

LOVE FOOD HATE WASTE – ENGAGING WITH STUDENTS

Each week more than one third of the average household garbage bin is filled with wasted food | NSW households throw away more than 800,000 tonnes of food each year | Across the state, this adds to more than \$2.5 billion worth of edible food being thrown away each year. Sad, isn't it? Sadder still, most of it could have been used.

What happens when we waste food?

Food waste is not using food items before they expire, or preparing and cooking more food than we need. Wasting food and beverages wastes the energy, water and natural resources used to grow, package, transport and marketing put into that food or drink. In addition sending food waste to landfill creates methane gas which is twenty-five times stronger than carbon dioxide at trapping the heat in the atmosphere. Wasting food is a huge sustainability issues our current society is facing.

Love Food Hate Waste Program at UWS

Student focus groups conducted at the University of Western Sydney (UWS) have found that large numbers of student residents regularly drive off campus to buy takeaway food and UWS Residential Campus Managers report that many of their students regularly throw away and waste vast amounts of food. The Love Food Hate Waste (LFHW) program has inspired and empower students to get them to understand and think about the environmental impact that could be having by wasting food, giving them HOPE to make smarter choices.

The LFHW program is generating an on campus culture of food literacy for students. In the program we teach the students menu planning, buying local produce and how to store their food properly. We offer tips on cooking, eating healthy and using their leftovers, as well as teaching students about composting and encourage them to grow their own produce. By provide students with new skills around the issue of food waste we are equipping them with life long learning after they finish university.

The LFHW program has implemented a "Fresh in a Box" food coop on campus on Hawkesbury campus, cooking workshops and demonstrations in the student residences on Hawkesbury campus, and production of a student cookbook "UWS Community Cookbook" with LFHW tips throughout for all university staff, students and the community. These programs were supported and funded by the UWS Office of Sustainability which has really helped with their success and implementation.



Photo 1) Students cooking in their resident kitchen from the UWS Community Cookbook.

Photo 2) Love Food Hate Waste workshop.

Photo 3) Nude food container and reusable drink bottle given out to each person at the workshop to reduce plastic cling wrap use and water bottles disposed of.



Average weekly household food waste in NSW (\$ dollars)



**LOVE
FOOD
hate waste**

BUY IT

Planning your meals and shopping list in advance will save you time and money.

Menu planning provides an opportunity to use leftovers more efficiently and makes it easier to stock your cardboards and freezer.

By sticking to your shopping list, you will only buy the items you need, reducing the amount of food waste that ends up in your bin each week.

We buy too much food because we think we need more than we actually do, we are tempted by special deals such as 'two for one' or 'buy one get one free' or we don't plan meals and shop to a list.

COOK IT

One of the most common reasons for wasting food is we cook too much.

By getting serving sizes right, knowing how to measure and cook the right amount of food for the number of people you are cooking for, will avoid food waste, save money and reduce our impact on the environment.

NSW householders throw away more than 800,000 tonnes of food per year. Food in the bin often ends up in landfill and produces methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times stronger than carbon dioxide.

SAVE IT

The way you store your food at home can affect its freshness, appearance and shelf-life.

We can reduce food waste by storing food correctly, checking 'use by' and 'best before' dates, using wilted and blemished vegetable and fruit in recipes and ensuring leftovers are eaten the next day or frozen after cooking for an easy mid week meal.

Each year NSW households throw away an estimated \$694 million worth of leftovers. While most of us store leftovers in the fridge almost half are eventually thrown away. The same problem occurs when we save our leftovers in the freezer, almost a third are thrown away.