



Summary of the WMAA Waste Educators' On-line Survey

Introduction

The Waste Educators' Working Group Victoria (WEWGV) first designed a draft print-based questionnaire which was piloted in May 2005. Using the questionnaire developed by the WEWGV, the WMAA National Waste Education Division reviewed, modified and developed a print-based questionnaire. This questionnaire was developed into an online survey by a company contracted to develop the survey, collate the data and provide a report. The company used was *Transcend-Ability*.

The survey was conducted online over a period of four weeks from 5 April to 11 May 2006. The link to the survey was emailed to WMAA members across Australia with the advice to forward to other colleagues who have a role in waste education.

1. General information

- 50% of respondents were male and 50% were female.
- 26% of respondents were between the ages of 20-29. The majority of the respondents were aged between 20 and 59.
- 84.6% of respondents indicated they are members of WMAA. 15.4% indicated they are not members of WMAA.
- The highest representation was from NSW (35%) with Victoria (20%) and Queensland (19%). The remaining respondents were from South Australia (15%), Western Australia (10%) and Tasmania (1%) with no respondents from ACT or NT.
- Local Governments 27.2% and Industry 18.7% were the two highest groups represented.
- Waste Educators 42% and Local Government 21% were the two most common WMAA groups with which respondents were most involved.

2. WMAA support

- Respondents were asked to describe their view of the level of support from WMAA. 39.4% described the support as good. 51% described the level of support as poor or fair.
- Respondents were asked to indicate if they required further support from WMAA. 68% indicated they required further support and 32% indicated they required no further support.
- Respondents were asked to rank their top five choices for education and training they expected from WMAA. 'Behaviour change information' ranked highest with 'Half-day seminars / workshops' ranked second and Website-based information ranked third. 'Formal/informal accredited training' and Professional development ranked 4th and 5th respectively.
- Respondents were asked to identify the level they mainly worked. 76.3% of respondents worked at the metropolitan or regional/rural level for their State/Territory.
- 63% respondents indicated their role focused on a combination of internal and external work rather than primarily internal within, or primarily external, to their organisation.



3. Waste Educators: Qualifications, Training, Experience and Needs

- Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education. 36.8% had completed a Post Graduate and 35.5% had completed a University degree/diploma.
- Respondents were asked to indicate how many years they had been involved in their role as waste management or resource recovery education. A significant number (45%) had only worked in their role up to 5 years.

4. Key target groups

Respondents were asked to indicate their key target groups, providing details in relation to Business, Community, Schools and Government.

- 82% of respondents that worked with **business**, worked with commercial businesses.
- 82% of respondents that worked with the **community**, worked with households.
- 79% of respondents that worked with the **school**, worked with primary schools, while 57% of respondents identified Secondary Schools as a key target group.
- 92% of respondents that worked with the **Governments**, worked with Local Governments.

5. Topics included in education programs

Respondents were asked to indicate the topics that are included in their education programs in the broad areas of 'Solid waste', 'Water', 'Energy', 'Air', 'Environmental Management Systems', 'Biodiversity' and 'Urban and regional planning'.

The most frequently included topics were:

- *Solid waste area*: 'Recycling (97%), Waste Avoidance (90%), Reuse (90%), Reduce 86%, Composting / Organics (85%)
- *Water area*: Water conservation 70%, water pollution 76%
- *Energy area*: Energy conservation 88%
- *Air quality area*: Greenhouse issues 88%
- *Biodiversity area*: Habitat restoration 88%
- *Environmental Management System area*: Auditing and assessment 82%
- *Urban and regional development area*: Natural resource management 71%

6. Priority areas for solid waste education

Respondents were asked to rank five priority areas for solid waste and resource recovery education from 1 to 5. 'Waste avoidance' and 'Recycling' were both ranked highly. 'Composting/organics' was ranked third. 'Reduce' and 'Reuse' ranked fourth and fifth respectively.

7. Barriers for waste and/or litter educators

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to barriers that may be faced in the role of a waste and/or litter educator. The most common barrier was 'I would like to know more about the theories of behaviour change' (86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed) followed by 'Waste education is only part of my job' (71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed). 'The lack of consistency in waste management across different regions is a challenge for me personally' (60% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed).



8. Information required as a waste educator

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of information they need in their job as a waste educator. The most common forms of information required were: Education programs and activities (81.7%), Case studies of education initiatives (80.3%) and Results of research / surveys (78.9%).

9. How respondents currently find out information

Respondents were asked how they currently find relevant information for their role. The most common ways identified included 'Internet (89%), Personal contacts (82%) and conferences and seminars (72%).

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