system. Their menu focusses on items made in house, making Equium the perfect spot to eat sustainable and thoughtful meals.

What they have been doing:

- Seasonal menu
- Fermenting abundant seasonal produce to increase its shelf life.
- Zero dairy milk bottle waste using a keg system.
- Leftover steamed milk from coffee preparation is used in ricotta hotcakes.
- Staff culture that focuses on sustainability.
- Recycling food waste using local composting business.

“To us it just makes sense, it shows integrity in what we do.” Jacques, owner of Equium



Equium Social, Mayfield

Local and seasonal sourcing



Hunter venues repeatedly spoke to the financial value of designing their menu from the ground up using seasonal, local produce.

- Longer shelf life: Fresher food means less spoilage and waste.
- Peak-season flavour: Better taste, without premium pricing.
- Differentiate: Bespoke local producers deliver unique ingredients that can set menus apart.
- Minimal packaging: Less or returnable packaging can lower waste disposal costs.

Partnering with local producers also builds business resilience through connection to community, strong supply chains, and rich storytelling opportunities that drive customer loyalty and brand growth.

- Trust and resilience: Knowing your growers builds trust and fosters collaborative, long-term relationships that support consistent quality and supply.
- Team engagement: Inviting your team to meet producers on-site or through visits, deepens their knowledge and pride, leading to more authentic, engaging guest interactions.
- Elevated guest experience: Customers value menus that reflect the character of your region. Locally sourced products create memorable narratives that can set your business apart.

Procurement



Strong systems in procurement are the foundation for reducing waste, improving efficiency, and protecting profit, while creating a culture of creativity and innovation that delivers fresh and interesting flavours that elevate guest experiences.

- Use sales data, booking trends, and team insights to forecast accurately and avoid over-ordering.
- Choose suppliers who offer flexibility in volume and delivery frequency.
- Build in resilience by developing relationships with a range of suppliers enabling your business to adapt quickly to produce opportunities or challenges.

Agile menu design



Agile menus are a built-in safety net, helping businesses adapt to seasonal shifts, product availability, fluctuating costs, and unpredictable customer demand while reducing waste and protecting profit.

- Plan with purpose: Identify trimmings and surplus when menu planning, and design them into secondary dishes or preserve them for future use.

- Be descriptive, not prescriptive: Use flexible language in dish descriptions so ingredients can be swapped based on availability and price, without compromising guest expectations.
- Leverage specials: Move excess, preserved, or re-purposed ingredients through specials that elevate the guest experience and clear inventory.
- Cross-utilise ingredients: Feature key ingredients across multiple dishes to improve rotation, reduce prep time, and maximise efficiency.
- Feedback loop: Maintain open communication between kitchen and front-of-house to flag uneaten components, adjust portions, and redesign menu items that underperform.

Food preparation



By scaling prep, utilising up-to-date sales and inventory data, building in flexibility, and maximising every part of every ingredient, kitchens become more efficient, more creative, more profitable, and minimise waste.

- Watch inventories closely and act quickly to use or preserve produce nearing end of shelf life.
- Use up-to-date inventory, sales trends and booking forecasts to inform prep lists.
- Create a culture where trimmings, imperfect produce, and surplus are automatically reimaged into new dishes or preserved.
- Train staff to trim lightly and prep with yield in mind.
- Store prep in batches to enable easy preservation if service is slow or when excess occurs at functions for example.

Food preservation



Turn surplus into shelf life. Techniques like fermenting, pickling, curing and drying:

- Extend ingredient life.
- Encourage skill development and engagement on team.
- Add value and interest to menus.
- Celebrate resourcefulness and innovation and boost your bottom line.

Storage



Prepare a storage system that protects produce and preserves its value.

- Maintain clear systems for inventory, mise en place, food rotation, and labelling.
- Schedule equipment maintenance and fridge temperature checks to avoid breakdowns.
- Use reusable containers to reduce waste and keep your storage system efficient.

Step 3: Use downstream practices to create value and minimise cost

Downstream innovation

Focuses on what happens to products and materials after their first use. Examples include food donations before items are discarded, or repurposing materials for secondary uses.

Small cafés and restaurants located in metropolitan areas often have limited space for onsite composting. It is recommended that these venues contact their waste contractor or a commercial food waste collection service. A commercial collection service will see your food scraps professionally processed into commercial compost which will be returned to soils to grow more food.

The commercial collection services are limited now in the Hunter, but are expected to increase over time as the mandates roll out. Please reach out and check with your current collection services providers on food waste collection services.

MOA Coffee Co.

MOA Coffee Co. is a conscious marketplace built by the community, for the community.

Located at 16 Gipps Street, in Carrington. MOA operates a farmers' market and bakery every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 7am-12pm. MOA also hosts special events such as thrift markets and wine tastings, while also offering a hireable space for private events.

“Whilst we have implemented sustainable practices where possible, we are continuing to learn and grow as a team and are constantly improving”

What they have been doing:

- Organic waste is donated to the Carrington community garden or collected by a local commercial collection service to be turned into compost.
- Coffee beans are delivered in reusable metal buckets, and are swapped at the next delivery.
- Customers are given a 50c discount on drinks when they bring their own reusable cup.
- Customers can choose to borrow a mug from the coffee mug library.





Coffee grounds

Some cafes donate coffee grounds to local farms or community gardens.

This is a great way to recycle waste for free, while also supporting local producers.



Estabar

With salty air and ocean views, Estabar has seriously good coffee, house-made seasonal gelato, and a menu parading local fruit and vegetables.

Customers relate to Estabar's values and are proud to support a business that proves sustainable hospitality is possible. Their practices, menus, and local focus has strengthened its brand, and contributed greatly to its sustained success. Their mostly 20s–30s team value working for a business that genuinely walks the talk, they stay longer, return often, and share values with customers.

What they have been doing:

- Differentiate their menu through creativity and seasonality to support local producers, strengthen regional food security and ensure the highest quality, freshness, and nutritional value.
- Reduce costs through tight menus, seasonal buying, and portion control which also saves space in fridges, storerooms, and bins while improving service efficiency.
- Avoid products with excessive packaging and partner with suppliers who take back containers, jars, bottles, and boxes.
- Use reusable containers, carefully managed inventory, and invested in tools like The Juggler milk doser, saving 8,000 bottles a year and reducing milk and plastic wastage, improving coffee delivery time, and minimising staff time allocated to rubbish removal.
- Serve only seasonal produce (no avocados for half the year) and design dishes that are simple, satisfying, and waste-free and use whole ingredients, repurposed offcuts, and set portions customers can finish comfortably.
- Embed sustainability into messaging, showcasing local producers and seasonal eating across menus, socials, and customer conversations.
- Waste minimisation is a part of daily practice, they compost all organics and recycled glass, cans, plastics, and cardboard, diverting 82% of waste from landfill.



Estabar, Newcastle

Tips to separate your food waste

Getting it right from the start!

Good source separation makes everything else work. It reduces contamination, keeps staff safe, saves time, and makes food waste recycling solutions possible and easier. Getting it right at the start is key. Here are some suggestions for separating your food waste.



Free Tools to Download

Go Circular training materials

[Go Circular](#) has developed training materials, including Managing your food waste PowerPoint slides and a food waste separation poster, that your business can easily adopt.

Autumn Rooms, Newcastle

Train staff and monitor contamination

Education and training for all staff is important to ensure that food waste is separated properly, and no contamination occurs. Training should be simple, role specific and ongoing, and include:

1. The reasons why you separate food waste, including what happens to the food waste and what the benefits are.
2. What can and cannot be disposed of in a food waste bin.
3. Why it is important to avoid contaminating the food waste collection with non-accepted items.

Tips for delivering the education and training:

- Team meetings.
- Q&A sessions.
- Tailored resources (e.g. posters, flyers, video recordings, webinars).
- Staff competitions (e.g. knowledge tests, quizzes).
- Email correspondence (e.g. adding educational messages to payslip emails).

Separate food waste at the point of generation

Food waste should be separated where it is created, by making food waste bins available. This includes food preparation areas, plate scrape stations, coffee stations and bar areas. Separating food waste at the source reduces double handling and significantly lowers contamination.

“Once you start separating the food waste, it is easy to do and makes sense.”

Two Hands Cafe Manager

Tip!

Undertake regular visual checks of bins to identify and address contamination.



Remove packaging before disposal

All packaging must be removed before food goes into the food waste bin. This includes plastic, labels, stickers and wraps. Packaging contamination limits recovery options and can stop food waste from being composted or recycled.

Support correct separation with clear bin placement and signage

Food waste bins should be clearly labelled and placed next to your general waste bins. This makes it easier for staff to choose the right bin, especially during busy periods. Clear signage should be included as part of staff training and induction

Repurpose your 10L or 15L buckets

Food waste is dense and heavy. Smaller containers reduce manual handling risks and are easier to move and clean. Many restaurants in the Hunter repurpose their 15L or 20L buckets for food waste separation. This is simple, reuse, low-cost and effective solution.



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