



REDUCE FOOD WASTE & RAISE YOUR PROFITS

RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL AND PROFITABLE FOODSERVICE BUSINESS IN AUSTRALIA IS NO EASY TASK. TO HELP, NSW ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY'S **AMANDA KANE** IS SHARING HER EXPERTISE FOR INCREASING YOUR BUSINESS' PROFITS BY FOLLOWING ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES.



If you ask business owners, there is nothing romantic about running a cafe or restaurant. Day-to-day operations are hectic and time-consuming. Businesses want to offer diners good food to inspire their taste buds and unique décor to enrich their dining experience. Other challenges exist from managing staff and suppliers to keeping cost down without reducing quality. Food business owners need to invest in their venues and watch operational cost to make sure they are growing their business and receive reasonable return.

It is not hard to measure your food waste. Finding the source of your food waste gives you a good indication of where you are losing money. All you need is a scale and three buckets (one each for food waste from spoilage, preparation and plate waste).

Many food businesses experience the high cost of waste removal but few know or even think about how much edible food was unnecessarily thrown away. The truth is when food does not make it to customers' plates it impacts on your business. NSW Environment Protection Authority's Love Food Hate Waste program has developed a business food waste prevention toolkit called, Your Business is

Food. It aims to help NSW food business such as cafes, restaurants and pubs cut cost and save money while reducing their environmental impact. Business who have participated in the program have reduce their food waste by 21 per cent on average.

The Your Business is Food principle is simple and involves only three steps. Any food business can follow these steps to cut food waste and increase profits. They are:

1 MEASURE YOUR FOOD WASTE

It is not difficult to measure your food waste. Finding the source of your food waste gives you a good indication of where you are losing money. All you need is a scale and three buckets (one each for food waste from spoilage, preparation and plate waste). These three types of food waste are explained more below. Place your food waste into the corresponding bucket and weigh each bucket at the end of the shift, day or when full. Also record the number of meals served during that shift or day so you can work out how much food waste is being created per plate. This forms your baseline.

Spoilage waste

Ordering too much and poor food storage are common causes of food

spoilage. Buying in bulk may seem cheaper, but if the food is thrown away, it ends up costing you more. Food left in the cool room too long or that was not stored correctly also causes food waste. This can happen when there is no cool room storage structure in place such as creating zones where similar items are stored or not using the common principle of 'first in, first out' (that is using older items first).

Preparation waste

Some food waste cannot be avoided like bones and some peels, but perfectly good parts of produce being thrown away could indicate problems with menu design or it may reflect on the skills of your staff, such as over trimming produce.

Plate waste

If customers are always leaving food on their plate at the end of a meal, your serving size may be too large. 49 per cent of NSW diners agree that large portion sizes are off-putting and 53 per cent says it is a waste of good food.

2 DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

Once you know where most of your food waste is coming from, you'll know which area to focus on in your action plan. Here are some solutions you can include:

Spoilage food waste – you may need to order less food but on a more regular basis to overcome buying too much. An orderly cool room or storage room is a good place to start. Label food when it comes in and sort them according to the 'first in, first out' principle will help cut costs from spoilage.

Why not offer a 'chef special' to use up surplus ingredients? It is also something to add variety for regular customers.

Kitchen preparation food waste

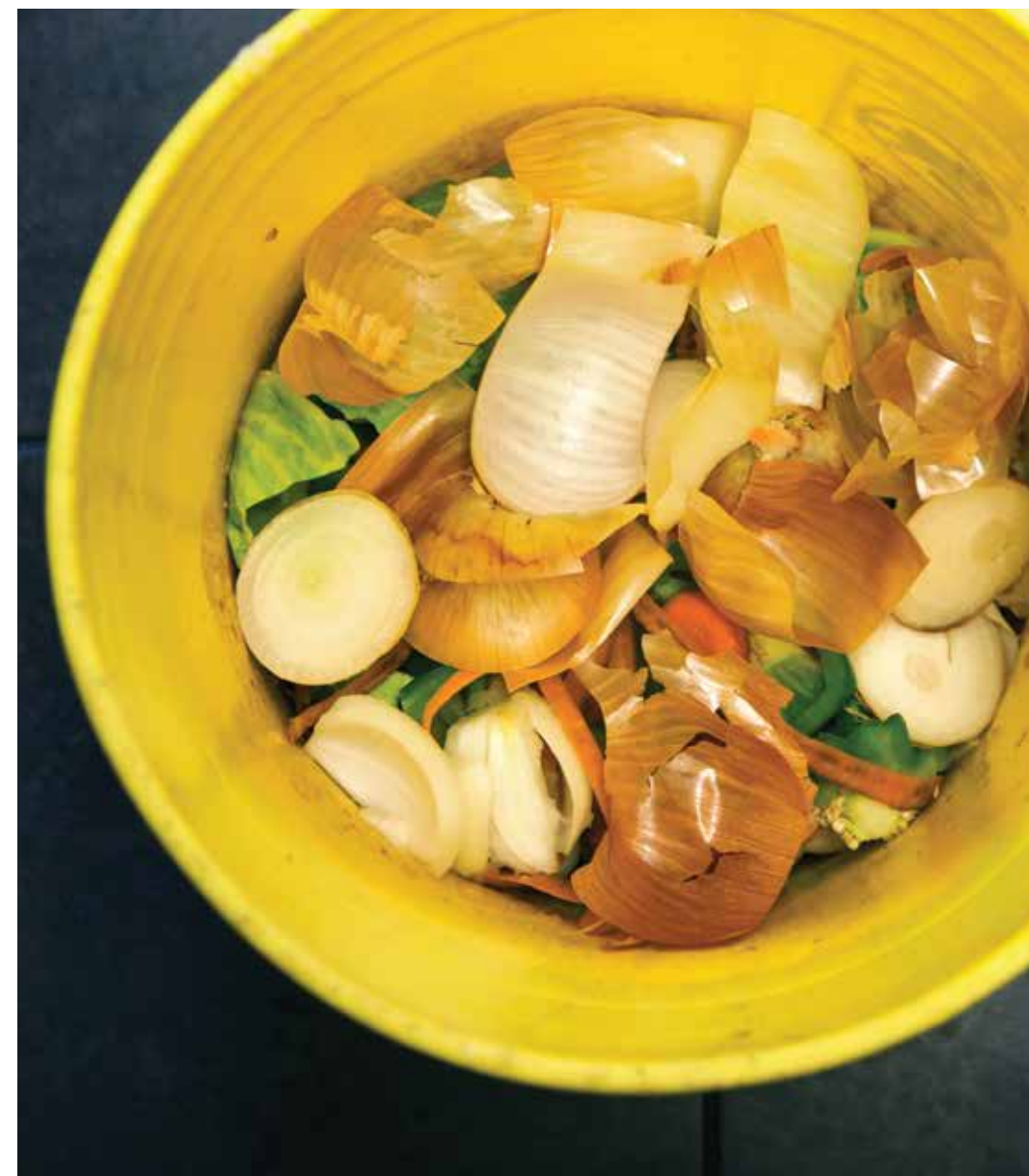
– consider how you can use the whole ingredient to reduce the amount you are throwing away. You can also consider how you can use perishable ingredients, in different ways such as tomatoes in a salad or a sauce.

Why not involve staff in menu design and make it a fun staff training exercise? It can improve productivity and create positive working environment while reducing your food costs. Who knows what signature dish may be invented?

Plate waste – consider offering takeaway containers if customers are unable to finish their meal. 67 per cent of NSW diners find the dining experience more favourable when businesses offer them a take away container. Why not ask for feedback or advise customers on the size of the meal (so that they have room for dessert).

3 CELEBRATE SUCCESS

One month after applying your action plan it's time to do another food waste review to see how your food waste amount has changed. Remember to celebrate your



success and to share it with your staff and customers. The Love Food Hate Waste team is more than happy to share your success too, (simply email them to info@lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au).

NSW EPA has awarded eight grants to support NSW food business to implement Your Business is Food. These grants will be delivered in the following areas: mid-North Coast (Midwaste), North Coast (North East Waste

and Cool Planet), state wide (Metcash and Restaurant & Catering Industry Association), South Coast (Eurobodalla Shire Council), Southern Tablelands (Regional Development Australia Southern Inland), Sydney (Lendlease). Lendlease Barangaroo and Metcash will be delivering the program within their own businesses, the other grantees are able to support food businesses in their area. (f)



Businesses that participate in the NSW EPA's Love Food Hate Waste Your Business is Food program cut waste by an average of 21 per cent. Visit lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au for details.

