

## Learning to Live Sustainably

### Evaluating education and behaviour change programs for environmental sustainability

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## Learning to Live Sustainably

- Research, evaluation, reporting and debate are a critical part of the whole process for engagement, learning and action for sustainability
- To date, this area has been neglected
- This area must be addressed within the need for comprehensive evaluation of our total effort for achieving sustainability – education and behaviour change methods do not operate in isolation and should not be singled out for particular scrutiny

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### Why evaluate?

- provide evidence of progress and ultimate outcomes to key stakeholders and the community as a whole
- guide the continual improvement of future work
- motivate future efforts by participants and attract new participants by providing feedback on progress
- improve accountability and recognition of responsible organisations (eg through benchmarking against agreed preferred practice and key success factors)

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### Distinctive features of the process being evaluated

- evaluating a long term, strategic process that sequentially rolls out and builds momentum
- process is unavoidably very complex:
  - aims to facilitate many different learnings and behaviours;
  - uses many different methods to suit the wide range of local, sectoral and individual differences;
  - factors other than the education program may be influencing the outcomes
- often large scale, both geographically and in terms of population size, with varying local and sectoral receptivity
- intended behavioural outcomes may not be evident for some years
- relatively small or very small total budget (with the risk that "ideal" in depth evaluation could take up the whole budget)

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Being a long term process means that over time evaluation needs to measure indicators of both:

- the **ultimate learning and behaviour change outcomes and associated environmental sustainability outcomes** that are aimed for; and
- **intermediate indicators** that show if the unfolding strategy process is on track at each point in time

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Reaching large numbers of people in an in-depth way means that evaluation needs to assess:

- **Quality** of activity and outcomes - eg intensive research on what is really happening regarding learning and behaviour change outcomes in sample situations where the change model is being reasonably fully implemented?

and

- **Quantity** / scale, spread and balance of activity – eg at each point in time how numerous and widespread are the situations represented by the samples? How many people are involved? What proportion of organisations in a sector are participating?

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#### No simple answer

- there is no single or simple method to effectively evaluate a comprehensive E&BC program for environmental sustainability
- needs a well-chosen package of evaluation methods tailored to the specifics of the situation (rather than just using a simplistic "off the shelf" evaluation process such as might be used in market research)

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#### Validity of data

Collect data through a range methods and compare findings from each method to help detect dubious data and give heightened confidence in the overall "picture" being built up.

- compare stated and observed behaviour
- longitudinal ("before and after") data
- compare situations that while otherwise similar differ in that only one has the education and behaviour change program ("with and without" or "test and control" data)
- obtain the largest possible number and range of samples and average the data across these.

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### Case study - Waste Wise

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#### Key focuses for "whole-community" engagement, learning and action:

- local councils and their communities
- businesses/workplaces and vocational learning
- schools and their families and local communities
- community events
- education centres (permanent and mobile)

#### Facilitated and supported

- at **regional level** (Regional Waste Management Groups / Regional Education Officers), and
- at **state level** (EcoRecycle and partners eg for Waste Wise Schools program - Gould League, CERES, Primary Principals' Association)

### Case study - Waste Wise

#### Evaluation data collected for programs in each focus area

##### Aimed to cover:

- what action implemented?
- what results achieved? (preferably with cause and effect evidence)
- what next? (continuous improvement)

##### Based on range of sources including:

- observations by program staff
- broad-scale surveys / questionnaires
- in-depth local studies

### Case study - Waste Wise

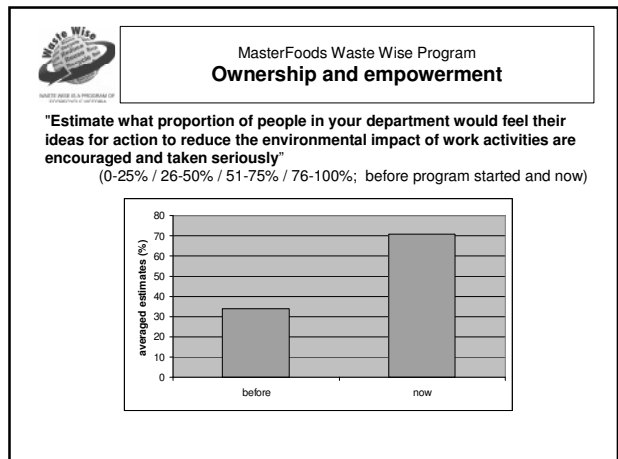
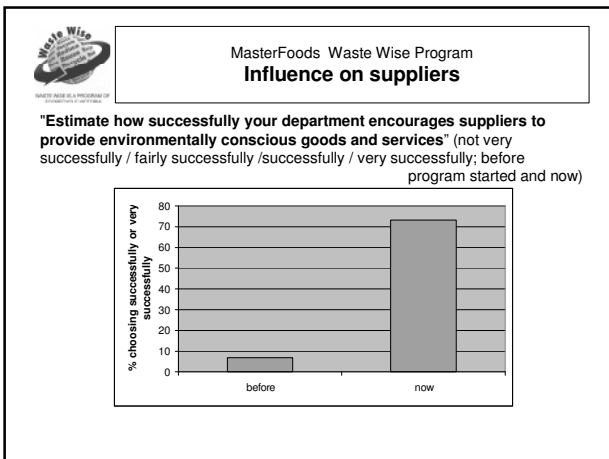
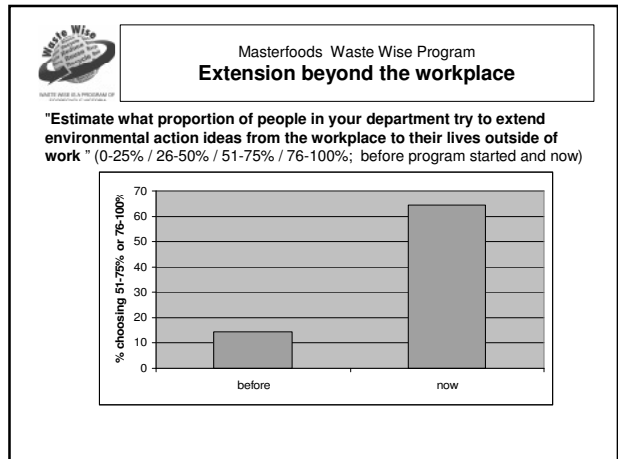
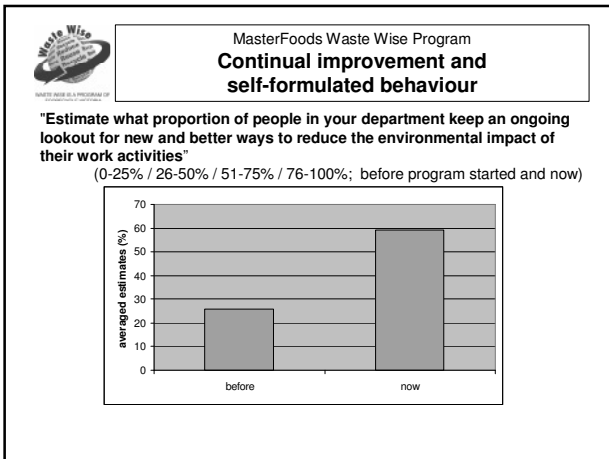
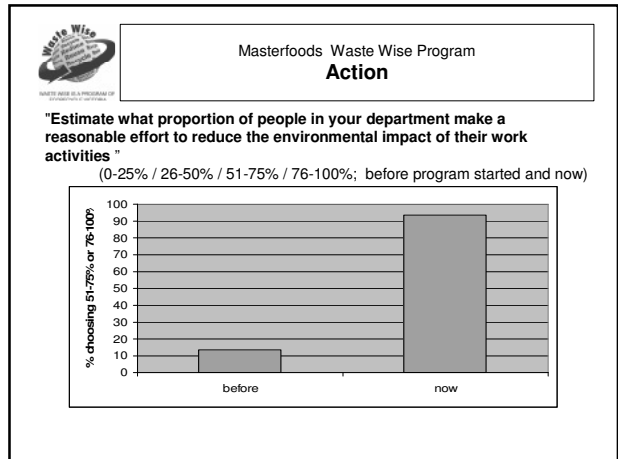
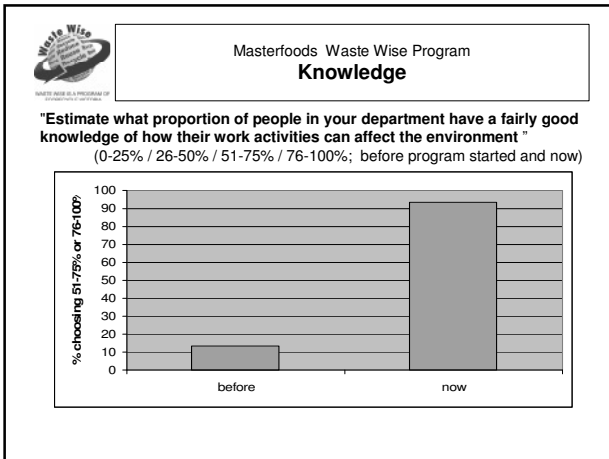
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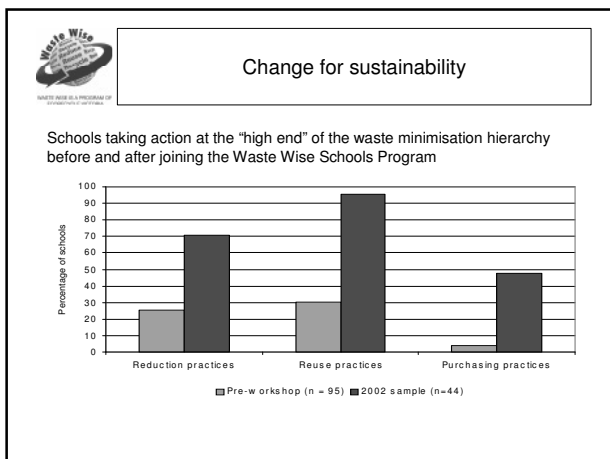
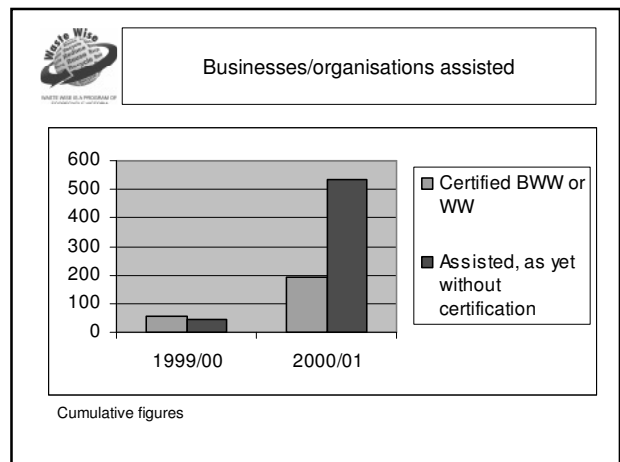
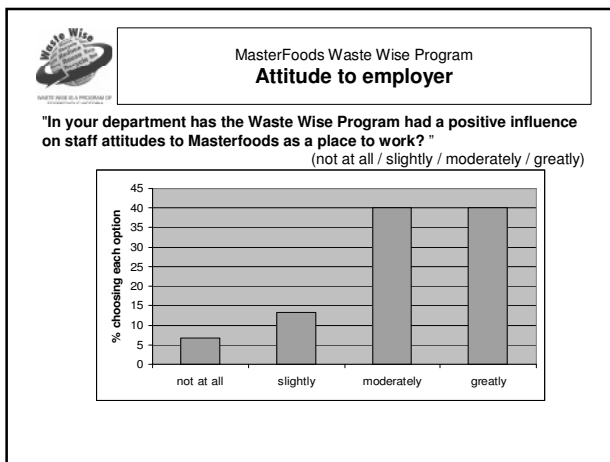
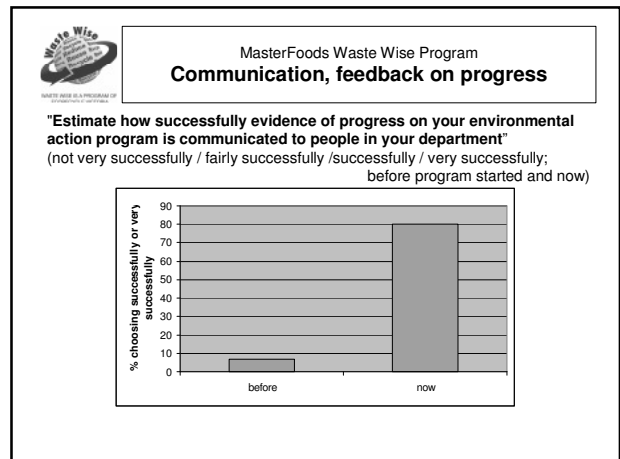
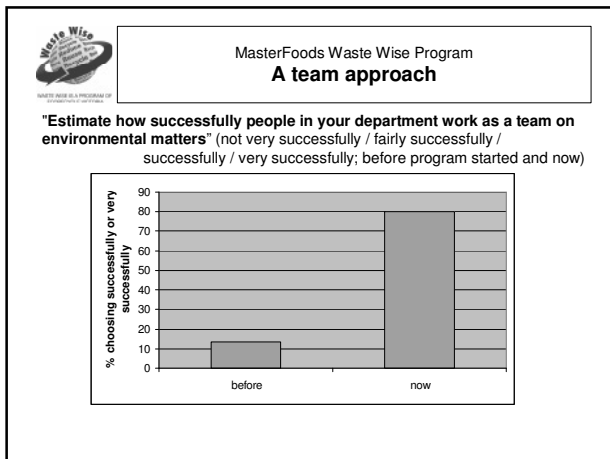
##### Referenced against:

objectives, preferred practice etc. in state, regional and local Waste Wise Education Strategies

##### Collated for:

- each region (quarterly, annual and special reports to Regional Waste Management Group Board and publicised regionally)
- the whole state (quarterly, annual and special reports from each of the 16 Regional Waste Management Groups to EcoRecycle and publicised at state, national and international levels)





**Case study – Cobden Technical School**

**Student opinion**

Percentage of students saying yes to the question:  
"Has the program at Cobden Technical School changed what you do in the following Waste Wise areas?"

- Reducing 39.7%
- Reusing 59.0%
- Composting 60.7%
- Recycling 47.5%

