

EVALUATION REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SSROC Regional Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Education Program 2019-2020



'Make Less Waste – Can I Recycle This?' Recycling Workshop: Sustainable Childcare Network (Canada Bay LGA)



'The Circular Future' Reuse and Repair Online Webinar: UNSW War on Waste 'Living Sustainably' series (online)



This Program is a NSW Environment Protection Authority,

Waste Less, Recycle More initiative

funded from the waste levy.



1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reduce Waste: The term 'Reduce Waste' is used generically throughout this Report to encompass a range of waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling behaviours relating to the waste hierarchy.

1.1 Introduction

This Report outlines the fourth year of the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC)'s Regional Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (WARR) Education Program (the Program). It provides information on the 2019-20 program design, delivery and evaluation findings. This Program is a NSW Environment Protection Authority, Waste Less, Recycle More initiative funded from the waste levy.

1.2 Program Overview

Since July 2016, SSROC has delivered waste education to Reduce Waste via 530 engagements – with a total of 8,754 participants. Workshops have predominantly been run by two SSROC Educators with support from bilingual educators, where necessary. In 2019-2020, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Program in mid-March 2020 and risk management strategies in line with statewide health advice were implemented. The Educators adapted the Program to pilot a series of live online, interactive webinars with the University of New South Wales (UNSW) student organisation *Arc – UNSW Student Life* and UNSW Environmental Sustainability group.

The Program has reached:

- First year (2016-2017): 131 waste education workshops delivered to 78 different community groups engaging 2,200 participants.
- Second year (2017-2018): 152 waste education workshops delivered to 140 different community groups, engaging 2,702 participants.
- Third year (2018-2019): 156 waste education workshops delivered to 129 different community groups, engaging 2,474 participants.
- Fourth year (2019-2020): 91 waste education workshops and webinars delivered to 36 community groups, engaging 1,449 participants.

The table below shows the number of participants confirmed as SSROC residents.

Table 1: 2019-20 All Program participants' residency based on information provided

LGA	Recycling workshop 1,152 participants	Reducing Food Waste 89 participants	Reducing Plastic 103 participants	Online education pilot 105 participants	TOTAL
Bayside	107	4	2	4	117
Burwood	32	7	1	1	41
City of Canada Bay	20	1	1	0	22
City of Canterbury Bankstown	243	16	0	2	261
City of Sydney	84	0	7	5	96
Georges River	187	17	1	1	206
Inner West	63	2	3	7	75
Randwick City	27	3	1	17	48
Sutherland Shire	54	0	0	0	54
Waverley	12	8	7	1	28
Woollahra	8	9	0	1	18
Non-SSROC LGA	112	7	3	17	139
Undisclosed	14	3	1	49	67
No evaluation					382
Evaluation by postcard	963	77	27	-	1,067
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS					1,449

1.2.1 Target Audiences

Program participants were recruited by targeting existing community interest groups, adult English classes, and young people across the SSROC region. The Program offers workshops and webinars to existing groups (with participants who may not already be interested in waste avoidance and resource recovery) and is typically delivered at the usual time and location that groups meet. This approach was undertaken to encourage peer-to-peer learning and to establish new social norms of recycling and waste avoidance behaviour that would continue to be exchanged amongst “harder to reach” group members, families and/or friend networks.

The types of community groups targeted were based around SSROC’s research¹ which identified several priority community segments for recycling and waste avoidance behaviour change within the region. These include members of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, parents with young children, and younger people (aged 16-29). This research along with data from SSROC regional bin audits informed the design and learning outcomes of the workshops and webinars.

1.2.2 Workshop Topics

Four different face-to-face workshop topics were offered to community groups on recycling, reducing food waste, reducing plastic waste, and on buying, swapping and selling second hand items online.

1.2.3 Webinar Topics

A three-part webinar series was offered to the UNSW student organisation Arc – UNSW Student Life, on reducing and recycling (*‘Bin Ninja Training’*), reducing plastic and food waste (*‘Going Zero Waste’*) and reusing and repairing (*‘The Circular Future’*).

1.2.4 Program Design

Building on the learnings and recommendations from previous years, the program includes the following steps to foster behaviour change:

1. Improved knowledge and understanding to Reduce Waste through participating in a waste education workshop or webinar.
2. Individual commitment to avoid and/or Reduce Waste by the end of the workshop or webinar; and when possible, sharing commitments “publicly” with their group. Workshop participants were asked to complete an optional pictorial postcard by choosing at least one of four commitment actions to Reduce Waste regarding the workshop topic and/or write their own action on the back of the postcard (see *Postcard example in Section 4.1.2 or Appendix B – Workshop and Webinar Materials*). Webinar participants were asked to share their own learnings and how they would Reduce Waste within the webinar, as well as encouraged to undertake a “mission” to Reduce Waste and share learnings with others after each webinar.
3. Commitment and mission reminders were sent to participants after each workshop or webinar. Workshop participants were sent a personal reminder of their commitment and completed postcards were mailed back to participants approximately two weeks after the workshop. Webinar participants were emailed with a link to the webinar recording where possible and reminded of their follow up mission to Reduce Waste and share learnings with others.
4. Physical and/or online resources were given to workshop and webinar participants to provide clear information on where to find further information on how to Reduce Waste.

¹ This research included a series of desktop reviews undertaken on behalf of SSROC: Arcadis, 2016 Literature Reviews - SSROC Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy Implementation – Regional Communications Campaigns (Comprised of Four Parts), see: <http://ssroc.nsw.gov.au/publications-resources/publications/>

1.3 Key Findings of 2019-20

Engagement of Key Target Audiences

- 85 workshops delivered to 1,344 participants² of 32 unique community organisations
- 73 Recycling workshops to 963 participants (86% of all workshops)
- 6 Food Waste workshops to 77 participants (7% of all workshops)
- 5 Reducing Plastic workshops to 27 participants (6% of all workshops)
- High engagement with English language classes (79% of workshops) i.e. 67 workshops were delivered in an English conversation class setting
- High engagement of CALD participants (92% of workshops)
- 47 workshops included whole or part-delivery in a non-English language including Mandarin (26 workshops), Cantonese (11), Arabic (5), Vietnamese (4), and Spanish (1)
- Six online education webinars were piloted with mostly young adults (under 30 years of age).

Commitment to Change

951 participants (71%), committed to at least one action to Reduce Waste on a postcard, which was mailed back to them as a reminder approximately two weeks later.

Top Commitments – Recycling workshop

“I will tell others to keep plastic bags out of the yellow bin” (707 pledges; 61% of participants)

“I will take my batteries for recycling” (643 pledges; 56% of participants)

Top Commitments – Reducing Food Waste workshop

“I will freeze my leftover fruits and meals” (48 pledges; 54% of participants)

“I will use up leftovers before buying new food” (44 pledges; 49% of participants)

Top Commitments – Reducing Plastic workshop

“I will bring a reusable water bottle” (30 pledges; 65% of participants)

“I will choose products not wrapped in plastic” (27 pledges; 59% of participants)

1.4 Key Recommendations for 2020-21

Evaluation data from 2019-20, indicated that the Program was on target to successfully meet its objectives prior to COVID-19 disruption and has continued to be reviewed and adapted appropriately after four years of delivery. Despite cancellation or postponement of workshops due to COVID-19, the Program has adapted to online education with the potential for broader expansion. New audiences were engaged, and previously engaged groups indicated interest in more advanced workshop topics and were interested in booking online education in 2020-21.

² 6 workshops delivered to 71 participants in July 2019 that were included in the 2018-2019 Evaluation Report due to alignment with the financial year reporting timeframe.

Recommendations for the 2020-21 Program include:

Review and update webinars and digital collateral to incorporate emerging research, changes to the waste industry, member councils' waste and resource recovery education priorities, and participants' and community organisations' needs.

The workshop and webinar lesson plans, content and resources should continue to be reviewed to incorporate any additional messages in emerging research and response to changes in the waste and resource recovery industry [such as integration of information and projections of the 20-Year Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy (20YWS) and the NSW Plastics Plan due to be released early 2021, the Australasian Recycling Label, China Sword Policy and NSW Container Deposit Scheme].

The Program should integrate aligned priorities to Reduce Waste across the region in consultation with SSROC member councils. Councils have indicated interest in creating online waste education digital assets and messaging for social media platforms.

Further explore and improve online education engagement and behaviour change to reach broader audiences and re-engage groups:

The Program's pilot of live online education webinars should be further reviewed and explored for broader application across the region. The UNSW War on Waste pilot of online webinars with mostly young adult participants (under 30 years of age) was delivered as an adaptive response to COVID-19. Learnings from this pilot and relevant training (e.g. Online Facilitator Training, Community-Based Social Marketing training and associated Masterclass Coaching) should inform how education is planned, promoted, delivered and evaluated in the 2020-21 Program.

With limitations due to COVID-19, Educators should continue to engage new groups and re-engage previous participants incorporating new behaviour change learnings, and focus on expanding the scope of digital and marketing content available to SSROC member councils.

Staffing Needs

Due to the continued demand for waste and resource recovery education across the region, planning, design, development and delivery requirements and support by SSROC member councils for this Program, continuation of two full time staff is recommended for 2020-21. However, the scope of deliverables will be adjusted to COVID-19 times to expand the development of digital assets to support councils to engage with residents on waste and resource recovery behaviours.



Reducing Food Waste Workshop: ZamZam Mums and Bubs (Canterbury Bankstown LGA)