

## Pathway to Sustainability Resource sheet

### Office waste

By minimising waste, your business can reduce the amount that goes to landfill, save money by reducing waste disposal costs, and lower the input of materials that goes into production. This will help create a more [circular economy](#).



Waste minimisation involves implementing waste prevention, waste reduction, recycling and reusing initiatives.

This resource sheet will show you to to:

- develop a Waste Policy for your business
- carry out a Waste Audit
- find out what you can do with your waste
- locate other waste resources.

### Waste Policy

Creating a Waste Policy can help your business commit to waste minimisation and monitor progress. Give a copy to each of your staff and encourage them to make a personal commitment towards reducing their waste. Review their progress every six months to make sure your business is on track.

Here is a sample Waste Policy you can use as a template for your own business:

<b>AIM:</b>	Develop Waste Management Programme to help achieve a zero waste target
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<b>ACTION:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up effective options for reducing, reusing and recycling in the office and the staff room.</li> <li>2. Work with your suppliers to reduce the amount of waste you deal with e.g. packaging.</li> <li>3. Remove rubbish bins from all desks and replace with recycling and small composting bins.</li> <li>4. Include recycling boxes for both single sided and double sided paper on all desks.</li> <li>5. Where practical, actively maintain a worm farm or Bokashi compost bin to maximise organic waste diversion. If you set up a Bokashi system, staff can take it home.</li> <li>6. Keep each area tidy and litter free in the office, as well as any external areas, to limit environmental impact.</li> <li>7. Opt for as many paper free communication options as is practical.</li> <li>8. Create a rooftop or indoor garden to use any fertiliser generated from the worm farm.</li> <li>9. Identify 'green heroes' (e.g. people who already compost at home) within your workplace and work together to set up composting and recycling systems.</li> <li>10. Develop a policy around e-waste and ensure staff know how to dispose of mobile phones and other electronic waste.</li> </ol>
<b>RECORD &amp; REPORT:</b>	Record six monthly data on waste recycling and reduction methods.
<b>PERSONAL COMMITMENT:</b>	Encourage each staff member to make a personal commitment to reduce waste, for example: <i>This year I will make sure I bring my own containers/cups to use for takeaway food and drinks when I am in the office.</i>

## Carrying out a Waste Audit

You can undertake a waste audit to find out where your waste is coming from and where it's going.

A solid waste audit is a great way of finding out how much waste you are producing, so you can find out how to reduce, recycle or reuse waste. Information from the audit will help identify current waste practices and how they can be improved.

Results from your waste audit can be included in your Waste Policy.

Download a Waste Audit manual from Waste Not Consulting [here](#).

## What can I do with my waste?

Once you have minimised the amount of waste your business is creating what are the options for dealing with the waste you can't avoid?

- **Recycling**

Ask your cleaning company to provide you with options available or contact your local [council](#) to see what recycling options are available to you.

- **Composting**

Composting is a really great way to lower your business' environmental impact. Composting office food, tea and coffee waste can be easy if it's done right.

If you work in an office environment where you have access to a grassy area, you can set up a compost bin. Even if there is no grass, you can still compost. [Hungry Bin](#) worm farms are a great way to compost in a small area.

Bokashi bins are also another effective way of composting your organic waste in a small area. Keep a couple of bins on rotation and send your staff home with the compost, or donate it to a community garden.

A further alternative is to work with others in your building and set up an account with a food waste collection provider like [We Compost](#), who will come and collect your compost and replace the bin with a new one as often as you like.

- **E-waste**

Mobile phones, their batteries and other e-waste (electronic waste) contain dangerous metals such as cadmium and lead which can harm the environment if not disposed of correctly. Mobile phones also contain valuable and often scarce elements known as 'rare earth' metals which are important to recover and recycle.

Use [SBN's member directory](#) to find out how you can dispose of e-waste.

## Useful resources

- **Sustainable Business Directory**

Search for organisations using the key word 'waste' on the [Sustainable Business Directory](#). You can narrow down your search to your own location too.

- **SBN's work on [Accelerating the circular economy in NZ](#).**

We are working with other organisations to find out how to move from waste management to material optimisation. If you want to find out more or get involved, please [contact us](#).

## Case studies

Check out these case studies on minimising and managing waste:

- [Hungry Bin](#) has been recognised by the Ministry for the Environment, winning a Green Ribbon Award for creating the largest worm farm in New Zealand.

- [We Compost](#) diverts approximately 45 000 litres of compostable waste from landfill every week.
- [Reclaim](#) saves more than 300 tonnes of material from going to landfill every day.
- [Sustainability Options](#) offers tailored advice on how to reduce waste in your business.
- [Junk Run](#) is a waste collection and recycling initiative that takes unwanted household and business items and diverts them from landfill. Whenever possible, customers' unwanted items are reallocated to community organisations.
- [Method Recycling](#) has created a stylish and functional recycling bin to suit corporate environments.
- [Resene Paintwise](#) is a product stewardship programme that takes waste paint and paint packaging and either recycles them or safely disposes of them.
- [Fuji Xerox](#) targets zero waste through resource recovery. It takes responsibility for all end-of-life products to achieve over 99.5 per cent resource recovery year on year.
- [3R Group](#) finds recycling solutions for problematic waste.
- [Creative Spaces, Auckland Council and Fletcher Construction](#) redesigned and refitted a 1990s building, which was arguably the largest interior refurbishment in New Zealand. 83 per cent of construction waste was downcycled or recycled.
- [Ethique](#) makes waste-free, salon quality, beauty and bathroom products such as shampoos, soaps and conditioners.