

## Early Childhood Waste Wise Resource Kit Introduction

### About the Project

The **Early Childhood Waste Wise Education Project** was an initiative of the North East Waste Forum (NEWF). The project ran from May 2007 to June 2010. The NEWF is a group of five councils in Northern NSW - Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Tweed Shire, Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley Councils - working collaboratively towards sustainable waste management solutions.

This project aimed to encourage, assist and support Early Childhood Services to reduce their waste and chemical use through implementing simple waste reduction strategies and routines in their organisation. These included, for example reducing paper waste, increasing recycling, setting up a compost / worm farm; involving young children in everyday waste reduction routines in services; developing an awareness in the staff, young children and parents about waste reduction concepts and the links to long term sustainability.

The Early Childhood Waste Wise Education Project worked with the children, staff, management committees and families of Early Childhood Services (Long Day Care Centres and Community Pre-schools). It was available for Early Childhood Services in the Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Tweed Shire, Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley Council areas.

*Children from Lennox Preschool with their new worm farm. Worm farm and worms donated by local Councils. Set up during a preschool visit with Georgie Piper.*

### How to be waste wise

With support from the NEWF and Council, follow the 5 steps to a waste-wise centre were undertaken. (see overleaf):

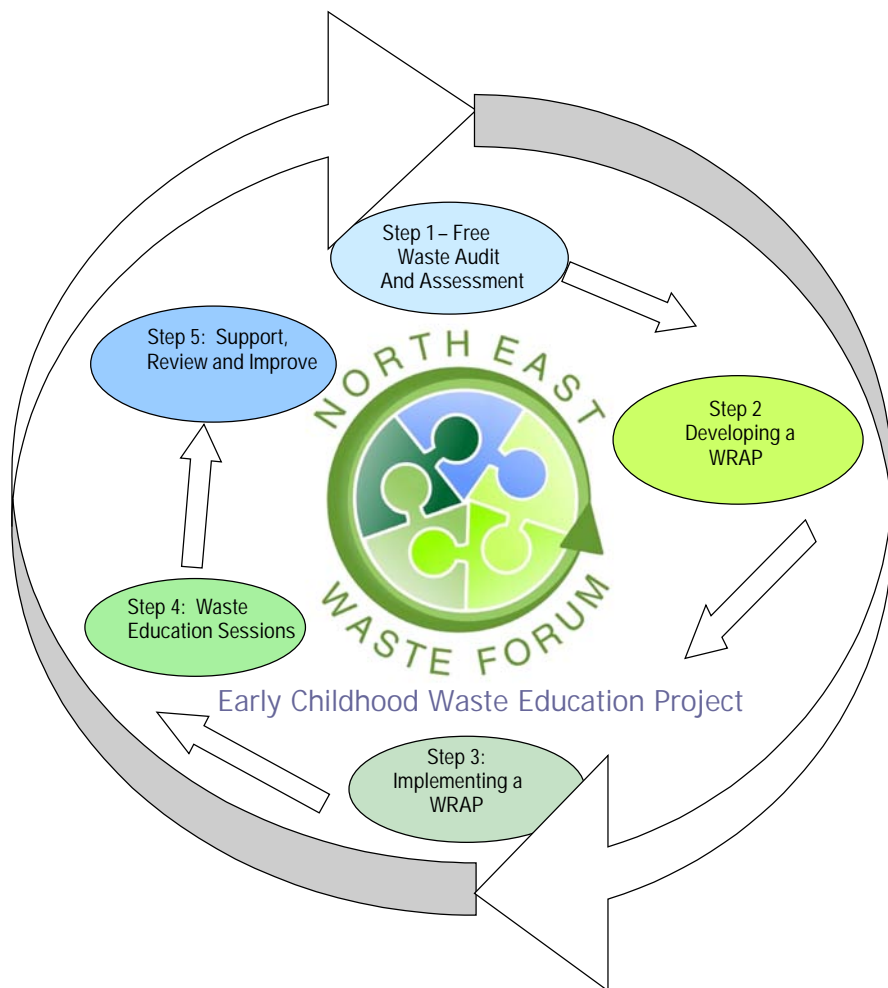
- ❖ Ensure correct recycling practices are in place and simple to use.
- ❖ Provide worm farms for recycling of compostable food scraps.
- ❖ Provide educational material on waste-free lunches, compost activities and reducing, reusing and recycling.
- ❖ Help in reducing the amount of chemicals used at the centres.
- ❖ Offer advice in making more sustainable purchases for products used at the centre.



### Contact Details

For information on education, and waste wise strategies, contact the Education Coordinator at the North East Waste Forum.

[www.northeastwasteforum.org.au](http://www.northeastwasteforum.org.au)



### Why reduce waste?

There are many reasons why we should reduce the amount of waste we create. For one, Australia is one of the highest waste generating nations on earth, each of us sending an average of over 1 tonne of waste to landfill each year. This level of resource use is unsustainable, and our main method of disposal – landfilling - has its own set of environmental problems.



## Five Steps to a Waste-wise Centre

The NEWF Early Childhood Service Waste Education project assisted and supported Early Childhood Services through five easy steps:

1. A free waste audit was undertaken which documented the waste and recycling at the service.
2. The provision of information and support for staff to create a Waste Reduction Action Plan (WRAP) with hands-on advice and use of this tool-kit.
3. Support was offered to implement the Waste Reduction Action Plan (WRAP). Included was a FREE worm-farm or compost bin, courtesy of local Councils. Setting up the worm farms was part of the educational group times.
4. Educational group times with a waste wise focus were provided for the children and staff.
5. Follow-up support & advice on implementation processes, and making any necessary improvements was offered.

### The Early Childhood Services Resource Kit

This Resource Kit was developed to support Early Childhood Services in decision making and planning when starting to think about waste reduction strategies, routines and education in Services. Many thanks go to: *Lady Gowrie Child Centre, Sydney; Julie Gaul from the Early Childhood Environmental Education Network and Little Green Steps Program, Wyong Council NSW*, for their generous sharing of information and resources.

#### Contents

- ❖ Waste Reduction Action Plan sheet (WRAP);
- ❖ Staff Survey on Waste Wise Practices;
- ❖ Waste Audit Sheet;
- ❖ Low Waste Lunches;
- ❖ Recycle and Re-use Song;
- ❖ Educational Group Time;
- ❖ Ways to foster environmental sustainability in children and their families;
- ❖ Tips to Avoid and Reuse Waste;
- ❖ Facts Sheets from the North East Waste Forum;
- ❖ ECEEN Newsletter;
- ❖ Little Green Steps Newsletter;
- ❖ Easy Composting Guide;
- ❖ Easy Guide to Natural Cleaning;
- ❖ Easy Guide to Worm Farming;
- ❖ Resource Sheet for further information – websites, contacts, books etc.