



HOW TO HOST A ZERO WASTE SCHOOL GALA



THANK YOU

A massive thanks to Cambridge Primary for being local leaders in this space and allowing photos of some of their activities to be in this guide.

Their annual gala is a hugely popular community event. In 2021 their event attracted 1500 people, raised \$12,000 and only created 1.5 black bags (60L) of waste.

That is outstanding!

ABOUT THIS GUIDE



You can start on your own waste minimisation journey by thinking about waste early on in your gala planning. Make one or two changes to this year's event, see how it goes, and then plan from there to further reduce waste generated at future events.

WHY A ZERO WASTE GALA?

The waste we create is a big part of the impact that we have on the world around us. As Kaitiaki or guardians of our environment, reducing our waste is the right thing to do, but there are lots of other benefits that come from working towards a zero waste event.

Engagement

People want to do the right thing. Your students will be excited about being able to make a difference and your community will feel good about being part of an event that makes it easier for them to make better choices.



→ **CHANGE**
feels good!

Environmental focus

Prioritising waste reduction at a significant school event will support any visions and goals your school has about protection of the environment and can link well into curriculum learning.

Reduce Cost

Reducing the amount of waste we create saves on rubbish disposal costs.

Reusing and repurposing things will also save on purchasing and handling costs.



Save resources

We have become really disposable in the things that we use and buy. Resources are taken, used and then thrown away once we are done with them. Not only are we sometimes throwing away things that still have value but we're also throwing away all of the embedded impact that has gone into make things - the resources, time, energy and transport that have been used to create that product.

Focusing on waste minimisation leads to a more circular approach where resources are used for as long as possible.

Creativity

Finding new ways of doing things when it comes to waste minimisation fosters innovation and creativity.

→ **YOU'LL BE AMAZED**
at what you can come
up with when you
LOOK AT THINGS IN A
DIFFERENT WAY!



IT STARTS WITH US

“WHAT DIFFERENCE IS ONE BOTTLE GOING TO MAKE? – SAID 7 BILLION PEOPLE” [@strawlessinchico](#)

We often feel that the changes we make as one person, one school or one gala won't make a difference. The reality is far from this, as we often underestimate the impact of what can appear to be a simple, isolated change.

One small change

Reducing our waste isn't an all or nothing game. It's about focusing on what you can do and making one change at a time.

HOT TIP 

- go for the easy changes first,
THE LOW HANGING FRUIT.

The ripple effect of change

The changes you make to minimise your waste will have a continuing and long lasting impact. What you do will help to role model and normalise the behaviour to your school and broader community. Change is totally possible because of the actions of one person, one school and one event.

HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

Bring people with you

It is important that you bring your school community along on the zero-waste journey. Make sure your PTA, Principal, students and parents (whoever you need for the event to be successful) understand and support the zero waste kaupapa.

Give everyone involved context around the 'why' - what's the motivation and benefits behind having a zero-waste focus.



Understand your waste

Create a snapshot of the waste you create. If you don't have actual data, make some educated assumptions around the types of waste you could expect the gala to create.



Have a vision

Set yourself a big audacious goal for the gala. It could be as simple as 'send zero waste to landfill'. Having a simple and easy to articulate vision helps people get behind it.



**DON'T OVER EXTEND YOURSELF,
it's totally fine to just try one
or two new things to
REDUCE THE GALA WASTE THIS YEAR!**

Make a plan

Once you have some insights around the type of waste your typical gala might produce, you will have a sense of the areas of opportunity.

From here you can develop a plan that outlines the 'what' and 'how' of what you are going to do to reduce your event waste. It doesn't have to be complicated but writing it down and sharing it helps create commitment.

Be sure to include measuring your gala waste in your plan so that you have a benchmark for future events.

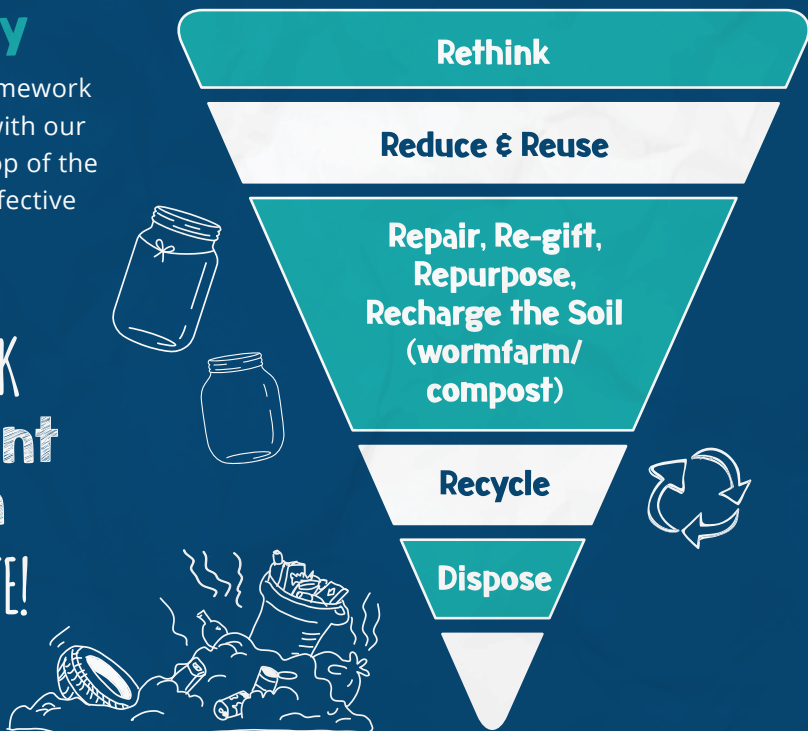
WHAT CHANGES CAN WE MAKE?



Follow the hierarchy

The Waste Hierarchy is a simple framework for the different ways we can deal with our waste. Focusing our efforts at the top of the hierarchy is the easiest and most effective way to reduce waste.

**A SIMPLE FRAMEWORK
for the different
ways we can
DEAL WITH OUR WASTE!**



RETHINK

The most effective way to manage waste is to avoid it in the first place.

Often, we do things out of habit. Rethink with fresh eyes the way you are doing things to see if there is an alternative or swap that won't impact the outcome.



Ideas & examples

Instead of selling things, can you offer fun things to do? Face painting, animal rides, hire a tail or costume, photo booth, petting zoos, amusement rides, coconut shy, giant board games, dunk tank, bean bag toss, horizontal bungee.

Can you avoid single use packaging and food packaging by replacing it with reusables? A reusable coffee cup library, op shop crockery and a wash station for a koha.

Can you rent or borrow equipment instead of needing to buy it? You can hire popcorn machines, furniture, gazebos, crockery, signage.

EXPERIENCES
over things!



REDUCE

Is there anything that you are providing or receiving that you can do without or can refuse?

Are there steps you can take to reduce the quantity of waste that is being generated?



**BAKING IN
reusable
containers**



**LESS PACKAGING
options!**



Ideas & examples

Can you choose food options that have less packaging? Ice cream in a cone, candy floss on a wooden stick, a popcorn machine, soda stream float station.

For anything that you are ordering, can you have a conversation with the supplier in advance that you don't need items individually packaged or excess wrapping?

Buy sweets in bulk instead of small packets or individually wrapped. Can baking be delivered in reusable containers or food supplies bought from bulk stores?

Can hire equipment be delivered without being shrink wrapped in plastic?



**EDIBLE
packaging!**



REUSE REPAIR REGIFT RECHARGE THE SOIL REPURPOSE

Instead of sourcing new, is there anything that you can reuse, repurpose, upcycle or repair?

If there is food waste being created, can it be composted and used to recharge the soil?
If anything is left over at the end of the gala, is it able to be re-gifted instead of going to waste?
Can decorations and signage be repurposed from things you already have? And reused next year?
Where are the things you are selling from? What are they made from? What are the options at the end of their life? It's great to use sales for fundraising, but can you support products that help rather than pollute the environment?

Ideas & examples

For any goods that you are selling, can they be repurposed or made from reusing resources that are already in the world or using things from nature?

REUSE

Jars are an amazing item that can be repurposed in so many ways - from recipe ingredients in a jar, to homemade baking and jams, bath salts to pet treats all in a jar. Easy as!

Can you sell reusable products that help people reduce their own impact? e.g. beeswax wraps, reusable produce bags, stainless steel pegs.

Plants, flowers and seeds are a favourite and can be packaged up in lots of creative, upcycled ways - like in tin cans, jars, op shop crockery.



START COLLECTING JARS
and lids early



READYMADE
BROWNIE,
YES PLEASE!



Ideas & examples

REPURPOSE

Can you create upcycled fabric gifts like bunting, cushion covers, upcycled t-shirt shopping bags or draught stoppers?

Can you use upcycled bunting or cardboard for decorations and signage?

REPAIR

Can you offer a repair café? Check out repaircafe.org.nz

Can you offer bike or scooter maintenance checks? It will also help encourage active transport to your gala as well.

RECHARGE THE SOIL

Can you have a compost collection bin set up in the food area?

REGIFT

If you have leftover food, can it safely be frozen for a future fundraising event or distributed to the community via a local community pantry on the day?



PLAN AHEAD TO
PACKAGE UP EXCESS
food to redistribute.
ICE-CREAM CONTAINERS
ARE ACE FOR THIS.

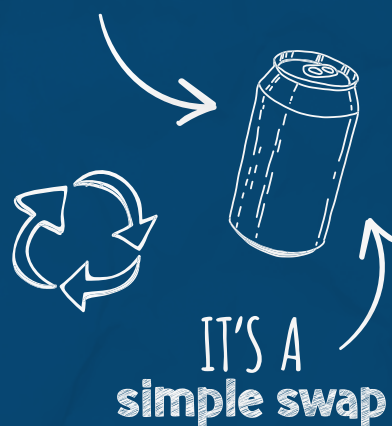
RECYCLE

Once you have made all the steps to reduce and reuse your waste, the next option in the hierarchy is recycling. Is there anything that is currently being disposed of to landfill that can be recycled?

Is there anything that is going to landfill that you could find a recyclable alternative for?



SWITCH TO AN
alternative drink
THAT COMES IN
RECYCLABLE CANS.

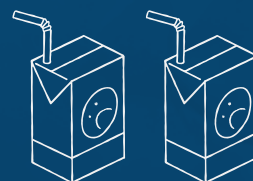


Ideas & examples

Set up easy to use recycling stations to make waste sorting for the punters as simple as possible. Often, it's best to have bin monitors at the recycling stations to help people put things in the right bin.

If you are sourcing drinks in nonrecyclable tetra-packs can you switch to an alternative drink that comes in a recyclable cans?

Have a plan for where your recycling is going to go - can you take it to your local transfer station?



Chocolate Chip Cookie in a Jar

 8-10min

- 1 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup chocolate chips (can use milk, dark or white or a mixture of all 3)



You will need to add a label for the extra ingredients needed

YOU WILL NEED TO ADD
1 EGG, LIGHTLY BEATEN
125G BUTTER (OR OIL IF DF)
1 TEASPOON VANILLA

Baking method

1. Pour jar contents into a bowl
2. Melt butter add vanilla and egg
3. Mix well
4. Spoon mixture into balls on a lightly greased tray
5. Bake at 200c for 8-10 minutes
6. Allow to cool on tray
7. Enjoy!



THANKS TO
The Store Room
FOR THIS TRIED AND TESTED RECIPE.



**ZERO WASTE
SCHOOL GALA**



SIMPLE BROWN PAPER BOUQUETS LOOK AMAZING! BUY AT THE FLOWER WHOLESALER AND SUPPLEMENT WITH GREENERY FROM YOUR GARDENS TO YOUR OWN BUNCHES.



DONUT WALLS ARE INSTAGRAMMABLE! EASY TO MAKE, DIY ANYONE? THEN BUY DONUTS DIRECT FROM THE SUPPLY, AND SPECIFY BOXED PACKAGING.



SIMPLE AND FUN FOR YOUNGER BROTHERS AND SISTERS!



GREAT IDEA! EASY CRAFT PROJECT FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS TO PREPARE, AND ALL NATURAL!



LOOK ONLINE FOR VISUALLY APPEALING, EASY TO MAKE AND TAKE BAKING ITEMS. NO PACKAGING AT ALL. BONUS!



YOUR LOCAL CAFE WILL BE KEEN TO OFFLOAD THE SPENT COFFEE GRINDS. LOOK ONLINE FOR A GOOD RECIPE, OFTEN ONLY THREE INGREDIENTS!



CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Be sure to share your journey and your successes. It helps normalise waste reduction and makes people feel engaged and motivated. It can be as simple as a photo in the school newsletter or a post on social media - but you'll be surprised at how much impact it has.

What help is available?

Waipā District Council has a free set of wheelie bin covers and tall flags for creating a recycling and waste station. You need to arrange your own waste services and hire wheelie bins, but this set allows you to set up a waste minimisation station, where you can add a pig bin or composting bin as well.

Contact waste.min@waipadc.govt.nz to find out more and book for your upcoming gala.

CELEBRATE YOUR
successes with
YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

