

Answers to additional question – Department of Education

Response:

NSW Curriculum

All NSW schools are required to teach courses of study for each of the key learning areas in accordance with syllabuses developed by NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), including the learning across the curriculum priority 'Sustainability'. The sustainability learning across the curriculum priority provides opportunities for teachers to include food waste in learning experiences for students in different syllabuses. Furthermore, the minimisation of all waste is encouraged in the project work of all students.

The following syllabuses have references to waste and food waste in the NSW Curriculum. As a matter of general practice, teachers of food-related technology subjects and their kitchen assistants will be extremely efficient in their purchase of food under the budgetary conditions of the school and faculty. In addition, students participating in food technology activities are encouraged to be efficient in their use of the supplied quantities of raw materials.

Syllabus	Description	Page reference
Science and Technology K–6 Syllabus	Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require students to participate critically and act creatively in determining more sustainable ways of living.	39
Technology Mandatory Years 7–8 Syllabus	Similar to above.	-
Food Technology Years 7–10 Syllabus	Specific syllabus references to the minimisation of food waste occur in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus area: Food Trends Students: discuss current trends in food, for example: local produce, eg bush tucker, farmers' markets, food miles; food waste; ... • Focus area: Food Trends (Life Skills) Students explore current trends in food, for example: farmers' markets, bush tucker, food waste, ... 	40 65
Agricultural Technology Years 7–10 Syllabus	References to recycling waste and waste management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant Production Students: recycle waste products from plant production enterprises, for example: develop a worm farm; construct and maintain a composite bin 	55

Syllabus	Description	Page reference
Food Technology Stage 6 Syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core strand – The Australian Food Industry <p>Students learn about: operations of organisations within the Australian food industry with particular attention to: ... environment including waste management, packaging practices, production techniques, and transportation...</p>	18

Teaching and learning resources

Schools are supported to select evidence-based resources that are most effective in improving student outcomes. We continue to develop and provide professional learning, resources and assessments that can assist our teachers in targeting students' individual needs.

Principals, in consultation with their school community, make decisions about the suitability of school-based programs and resources to support teaching and learning in schools. Programs and resources may include local council initiatives, kitchen gardens, composting and recycling programs. The department does not endorse or recommend resources, products, services or programs developed by external organisations or individuals.

NSW public schools – government and site-based programs

Many schools practice on-site composting in conjunction with programs such as kitchen gardens. Often the kitchen garden programs align with relevant curriculum including PDHPE, Geography, Science or TAS. We are still in the process of gathering data to allow us to quantify more accurately what proportion of schools practice composting. This work includes the development of a sustainability engagement tool which will include a waste module and will be available to all NSW public schools to document their school sustainability initiatives to allow central visibility.

Another key initiative supporting more sustainable management of food and organic waste is the current transition of approximately 1,500 schools to the new Whole of Government waste contract (c9698) which includes the option for many schools to have an organic waste collection service for off-site composting. The Department is working closely with the relevant staff in NSW Treasury who contract manage the c9698 program, and the contractors themselves, to maximise access to this service. A recycling pilot is planned to commence shortly to better understand, amongst other things, how to maximise segregation and minimise contamination of food waste in schools which can be a significant barrier to processing food waste. The learnings from this pilot will also inform enhancements to the waste component of the engagement tool.

It is important to prevent the production of food waste in the first place, rather than focusing on how to process or dispose of it. A number of schools run food waste reduction programs such as Nude Lunches. Again, we are working to develop more comprehensive data about which schools are undertaking such initiatives and to better understand the hallmarks of effective programs. The department's School Infrastructure NSW team has recently commenced discussions with the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) around administering the Love Food Hate Waste program. DPE has already run this program in

several schools and is now actively discussing with our Department how to broaden the program's reach.

Finally, schools wishing to implement waste reduction programs can obtain resources to support their initiatives through the Sustainable Schools Grants program, a four-year, \$10 million program which funds schools up to \$15,000 to deliver hands-on sustainability projects. Selection of Round 3 applicants is underway and Round 4 will be opening for applications in Term 4, 2022. Approximately 20% of applicants have waste-related projects, and case studies from particularly successful or innovative projects will be shared across the Department.

At the current time, there is a considerable body of work to reduce food waste taking place in the Department with support from key stakeholders including DPE and NSW Treasury. The key emphasis is to ensure that various programs are aligned and coordinated, and to carefully curate the diverse resources on this topic to reduce the workload for school staff wishing to use them. An opportunity where support would be welcome would be additional resources to support the expansion of kitchen garden programs across further schools. This would allow the food waste message to be more widely integrated with curriculum in both primary and high schools.

NSW public schools – program examples

In addition to delivering the curriculum, NSW public schools organise initiatives and programs to run with their students, families and the broader community. The programs are diverse in nature and range from small initiatives to a whole school approach to waste. Programs in schools can be costly in terms of resourcing, and any additional support in this area would be welcome. Examples of programs currently in existence include:

Dapto High School has a variety of programs across the school.

- Avoiding food waste is front and centre in the various Technology and Applied Studies (TAS) subjects; Hospitality, Food Technology and Mandatory TAS [Years 7-8] The school aims to have students as close as possible to food production; using what the school grows, harvesting 'just in time' for daily use thus avoiding waste.
- Food waste from the curriculum kitchens and canteen are distributed to the school's chickens and held in compost bins. Worm juice is then used on food gardens or sold to students and staff.
- The school farm produces food for use in the canteen and in TAS eg. fruit, eggs, beef, lamb, vegetables, herbs.
- The school stores 100,000 litres of water in tanks across the school; regularly used in food production.
- The school has just started planning a 'Food Forest'. The farm will plant lemons, mandarins, oranges, mulberries, avocado, etc. Planting in Spring.
- At the end of lunch each day the Principal distributes unsold canteen food.
- Avoiding food waste is just part of the school's broader sustainability push; the school has recycled almost 200,000 containers
- Each year, Year 7 plant a food tree alongside their Year Advisors; they are asked to look after it for six years and then bring their grandchildren back to sit under it.

Fairy Meadow Public School has a permaculture garden which requires all the students' fruit and vegetable waste to support the functioning of the garden. Fruit and vegetable scraps are collected daily and placed into the compost beside the garden. The compost is tended to weekly. As the permaculture garden expands and more ecosystems are included,

the program will expand. For example, chickens will be introduced as their grounded eggshells provide calcium to the compost.

Sanctuary Point Public School commenced a program two years ago, encouraging via newsletter and social media, families to reduce the amount of packaging in snacks and lunches and increase students eating whole foods. The school also encouraged students to take the packaging home and use family recycling so families were aware of amount of rubbish they were adding to landfill. The program is not as active as it was two years ago as a few parents did raise their concerns, wishing to choose what they put in the students' lunch boxes.

Austinmer Public School conducts a composting program- with subpods and compost bins. The school is engaging with Harvest- Feast program with Stage 3. The school would like to expand the current program, utilising the new garden space and a community group that conserves/ preserves food. The school also has biannual visits to Wollongong Botanic Gardens engaging in their educational programs.