



# How to make your school event zero-waste

## *Before the day:*

1. At the initial planning stage, present the concept of a zero-waste event to your school's Principal, Caretaker, Senior Management, and Parent/Teacher Association and, most importantly, the students. Get everyone to commit to the idea.
2. Get the zero-waste concept into the initial planning stage of the event.
3. Find at least one dedicated parent and a couple of other parents to manage the waste. Make sure someone is always at the "RETURNS" area during the event and that you have enough people to tidy up and wash plates after the event.
4. Publicise the event as waste free or zero-waste (posters, adverts, newsletter) and ask everyone to bring their own plates, cups and cutlery, etc. Stress the "Pack In, Pack Out" message and let everyone know to take all their rubbish home.
5. Nelson City Council has advice on their website  
<http://nelson.govt.nz/services/rubbish/recycling-3/recycling-events-guide/>
6. Contact Nelmac (03 546 0910) to arrange loan of event recycling bins:
7. Arrange for all food stalls to accept people bringing their own containers. (A stock of re-used ceramic cups/plates may be needed in case some people forget to BYO. Wooden cutlery and paper or potato starch or biodegradable plastic plates/cups may also be required.)
8. Design your "RETURNS" area to be as attractive or interesting as possible; you might like to choose a theme that suits the event, or use Andy Williams' idea of creating a space where you can engage people in talking about rubbish.
9. Decide which recycle signs to use on the bins for example: glass, cans, paper, plastic, food scraps, serviettes (can be composted), wooden cutlery. Recycling bins can be used for returning plates, etc. as they are a good size and easy to carry.
10. Convert all your rubbish bins to recycling bins OR cover with sturdy material. Make sure ALL bins are covered. If even one is left uncovered it will turn into a mini Mount Everest of rubbish – open bins give tacit permission to leave your waste behind.

11. If your school has no composting system, consider asking parents with chickens/pigs if they would accept any food scraps collected.
12. The day before, talk to the students to REMIND their families and send a reminder slip home to BYOC and “Pack in Pack Out”.

### ***On the day***

1. Set up the “RETURNS” area, making it as attractive as possible.
2. Make sure you make the zero-waste message clear—use prominent, clear signs.
3. If the local radio or publicity people are at the event, ask them to keep reminding people about it being waste-free and tell them where the “Returns” area is located.
4. For your events team you will need:
  - someone rostered on during the event to run the area, keep the area tidy (if necessary) and thank people for putting their returns in the right place,
  - someone to wash plates during the event, and
  - someone to go around the stalls to check where plates are needed,
  - someone to wash the plates at the end of the event
  - someone to tidy up the grounds at the end (hopefully this will be a very small job!)

### ***After the event***

1. Meet with the organising team to evaluate how it went and what could be done better next time.
2. Estimate what percentage of total waste you diverted from landfill.
3. Congratulate the whole school at assembly.
4. Publicise your success and celebrate!

## **Where to get things from:**

**Recycling bins:** NELMAC has bins for loan.

Nelson City Council can give general advice on health and safety requirements.

To help you decide which biodegradable products to buy in for events, check out the NCC website: <http://www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz/assets/Services/Downloads/recyclable-utensils-flier.pdf>

**Re-used plates and cups** may be obtained from:

- your school kitchen
- Nelson Environment Centre (has 100 white ceramic plates, and 50 cups available for free loan – refundable deposit of \$20 required)
- your local op shop; Nelson Re-use and Recycle Centre 03 548 5603; or school community.

**Potato starch plates/cups** or **biodegradable plastic cups** can be composted (in industrial compost facilities) or used as seedling pots and **wooden forks** can be later used as markers for seedlings in the school garden. Contact Nelson Food Distributors (03 544 4435) and Potatopak (Blenheim)

**GOOD LUCK!**

For more information, contact:

Waste Education Services – Schools Team

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