

Why Conduct a Waste Audit?

An Early Childhood Centre Focused Rationale

A waste audit is a practical, evidence-based tool for understanding how much waste your centre generates and how effectively materials are being sorted into the appropriate waste streams. By examining real waste, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders gain a clear picture of what is being sent to landfill, what could have been recycled, recovered, or composted, and where simple habit or system changes can achieve major reductions. It provides clear, practical information that supports better waste management, helping to reduce environmental impact and operating costs.

The findings from a waste audit provide early childhood centres with practical, data driven insights into how waste is generated and managed on site. By examining materials firsthand, teams can identify inefficiencies, analyse trends, communicate findings clearly, and implement targeted improvements. This process supports strategic planning, environmental reporting, and sustainability initiatives, helping centres translate goals into real-world actions that reduce waste, cut costs, and minimise environmental impact. Waste Audits and the learnings gathered from them also strongly support the sustainability element of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) v2.0 and NQS Quality Area 3.

Conducting a Waste Audit Helps Centres to:

1. Establish a baseline for improvement

A waste audit shows how much waste is generated and where it ends up so you can set meaningful, measurable goals.

2. Identify avoidable waste and reduce costs

Highlights opportunities to avoid, reuse, compost, or recycle waste, reducing landfill and associated costs.

3. Improve sorting and reduce contamination

Audits reveal where sorting errors occur identify simple improvements such as signage, bin placement, or system changes.

4. Increase awareness and support behaviour change

Seeing real waste makes its impacts tangible, builds responsibility, and strengthens a culture of sustainability across the centre and out into their community.

5. Support Reporting and Sustainability Goals

Reliable audit data helps track progress, demonstrate outcomes, and meet environmental and sustainability commitments.

By conducting a waste audit, centres gain the insights needed to make informed decisions, improve waste systems, track measurable progress over time and reduce costs.

This work aligns with EYLF (v2.0) and NQS Quality Area 3 along with the NSW Government's [Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041](#), which sets long-term goals to avoid and reduce waste, value resources and support the transition to a circular economy. term goals to avoid and reduce waste, value resources and support the transition to a circular economy.

