



# Creating change through your environmental education project

A practical guide for organisations applying for NSW Environmental Trust Environmental Education Grants



This guide has been written by the Australian Association for Environmental Education - NSW Chapter (AAEE NSW) for the NSW Environmental Trust.

AAEE NSW wishes to thank the project team of Wendy Goldstein, Jem Hansen, Lynne McLoughlin, Les Robinson and Erika Van Schellebeck and the critical friends group of Niki Carey, Aimee Freimanis, Sue Martin and Victoria Walker.

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Front cover photo: Young rural leaders make imaginative use of craft materials to design biosecurity projects. See more at the [Young Farming Champions](#) program website.

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# Introduction

This practical guide has been created to help organisations applying for NSW Environmental Trust funding to design project proposals that meet the new program direction for Environmental Education Grants in 2019.

## A new program direction

As outlined in the NSW Environmental Trust's Environmental Education Grants [Program Guidelines](#), this new direction reflects contemporary best practice environmental education with a focus on the emerging approach of Transformative Learning for Sustainability.

Transformative Learning for Sustainability builds on the internationally recognised educational approach of Education for Sustainability, that first emerged when the United Nations declared the decade from 2005 to 2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

Since then, we have increased our consumption of resources and impact on the environment to an alarmingly unsustainable rate and a new approach is needed for environmental education. Rather than a traditional focus on individual behaviour change and increasing awareness and knowledge, this new approach considers more systemic and transformative approaches that take into account practices, values, worldviews, and systemic change.

People live in communities and societies and work in organisations and homes with policies, procedures, practices and politics which can enhance or constrain a more sustainable lifestyle. Individuals do not exist in a social vacuum and what is happening in our world around us can either support or hinder us to make individual pro-environmental changes in our daily lives.

## Use this guide to develop your grant application

Please refer to this guide when developing your application for an Environmental Education grant.

### **This document provides guidance on:**

- Using program logic to help conceptualise your project.
- Thinking about how your project can change systems as well as behaviours.
- Doing social research to better understand your target group's values and gain insight into their thoughts and ideas on your project activities.
- Integrating your target group's values into your communications to show how your project is relevant to them and increase engagement.
- Testing your project activities with your target group to discover what doesn't work so you can refine your approach before your project implementation phase.
- Reflecting regularly as a project team so you can adapt your plans based on what you've learned, to help ensure your project creates change.
- The different types of evaluation data and methods for environmental education projects.

## Guiding principles for best practice

The new direction of the NSW Environmental Trust's Environmental Education Grants reflects contemporary best practice.

What best practice means and looks like for NSW environmental educators has been defined by the Australian Association for Environmental Education- NSW Chapter (AAEE NSW) in *Make the Change: A Framework for Education and Engagement for Sustainability 2014-2021*, developed in partnership with NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (now Department of Planning, Industry and Environment).

This framework continues on from the NSW Government Environmental Education Plan *Learning for Sustainability 2007- 2010* and provides a unified, coordinated and collaborative approach to sustainability education and engagement across NSW.

Based on international best practice research and extensive stakeholder consultation, *Make the Change* defines the shared vision, principles and goals that will support sustainability education and engagement providers from all sectors to shape effective action into the future.

For more information on the *Make the Change* framework visit the [AAEE NSW website](#).

### Best practice sustainability education and engagement projects:

1. Operate within and promote the values of sustainability - defined as 'balancing the community's economic and social needs within the planet's ecological limits'.
2. Encourage the community to be active citizens in caring for our environment.
3. Respect and reflect local Aboriginal culture and heritage and include cultural and place-based learning.
4. Reflect and address the needs of target audiences and engage these participants through critical thinking, problem solving and action.
5. Have reflection, monitoring and evaluation built into their design, to allow for continuous improvement.
6. Are achieved by seeking collaborators from the target audience, local Aboriginal community and organisations from different sectors.

From *Make the Change: A Framework for Education and Engagement for Sustainability 2014-2021*

# Imagining your project with program logic

To create change your environmental education project should be based on a 'logic' or 'Theory of Change'. This should be a simple, plain English answer to the question: "What needs to happen for there to be improvement in our environment?"

A good way to visualise your project is with program logic, which is also called a theory of change, outcomes hierarchy, or logframe.

This tells the story of your project, showing how each element contributes to the ultimate outcome (see figure 1 below)

The vital part is deciding on your systemic and behavioural outcomes. These are the changes you should be able to observe within the timeline of your project which will contribute to the desired environmental outcome.

## Ultimate outcome

### Environmental outcome

The vision for an improvement in our environment your project is aiming to create.

## Intermediate outcomes

### Systemic and behavioural outcomes

The changes you propose in people's day-to-day practices, management or organisational practices, systems or infrastructure that are needed to achieve this desired environmental outcome.

## Immediate outcomes

### Immediate participation outcomes

The immediate changes you expect in your target group as a result of your education and engagement activities, that will achieve the changes proposed above.

### Project activities

The education activities you will run to engage with your target group (audience).

### Project Resources

The resources you need to create to engage with your target group.

### Inputs

Time, money, expertise and leadership.

Figure 1: The program logic of a best practice environmental education project.



Below is a checklist to help identify the strategies that are vital to ensuring your project creates the systemic and behavioural changes that will improve our environment.

<b>Program Logic Checklist</b>	
<b>Select a mix of these strategies to ensure your project creates systemic and behavioural changes.</b>	
<b>Systemic strategies</b> Change the environment in which people make their choices. They can also be good long term legacies of your project.	<b>Behavioural strategies</b> Enable individuals to make sustained changes in their behaviours.
<input type="checkbox"/> Change the physical environment	<b>Stronger behavioural strategies</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a group	<input type="checkbox"/> Familiarity (seeing how to do it)
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a network or alliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Design for easiness
<input type="checkbox"/> Modify administrative processes or policies	<input type="checkbox"/> Passionate champions and role models
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide timely data that guides decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Showing others are doing it (norms)
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage accountability	<input type="checkbox"/> Buddies and action teams
	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer-peer conversations
	<b>Weaker behavioural strategies</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Incentives
	<input type="checkbox"/> Facts
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pledges
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bad news ('threat appeals')

Figure 2: Refer to this checklist when selecting strategies for systemic and behavioural change.

The following section provides information on these strategies, with examples.

## Systemic strategies for change

People live in communities and societies and work in organisations and homes with policies, procedures, practices and politics. These systems can either enhance or constrain a more sustainable lifestyle, so to help people adopt specific practices or behaviours you need to look at what systemic changes could be made.

The following pages provide information on these strategies that can enable systemic change, with examples.

### Change the physical environment

What changes to the physical environment could contribute to the environmental outcome?

For more bike trips, build a cycle way. For less waste, put the right bins in the right places. If you want people to spend time in nature, install beautiful seating.

Physically engineering the environment can be a strong intervention because it targets practical barriers to action and can last well beyond the project's end.

If the changes are prominent, visible and attractive, they can have a sustained influence on local norms and culture.

### Ease-making infrastructure

Making the right action easier, quicker and safer is a strong intervention.

“Our studies of cigarette littering behaviour show that where special attention has been paid to providing well-located butt disposal options in clean, well maintained areas, butt littering rates can be halved.”

– Curnow, R. and Spehr, K. *Litterology, Understanding Littering and the Secrets to Clean Public Places*



The right, well-placed 'binrastructure' can make a big difference to littering rates.



Rockdale Council developed this special hot coal bin to reduce dumping of BBQ coals on Botany Bay foreshores.

### Social interaction infrastructure

To appreciate nature and to have conversations, people need places to come together. So 'nature place-making', including just putting seats in a bush park, can be a positive strategy.



This eco-themed seat graces Henry Lawson Park, Abbotsford.



The seating in Kendrick Park, Cooks River, Sydney, draws visitors' attention to the indigenous story of the area.

### Natural infrastructure

Nest boxes for mammals and birds, bird baths, bee hotels, frog ponds, native gardens with rocks and logs and pollinator gardens can support individual behavioural changes, influence social norms and contribute to environmental outcomes.



Bee hotels and pollinator gardens formed the centre pieces of the University of Western Sydney's Bee Aware of Your Native Bees project.



Arncliffe Men's Shed constructed nest boxes for birds and microbats for Rockdale Council's Wild Things project, funded by the Environmental Trust.

## Communicating via infrastructure – ‘marking the place’

Can you use hard surfaces to prompt the right behaviour and start conversations?



This signage clearly depicts a desirable behaviour.



Drain stencils are a sustained communication, at minimal cost.



A road surface can start conversations. This energy conservation project in Brighton, UK, reported on the energy performance of individual streets by stencilling the result onto the road.

## Inspirational infrastructure

Public art that turns people's attention to the natural environment and educates subtly (without lecturing or threatening) can be a strong intervention because it changes the lived experience of places, sparking new conversations and influencing social norms.

If the art is permanent, it can be a valuable legacy of your project.



The Hello Koalas Sculpture trail raises awareness of Port Macquarie's threatened Koala population.



This sculpture celebrates the Little Tern as part of the identity of a district.



The City of Canada Bay used attractive glass sculptures (codesigned with school children) to help reduce vandalism on mangrove walkways. Find out more about this project at the [Whale Design](#) website.

## Create a group

Collective effort really does change the world in dramatic ways by concentrating human energy and creativity.

When people work for a common purpose their fears greatly reduce. They are able to take on onerous and challenging activities, set high expectations and support each other.

When established as incorporated associations, informal volunteer groups take on an independent life, making sustained contributions to their communities and industries, and strongly influencing local culture and norms.

### Examples include:

- cooperative purchasing groups
- local trading exchanges
- industry associations
- innovation hubs
- community gardens
- environmental care and 'friends of' groups
- shared venues and play spaces
- resource and equipment pools
- repair centres.



Sustainable Salons, a group of passionate hairdressers aiming to transform the industry. Find out more at their [website](#).



Totally Renewable Yackandandah, a volunteer community group, formed in 2014, with the aim of powering a small Victorian town with 100% renewable energy.



A group of two: '5 for Ryde' is Jo Taranto and Corina Seeto, an amazingly dynamic duo who began reducing disposable coffee cups in Ryde and went to create a fantastic [action guide for community campaigners](#) as part of the War on Waste.

## Create a network or alliance

Bringing actors together to share challenges, celebrate progress, learn from each other, and work on common efforts is a strong intervention. Think about monthly network meetings, communities of practice, blitz groups.

It might be a regular meeting of groups (for example, all the players in conservation in a district), or it might be a network of individuals (for example professional sustainability educators).

It can be formal, with scheduled meetings, or loose, held together by an annual camp fire meeting, a Facebook page and a common passion.

An excellent guide to facilitating a network is [Collaborating for Sustainability](#), which comes with [case studies](#).



The University of Western Sydney used its Environment Trust grant to set up a thriving network of bee-friendly gardeners as part of the Bee Aware of Your Native Bees project.



The Australian Association for Environmental Education- NSW Chapter used its grant to establish networks for environmental educators in each region of NSW. Each has a convenor and meets regularly to learn, share and inspire.

## Modify administrative processes or policies

Is the problem partly caused by unhelpful administrative processes, poorly enforced regulations, or poor policies?

Check whether administrative processes are hindering good practices or rewarding poor practices.

Your social research should consider this and investigate possible solutions.

A good resource to explore this issue is the [Australian Government Guide to Regulation](#).



Byron Shire Council banned smoking on beaches as part of its Butt Free Byron project. Combined with education and engagement, infrastructure and enforcement, this project significantly reduced cigarette butt litter.



## Provide timely data to guide decisions

How many Koalas are on my property? How dry are my soils? How much energy am I using? How much litter is in the river?

Carrying out site assessments, regular environmental audits, or installing technical systems that deliver the right data, can be vital for individuals, councils and government agencies to make good day-to-day decisions.

Having feedback, at the right time, on the negative consequences of actions means corrective action can be taken before damage mounts.

Keep in mind that many individuals simply lack the time or skills to create this data. If so, you could provide a service that does it for them.

### Examples:

**Waverley Council** used an Environmental Trust grant to provide tailored garden plans to residents as part of its Living Connections project.

**Tweed Shire Council's Sustainable Grazing in the Tweed project** used an Environmental Trust grant to provide free soil testing for graziers (which would normally be costly).

## Encourage accountability

Making the performance of key players public is a strong tool to ensure they follow through on commitments.

Examples include performance measures, independent monitoring, accreditation systems, rating systems and rules about transparency.



Measuring and sharing performance data is a good example of accountability.



The Australian Hairdressing Council used an Environmental Trust grant to establish an accreditation system for Sustainable Salons.

# Behavioural strategies for change

The solutions to environmental problems almost always depend on specific people adopting specific practices or behaviours, for example obtaining firewood from difference sources, driving slower in koala habitat, installing bee hotels, recycling hairdressing waste, correctly disposing of litter, or reducing fertiliser use.

The following pages provide information on strategies that can enable behaviour change, with examples.

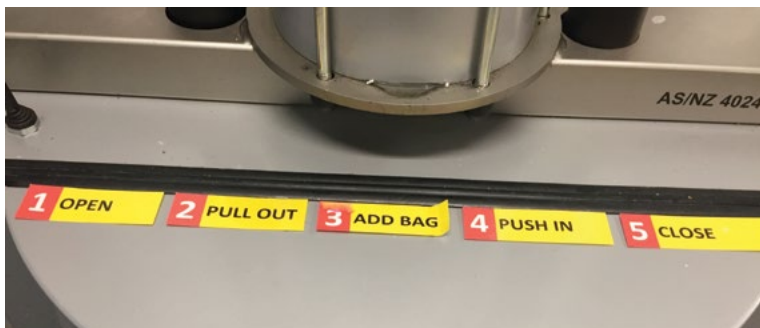
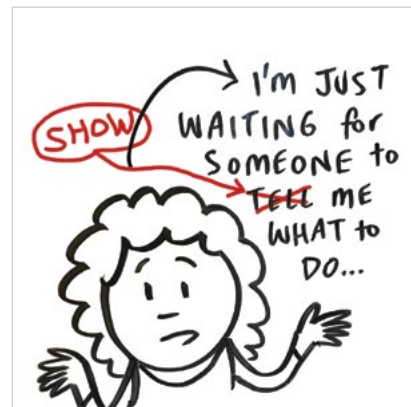
**Note:** These strategies can either be items in your Program Logic or simply aspects of *how* you roll out your activities and communications.

## Familiarity (seeing HOW to do it)

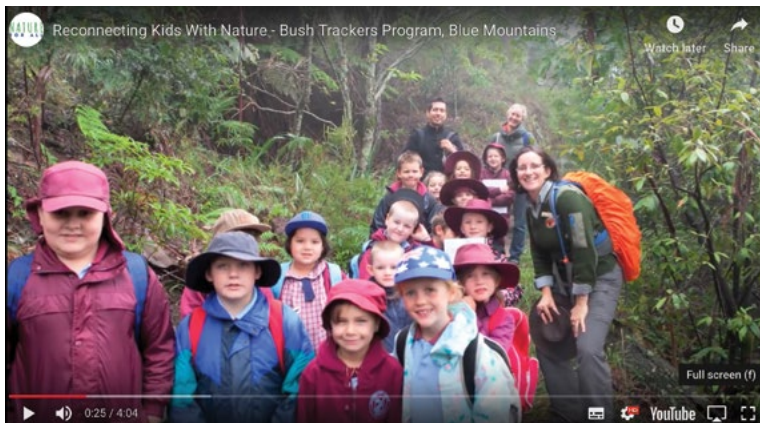
'Fear of the unknown' is one of the biggest obstacles to change. People can be frozen into inaction by the fear of failure and embarrassment.

Creating familiarity is therefore vital for every change project. It means demonstrating the steps in doing the action so clearly that the individual is able to mentally rehearse doing the action. This

Use visual instructions, how-to prompts, modelling (seeing a similar person do the actions) and hands-on, experiential learning.



Clear, simple instructions make a big difference.



Immersive learning creates familiarity and reduces fears. The National Parks and Wildlife Service used its Environmental Trust grant to create Bush Trackers, a program that tackles 'nature deficit disorder' by familiarising kids and families with bushland, learning cultural stories and bush safety.

## Design for easiness

Is the right action as easy as possible to do? Easiness means reducing the mental and physical effort as close to zero as possible.

In practice easiness often includes reducing the number of steps or decisions and making each remaining step or decision as rapid as possible.

Often change requires complex, difficult, time consuming actions to be REDESIGNED so they are simpler, less mentally demanding, and speedier.



This litter bin makes it easy for truck drivers to do the right thing. Source: Highways Today.

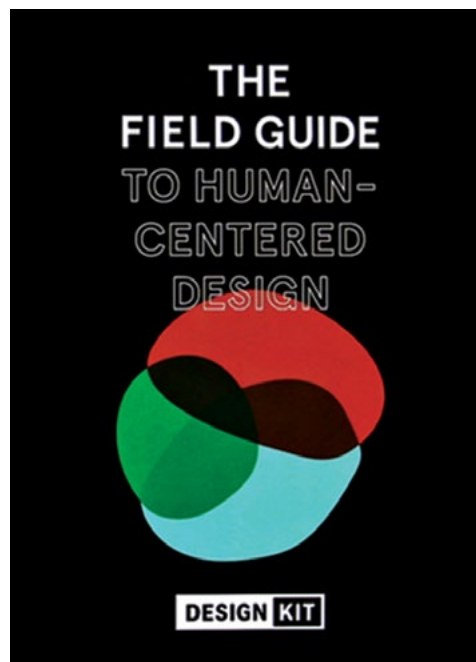


Clear graphics make it easier to understand what you should and shouldn't put in the bin.

Thinking about easiness invites us into the world of Design Thinking, a powerful system of practice that involves:

- immersion in the realities of people's lives (by observing, talking to people)
- rethinking the problem
- imaginative brainstorming
- fast prototyping in the field

An excellent resource on this is *The Field Guide to Human-Centred Design* by IDEO.



The Field Guide to Human-Centred Design.

## Passionate champions and role models

Every successful change project has a passionate leader or role model. Passion and optimism are contagious. Ensure your project brings people into contact with passionate, optimistic people who are 'living the dream' and can teach by example. It's best if they are similar people or part of the local social network rather than celebrities.



Take 3's Sand Solider Program, funded by the Environmental Trust, credited professional iron woman and surfer ambassadors as a big factor behind the take-up of beach clean-ups by surf clubs. Read more about Take 3 for the Sea on their [website](#).



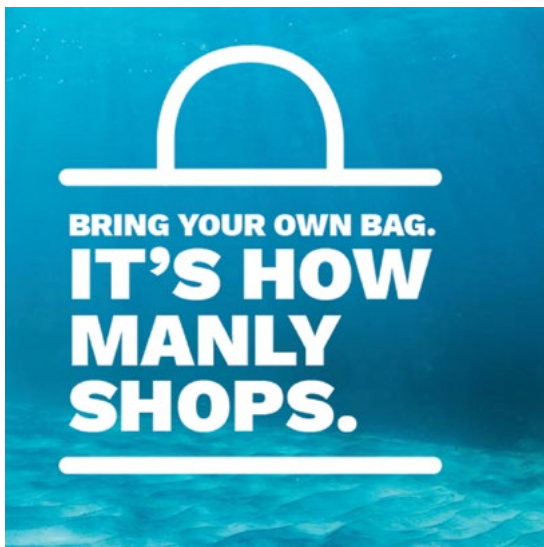
Waverley Council's Bondi Unwrapped project used the Bondi Beach lifeguards as role models for not littering.

## Show that others are doing it ('norms' or 'social proof')

Can you provide evidence to your target group that plenty of other people like themselves are supporting it, doing it and enjoying the benefits?

Humans have “a sort of instinctual response to overvalue something” when we see that others want it.

– Read Montague, neuroscientist, quoted in *Why we do what we do*, *New Scientist*, 31 July 2004



Plastic Free Manly distributed these bags to emphasise a positive social norm for Manly residents.



Bankstown City Council promoted this statement of social norms: “85.7% of Households in Bankstown Recycle Right”.



Images like this from the group Responsible Runners demonstrate that picking up litter is normal and popular.



Barragal Landcare used its Environmental Trust grant to establish 'cluster groups' of landholders who work with their neighbours to control foxes during Autumn and Spring.



Conservation Volunteers Australia used its Environmental Trust grant to support local fishing clubs to run carp muster and Tilapia capture events in northern NSW coastal rivers.



MidCoast Council's 'Weed, Wine and Dine' night focused on sustainable gardens and harmful weeds, as part of its Environmental Trust grant project.

## Buddies and action teams

Buddies create courage, tremendously reducing peoples' fears of change: "Knowing you are not alone."

For example: an action team, a landholder cluster, a green team, a buddy system, mentoring, ride to school groups.

## Peer-peer conversations

Focused peer-peer discussion is a strong enabler of change.

Human beings literally 'talk themselves into change'. This is made possible by informal events where participants express personal views, share challenges, celebrate progress, and learn from each other. Such get-togethers lower the fears of change and strengthen social norms.

Examples include field days, tours, walks, camp fires, picnics, coffee table talks, BBQs, community clean-ups and forums on hot issues.

A carp muster, for example, is both a social event and an opportunity for personal behaviour change as people informally share experiences, knowledge and skills with each other.

Keep in mind that to maximise attendance beyond the 'usual suspects' these events should be designed to have broad popular appeal: they should be fun, have food, and provide child-friendly activities (i.e. not 'workshops' or meetings).

### Examples:

**The Coonamble Neighbourhood Centre** used its Environment Trust grant to run a Coonamble Energy Futures Forum with over 65 attendees.

**Orange City Council** used its Environmental Trust grant to take local and state government weed officers on a high risk weeds study tour as part of a professional development program.

## Weaker behaviour change strategies

### Incentives

Sometimes a well-timed incentive can help people over a behavioural 'road bump', for example a farmer covering the costs of installing an off-creek watering system. However incentives are short term and there's strong evidence that they tend to *reduce* people's intrinsic motivation in the long run. Use selectively.

### Pledges

Pledges tend to work in very specific settings where the pledges are publicly visible to the pledger's own acquaintances, friends and neighbours. The most effective pledges are not formal 'pledges' but rather publicly visible statements of commitment, like front yard signs, bumper stickers, newspaper ads, or engraved bricks on a wall or footpath.

### Facts

If you have important facts that need to be communicated, do so clearly in plain English. However don't assume that facts or messages alone can cause people to change their behaviour. If you're fortunate enough to have a surprising fact that you know will seriously affect people's choices (like "there are 10 teaspoons of sugar in cola") communicate it graphically and strongly. However keep in mind that such persuasive facts are rare, and always have to be linked to easily do-able behaviours.

### Bad news ('threat appeals')

Attempts to make people feel bad about their current behaviours almost always cause denial and resistance. It is better to recognise, thank and celebrate people for the good things they are doing.

# What mix of strategies will you select?

Think about choosing a mix of strategies that:

- are available, affordable and do-able by your team
- have a reasonable probability of making a difference
- if possible, are supported by local evidence, expert advice, or good practice examples from elsewhere.

Typically you'll think about employing a mix of 3-5 systemic and behavioural strategies.

Remember that every situation is different and there is no perfect model. It's important to start with a best hunch and then pivot your project based on what you learn from engaging with the real world.

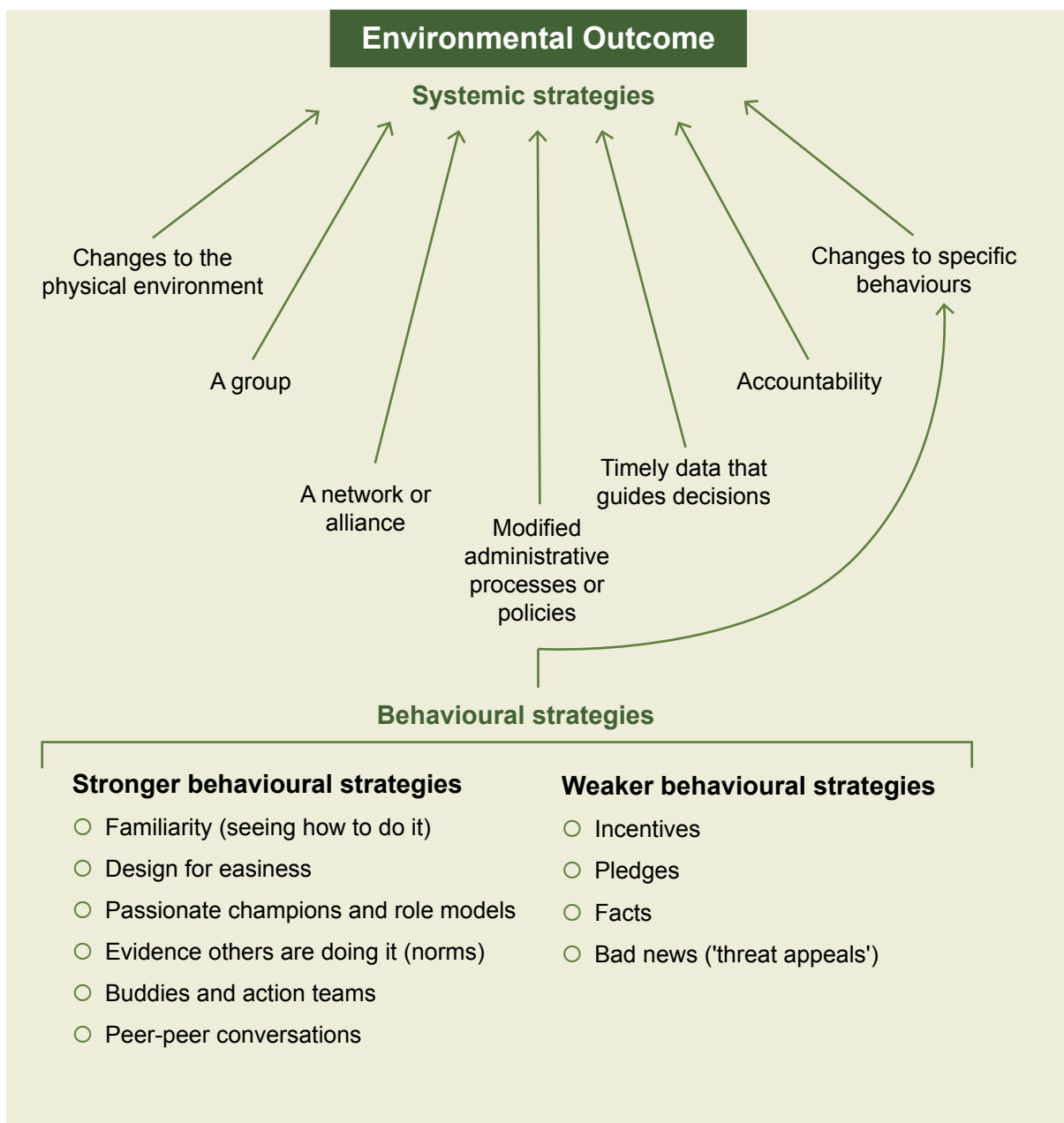


Figure 3: Use a mix of systemic and behavioural strategies in your environmental education project.



## Using values-based communications

'Values' refers to people's hopes, wants, dreams and desires. If we want people's energy and commitment, we need to show we share their values by offering projects that improve their lives or solve their frustrations (as well as achieving the environmental outcomes).

Values are communicated in the language of your project - its name, its stated purpose, and its messages. Keep in mind that the substance of the project must genuinely deliver on those values if you want results to be sustained.

Values are the source of motivation in human beings. The more heart-felt the value, the more time and energy people are likely to spend acting for that value, over a longer period.

For example, if you're working on riparian protection project, instead of "improving our rivers" a better purpose statement might be "giving farmers the edge in their business".

If you can genuinely deliver on that purpose you're more likely to see riparian protection practices adopted and sustained.



## Doing good for others

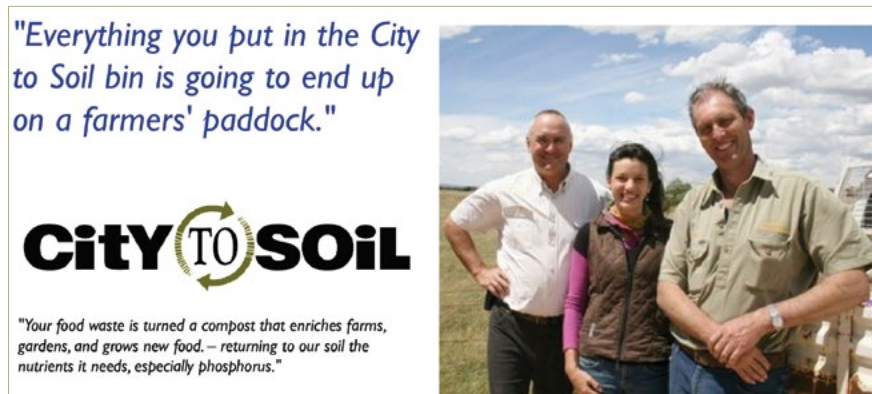
It can be tempting to frame projects around a selfish notion of ‘what’s in it for me’ by focusing on immediate financial rewards (like prizes, giveaways, or incentives) or on avoiding threats (like fines).

Instead, it can be more effective to focus on making a positive difference for other humans.

Most people are strongly motivated to make a better world for other human beings. Provided we make it safe and simple to act, most people will readily accept a chance to leave a positive legacy. Read more in this [HuffPost article](#).

### Examples:

**Queanbeyan City Council’s City to Soil** project aimed to get householders to use a kitchen caddy to transfer food waste into their green waste bin. It was framed as a chance for householders to do good by improving the lives of farmers, and to return to ‘our soil’ the nutrients it needs.



Queanbeyan City Council’s ‘City to Soil’ project was framed around making a difference to the lives of farmers and to ‘our soil’.

**Project Cane Changer** is a successful program to increase the number of environmentally accredited cane growers in Queensland.

It aimed to align with cane growers’ values by recognising their existing environmental knowledge, their pride as custodians of the land, and their history of innovation.

Read about how psychology was used to understand what motivated sugar cane farmers to change their practices in this [Rural Extension and Innovation Systems Journal article](#).



Project Cane Changer surveyed 48 cane growers to understand their values before devising the strategy. Read more on the [project website](#).

## Social research helps you understand values

Understanding what values are important for an audience is vital for good project design.

Social research lets us hear what matters to our audience so that we can then construct projects that deliver **both** on things they care about and on your desired environmental outcomes.

Spend time talking to your audience to get a sense of what they care strongly about.

For example, with a group of farmers it might be productivity, pride in their land, self-respect as hard working producers, or just tackling a particular weed that's taking too much of their time and money.

Once you figure it out, make sure you frame the purpose and language of your project around that value.

## Should you try to change people's values?

Keep in mind that it can be extraordinarily hard to change people's values. That's because values are the result of people's entire experience of life. Values can sometimes be altered by intense and confronting life experiences (see next section 'Offering transformative experiences'). However it will always be easier to 'paddle with the current' by aligning with people's existing hopes and desires, rather than trying to alter them. In fact trying to change them can be dangerous because audiences will often read this as 'you think I'm bad', leading to denial and resistance.

Therefore, instead of trying to motivate people to believe in your values, it's better to devise projects that are clearly at the service of your audience's own hopes and dreams.

Read more about values framing for the environment in this 2010 journal article by George Lakoff in [Environmental Communication](#).

### Values-based communications: Key points

**Working with your target group's values will help to communicate that your project is relevant to them and increase engagement.**

- Find out what your audience care strongly about and then frame the purpose and language of your project around that value.
- Framing your project around the positive hopes and dreams of your audience will help to harness their motivation and commitment.
- Always be aware of whose values you are communicating - yours or your audience's?
- Avoid the common mistake of trying to persuade your audience to care about the same values you care about.

Figure 4: Refer to these key points to ensure your project communications are based on the values of your target group.

## Offering transformative experiences

Transformational Learning for Sustainability is an emerging theoretical perspective on environmental education that focuses on devising experiences that shift people’s perceptions, meanings and worldviews: their ‘frames of reference’. This includes, for example, shifting from short-term thinking to long-term thinking, from a pessimistic view of human nature to a hopeful view, from competition to collaboration, from being separate from nature to being located in nature.

Read more about Transformative learning and sustainability in this 2010 article by Stephen Sterling in [Learning and Teaching in Higher Education](#).

Such transformative shifts often require exposure to strong and confronting experiences, however it is possible to incorporate simple elements into any project that will increase the potential for transformative moments in your education and engagement activities.

Below is a checklist outlining the different transformative experiences that you can build into your project activities.

Transformative experiences Checklist	
<b>Build these experiences into your project to enable people to have transformative moments where they shift their assumptions and worldviews.</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strong, immersive, first hand experiences
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conversations between people of diverse values and worldviews
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bottom-up decision making
<input type="checkbox"/>	Big picture thinking
<input type="checkbox"/>	“How it could be” discussions that envisage a better future
<input type="checkbox"/>	Time with passionate role models
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use creativity to break stereotypes

Figure 5: Use this checklist to build transformative experiences into your project activities.

The following section provides information on these experiences, with examples.

## Strong, immersive, first hand, sensory experiences

Can you bring people face-to-face with environmental problems and/or inspiring solutions? For example a visit to a landfill or recycling facility, or an immersive bushwalk, or a day picking up litter on a beach, or a day working on a permaculture farm.

Keep in mind that there needs to be a close attention to hopeful solutions to prevent people despairing. For more on this see the work of Joanna Macy and her book [Active Hope: How to face the mess we're in without going crazy](#).

When thinking about the design of these experiences, an excellent resource is Tim and Dan Heath's [The Power of Moments](#). They propose that transformational experiences have four features in common:

- **Elevation:** they are emotional moments that rise above the routine.
- **Insight:** they contain crisp, surprising insights that the audience discover for themselves.
- **Pride:** they celebrate people's achievements.
- **Connection:** they involve a strong experience of connection to others.

### Example:

**Coffs Harbour City Council's Coffs Ambassadors Tours** program used its Environmental Trust grant to train volunteers to take residents on guided bushwalks in their special local 'place'.

These Coffs Ambassadors were role models and encouraged participants to adopt simple practices to protect these environments, e.g removing noxious weeds from their gardens, keeping their dogs on leads and picking up litter.



The Coffs Ambassadors Tours program took residents on bushwalks to special natural environments in their local suburbs and towns, like rainforests and estuaries.

## Conversations between people of diverse values and worldviews

Conversing directly with people from diverse backgrounds and worldviews can suddenly shift our own. It's an effective way to break down prejudices and open minds to alternatives.

Ideally these events should be social, enjoyable, safe, comfortable and non-confronting. Food is an excellent way to bring people together.

The facilitator should take care to ensure that people don't feel judged, and there should be a clear purpose and structure.



The Dogfest community event.

### Examples:

**Dogfest** was a festival-like event that engaged Redlands dog owners in responsible dog ownership and Koala protection.

Read more in this [Redland City Bulletin news story](#).

**'Bunny Boiler Challenge'**  
**Phillip Island Landcare Group Fundraising Dinner and Rabbit Control Information Night**  
Rabbits are our National disgrace – they also taste great!  
This is another opportunity for professional Chefs and Home Cooks to present their favourite rabbit recipes and be judged the winners for 2016  
**When? Friday 18th March 2016, 6pm until late**  
**Where? Cape Kitchen, 1215 Phillip Island Road, Newhaven**  
**Costs? \$25 per head or \$60 per family (pay at door), Drinks at bar prices, no BYO.**

**Activities?** Before dinner: Rabbit control techniques presentation, while children play 'Pin the tail on the rabbit' game.  
Dinner: Sample rabbit recipe entries from competing Professional Chefs & Home Cooks. (Non-rabbit eaters need to mention this when booking)  
After Dinner: Prize presentation for winning dishes judged by the audience. Raffle drawn with prizes donated from local groups and organisations. Live local music – Rabbit poems, songs or stories from the audience.

**Chefs register by Friday 4th March to enter your rabbit recipe.**  
**Conditions of Entry:** One entry per person. Entry is \$10.00 with 2 rabbits for each entry. Professional Chef and Home Cook competition categories with a \$50.00 prize to the winner of each category. Rabbits and pick-up details will be available on registration. Dishes should be brought to venue heated and ready for serving. No cooking on site. Facilities will be provided for keeping dishes warm. Electric slow cookers are ideal to bring your hot dish in.  
**No unregistered dishes accepted on night**

**RSVP by Monday 14th March to attend this event.**  
Please respect RSVP aspect to ensure catering is to your satisfaction.  
Registrations & RSVP's to Joel Geoghegan by phone on 0409 705 652 or email [j.geoghegan@basscoast.vic.gov.au](mailto:j.geoghegan@basscoast.vic.gov.au)

The bottom of the flyer features three logos: 'THE CAPE KITCHEN philippisland nature parks', 'Phillip Island LandCare' (with a koala logo and the tagline 'Leveraging Productive Landcare Throughout Victoria'), and 'Bass Coast Landcare Network'.

Landcare's Bunny Boiler Challenge event

**Bunny Boiler challenge**, an annual Landcare event that brings together the whole Phillip Island community with the aim of engaging landholders in rabbit control.

## Bottom-up decision making

This is where participants make important decisions about what problems to target and how to target them. Landcare is a good example of this approach. It involves self-determination plus the resources to act.

## Big picture thinking

Also known as ‘systems thinking’, this is where participants are familiarised with, and have a chance to discuss, the systemic causes of problems.

This helps people to understand connections between environmental, economic, social and political systems so that they can create solutions that go beyond just addressing the isolated symptoms of a larger problem. Exploring these connections can also empower them to critically think about environmental issues **outside** of the scope of the project and how they might be solved, which can be an important legacy of your project.

For example, a project engaging café owners to stop using plastic straws would include information about the bigger problem of single-use plastics, its impacts on our oceans and waste management systems, and the political movement to ban single-use plastics.

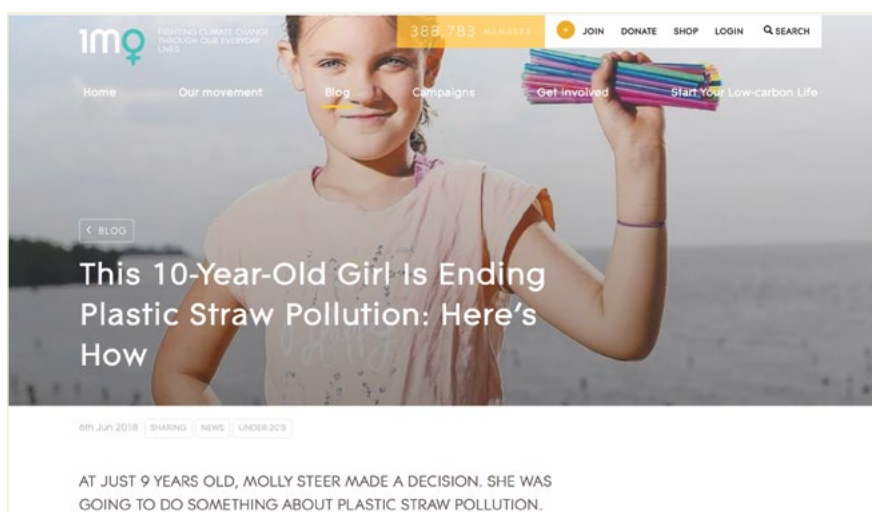
## “How it could be” discussions that envisage a better future

Imagining a future where an environmental problem is tackled can reduce pessimism and help people understand the pathways to improvement. Also known as ‘envisioning’ or ‘futures thinking’, doing this helps create a link between where we are now and where we want to be in the future, so we can plan a series of steps to get us there.

You might ask each participant to answer the question: “What would it be like if this problem was no longer with us?” Being exposed to inspiring, innovative examples can help people think imaginatively about possible futures.

## Time with passionate role models

Meeting passionate, stereotype-busting leaders and innovators can spark enthusiasm and defeat pessimism. Their authentic stories make it possible to believe that out-of-the-ordinary results are possible.



Here is a passionate role model: Molly Steer, whose [Straw No More campaign](#) has inspired adults and children across Australia.

## Use creativity to break stereotypes

Use your creativity to design a project that breaks expectations about how environmental education projects are supposed to look and feel.

When you take risks and break the rules it makes it easier for your audience to believe they can take risks and break the rules too.

For more inspiring stereotype-breaking tactics, see the Enabling Change website resource ["If Not, Then What?"](#)



The **Sugar vs the Reef?** project in Mackay held a Sunset Symphony in the Sunflowers to showcase how sunflowers could be grown as a sustainable soil recovery crop on cane farms.

Read more at the [project website](#).

Watch this [video](#) of the event and this [documentary](#) about how art and agriculture came together for the project.



# Doing social research with your target group

Traditionally, environmental education projects were built on the assumption that changing people's knowledge and attitudes was enough to change their behaviours.

Systems Thinking points out that this is not so simple. People's daily practices are embedded in a taut web of social norms, infrastructure, technologies, feedback loops, prices, legal rules, and so on. Meanwhile, Social Practice Theory points out that many daily practices are resistant to change because they define people's membership of a social group. For example, we might hear that 'real farmers around here don't grow organics' or 'serious cyclists around here don't use bicycle bells'.

To create sustained change we need to find ways to intervene in this complex web of influences and meanings. This means doing social research at the start of a project to learn about the practical realities of people's lives and businesses, their values, and their sense of identity. Developing insights into the practical constraints of your audience's lives, their motivating values, and the norms of their peer groups helps us to identify interventions that will be welcomed rather than resisted.

## Social research methods

Social research methods include:

- **Interviews:** One-on-one conversations with individuals. This could be formal interviews e.g. sitting down in a coffee shop, or informal discussions in the field e.g. talking to dog walkers on a beach.
- **Focus groups:** Facilitated conversations, each typically with 5-7 people.
- **Field observation:** Watch them doing it. For example, staff could observe littering behaviours at a festival, or cameras could observe dogs being exercised in a 'no dog' zone.
- **Do it yourself:** Walk in their shoes or alongside them. If you can experience the situation for yourself, do so - you'll learn a lot.
- **Codesign:** Invite some of your audience to help design the project with your team. Typically this means holding a workshop that includes an inspiring briefing followed by a brainstorm.
- **Questionnaire:** A list of questions to be answered by individuals, see more in the Evaluation section of this guide on page 36.

For step-by-step instructions on how to conduct these and other social research methods visit the [Design Kit website](#).

## A note about questionnaires

Questionnaires are good at measuring the distribution of beliefs, attitudes, practices and social norms in a population. However they are a weak tool for obtaining insight into how to move people into a desired future.

Social research should always begin with interviews to ensure open-ended listening with the aim of having our assumptions challenged, and obtaining surprising insights. Once this qualitative research is complete, a questionnaire can determine the proportion of your population that may be open to various strategies.

## How many people in your sample?

There is no universal rule as it depends on your budget and your engagement targets, but as a guide you want enough people so that your results can be corroborated by several individuals. It's not essential to meet academic standards though, as the aim is for your team's assumptions to be challenged and tested, and to obtain unexpected insights.

You might consider:

- 3-4 focus groups with 7 people each *and/or*
- 30-60 face-to-face interviews *and/or*
- 30-60 field observations

## Interviews

Social research should always begin with interviews to ensure open-ended listening with the aim of having our assumptions challenged, and obtaining surprising insights.

**Examples: The City of Canada Bay** interviewed 80 dog walkers in public parks to develop their "Bag it, Bin it" dog poo reduction campaign.

**Waverly Council** interviewed 42 household recyclers, by knocking on doors in apartment blocks, to develop a project to reduce recycling contamination.

## Who to interview?

When deciding who to interview, consider starting with pre-qualifying questions that exclude people at the extremes of the bell curve ('the converted' or 'the opponents'). It's often best to look for people who are open to the idea but not yet doing it. That way you can hone in on practical barriers that might make a difference.

## What questions to ask?

Start by creating a script of questions. Here are some suggested questions you could use as a starting point.

**What is their personal experience of the situation?**

For example: "Tell me how you currently recycle / deal with your picnic litter / maintain your garden / manage weeds on your property / use the river?"

Ideally, collect this information as a flowing narrative ("What do you do first? What do you do next?" etc..). Listen carefully for 'pain points' where people experience frustrations, negative feelings or obstacles. Ask people to interpret their observations along the way. For example, a littered park might be interpreted as "council doesn't care"

**What might enable personal change?**

What ideas do they have for tackling the environmental problem?

What do they understand about the causes of the problem?

What do they think about the proposed solution?

What conditions need to be met for them to adopt a specific action or practice?

Why aren't they acting now?

How could a practice / tool / system be made easier?
What do they think is the 'normal' practice amongst their peers?
What do their peers say about the problem? About the solution?
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>What might engage them?</b>
What kinds of community activities most attract/excite them?
Who do they trust as credible sources and leaders?
How would they like to be communicated with?
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Demographics:</b> It can be important to ask for data such as the respondents' age (in ranges), gender, languages spoken at home, whether owner/tenant, and time in the area/industry.

## Codesign

Codesign is an approach that brings your target audience directly into your project planning process to design the details of your strategy, tactics and messages.

Holding a codesign workshop with some supportive members of your target audience allows you to tap into their perspectives and imaginations directly. See the [Design Kit website](#) for detailed instructions on how to run a codesign workshop.

### Examples:

**The Redland City Council and Griffith University Leave it! project** that aimed to reduce domestic dog attacks on koalas in south-east Queensland, started with six codesign workshops with dog owners and experts. They were shown examples of projects from other places, then brainstormed solutions together. The result was a positive, dog-focused program that delivered obedience training, giving dog owners the skills needed to avoid wildlife, and launched through a popular Dogfest festival that had 1500 attendees. Read more in [this ResearchGate website article from Social Marketing in Action](#).

**Waverley Council recycling contamination project:** To design a strategy to tackle recycling contamination in multi-unit dwellings, the council held a 2 hour workshop with five internal staff, three managing agents, and three keen recyclers from blocks of flats. They were briefed with local data and possible solutions from around the world. They then brainstormed and prioritised their ideas to generate the strategy that was piloted in Waverley.

<b>Social Research: Key Points</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect information systematically e.g. have a written format that you complete for each person you interview.</li> <li>• Be completely neutral and avoid advocating a solution or trying to convince people of any proposition.</li> <li>• Make sure you meet people face-to-face and ask open-ended questions that let you explore possibilities. Don't just rely on written surveys.</li> <li>• Be open minded and willing to be surprised and discomforted.</li> </ul>

Figure 6: Refer to these key points when doing social research with your target group.

## Testing your project

Field testing involves planning a cheap and quick ‘no frills’ version of at least one ‘make-or-break’ engagement activity that’s at the centre of your project.

You then test this with a small number of your target group to find out how your audience responds to the activities e.g. which elements had an impact and what didn’t work?

This will give you new ideas on how you can refine or redesign the activity. Keep in mind that the purpose of field testing is not simply to confirm your initial assumptions but instead to learn how to change your project for the better. It should cause you to abandon some aspects, build on others, and generate valuable new ideas as you go.

Field testing aims to ensure your project works as effectively as possible in real life conditions. It’s excellent risk management.

### Example:

If your key engagement activity is to offer site visits to landholders to reduce weed infestation, you might begin by offering site visits to 10 landholders in one part of the catchment.

You’d subsequently interview the participants to find out whether they applied new weed management techniques on their land. You might run two or three such field trials, improving your ideas each time, before feeling confident to roll out your program on a large scale.

## Questions to test

Your field testing should include data collection. At a minimum, collect data on the following questions:

1. Did the tactics engage the target group(s)? For example, did the pop-up stall attract residents to have a conversation and take a native plant home?
2. Was the engagement experience satisfying? Did it answer their questions? Did they feel more likely to act?
3. Did the engagement lead to the desired action? For example, how many people planted the native plant in their garden, and watered it?



Port Phillip City Council carried out a simple field test of a possible strategy to increase the use of bicycle bells by cyclists. They sprayed temporary stencils on a number of shared paths and counted the before and after rates of bellling by cyclists.

### Example: Canterbury-Bankstown Council

Made good use of field testing to reduce contamination in recycling bins.

The project team selected 1400 households and divided them into six similar groups. They devised six different prototypes, one for each group, and trialled them over a 14 week period, measuring the results with bin audits.

The results were:

- Feedback cards alone = 0–6% reduction in contamination
- Feedback cards + plastic tubs to transport recyclables from kitchen to bin = 16% reduction in contamination
- Feedback cards + a hole in the bin lid to make it inconvenient to stuff whole plastic bags into the recycling bin = 25% reduction in contamination
- Feedback cards + face-to-face pledges with council staff = 25% reduction in contamination
- Feedback cards + door knocking by council staff beforehand = 30% reduction in contamination
- Feedback cards + bulk recycling bin = 37% increase in contamination

These results let the team to make an evidence-based decision about the most effective strategy.

**Hint:** If you work for local government, you may be able to test your idea on a sample of council staff who aren't directly involved in your project. Council staff are a broad cross-section of adults, so they can be a good test bed.



Field testing allowed Canterbury-Bankstown Council to test six alternative strategies to reduce recycling contamination. Each strategy combined these feedback cards with a different tactic.

### Testing: Key points

- Select at least one 'make-or-break' engagement activity that's at the centre of your project.
- Create a quick and dirty version of this key engagement activity to test on a limited sample of your target group.
- Be clear about the questions you're testing and be sure to collect data on how people responded to the activity.
- It can be a good idea to create a number of different versions of your activity and test each one on a separate sample, comparing the results.
- The idea is not to confirm your initial assumptions, but to learn how to change your project for the better. You should expect to abandon some aspects, build on others, and generate valuable new ideas as you go.

Figure 7: Refer to these key points when planning your project testing phase.

# Reflecting on the lessons you're learning

It's valuable to have a structured process for reflecting as a team on the lessons you're learning as you devise the project.

This is a basic action research format you can use a number of times during your project, for example:

- To identify lessons from the research stage;
- To identify changes you want to make following the testing stage.

## The reflection format

1. Bring together your team and some additional minds for a short discussion e.g. two hours. It's good to choose an out-of-office location e.g. a garden café.
2. Review the results of the research/testing activities.
3. Facilitate a discussion in three phases:
  - a. What results were surprising? List them.
  - b. What could those results mean? List possible lessons.
  - c. What changes should we make to our project based on those results? List the recommended changes.
4. Record your decisions.

## Note to facilitators

Ask people to avoid advocating solutions and instead get into a curiosity mindset where all ideas are respected. To maximise the range of ideas, begin by silent brainstorming with sticky notes before commencing a free discussion. If difficult choices need to be made, consider prioritising with dots rather than letting strong opinions dominate.

Along the way, the facilitator might ask more questions to focus people's minds.

## For example:

*"What happened?"*

*"What was dispensible?"*

*"What did you see/hear?"*

*"If that was impossible, what could we do instead?"*

*"What makes you say that?"*

*"What would a comedian/celebrity gardener/celebrity cook do?"*

*"What else could explain that?"*

*"Whose point of view is missing?"*

*"What was great?"*

*"What caused laughter?"*

*"What assumptions are we making?"*

*"What assumptions are stopping us?"*

*"What didn't work?"*

*"If you had a magic wand, what would you do?"*

If major uncertainties remain, carry out additional research or field testing. Then repeat the reflection process.

## A bit more on evaluation

The previous sections on social research, testing and reflection show how evaluation is a process that is essential to integrate into all stages of your project. Research and testing are types of ‘formative’ evaluation that help you develop and adaptively manage your project by improving its design and outcomes, whereas ‘summative’ evaluation is done at the end of a project to measure its outcomes.

The new NSW Environmental Trust environmental education program has been designed with a clearer focus on program logic. Program logic steps you through how to plan your project so that you can evaluate all aspects it, from the resources you develop, activities you run, immediate participation changes you encourage your target group to make, and the systemic and behaviour changes you create for an environmental outcome.

This program logic, combined with the research and testing phases and emphasis on reflection through all phases, including implementation, is the evaluation framework of your project.

### Baseline data

To be able to evaluate if your project has created change, you need a starting point from which to measure your changes. This is known as baseline data. It can describe something physical e.g. the % of recyclables going to landfill due to contamination or length of existing cycleways, or social e.g. the number or % of residents who have adopted a new practice or number of new organisational practices adopted.

It is critically important to obtain this baseline data either when you are developing your project concept or during the research and testing phases. Knowing your baseline data will help you set realistic and achievable targets for the systemic and behavioural changes you are aiming to create, as well as any targets for environmental change if your project is able to measure these. Once you have started your project activities to educate and engage your target groups, it is generally difficult or impossible to go back to get this data.

### Describing evaluation data

There are many different forms of evaluation data or information:

- **Statistical:** from surveys (questionnaires and semi-structure interviews), checklists and inventories, tests, statistical data banks, public and academic reports.
- **Written:** from diaries, interviews, workshop notes, electronic communication, reflective reporting, minutes, plans, formal documents (policies, agreements).
- **Aural:** from interviews, workshops, focus groups, radio tapes, teleconferences.
- **Visual:** from time lapse and stills photography and videos, visual arts, maps, mind maps and word clouds.

Evaluation data or information is often described in two different ways:

- **Quantitative:** this is numerical data, for example the number or percentage of people who changed their practice or participated in a project.
- **Qualitative:** this data is made up of words or stories, for example text, voice or visuals to describe the experiences of the people who changed their practice or participated in a project.



## Evaluation Methods

Below are brief descriptions of the methods or tools you can use to collect evaluation data or information. An excellent guide for more detailed information on each and how to do them is the [Community Sustainability Engagement Evaluation Toolbox website](#).

### Audits or Counts

Audits refer to undertaking counts, whether they are of fixtures, appliances, materials, or waste. The main types of audits in behaviour change programs relate to energy, water and waste. Audits can be undertaken through home visits or through self-reporting done via a questionnaire.

### Case Studies

This involves the written documentation of the ways that particular individuals or organisations responded to a program. They are both evaluative and demonstrative in nature. It is a means of obtaining qualitative information which will assist in the evaluation of the program. Similarly, the case study can be used as an example of positive practice that occurred as a result of the program, and so will encourage the involvement of others.

### Checklists

These are routine data collection methods that are purpose built for the project. They are often used for service evaluations where it is important to collect data about client contact on a daily or weekly basis.

### Dartboard

The evaluation dartboard is a quick and simple method for participants to rate the delivery of a workshop, training session or similar activity. It provides a visual snapshot of participants' views without the need for further analysis or work (for example, compared to questionnaires).

### Deemed Savings

Deemed savings refers to using equations to calculate resource consumption savings from a range of actions. The calculations are developed from a set of assumptions that should reflect an average scenario for the action or behaviour.

### Diaries

The keeping of a diary about what is being learned as a result of a program is useful for long face-to-face training and/or community development projects. It can be used when there is a need to explore attitudes, determinants, processes and/or experiences. A diary can be totally unstructured or focus on specific issues or processes.

### Ethnographic studies

Such studies provide a written description of the rules, norms and traditions of a particular ethnographic group. They offer real life evidence of activity, and integration of theory and practice within a group.

## Footprint Calculators

Ecological or carbon footprint calculators provide a tool to calculate deemed savings based on answers to a set of questions. Theoretically, a footprint calculator can be used to evaluate a participant's footprint before and after an intervention.

## Focus groups

These involve the identification of groups of between 5 and 12 people who are then involved in a facilitated discussion about a project or activity. The groups should reflect the population that is targeted by the project, although sometimes focus groups of other stakeholders might be used. The facilitator will use a purpose-built discussion guide to ensure that the process obtains the data required. Data is analysed through the grouping of like information, then the identification of key themes and findings. Note that the data collected is qualitative in nature.

## Interviews

These involve a one-on-one discussion between the evaluator and the subject of the interview and can be done face to face (in person or online) or over the phone. They might occur in a structured manner, where a questionnaire or discussion guide is used. At times, however they might be semi-structured, or not structured at all (for example, "Can we talk about this project?").

## Lessons Learnt Workshop

A lessons learnt workshop is another variation of the focus group. The lessons learnt workshop can be used by projects, teams or organisations as a participatory evaluation tool. The workshop can be held at stages throughout a project (formative evaluation) or held at the end of the project (summative evaluation).

## Literature reviews

Literature reviews can be extensive or more precise. They will help establish the framework for both the program and its evaluation, and will often identify useful benchmarks. Also, this process will sometimes unearth useful evaluation tools that will save a lot of work for the program manager.

## Metering

Metering refers to the measurement of resource consumption, particularly for electricity, gas and water. Most residential dwellings have individual electricity and water meters, and where town-gas is available, a gas meter. Metering data can be obtained from various sources including: collecting billing data, Meter reading and Smart Metering.

## Observation

Observation can take place anywhere at any time and is particularly useful for collecting data about behaviour. Data from observing people's actual practices is often very different to what people self report, so this can be critical information.

The observer can be a participant in the program, or a passive observer. Specific records of observations need to be kept. These include written notes, photographs, video records, audit results, etc. Ethics issues may need to be addressed in observations, especially for observations not in public places or where audio or video recording is being used.

## Questionnaires (a.k.a Surveys)

Questionnaires can be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative information on participants' knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and awareness. Participants can complete questionnaires themselves on paper or online, with online survey tools like SurveyMonkey being popular because the data is collated and analysed for you. Participants can also be asked to complete a questionnaire over the telephone or face-to-face. Random sampling can be used and results triangulated with other methods of data collection. This can also be done within the questionnaire by asking the same question in two or three different ways.

(Although the term survey and questionnaire are often used interchangeably, surveys actually refer to the broader range of methods to collect information from a group of people, which include questionnaires and interviews.)

Because questionnaires/surveys are a very common evaluation method used by environmental educators, please refer to the tips on the following page to ensure your target group engages with it and you get the information you need.

## Routine data collection

Data collection at a population level. It can be broad scale (for example, how many people are in this particular non-English speaking target group, using data from the ABS census) or specific to project (for example, how many people attended this workshop).

## Stakeholder Analysis

A stakeholder analysis provides a means to identify the relevant stakeholders and assess their views and support for the proposed project. A stakeholder can be defined as any individuals, groups of people, institutions or organisations that may have a significant interest in the success or failure of a potential project around the issue of concern. These may be affected either positively or negatively by a proposed project.

## Storytelling

Storytelling provides a powerful means to obtain information on a project's outcomes from participants' experiences and viewpoints. Storytelling provides meaningful information that can highlight both the strong points and weaknesses of a project, as well as any unintended consequences. In a way, by asking participants to provide a story on a project, it asks them to evaluate an aspect of a project, rather than provide information for someone else to place a value on, storytelling generally brings out memorable or momentous experiences.

The Most Significant Change (MSC) is a method of participatory evaluation that involves the collection of significant change stories at different levels of the intervention (for example project staff, change agents, intervention participants) and collectively deciding on the most significant change stories based on selected themes (called domains).

## Time Tracking

Community engagement and behaviour change projects can take up a lot of staff time (most likely more than planned). It is important to track the amount of staff time, and what activities the work is related to, so as to provide lessons for future projects.

## Questionnaire Tips

- Participants are more likely to commit to answering a questionnaire when they see it as interesting, of value, short, clearly thought through and well presented.
- It is very important to have consistency between pre and post survey questions.
- Use both open (long response) and closed (multiple choice) questions.
- Begin with questions that will raise interest.
- Ask easier questions at the beginning to help get the respondent into the swing of things. (This does not necessarily include personal questions relating to demographics. These are often left until the end when the respondent has committed themselves to answering and are less likely to object to giving such data).
- Have a logical sequence, e.g. group together all questions that relate to similar areas.
- Some general rules for question wording are:
  - Be concise and unambiguous.
  - Avoid double questions.
  - Avoid questions involving negatives.
  - Ask for precise answers.
  - Avoid leading questions.
- Don't ask too many questions, as this can lead to a poor response rate.
- Review your survey by answering every question yourself and asking a colleague to do the same. This will help you to find out:
  - If it is easy to do and how long it takes to complete.
  - If you have used the correct settings in an online survey, so that respondents can answer questions the way you want them to, e.g. making a question compulsory or having a multiple-choice question that only allows respondents to choose one answer.
  - If your link or QR code for an online survey works.
- Test the questionnaire on a small sample of your participants first to detect any flaws in your questioning and convert open-ended questions to a closed question by determining the range of possible answers.
- Having done your test survey, you can make amendments that will help to maximise your response rate and minimise your error rate on answers.
- Increase your survey response rate by:
  - Explaining what is about.
  - Persuading participants why it's important to complete, e.g. survey responses help you to report back, which increases the likelihood of getting funding to offer the program again.
  - Providing an estimate of how long it will take to complete.
  - Reassuring respondents with a promise of confidentiality, explaining what you mean by this and ensuring all staff with access to survey data comply with this promise.
  - Offering inducements like entry in a prize draw.
- Build time into your engagement activities for participants to complete pre and post surveys and do this as a group to encourage more people to complete the survey.
- If surveying participants at events, ensure staff are positioned at all exit points.
- Avoid people taking a survey home to complete, as it is unlikely that it will be returned to you.