

*What We Need Is . . .  
A Community Education  
Project*



NSW Environment Protection Authority  
NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation

# *What We Need Is...*

# *A Community Education Project*

*An eight-step guide to running a community education project*



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## What do you think?

We seek your comments and advice on the content and style of this publication so we can review its usefulness and determine whether revised versions should be considered at some time in the future.

Please fill in and return the **Your Comments** sheet on page 59 of this guide. We look forward to hearing from you!

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# Contents

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<b>Section 1— Community education background</b>	About this project guide	4
	Using this guide	5
	About community education	6
<b>Section 2— Community education planning</b>	Project planning sheet	10
	Planning your project step-by-step	11
	Step 1. Analyse the issue or problem	12
	Step 2. Identify stakeholders	14
	Step 3. Know your target group	16
	Step 4. Determine objectives and outcomes	18
	Step 5. Design your methods	20
	Step 6. Consider funding	22
	Step 7. Make an action plan—and implement it	24
Step 8. Monitor and evaluate	26	
	Full checklist of questions to consider	29
<b>Section 3— Sample community education projects</b>	Project Aware on the Rocks	32
	Feral Trolleys	34
	Kids, Companies & Creeks	35
	Rural Awareness Property Tours (RAPT)	37
	Hawkesbury-Nepean Phosphorus Action Program	38
<b>Section 4— Useful community education methods</b>	Checklist of useful education methods	42
	Characteristics, strengths and weaknesses	43
	Glossary or ‘learning the lingo’	57
	Useful reading	58
	Your comments	59

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# Section 1— Community education background

## About this project guide



*Many people concerned about community issues express ideas such as these at some time.*

Education is an increasingly popular method being used by many community, industry and government organisations to address issues of social, environmental and corporate concern.

But community education is much more than producing a brochure to tell people about the way we think a problem can be resolved.

Effective community education requires a good understanding of the issue of concern, being clear about who we are trying to reach, knowing what behaviour we are trying to change, and investigating the best ways to make this happen.

This guide has been prepared following a number of inquiries and requests for assistance from groups planning community education projects. It provides:

- background information about community education (Section 1)
- a step-by-step guide to planning a community education project (Section 2)
- sample community education projects (Section 3)
- a summary of useful community education methods (Section 4).

## Using this guide

### Who could use this guide?

This guide is for people interested or involved in planning and running community education projects. It can be used by:

- individuals and groups
- local community action groups such as Landcare and Rivercare
- environment groups
- Catchment Management Committees
- local councils
- government and non-government agencies.

The guide is written specifically from the perspective of developing education projects to deal with environmental issues. But the principles and practices outlined can be applied to other issues of community concern.

### Why community education?

Community education is essential because most environmental and social problems arise as a result of people's actions. It is people's behaviour that is generally responsible for the problem; and it is people who need and want to find a solution for it.

### Will your project change people's behaviour?

Education isn't the only factor that influences people's behaviour. So education projects may not result in an immediate change for the better—particularly in the short term. This is because people's behaviour is also influenced by:

- the social values and standards passed on in the home, at school, through social groups and the media
- age, gender, ethnicity, income and occupation
- recent events





- laws, regulations and policies—and how these are monitored or enforced
- infrastructure such as the availability of technology, products and services
- economic factors such as financial incentives and disincentives
- laws, regulations and policies—and how these are monitored or enforced.

Education should therefore be considered as one of a number of complementary mechanisms to address issues which arise from people's actions. Other useful mechanisms for change are:

- Enforcement: policy, legislation and regulation
- Economics: monetary incentives and disincentives
- Engineering, science and technology
- Evaluation, monitoring and research.

An example of the complementary use of these mechanisms to reduce the problem of stormwater pollution in an urban catchment is outlined below.

#### **Complementary mechanisms to reduce stormwater pollution in an urban catchment**

##### **Education and encouragement**

- **Knowledge**—using media and publications to increase understanding of the effects of stormwater pollution on local creeks and the specific pollutants that are a problem
- **Skills**—training community members in water quality testing so that pollutants and the sources of stormwater pollution can be identified
- **Attitudes**—forming community action groups to develop care, cooperation and responsibility for reducing stormwater pollution in local streets
- **Practices**—organising and participating in clean-up activities.

##### **Enforcement: legislation, regulation & policy**

- **Laws and regulations**—requiring industries to be licensed, enabling prosecutions and fines under the Clean Waters Act, and limiting quantities of chemical discharges.

##### **Economics**

- **Monetary incentives and disincentives**—licensing costs that relate to the total pollution from industrial premises and grants for demonstration projects.

##### **Engineering and science**

- **Science**—to investigate and gather evidence on the ecological effects of pollution
- **Engineering and technology**—to develop, design and construct devices such as trash racks and pollutant traps to capture pollutants.

##### **Evaluation, monitoring and research**

- **Monitoring**—to measure changes in the type and quantity of pollutants
- **Evaluation and research**—to assess and report on the impact of educational and other methods used.

# About community education

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Community education is a process used to:

- create **awareness** of an issue
- enhance people's **knowledge, understanding and skills**
- influence people's **values and attitudes**
- encourage more responsible **behaviour**.

Community education incorporates aspects of:

- public involvement
- adult education
- vocational education and training
- school and tertiary education
- community development
- communications or social marketing (mass media, public relations and campaigns).

**What makes a community education project effective?**

Effective community education projects:

- involve stakeholders and learners in decisions about the planning, management, content, style and delivery of the project
- create a supportive environment for influencing behaviour
- support and strengthen existing community networks; help create new ones
- motivate and encourage ownership
- provide opportunities for examining beliefs and values
- identify and promote positive actions rather than discourage undesirable actions
- are relevant, accessible and affordable, recognising the differing circumstances and constraints in a community
- use two-way communication methods
- respond to the diverse needs of a community.

**And what is most important?**

**Collaboration** is the key to successful community education projects.

This guide promotes the use of a **collaborative approach** which is more 'bottom up' than 'top down' in its planning, design, management and implementation. However, externally initiated 'top down' projects often provide the impetus or lead to the development of community-based projects and therefore play a significant role in promoting good community education.

**Bottom up: community-based approach**

The most effective community education projects are often those which come from the community—where there is a clearly identified community need, community ownership of the problem, determination to find its solution, and community resourcing to make it happen. In such instances, the community identifies external groups or individuals it wants or needs to involve.

**Case study:** Angel Beach Dune Care group was formed in response to the concerns of a small number of people about their coastal environment. Over a number of years the group has undertaken preservation and rehabilitation work of the littoral (coastal zone) rainforest and dunes. The project has involved local schools, TAFE, LEAP (Landcare and Environment Action Program) participants, Ballina Shire Council and the Tourist Information Centre. Community awareness and education has been an important aspect of this project to encourage involvement and ownership. Education methods used have included presentations and demonstrations followed by hands-on involvement of school students in rehabilitation work; information flow through various media; signs at beach access points; community displays; and print material distributed through tourist access points.

**Top down:  
externally-initiated  
approach**

Sometimes, the need for a community education project is identified or initiated from outside the community. In such cases, the project initiator should aim to use a collaborative approach that involves stakeholders and target communities as partners in decisions about planning, management, content, style and delivery of the project. Often externally-initiated projects provide the impetus for, or lead to the development of, community-based projects.

**Case study:** *Earth Works* is a project which was initiated by the NSW Environment Protection Authority to increase community awareness and participation in waste minimisation, recycling and composting. Nine local councils, environment and community groups were involved in the pilot project to trial the program. The program is based on a peer education approach, with *Earth Works* course participants later conducting education outreach and waste minimisation activities in their communities. *Earth Works* has now been adopted by many local councils, community colleges and community groups.



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# Section 2— Community education planning

# Project planning sheet

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Use the questions highlighted in the following pages (full checklist page 29) to plan your project. The sample projects in Section 3 can help guide your use of this page.

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**Step 1. What is the issue or problem?**

**Step 5. What methods should we use?**

**Step 2. Who are the stakeholders?**

**Step 6. How will we fund the project?**

**Step 3. Who are our target group(s)?**

**Step 7. What is our action plan?**

**Step 4. What are our objectives and outcomes?**

**Step 8. How will we monitor and evaluate?**

# Planning your project step-by-step

## How to plan a community education project

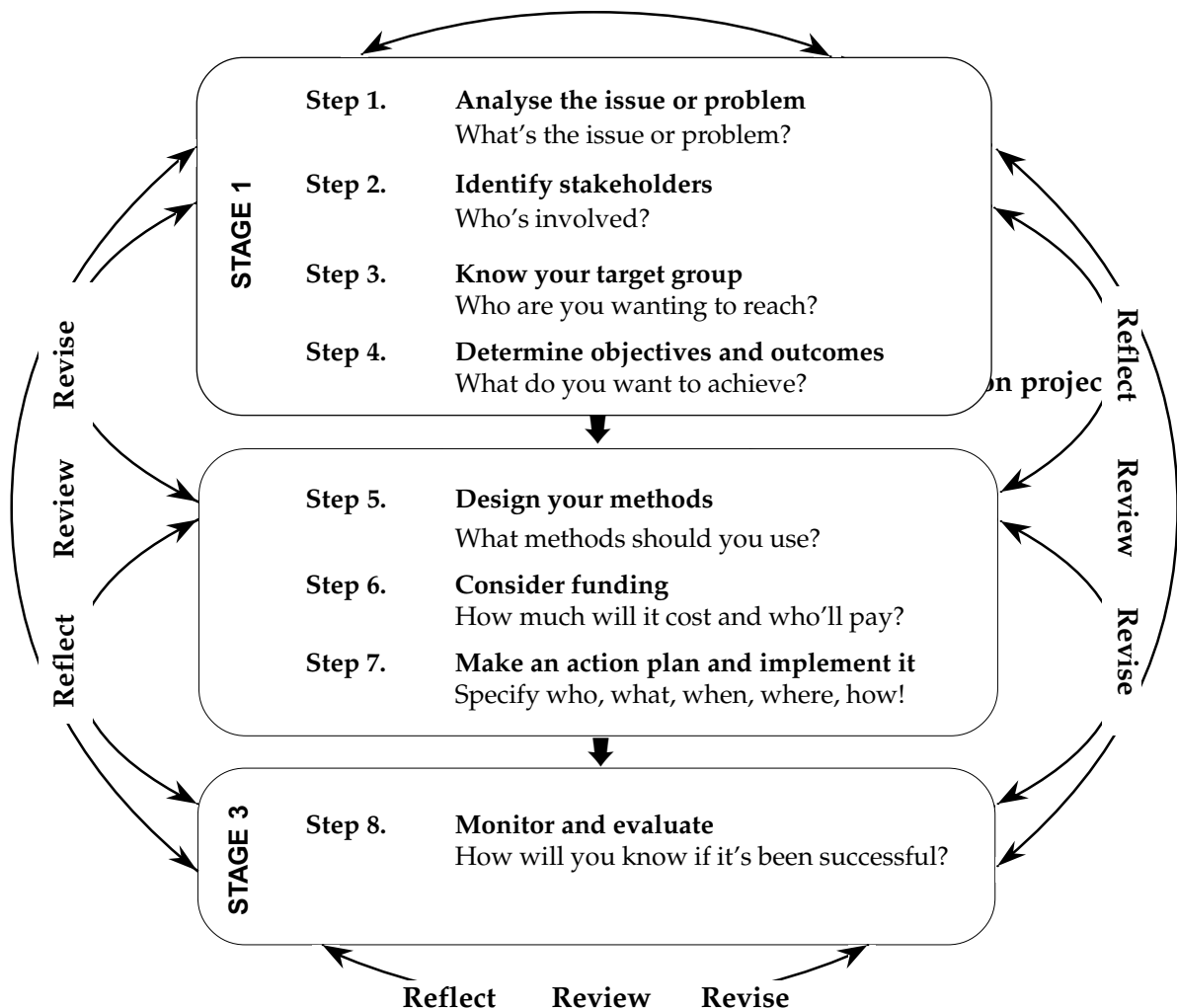
Community education projects need careful planning in their definition, design, development, implementation and evaluation. This section provides:

- a planning sheet
- a step-by-step guide to planning your community education project, illustrated by a case study
- sample questions to be asked at each step, with a full checklist of questions on page 29.

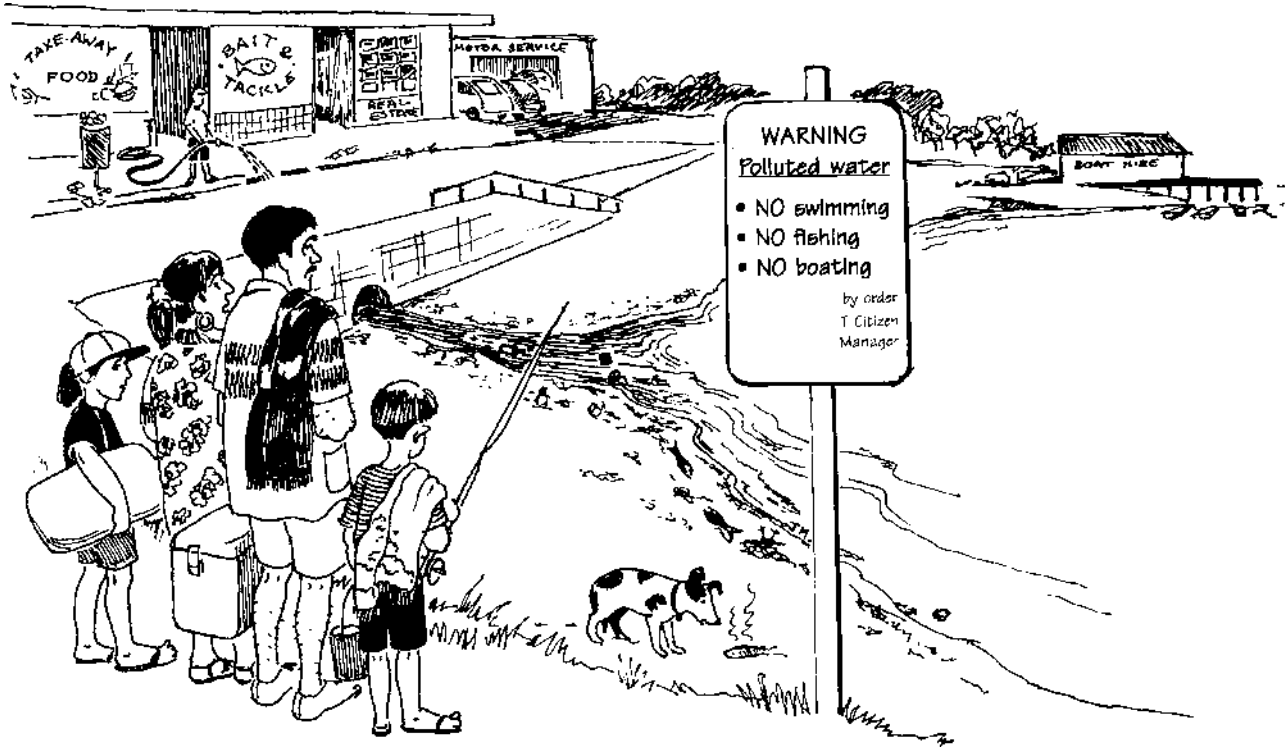
While this section is presented as eight sequential steps, you may wish to consider some steps together. For example, Steps 1–4 could be grouped as Stage 1, and Steps 5–7 as Stage 2. It's a good idea not to stick too rigidly to a formula. Apply the 3Rs principle of 'Reflect, Review and Revise' throughout your project planning. The information you gather in each step will influence your decisions in following steps and may warrant revision of previous steps.

As you work through the eight steps of planning your project, you should gain a clearer understanding of the issue, your objectives and your approach to achieving these objectives. The outcome should be a plan or brief that will guide and support you in carrying out your project.

### Eight steps to planning your community education project



## Step 1. Analyse the issue or problem



### What's the issue?

Find out what's causing concern, and break the issue down into its **components**. You can do this by collecting information from a variety of sources and discussing the problem with others.

A clear understanding of the issue is essential to the good design of a community education project. You can identify and clarify issues in a regular, planned approach to managing your group, or in response to a recent event. To define an issue or problem, you need to investigate, discuss, analyse and review with input from stakeholders. If you look for solutions before you fully understand the issue, you could have trouble clarifying what you want, and are able, to achieve.

### How?

- Find out what others have done about this problem: what worked, what didn't, and why?
- Decide on a broad goal for the focus and direction of the project. This will be confirmed or changed as you gather more information in the next steps (see step 4).
- Consider and revisit this step continually as you design and formulate your community education project.

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## Tips

- Do a literature search.
- Spend a day on the phone talking to stakeholders to find out what they know about the topic.
- Check local and metropolitan papers.



## Questions you can ask

- What is the problem or issue of concern?
- To what extent is this an issue of concern within our community?
- Does our community realise there's a problem?
- What are the reasons for or causes of the problem?
- How can we promote community discussion and debate about this issue?
- What do we know about the issue? What research do we have? What's been done already? Who's been involved?
- Is 'education' the way to deal with the issue? What about other approaches such as regulation and enforcement, economics, engineering and science?
- What do we want to achieve? What **can** we achieve? What's our goal?
- What outcome do we want from education? Are we trying to encourage debate? influence attitudes? give or gather information? develop skills? change behaviour?
- Are the alternatives we wish to promote **practical**?
- Can we formulate our needs in terms of short, medium and long-term goals?

Case Study: Shoalhaven Business

### *What was the problem?*

The problem comprised:

- stormwater pollution and waste generation associated with small industries and businesses
- perceived lack of interest and activity in environmental management across small industries and businesses
- the limited resources of small industries and businesses.

### *What was the broad goal?*

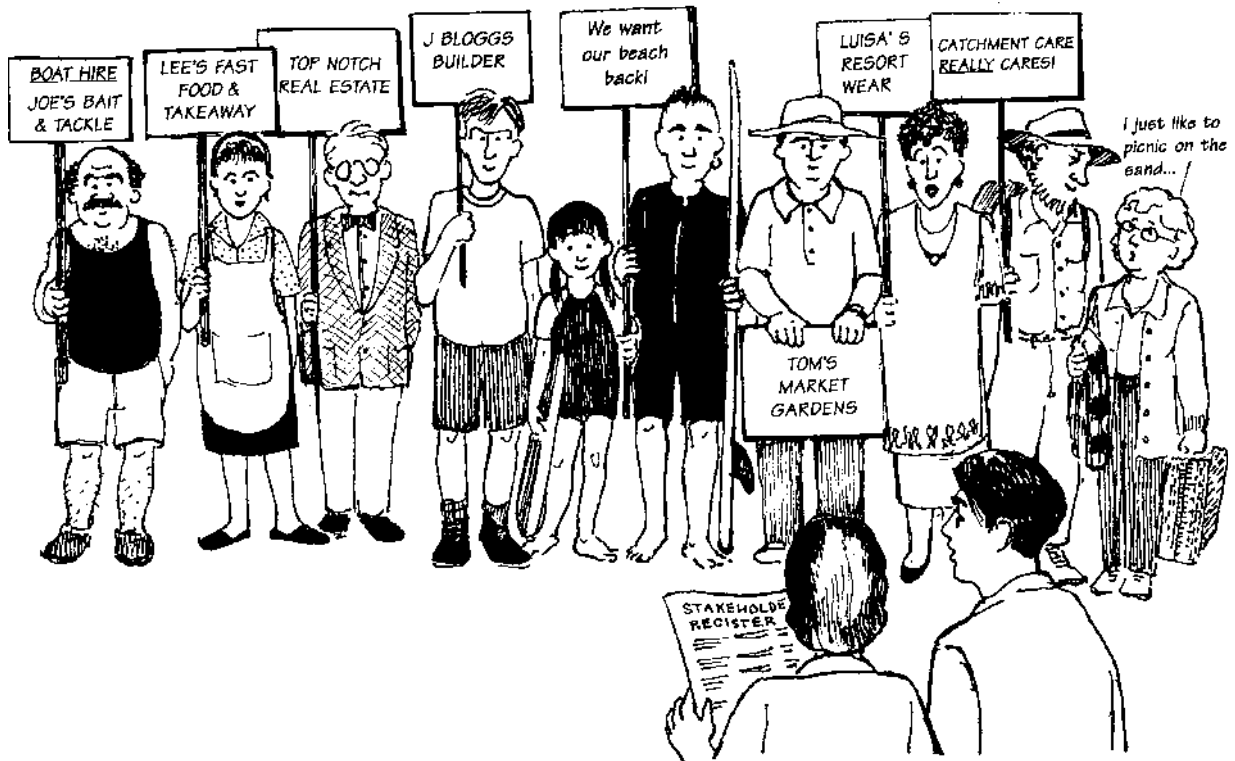
- The broad goal was to develop and implement a partnership project with Shoalhaven City Council to address waste generation and stormwater pollution problems associated with small industries in Nowra as part of the Solutions to Pollution campaign.

They think the beach is bad. They should see our river!





## Step 2. Identify stakeholders



**Involve stakeholders** Identify the stakeholders, involve them and find out where they stand in relation to the issue.

Successful community education projects acknowledge and involve the groups or individuals who have a stake in the issue. Stakeholders can be defined as those who are interested in, concerned about, affected by, have a vested interest in, or are involved in some way with, the issue. Because of their involvement and ownership of the issue many stakeholders will have knowledge, networks and resources which can add significant value to your project.

**How?**

- Identify the 'key players' or main stakeholders and invite them to be part of the project.
- Find out where each stakeholder stands in relation to the issue and review Step 1 in light of this information.
- Make stakeholders your allies. Try and set up your project in partnership with key stakeholders. (If you can't set up your project in partnership with other stakeholders, at least set up a process that will ensure stakeholders are kept informed and given the opportunity to comment.)

**Tips**

- Stakeholders may include community groups, industry or business associations, environment groups, local councils, government departments, schools, tertiary education institutions, youth/senior citizens' groups, politicians, local residents.

- Ensure at least one stakeholder is from your target group (see step 3).
- Try to identify and enlist the assistance of a community 'opinion leader' for your stakeholder network.
- Work out each stakeholder's main concerns about the issue; acknowledge their differences, then concentrate on identifying the common ground and benefits for each.
- You can involve stakeholders through working groups, surveys, newsletters, as members of a steering or advisory committee and through personal meetings.



### Questions you can ask

- Who has a stake (positive or negative) in the problem or issue?
- Who is most affected by the problem or issue? Who is concerned? Who may have different views?
- In relation to the problem, who are the opinion leaders in the community?
- Who are the key people to assist in solving the problem?
- Is there a person who could 'champion' the project for us?
- What do the stakeholders know, feel, want, believe and value in relation to the problem or issue?
- What are the threats, risks, costs and benefits for the stakeholders?
- How will we involve the stakeholders?

Case Study:  
Shoalhaven  
Business

#### *Who the stakeholders were*

Stakeholders included:

- owners and operators in local industries and businesses
- local council
- local Chamber of Manufactures
- local Catchment Management Committee
- industry associations
- the Environment Protection Authority (EPA); the Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC)
- local Chamber of Commerce
- local media.

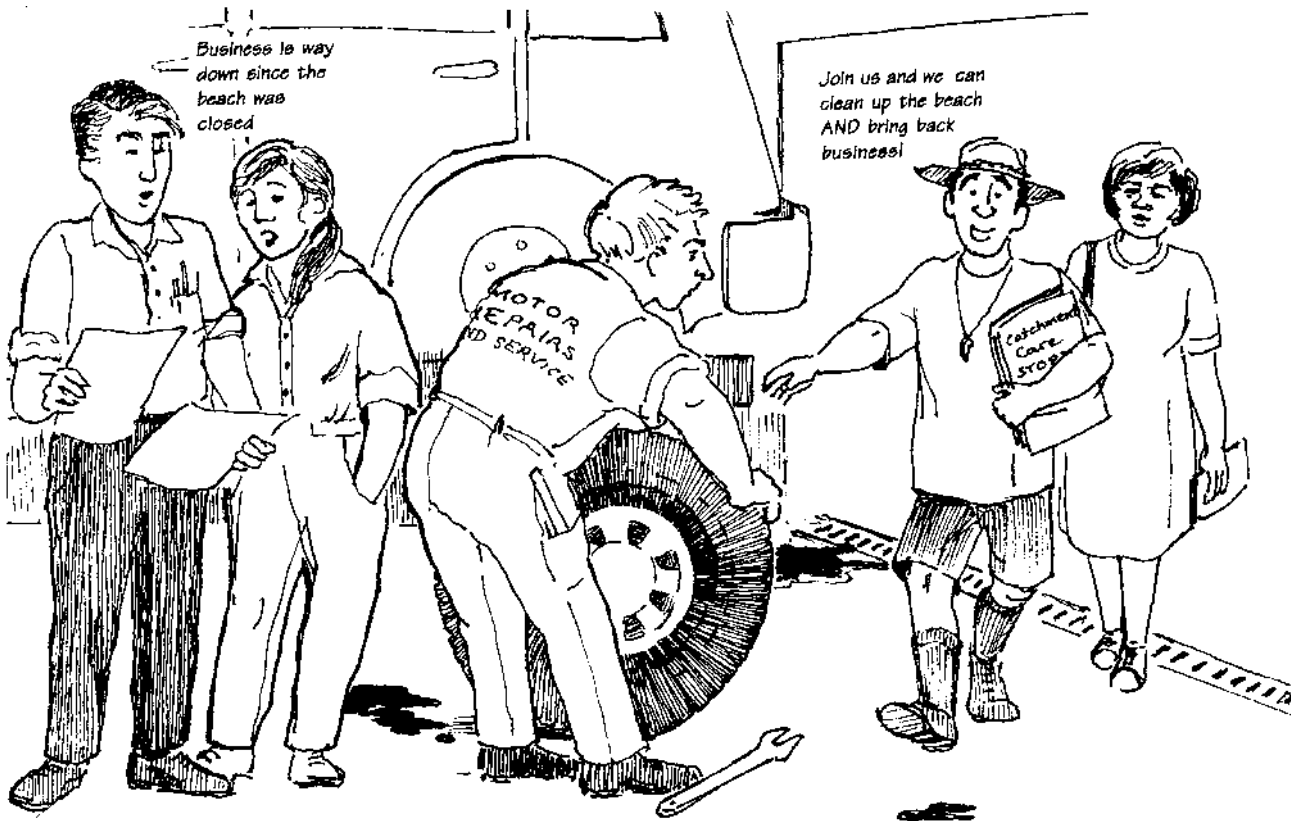
#### *What stakeholders' interests and views were*

Stakeholders were:

- concerned not to 'paint industries in a bad light'
- concerned not to discourage further business and industry from setting up in the area
- of the view that 'business development' and 'environment' had little common ground.



## Step 3. Know your target group



**Decide who you want to reach**

**Identify, get to know and involve your target group early in your project.**

You will need to clearly identify your target group and gain an understanding of their current knowledge, attitudes and practices concerning the issue.

**How?**

- Understand the characteristics of your target group. This will make it easier for you to select the most appropriate method for achieving your educational objectives (see step 4).
- Spend some time finding out about your target group and where they stand in relation to the issue. This will help you define your project's objectives and outcomes more accurately.
- Involve your target group. As well as providing important information for your project design this can also open up 'potential access points', or opportunities for approaching your target group, once the project is under way.
- Consider doing some preliminary research to find out and record your target group's current knowledge, attitudes and practices relating to the issue. This will help in evaluating the project (see step 8).

**Tips**

- Define your target group in terms of characteristics such as age, gender, culture, locality, interest and occupation. These can have a strong influence on your group's current knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour.

- Researching your target group need not be complicated: it may simply involve setting up a focus group or discussion with a sample of people (say, 5–10) who are representative of the group.
- Remember that your target group will also be a stakeholder in the project. If possible, find representatives from your target group to be part of your stakeholder network.
- Be aware of the possible negative aspects of the project (threats and risks) for the target group. Find ways to turn these around to benefits.
- Try to find a 'hook' or motivating factor that will encourage the target group to be on side.



### Questions you can ask

- Who are we trying to reach/influence through this project?
- Is there more than one target group? (*Define each group precisely.*)
- What incentives are there for the target group to be involved with the project?
- What does the target group know, feel, want, believe and value about the problem or issue?
- What are the threats, risks, costs and benefits for the target group?
- What is the best way of reaching the target group?
- If they are not already involved with the issue, what will motivate our target group to be involved?
- What support do we need to give the target group to help achieve the project's outcomes?

Case Study:  
Shoalhaven  
Business

#### *Who we identified as our target group*

Our target group comprised:

- owners and operators (primarily males aged 18-50 years) in small industries and businesses in two industrial estates in south Nowra
- priority industries: motor vehicle repair and servicing businesses.

#### *What we knew about our target group*

- We had limited information about the current knowledge, attitudes and practices of operators in the industrial estates.
- There was a general lack of resources and support services for small industries and businesses.
- The group would respond best to a positive approach that identified solutions.
- Money, good publicity and community citizenship were the motivators for change.



## Step 4. Objectives and outcomes

### Determine objectives and desirable outcomes

Determine the result you want from your community education project. Define this in terms of a goal, educational objectives and desired outcomes. The **goal or aim** of your project is a broad statement of what you want to achieve—the **purpose** of your project. It summarises the collective effect of your specific objectives.

### How?

In step 1 you will have outlined a broad goal. After steps 2 and 3 you'll have a clearer understanding of the stakeholders and target group, which will enable you to define your goal more precisely (see 'broad goal' and 'revised goal' in the case study at right).

Define your **educational objectives** in terms of the knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and practices you want the target group to have or adopt to achieve the goal. Define desired **outcomes** in terms of the effects and outputs (tangible products) you hope will result from your project.

### Tips

- Be realistic in setting your goal and objectives.
- When you've written down your objectives, spend some time to consider how you'll evaluate the extent to which they've been achieved
- Be clear and specific about what you want from your project.



### Questions you can ask

- What are we aiming to achieve as a result of this education project?
- What are the specific educational objectives of the project in terms of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and practices? Are these objectives measurable?
- Do we need to look at short-term and long-term goals for this issue?
- What are the key messages we wish to communicate?
- What outcomes do we want from the project?
- Will any products result from our project? What will we do with these products when the project is finished?
- How will achieving our objectives help solve the issue or problem?
- What barriers may hinder the achievement of our objectives?

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Case Study:  
Shoalhaven  
Business

***Broad goal***

To develop and implement a partnership project with Shoalhaven City Council to address waste generation and stormwater pollution problems associated with small industries in Nowra as part of the Solutions to Pollution campaign.

***Refined goal***

To undertake an environmental review and education project within the south Nowra industrial estates which would:

- provide information for future environmental education projects targeting small industries and businesses
- assist in reducing stormwater pollution and waste generation
- develop partnerships between local and State governments and small business.

***Educational objectives***

Educational objectives were:

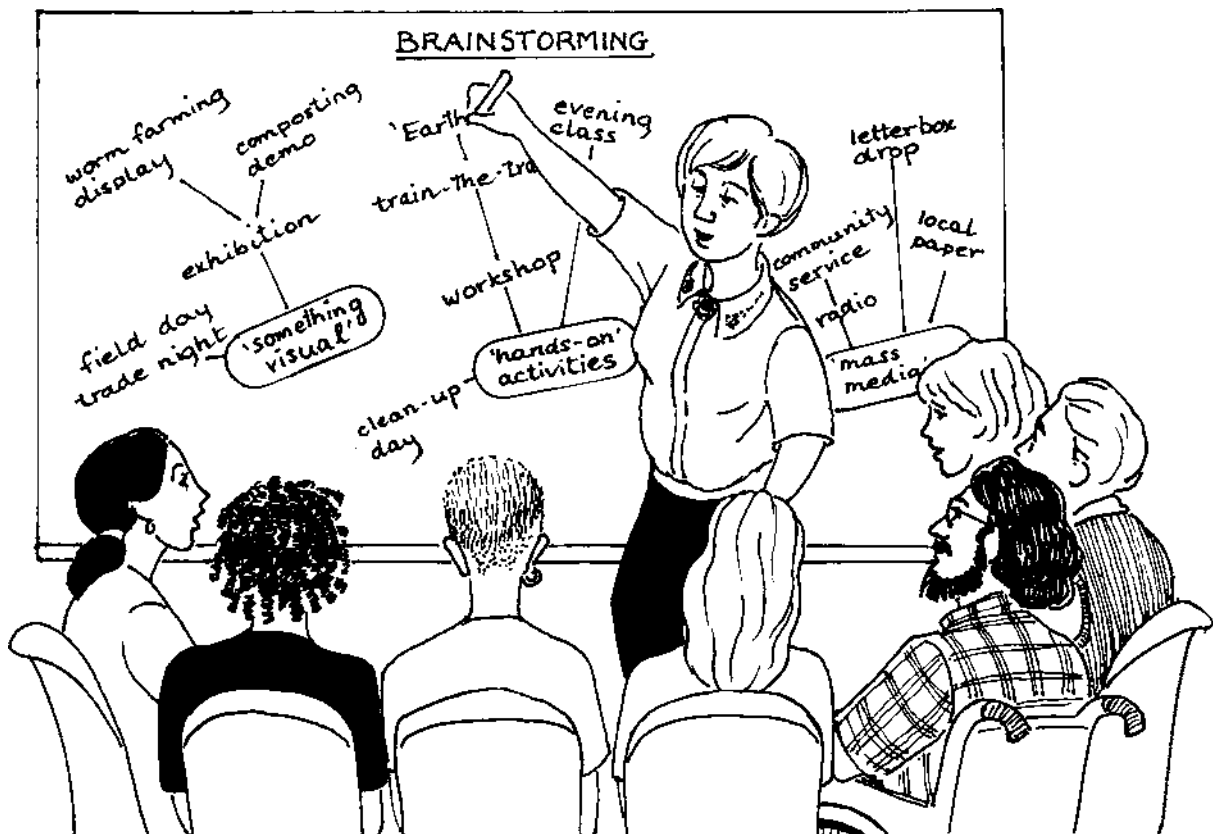
- to increase knowledge and understanding about the environmental impact of stormwater pollution and waste generation
- be able to identify the environmental impacts associated with business premises
- be able to identify solutions to the environmental impacts
- develop an appreciation for the value of cooperation between industry, the community and government in environment protection
- to encourage the use of work practices that reduce the environmental impacts of business premises.

***Outcomes***

Major outcomes and outputs were:

- evidence of better 'housekeeping' practices, specifically in relation to reduced stormwater pollution
- an increase in recycled material collected by waste management staff
- a reduction in the amount of waste being collected and disposed to landfill
- examples of cleaner production activities
- educational products such as business information material and positive newspaper articles
- knowledge about smaller industries and businesses, which can assist with work in the future
- relationships established with Council, business and industry groups
- a report which enables other groups to implement a similar project.

## Step 5. Design your methods



### Consider your methods

Investigate the methods, tools and techniques you could use to achieve your goal, objectives and outcomes.

### How?

- Brainstorm ideas on possible methods you could use to achieve the project's outcomes and objectives.
- Use the checklist of possible educational methods, which is included for reference on page 42. The characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of each method are summarised on pages 43–56.
- Keep in mind who your target group is and what is the most appropriate, effective and efficient method of achieving your objectives with this target group. If (for example) your educational objectives are concerned primarily with influencing knowledge and understanding, then **informing** techniques will be used. If your objectives are concerned with improving skills, **demonstration** methods may be most appropriate.

### Tips

- People learn differently, so consider a variety of methods to increase your effectiveness
- Community education projects that use only 'information giving' methods rarely have long-term effectiveness.
- Your budget will influence your decisions on which methods you can use.



**Questions you can ask**

- What is the best method of achieving the project's goal, objectives and outcomes
  - given the time and money available?
  - in view of what we know about the target group?
- Do these methods reflect the educational needs of our target group?
- Would it be useful to use more than one technique to achieve the objectives?
- What methods will have the most impact on the target group?
- Are there solutions to the problem and how do we reach these solutions?

Case Study:  
Shoalhaven  
Business

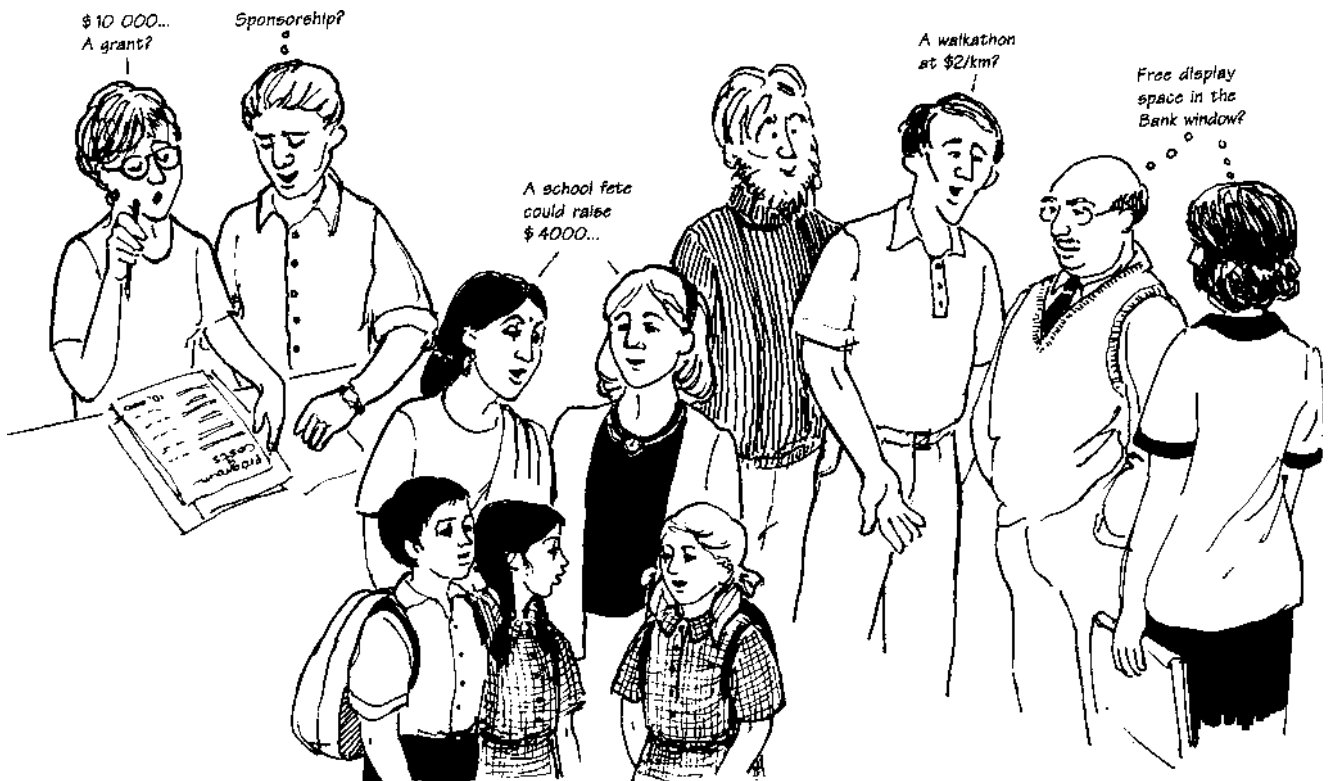
*Methods*

Methods comprised:

- setting up a consultative steering committee involving representatives from businesses, industries, Council, the EPA, and an opinion leader from the industrial estate
- conducting a telephone survey and focus group to monitor progress
- conducting environmental reviews to assess current practices
- issuing newsletters to involve and inform
- organising a launch to introduce, promote and set the tone for the project
- conducting media activities including organising articles for publication in the local paper and trade press
- holding a trade night: displays, demonstrations and discussions around the key issues
- preparing and issuing information sheets
- putting up on-site signs and posters.



## Step 6. Consider funding



**Find out what it will cost and who'll pay**

**Identify possible funding sources and the benefits for potential funding organisations.**

Nearly all projects, even small ones, need funding to make them happen. Although this step could be included as part of the examination of resource requirements in Step 7, the difficulty in obtaining funding—especially for community groups—warrants its inclusion as a separate step.

**How?**

- Estimate the total cost of your project.
- Add a small contingency fund for items you may have forgotten or which may crop up as your project progresses.
- Don't forget possible evaluation costs.
- Identify all possible funding opportunities, e.g. government organisations, private sponsorships, grants.
- Identify the benefits and value of your project for potential sponsors or funding organisations.
- Seek in-kind support from a variety of organisations.
- Consider alternatives or modifications to your project methods just in case you're unable to attract all the funding you need.
- Work out how you'll manage the funds and report on expenditure.

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## Tips

- Break your project down into all its components.
- Allocate dollars against each component.
- Make your funding application **visual**: it's easier to attract funding when the benefits are made clear through the use of charts, diagrams and photos.
- Identify how your project will be better than, and different from, other work in the area. Try to put yourself in the shoes of potential funding organisations. From this position, identify what might encourage you to put money towards the project.



## Questions you can ask

- What is the estimated cost of our project?
- What funds do we have available?
- What funds do we need?
- What 'in-kind' support do we have or could we get?
- Who may be interested in financially supporting our project?
- Do we need to consider sponsorship for our project? What are the benefits for potential sponsors?
- Are there potential sponsors who are not appropriate?
- If we can't attract full funding for our project, what options do we have?

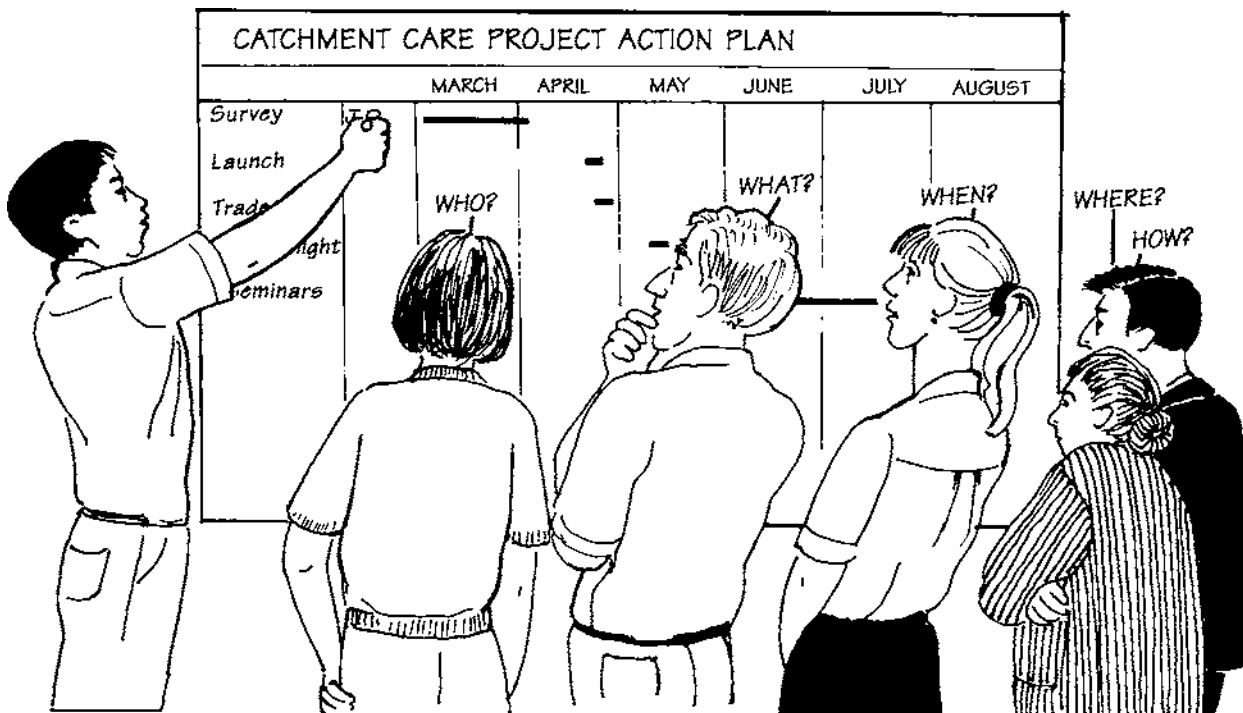
Case Study:  
Shoalhaven  
Business

### *Funding*

The project was funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority. Funds covered:

- a grant to council
- costs of an independent adviser to help with investigation and development of the environmental review process
- costs for the survey and interviews
- cost of launch and printed material.

## Step 7. Make an action plan



### Make an action plan and implement it

Prepare an action plan to ensure you achieve your project's goal and objectives. An action plan identifies who has to do what by when, and what resources will be needed. An action plan is designed to keep you and others in your project on track.

### How?

- Your plan should cover 'Who, what, when, where and how?'
- Identify your resource requirements: the people, budget and time you will need to make your project happen.
- Prepare a schedule that identifies the milestones (key tasks) for the project.
- Identify the specific tasks and their components, who is to make each task happen and, against each task, an expected date for completion.
- Allocate funds against each part of your project that needs to be budgeted for.
- Revisit the action plan throughout your project. As you get into the project you may find your timeframe has been unrealistic and that you need to revise your action plan to take account of new information.

### Tips

- Use your key milestones and work backwards to prepare a timeframe for each.
- Allow plenty of time for consultation, approvals and funding arrangements.
- Monitor your action plan regularly.

## — and implement it

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- Some people find it easier to use commercially prepared schedules, such as Gantt charts and project management software, for managing the timing of large complicated projects.
- As you gather more information about your target group you may need to add or delete tasks on your action plan. This is not a fault in your project design but an indication that you are continuously improving your project by 'reflecting, reviewing and revising'.



### Questions you can ask

- What specific actions are needed to achieve the project's objectives? What are the key tasks?
- What's the timeframe for the project? What are the milestones?
- What resources, other than dollars, are required (e.g. people and time)?
- Who's responsible for doing each task?
- Have we identified monitoring and evaluation steps in our action plan?
- How will we market the project to the broader community? Is there value in launching the project?
- How will we keep the broader community informed?

#### Case study: *Make an action plan—and implement it*

Shoalhaven  
Business

The action plan was as follows:

- Project plan and budget approved (Nov–Dec) [Project coordinator]
- Steering Committee established (Jan) [Project coordinator, council officer and Chamber rep.]
- Launch (Feb) [Project coordinator and council officer]
- Survey (Feb) [Independent adviser]
- Visit several premises to identify areas of concern and develop an 'environmental review process' (Feb–April) [Council officer]
- Develop and distribute monthly newsletters (ongoing)
- Liaise with industry associations (ongoing) [Project coordinator]
- Publicise positive actions in local and industry press (Feb–May) [Project coordinator]
- Hold seminar/workshop for interested owners and operators (May) [Steering committee]
- Interview participants to obtain feedback on the project's strengths and weaknesses (June) [Independent adviser]
- Prepare report summarising the outcomes and possible future directions (on completion of project) [Project coordinator].

## Step 8. Monitor and evaluate



### Measure the success of your project

**Monitor and evaluate the project, and tell people about it.** This is generally considered the most difficult step in education project planning and is therefore often left out of many project designs. Increasingly, however, groups who want to attract funding and support for projects are being asked to show how they will determine a project's success. Monitoring and evaluation of your education project can:

- help you make decisions and recommendations about future directions
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of your project
- enable judgments to be made about the worth of the project
- determine stakeholder and target group satisfaction
- determine the rate and level of attainment of the objectives
- monitor performance
- meet demands for accountability.

It's very rare that all aspects of a project are successful. So it is as important to identify opportunities for improving your project as it is to report on the project's successes.

Although this guide lists evaluation as Step 8, it is important to develop an effective evaluation plan early in the life of the project so the evaluation process can be built into the project design.

### How?

Evaluation is about collecting information and keeping records that show the progress of your project, and problems and achievements against your goal and objectives. This can be done simply through recording and documenting, or in a more scientific approach which involves comparison and rigorous experimental design.

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For community education projects there are two main types of project evaluation:

**1. Process evaluation**—provides information about what is happening throughout your project development and implementation. It involves examining, describing and documenting the project's activities or processes. It is the most common form of evaluation undertaken in community education projects and is characterised by qualitative assessment.

#### Tips

- Decide on the methods you'll use to assess your project. Common process evaluation methods include documentation and description, discussions and observations, focus group questioning, participant and opinion leader surveys, monitoring of participation rates, expert or peer reviews, audits, and trialling of project components.
- Process evaluation will help with quality assurance and the continuous improvement of your project. It provides information about the appropriateness of your project's content and methods.
- Keep records such as photographic and written evidence of key activities to show the progress of your project.
- Tell people about your results and use the evaluation information to make improvements to your project.

**2. Impact evaluation**—assesses the overall effectiveness of a project in achieving its stated goal and objectives. It generally requires some form of planned evaluation design that will measure impact over time and determine whether that impact was the result of your project. Impact evaluation usually requires significant resources and expertise, particularly if experimental and quasi-experimental designs are used. Impact evaluation is often characterised by quantitative assessment methods.



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### Tips

- If you want to do this type of evaluation, seek the advice of a professional who has experience in designing and conducting evaluations.
- Professional evaluators can provide advice on the evaluation design, the sample size, internal and external validity, and the evaluation procedure.
- How will we know if we've achieved our goal and objectives?
- How will we measure the effectiveness of the project?



### Questions you can ask

- Is the project reaching the target community?
- What have been the strengths and weaknesses of our project?
- How will we gather the information we need to determine the success of the project?
- Who will be interested in the evaluation of our project?
- What will we do with the information we collect as a result of monitoring and evaluating our project?
- How could the project be improved? What worked, what didn't, and why?

Case Study:  
Shoalhaven  
Business

### *Monitoring and evaluation*

Activities included:

- a pre-project telephone survey
- monthly monitoring through Steering Committee
- assessment of practices through environmental review process
- monitoring of media coverage
- post-project interviews to determine perceived value of project
- a report summarising strengths, weaknesses and outcomes, with recommendations for future work.

# Full checklist of questions to consider

## Step 1. Analyse the issue or problem

What is the problem or issue of concern?  
To what extent is this an issue of concern within our community?  
Does our community realise there's a problem?  
What are the reasons for or causes of the problem?  
How can we promote community discussion and debate about this issue?  
What do we know about the issue? What research do we have? What's been done already? Who's been involved?  
Is 'education' the way to deal with the issue? What about other approaches such as regulation and enforcement, economics, engineering and science?  
What do we want to achieve? What **can** we achieve? What's our goal?  
What outcome do we want from education? Are we trying to encourage debate? influence attitudes? give or gather information? develop skills? change behaviour?  
Are the alternatives we wish to promote **practical**?  
Can we formulate our needs in terms of short, medium and long-term goals?

## Step 2. Identify stakeholders

Who has a stake (positive or negative) in the problem or issue?  
Who is most affected by the problem or issue? Who is concerned? Who may have different views? (*Prioritise.*)  
In relation to the problem, who are the opinion leaders in the community?  
Who are the key people to assist in solving the problem?  
Is there a person who could 'champion' the project for us?  
What do the stakeholders know, feel, want, believe and value in relation to the problem or issue?  
What are the threats, risks, costs and benefits for the stakeholders?  
How will we involve the stakeholders?

## Step 3. Know your target group

Who are we trying to reach/influence through this project?  
Is there more than one target group? (*Define each group precisely.*)  
What incentives are there for the target group to be involved with the project?  
What does the target group know, feel, want, believe and value about the problem or issue?  
What are the threats, risks, costs and benefits for the target group?  
What is the best way of reaching the target group?  
If they are not already involved with the issue, what will motivate our target group to be involved?  
What support do we need to give the target group to help achieve the project's outcomes?

## Step 4. Determine objectives and outcomes

What are we aiming to achieve as a result of this education project?  
What are the specific educational objectives of the project in terms of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and practices? Are these objectives measurable?  
Do we need to look at short-term and long-term goals for this issue?  
What are the key messages we wish to communicate?  
What outcomes do we want from our project?



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Will any products result from our project? What will we do with these products when the project is finished?

How will achieving our objectives help solve the issue or problem?

What barriers may hinder the achievement of our objectives?

**Step 5. Design your methods**

What is the best method of achieving the project's objectives and outcomes, given the time and money available?

What is the best method of achieving the project's objectives and outcomes in view of what we know about the target group?

Do these methods reflect the educational needs of our target group?

Would it be useful to use more than one technique to achieve the objectives?

What methods will have the most impact on the target group?

Are there solutions to the problem and how do we reach these solutions?

**Step 6. Consider funding**

What is the estimated cost of our project?

What funds do we have available?

What funds do we need?

What 'in-kind' support do we have or could we get?

Who may be interested in financially supporting our project?

Do we need to consider sponsorship for our project? What are the benefits for potential sponsors?

Are there potential sponsors who are not appropriate?

If we can't attract full funding for our project, what options do we have?

**Step 7. Make an action plan and implement it**

What specific actions are needed to achieve the project's objectives? What are the key tasks?

What's the timeframe for the project? What are the milestones?

What resources, other than dollars, are required (e.g. people and time)?

Who's responsible for doing each task?

Have we identified monitoring and evaluation steps in our action plan?

How will we market the project to the broader community? Is there value in launching the project?

How will we keep the broader community informed?

**Step 8. Monitor and evaluate**

How will we know if we've achieved our goal and objectives?

How will we measure the effectiveness of the project?

Is the project reaching the target community?

What have been the strengths and weaknesses of our project?

How will we gather the information we need to determine the success of the project?

Who will be interested in the evaluation of our project?

What will we do with the information we collect as a result of monitoring and evaluating our project?

How could the project be improved? What worked, what didn't, and why?

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# Section 3— Sample community education projects

# Community education project examples

Five community education projects concerned with environmental issues are outlined in this section. They exemplify the eight steps of the project planning model described in section 2. The projects are all similar in their collaborative approaches but different in their origins and methods. The projects are:

1. Project Aware on the Rocks
2. Feral Trolleys
3. Kids, Companies & Creeks
4. Rural Awareness Property Tours (RAPT)
5. Hawkesbury–Nepean Phosphorus Action Program

**Project Example 1:** A community education project initiated by Pittwater Council, focusing on intertidal coastal zones.  
**Project Aware on the Rocks—Pittwater, Warringah and Manly** For more information, phone Cathy Hemery on (02) 9970 7222.

## Step 1. Analyse the issue or problem

Population growth, recreational use and collection of organisms has been reducing the diversity, numbers and size of plant and animal species in intertidal zones along the coast.

## Step 2. Identify stakeholders

Key stakeholders were:

- Pittwater Council
- project volunteers
- Coastal Environment Centre
- Institute of Marine Ecology, University of Sydney
- NSW Fisheries
- Australian Museum
- Department of Land and Water Conservation
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- local Catchment Management Committee

- community groups including Anglers Action, Friends of Bungan Beach, Pittwater Rotary, Marine and Coastal Community Network
- Marine Education Society of Australasia.

## Step 3. Know your target group

The target group comprised visitors to and users of the intertidal zones.

## Step 4. Determine goal, objectives and outcomes

The **goal** was:

- to stop the decline of flora and fauna of intertidal areas along the coast.

The **objectives** were to:

- build partnerships between local government, the community, scientific organisations and statutory bodies to promote a holistic and cooperative approach to coastal conservation

- increase community awareness of the issue
- encourage community conservation of intertidal zones along the coast
- build understanding of the important role of marine invertebrate communities.

The **outcomes** were:

- trained volunteers as conservation advocates
- ongoing involvement of volunteers
- support and involvement of professional bodies: scientists and statutory authorities
- sustained community, regional and media interest in the project
- additional funding recognising the worth of the project
- a resource folder
- guided tours of rock platforms.

#### **Step 5. Design your methods**

The methods involved:

- training community volunteers to undertake outreach conservation activities
- guided tours of rock platforms
- displays about intertidal zones
- a survey of recreational users of accessible intertidal areas.

#### **Step 6. Consider funding**

Funding support was obtained from Ocean Rescue 2000, Sydney Northern Beaches CMC, Pittwater Rotary, Federal Coastcare and *Australian Geographic*.

#### **Step 7. Make an action plan and implement it**

The plan involved:

- circulating an intertidal display at community venues (Jan 95)
- holding community information evenings at Avalon and Narrabeen (Feb 95)
- mounting a display at the Royal Easter Show (Apr 95)
- writing a resource manual and inviting prospective trainers to participate (June 95)
- running training courses (July–Nov 95)
- implementing and monitoring outreach activities (Nov 95 onwards)
- evaluating the project (Jan–Feb 96)
- holding regional workshops (Feb–April 96)
- developing field opportunities to improve trainer knowledge (Jan–May 96)
- developing signage for placement at the most valuable sites
- consulting with communities of non-English-speaking background to develop an understanding of their interests in the area and extend the program to meet their needs.

#### **Step 8. Monitor and evaluate**

The project was monitored and evaluated by:

- conducting surveys of trainers
- conducting surveys of participants in training sessions
- consulting with stakeholders to obtain feedback
- consulting with organisations who were doing similar work to identify improvement opportunities.

**Project Example 2: Feral Trolleys** A community education project initiated by the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

For more information, phone Helen Scott, EPA, on (042) 26 8116.

### Step 1. Analyse the issue or problem

Shopping trolleys were polluting, blocking the water flow, and causing erosion of creeks in the Georges River catchment.

### Step 2. Identify stakeholders

Stakeholders were:

- Georges River CMC
- the nine local councils in the catchment that were responsible for collecting the trolleys
- the EPA
- supermarkets in the area
- the Retail Industry Association.

### Step 3. Know your target group

The target group comprised:

- shoppers
- school students
- retail industry.

Shoppers and school students were often leaving trolleys in streets and gutters. Neither shoppers nor retailers realised the impact that trolleys, and other things left in streets and gutters, were having on local waterways.

### Step 4. Determine goal, objectives and outcomes

The **objectives** were to:

- increase the target group's understanding of the impact of shopping trolleys on creeks
- encourage supermarkets to take more responsibility for collecting shopping trolleys
- develop an appreciation of catchment management and of cooperation in reducing and preventing environmental problems.

The **outcomes** were:

- relationship established with industry association
- school kit and 'Feral Trolleys' poster.

### Step 5. Design your methods

Methods involved:

- convening a steering committee with representation from key stakeholders
- identifying the four components of the program; establishing working groups with local government, industry, media and Department of School Education
- adopting the concept of 'Feral Trolleys'
- asking representatives from all local councils to support a moratorium on imposing a bond on supermarkets for collecting trolleys; to count the trolleys collected in a month; and to display their banner at the launch
- industry group convening two meetings with representatives from the major supermarket chains and the Retail Traders Association to:
  - organise for trolleys held by councils in the catchment to be collected on day of launch
  - ensure that money saved from the councils' moratorium was spent on posters, prizes for the school competition, or the launch (the EPA and Georges River CMC funded the balance)
  - organise a mechanism for the community to contact the supermarket to have an 'escaped' trolley collected.
- producing and distributing *Feral trolley spotting kit* for schools' competition
- involving *Totally Wild* (Channel 10 TV) and inviting other media to the launch.

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### Step 6. Consider funding

Funding support was obtained from the EPA.

### Step 7. Make an action plan and implement it

The plan was to:

- establish a steering committee and involve it in planning (Apr–May 95)
- establish working parties and hold meetings with stakeholders (Jun–Jul 95)
- produce school kit and posters (Jul–Aug 95)

- conduct a launch—involving the media, presentation of awards and student performances (Sept 95).

### Step 8. Monitor and evaluate

Councils and supermarkets monitored changes in numbers of trolleys left in the streets, also the number of related contacts from the community.

Supermarkets were monitored for the impact of an in-house statewide campaign.

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**Project Example 3: Kids, Companies & Creeks (KCC)** A community education project initiated by OzGREEN, Manly Environment Centre and Blackmores Ltd.

For more information, phone Sue and Col Lennox, OzGREEN on (02) 9971 4098; Manly Environment Centre, (02) 9976 2842; or Blackmores Ltd, (02) 9951 0111.

### Step 1. Analyse the issue or problem

The problem had two components:

- deteriorating water quality in Manly Lagoon
- the impact of small and medium-sized businesses on water quality in the catchment.

### Step 2. Identify stakeholders

Stakeholders were:

- school students
- local council
- OzGREEN community group
- Streamwatch
- Manly Environment Centre
- Blackmores Ltd Environment Committee
- the EPA
- Department of Land and Water Conservation
- Waste Services NSW
- the local CMC.

### Step 3. Know your target group

The target group was business people in the Balgowlah industrial estate. Project organisers had limited information about the current practices of operators in the industrial estates.

### Step 4. Determine goal, objectives and outcomes

The **goal** was to encourage links to be made between 'kids', 'companies' and 'creeks' by holding a major event in the industrial estate that would motivate and involve the target group in activities to improve local water quality.

The **objectives** were to:

- make non-threatening contact with industry
- involve and include key stakeholders in the Manly Lagoon catchment
- increase community awareness about waste minimisation, water pollution and catchment protection
- motivate the business and industry community to adopt an attitude of environmental care
- encourage business and industry to investigate and adopt practices that would minimise environmental impact.

The **outcomes** were:

- better relationships with stakeholders in the catchment
- a model for future extension of the project

- production of a KCC booklet outlining the project for others
- awards recognising environmentally responsible businesses
- school-student links with businesses
- a 'waste expo' event providing networks and information
- case studies of companies using operating practices that were better for the environment.

### Step 5. Design your methods

The methods comprised:

- forming a consultative team with representatives from stakeholders
- students doing water quality testing
- students visiting businesses
- a waste expo event, including:
  - displays, advice and print material
  - motivational performances by school students (singing, drama and speeches)
  - engaging a local celebrity (Angry Anderson)
- making use of the media, including preparing articles for the local paper.

### Step 6. Consider funding

Funding was obtained from Blackmores Ltd, the DLWC, the local Catchment Management Committee and the EPA.

### Step 7. Make an action plan and implement it

The plan was to:

- find a team and plan regular meetings [6 months before event]

- investigate what has already happened in the area [5 months before]
- determine resources and allocate jobs [5 months before]
- develop a logo for the project (school students, 4 months before)
- review Streamwatch data, organise testing groups and skills training for students
- prepare map of industrial estate
- conduct role-play training for students to approach industry [OzGREEN]
- determine theme and approaches for the Waste Expo event [team]
- prepare Waste Information Guide [Manly Environment Centre]
- invite displays
- invite guests and companies, organise catering and equipment [3 weeks before]
- visit companies and do catchment water quality testing [students and team, 3 weeks before].

### Step 8. Monitor and evaluate

Monitoring and evaluation was done by:

- keeping records to measure involvement of students and stakeholders
- scanning media coverage
- monitoring progress through team meetings
- doing case studies of business practices.

**Project Example 4: Rural Awareness Property Tours (RAPT)** A community education program initiated and coordinated by Binalong property owner Libby Elliot. The aim was to ensure continuing viability of the tours by putting them on a business footing and spreading the load among a larger group of properties.

For more information, phone Libby Elliot on (06) 227 4220.

### Step 1. Analyse the issue or problem

Land in rural areas was being degraded as a result of problems such as erosion, salinity, drainage, weed infestation and mine rehabilitation.

### Step 2. Identify stakeholders

Stakeholders were:

- landholders
- Department of Land and Water Conservation
- NSW Agriculture
- Greening Australia
- CSIRO
- Landcare groups: Harden–Murrumburrah, Boorowa, Gunning and Binalong
- Lachlan Catchment Management Committee.

### Step 3. Know your target group

The target group comprised:

- landholders
- Landcare and special-interest groups
- interested public
- primary and secondary schools.

What was known about the target group:

- Farmers, and other people interested in or concerned about rural issues, wanted practical learning experiences.

### Step 4. Determine goal, objectives and outcomes

The **goal** was to increase Landcare and environmental management awareness across a wide spectrum of interest groups and individuals.

The **objectives** were to:

- improve understanding about rural environmental issues such as erosion control, river catchment planning, drainage management, salinity, mine restoration

- provide hands-on experience with problems that could occur within the target groups' own environments
- demonstrate practical examples of better rural management practices that are reducing these problems
- develop concern for the environment and an appreciation of the positive action being undertaken in agricultural resource management
- encourage a cooperative-sharing approach to better agricultural resource management.

The **outcome** was a self-funded program of promoting environmentally sound farming activities in the region.

### Step 5. Design your methods

Methods involved:

- conducting tours of a network of 30 properties
- the landholder of each property giving a presentation or talk
- holding on-site demonstrations
- holding on-site discussions.

### Step 6. Consider funding

RAPT is a self-funded business. The charge to tour participants depends on the size and requirements of the tour group. Funds generated from the program are used to reimburse participating farmers for their time, assist with RAPT management and coordination, and support further Landcare work.

### Step 7. Make an action plan and implement it

The plan involved:

- landholders visiting a similar program in Victoria, leading to the concept of RAPT.
- liaising with stakeholder groups to investigate the feasibility of setting up the program



- surveying properties in the Yass, Binalong, Harden, Boorowa and Gunning areas to determine the level of landholder interest
- visiting properties and speaking with interested landholders to select the most suitable properties.
- seeking advice on management practices from expert bodies such as CSIRO
- forming an advisory committee

- developing promotional material
- publicising RAPT through a range of rural and environmental organisations.

#### **Step 8. Monitor and evaluate**

The program was monitored and evaluated by surveying participants after each RAPT tour (a landholder committee provides support).

#### **Project Example 5: Hawkesbury–Nepean Phosphorus Action Program**

A community education and awareness project initiated by the Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Trust to improve water quality in the catchment.

For more information, phone Peter Salier on (045) 774 243.

#### **Step 1. Analyse the issue or problem**

The problem was the current health of the Hawkesbury–Nepean River, including the growth of algal blooms and water weeds (caused by excessive amounts of phosphorus and increasing population growth).

#### **Step 2. Identify stakeholders**

The stakeholders were:

- local government/catchment councils
- Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Trust
- Department of Land and Water Conservation
- Environment Protection Authority
- Sydney Water Corporation.

#### **Step 3. Know your target group**

The target group comprised:

- catchment residents and the general community
- local government
- industry
- agriculture
- schools
- recreational and tourist groups.

#### **Step 4. Define the goal, objectives and outcomes**

The **goal** was a healthy, diverse and productive Hawkesbury–Nepean river system for all.

The **objectives** were:

- to increase public awareness about the harmful effect of phosphorus on river health
- to provide information about the sources of phosphorus.
- to encourage individual and corporate actions to help minimise phosphorus and pollutants
- to provide monitoring data to verify changes in the generation of phosphorus
- to reduce the incidence of algal blooms.

The **outcomes** were:

- increased community awareness of the effect of phosphorus on the river
- less phosphorus generated in the catchment and entering watercourses
- change in attitude and behaviour within the community, leading to sustainable gains
- reduced chemical dosing required to treat phosphorus at sewage treatment plants.

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### Step 5. Design your methods

Methods comprised:

- appointing a full-time project manager
- establishing a steering committee with representatives from the community, local government, government agencies and the Trust to set strategic direction for the program
- establishing a working party with representatives from government and the Trust to implement Steering Committee recommendations
- communication/marketing:
  - brochures, posters, T-shirts, drink coasters, bookmarks, carry bags, displays, catchment mailout, calendar
  - media activities: radio and press advertising, competitions, trade journal articles
  - meetings with key stakeholders and organisations to enlist support and develop joint programs
  - regular media releases to key stakeholders
  - school activities, teaching resources, competitions
  - public awareness; operational monitoring.

### Step 6. Consider funding

The program was funded by the Special Environmental Levy, the Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Management Trust, Department of Land and Water Conservation and some catchment councils. The agencies and the Trust also gave ‘in kind’ support.

### Step 7. Make an action plan and implement it

The plan involved:

- a pre-benchmark survey (Nov 94)
- strategic media and marketing plan approved (Mar 95)
- a program launch (May 95)
- a local radio campaign (May 95)
- negotiating with Cumberland Newspaper Group for a regular column in each catchment paper and to support the program (Jun–Jul 95)
- negotiating with John Williamson to lend his support to the program (Jun 95)

- negotiating with Radio 2WS FM for community service time and support (Jul 95)
- a Streamwatch Open Day (Jul 95)
- intensive radio/print campaign (Aug–Dec 95)
- launch of the local government Phosphorus Action Policy (Aug 95)
- bus and carpark advertising (Aug–Dec 95)
- mail-out to all residents in catchment (Oct 95)
- school art, pledge and advertising projects (Sep–Dec 95)
- a schools Presentation of Awards Day (Dec 95)
- a field day for dairy farmers to promote dairy waste systems (Nov 95)
- an on-site wastewater disposal training course (Dec 95)
- an evaluation survey (Dec 95)
- negotiating with Panthers for monthly column and to support the program (Feb 96)
- negotiating with Sydney Water to monitor influent phosphorus at 3 STPs (Dec 95–May 96)
- launch of the school education package *Enough is Enough* with Sydney Water (Jun 96)
- preparing and circulating a report.

### Step 8. Monitor and evaluate

Activities involved:

- a benchmark survey (telephone poll of 120 residents in 6 subcatchments) (Nov 94)
- monitoring of progress (Steering Committee, monthly)
- monitoring of influent to 3 STPs (ongoing)
- media monitoring
- water quality monitoring of Hawkesbury–Nepean River and tributaries (EPA, Sydney Water, StreamWatch)
- monitoring changes in practices of local government and agriculture
- an evaluation survey (telephone poll of 120 residents in 6 subcatchments) (Dec 95).

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# Section 4— Useful community education methods

## Checklist of useful education methods

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The methods you use to educate your target group will depend on your objectives, who you are trying to reach and the resources you have available. Some of the most common methods used are listed below, followed by an outline of the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of each.

### *Methods*

- ✓ Audio visual tools such as video recordings, audio recordings, photos and slides
- ✓ Awards
- ✓ Case studies
- ✓ Curricula and courses of study through schools, universities, TAFE, home study and community education centres
- ✓ Debate
- ✓ Demonstration
- ✓ Exhibitions, displays and models
- ✓ Focus groups
- ✓ Grants
- ✓ Individual advice, communication or instruction
- ✓ Interactive computer packages including CD ROMs and the Internet
- ✓ Launches
- ✓ Mass media, including advertising and publicity
- ✓ Meetings and discussions—steering, advisory and consultative groups
- ✓ Peer education
- ✓ Print material such as brochures, posters, books, letters, newsletters, stickers, bookmarks
- ✓ Role play
- ✓ Study circles
- ✓ Talks, presentations and seminars
- ✓ Theatre, mime and puppetry
- ✓ Tours, open days and field days
- ✓ Training, train-the-trainer programs and training modules
- ✓ Workshops.

# Characteristics, strengths & weaknesses

In the following pages, characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of various community education methods and tools are outlined to help you select those that best suit your project and your resources.

## Audio-visual tools



Audio visual tools such as video recordings, audio recordings, photos, slides and overhead transparencies are an essential component of many education projects. They should always be considered as aids and not as an educational method that stands alone. Audio visual material should be introduced and concluded through some form of discussion. It needs to be carefully selected or prepared to

ensure it is relevant, convincing and interesting. While video recordings are often the most favoured audio visual aid, their production requires significant financial resources and professional expertise. How they are to be distributed also requires careful consideration. Slides, photographs and audio recordings are a very useful alternative.

### Strengths

- are useful to add, maintain and stimulate interest
- can save time: 'A picture is worth a thousand words!'
- can clarify and clear up problems of ambiguity
- can reinforce the concepts you are trying to communicate in words
- can be useful in conveying emotive elements
- can aid memory
- can provide 'proof' and make an issue 'real'.

### Weaknesses

- production costs for video material can be expensive
- material goes out-of-date quickly
- may require special equipment and space for viewing and listening
- equipment will require regular servicing to minimise breakdowns
- are inclined to 'sit on the shelf'.

## Awards

Awards to encourage and recognise achievements can be a useful method of motivating and supporting education projects in a community. Well-publicised award and accreditation programs can be sought-after by many groups and can result in participation by people who might otherwise not be inclined to be involved in your project. Awards programs need to be well promoted and have a well-thought-out system for independent evaluation of entries. Categories of awards to ensure entrants are competing against each other on an equitable footing need to be established. Conditions of Entry and Criteria for Judging need to be identified and published.

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### **Strengths**

- motivate involvement in projects
- encourage positive action.

### **Weaknesses**

- can be resource intensive
- are ineffective unless well promoted and valued by the target community.

## **Case studies**

Case studies are records of innovative or good practice. They record specific problems or issues experienced by a person or a group and the actions taken to overcome the problems. Their purpose is to promote these actions to others. They are often used where there have been limited solutions found to a particular problem. Case studies generally report factual information as well as opinions (good and bad). In presenting case studies, ensure that language styles, reading levels and format design are appropriate for the target group.

### **Strengths**

- provide real examples
- encourage replication
- are generally practical in nature
- provide innovative ideas.

### **Weaknesses**

- distribution methods and points for the target group to access the information need to be determined and promoted.

## **Curricula and courses through schools, universities, TAFE, home study and community colleges**

Curricula and courses of study designed and presented by leaders, teachers or experts in a particular field are often considered the most traditional and widely accepted method of education. Curriculum is a feature of formal education specifically received through primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions. A curriculum generally follows prescribed syllabuses which outline the courses of study in relation to skills and competencies. People's interest in lifelong learning, and changes in society and technology, have resulted in extension or continuing education courses being widely available through universities, community colleges, home study, distance education, TAFE, and Workers Education Associations (WEA). The range of courses available today is extensive, catering for both vocational needs and special interests.

### **Strengths**

- courses are generally well planned, tested, accredited and presented by qualified people
- course components are generally mandatory—your information will reach your target group
- adult learners are usually involved because they want to be—interest and motivation are high.

### Weaknesses

- the structure can be rigid
- it can take considerable effort, time and skill to have new courses approved or adopted
- integrating new content into existing curricula is time- and energy-consuming.

### Debate



Debate is a more formal approach to discussion, useful for structured presentation and examination of opposing views. This method is most popular with young people and is a useful way of encouraging analysis and assessment of often controversial issues.

Because a debate is a staged and timed performance, it enables participants to express ideas with some protection. A debate should be designed to encourage audience consideration and discussion about the arguments presented.

### Strengths

- encourages reflection by the audience
- develops understanding of, and empathy for, opposing viewpoints.

### Weaknesses

- require considerable effort to organise
- are difficult to evaluate.

### Demonstration

Demonstration is an important and effective method used specifically for the acquisition of skills, e.g. composting and water-quality monitoring. It requires the demonstrator to be competent and confident in showing and communicating all aspects of the skill that the target group is later expected to emulate.

Good demonstration requires the ability to break down the skill into its various components so the target group can practise the components effectively.

### Strengths

- is practical
- can provide hands-on experience.

### Weakness

- often makes skills look easier than they really are.



## Exhibitions, displays & models



Minimal text, large interesting graphics and some form of interactive activity are the key components of a good display. Displays can be simple, inviting and easy to erect; technologically extravagant requiring expert design and construction; or somewhere in between. Your budget and target group will determine the type of display you produce. Displays are often a feature of events designed for the general public and this creates problems in targeting your audience or learning group.

Targeted events, such as trade shows and ethnic community days, are more useful in ensuring your display is reaching your target group. If you staff your own displays, your audience can question, discuss and clarify with you the content in your exhibition. Models can add extra interest to a display and are a useful method of representing—in smaller scale and three-dimensional form—your key message.

### Strengths

- provide general information
- can interest and reach people who may not be members of organised groups or have a special interest in the topic
- can be useful in making an issue more salient to a community
- have the further advantage that, if they are part of an organised exhibition or event, much of the publicity and logistics may be organised for you.

### Weaknesses

- can be expensive and resource-intensive to prepare
- require publicity to attract participants
- are often for the general public, so it can be difficult to know if people who visit an exhibition or display represent your target group
- are difficult to evaluate in terms of their effectiveness.

## Focus groups

Focus groups are small groups (say, 5-10 people) formed to discuss a specific topic. They are used as a method of obtaining information from people who represent your target group and are a popular qualitative method of seeking people's opinions about issues, products and processes. As such, they are often used in program evaluation. Focus groups are led by a facilitator skilled in questioning to draw out people's views and reactions to the topic of focus. Focus groups are an excellent way of determining whether a particular program product (e.g. a poster) is on track.

### Strengths

- provide useful information about people's attitudes
- because they are small, ensure involvement for testing ideas and gaining opinions.

### Weaknesses

- can be resource intensive (e.g. cost of engaging facilitator and hiring venue; participants may also require payment)
- are often criticised because the information collected is based on the views of a small sample.

## Grants

Grants are provided by many government organisations to encourage community involvement in issues of social and environmental concern. Grants provide financial resources which enable many communities to undertake significant projects in their local area. They provide local communities that have well developed networks, motivation and strong ownership of local issues, with the essential financial resources to translate their concerns and interests into action. There are a number of educational grants programs that fund community groups.

### Strengths

- support individuals and groups who have ownership and commitment
- enable goodwill to be translated into action
- encourage new ideas
- enable innovative projects to be tried and tested
- support the conduct of local projects on a needs basis.

### Weaknesses

- grants require a system of administration to ensure that recipients understand and adhere to the conditions and accountabilities
- recipients may need some guidance in obtaining skills to improve the effectiveness of their approaches.

## Individual advice, communication or instruction



Often overlooked as an educational tool, this method is commonly used by many people in day-to-day interactions with individuals in the work, home or community setting. Individual advice, communication or instruction is viewed by many as a most effective education method because it provides one-to-one tailored education. Many people who use this method may not realise the educational value of

the approach. It should not be undervalued, and is promoted here as a useful method for consideration:

- when working with individuals in isolated situations
- as a process for encouraging participation in a network
- when working with individuals who may have unique requirements.

### Strengths

- encourages interaction
- accommodates individual needs and differences
- is useful when the target group is small and its members have little in common.

### Weakness

- from provider's perspective, can be viewed as inefficient.

**Interactive computer packages including Internet, CD-ROM**



Computer technology offers fast, effective access to worldwide information and is therefore an important educational method with rapidly expanding universal appeal. While the cost of hardware is restrictive for many, most educational institutions, and many workplaces and public information centres, now have computer facilities. If your target group has

access to computer technology you may consider using this method.

The **Internet** is a worldwide communications and information network linking millions of computers around the globe. It provides access to online information services through documents and databases and, through electronic mail (e-mail), allows Internet users to communicate with other e-mail users in a most cost- and time-efficient manner. The Internet is one of the world's largest and fastest growing computer networks.

**CD-ROMs** are laser discs that allow enormous amounts and variety of information to be stored and retrieved—including text, photographs, drawings, film, video and audio material. Their use as an educational tool is rapidly expanding in schools, universities and industry.

### Strengths

- can be interesting and fun
- cater for individual learning
- are interactive—you make it happen
- take a discovery-based approach.

### Weaknesses

- many people have limited access
- systems breakdowns
- it can be expensive to develop CD-ROMs

- hardware is expensive
- not everyone is a computer whizz—yet!

### Launches—project or product

A launch is a popular method of letting people know about your project or product. It can also be an important way of introducing an activity, project or product to a wider audience. A launch requires considerable planning and should be structured to ensure it flows smoothly and to schedule. Timing is important: the event should not run for too long. Be clear about the reason for conducting the launch. If your purpose is to attract publicity for your project, contact the media, prepare media information and make sure the launch event has something new or different to offer (see further under Mass Media).

#### Strengths

- attract media coverage
- promote interest and support.

#### Weaknesses

- can be time-consuming to organise
- can be costly (venue, catering, personalities, etc.)
- may give rise to unrealistic expectations.

### Mass media, including advertising and publicity

Mass media is used to communicate to large numbers of people. It is a useful method for raising an issue, encouraging debate and for making an issue more salient. The information is presented through various media and the public can generally choose to read, listen, view or disregard the material offered. The only way to ensure the media cover your project is through **paid advertising**, but this is expensive and there is still no guarantee that your target group will take in your information. If paid advertising is not possible, there is value in examining opportunities to access community-service information for both print and electronic media. **Publicity**, such as a media release, is the most popular and useful method for achieving possible coverage of your project. Careful selection of the media that are most likely to be accessed by your target group will also improve the reach of your information.



- **Paid advertising** can be run through:
  - the print media (such as journals, magazines and newspapers)
  - the electronic media (such as television, radio and cinema)
  - outdoor media (e.g. billboards/poster boards on trains, buses and taxis).
- **Publicity** can be obtained through:
  - interviews and talk-back sessions on radio
  - media releases and interviews with the press and television media
  - launches, announcements and news conferences.

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### **Strengths**

- has the potential to reach large numbers of people
- is a convenient and generally credible information source
- can increase the perceived credibility and worth of your project.

### **Weaknesses**

- the high cost of advertising space
- possible distortion (dilution or exaggeration) of information during editing
- communication is generally one-way (letters to the editor and talk-back radio overcome this to a limited degree)
- added headlines or leading paragraphs may not support the main message.

### **Tips**

Media interest is often aroused by:

- the unusual, the latest, the sensational
- action, drama and emotion
- 'stars': well-known, entertaining identities
- spectacles and visuals
- 'people' stories
- public-interest stories: who, what, when, where, why.

Paid and unpaid media which you could consider include:

- local and metropolitan newspapers
- community newsletters
- community and ethnic radio
- ethnic press
- trade, business and industry newsletters and journals
- other journals and magazines
- religious media
- youth, seniors and women's network publications

### **Meetings and discussions—steering, advisory and consultative groups**

Meetings and discussions, either in organised small groups or in one-to-one situations, provide an excellent means of two-way communication. Steering, advisory, and consultative meetings are an important method used in partnership projects. They assume that the parties involved have valuable knowledge or skills which can assist in solving a problem. (This method should not to be confused with public meetings, which are sometimes used as a consultation strategy to explore a contentious issue affecting many people.)

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### Strengths

- encourage ownership
- encourage sharing of ideas and opinions
- provide opportunity for honest conversation
- facilitate sharing of resources and skills
- can foster rapport and an environment of trust among small groups or individuals who meet over a period of time.

### Weaknesses

- can be time-consuming.
- can lead to individuals being side-tracked and losing focus.

## Peer education



Peer education approaches empower those in identified communities to educate their neighbours, friends and acquaintances about a topic or issue which is of interest or importance to them. Peer education is useful because it brings together people of 'equal status' who are associated in some way. This equality often encourages more open and honest discussion, questioning and interest around the focus topic.

Association with a peer encourages many individuals to have increased confidence and a belief in their ability to do similar activities. Peer education can be strengthened by conducting a support course, talk or demonstration. *Earth Works* and *Project Aware*, both mentioned in this guide, are examples of peer education programs.

### Strengths

- generally connects committed individuals
- features a non-threatening learning style which builds confidence and encourages involvement
- generally has a practical focus
- projects generally rely on the goodwill of volunteers (so you need to ensure that their services are recognised and not taken for granted).

### Weaknesses

- peer educators require support and access to advice
- peer education requires an initial core group to get things started.

Print material, e.g. brochures, posters, booklets, letters, newsletters, stickers, book-marks



Well-worded print material, designed with the needs and interests of the reader in mind, is one of the most common methods used to educate. The type of print material you choose will depend on the quantity and style of information you wish to convey. A distribution mechanism is essential to ensure this material gets into the hands of the target group. The variety of print material provides flexibility to meet individual needs—e.g. it can be a one-off, awareness-raising publication such as a poster; a series of theme-based periodic releases such as a newsletter (which can be packaged in a folder format for updates and future reference); or can be personalised, such as in direct-mail letter format.

### Strengths

Well-planned and worded print material:

- is visible and informative
- can reach large numbers of people
- allows people time to digest information and return to it for future reference when needed
- provides flexibility to meet individual needs.

### Weaknesses

- generally a one-way communication method which does not encourage questioning, clarification or feedback. (Response or comment return slips can partly overcome this problem)
- requires well-planned distribution methods to ensure it reaches the target group and is read by them
- must compete strongly for the reader's interest against the mass of printed items already in existence
- not all people read the same language! Different people respond to different writing styles, language and tone in printed material
- may contain too much information and be written in a form that is too complex for the target group.

### Role play

Role play is a form of simulation which is used for affective learning (values, beliefs and attitudes). Its purpose is to enable people to experience a situation from the past or to prepare for a future situation. It involves acting out an episode in which time and space have been compressed. It is a popular method, used particularly with young adults of mixed ability levels. Every role play should be concluded with a debriefing session for reflection and to enable participants time to readjust to the normal situation.

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### **Strengths**

- encourages participants to discover outcomes rather than being told answers
- is useful to extend knowledge into feeling
- is useful for examining and clarifying values and beliefs
- can increase motivation.

### **Weaknesses**

- can be time-consuming to prepare
- can be difficult to evaluate effectiveness
- may cause discomfort and embarrassment
- participants may not link the role play to reality
- the outcomes vary with the role players.

### **Study circles**

Study circles are small groups which meet three to six times to discuss and learn about an issue of concern to them. Each session lasts about two hours and is guided by a facilitator. The participants learn at their own pace through discussion and debate without an expert 'running the show'. Study circles can use resources and stimulus material prepared expressly for their purpose, or can collect their own material based on local interest and resources. Contact the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education for more information (phone (06) 9251 7933).

### **Strengths**

- are 'issue' focused, covering topics of current concern
- attract participants who are motivated, interested in the topic of study and therefore more likely to be actively involved
- entail non-threatening learning which encourages critical thinking and discussion
- comprise small groups, which facilitate participation
- can be formed from existing groups such as Landcare groups, parent groups, recreational groups.

### **Weaknesses**

- need organisers to create circles, select material, recruit participants and attend to logistical details
- need good facilitators to lead discussion and involve participants.

### **Talks, presentations and seminars**

Talks and presentations to organised groups require planning and preparation. They are useful methods for stimulating interest, giving information and encouraging involvement in a future project. It is essential to know who your audience is and what their level of interest may be. Don't assume that, because you have been invited to speak to a group, they will all be attentive and



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supportive of your presentation. Variety in presentation and the use of visual material can help you get your message across. Always allow time for the group to have input through comment and questioning. Consider having a 'handout' as a reference or reminder of the key points of your presentation.

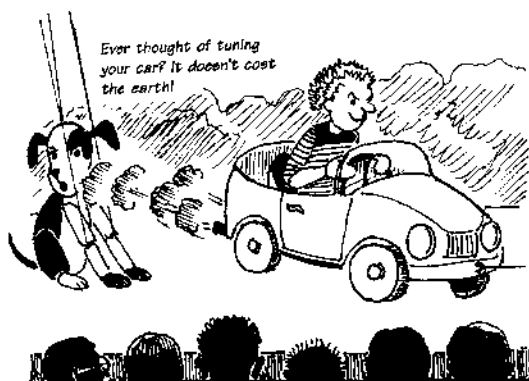
### Strengths

- can reach organised groups or established networks
- people in the groups tend to talk to others in the community about the presentation. Your reach therefore has a 'trickle down' to others
- they allow for questioning, clarification and input from the group
- established groups will usually assist with much of the organisation of your presentation (i.e. venue is usually set by them, invitations and publicising of the presentation is also done by the members of the group)
- they are helpful in networking and establishing relationships.

### Weaknesses

- will not reach large numbers unless a program of presentations is scheduled
- are time-consuming if they involve presenting to many groups
- require interesting/entertaining speakers—or the audience may 'switch off'
- require considerable time for preparation
- do not guarantee you will reach your target group if you are responding to an external request to give a talk
- need some form of print material to be distributed at the presentation, or many people will not take in all the information presented
- require skill and flexibility in timing to balance audience needs for discussion and speaker's needs to cover all the key issues.

### Theatre, mime and puppetry



The performing arts, specifically theatre, mime and puppetry, are appealing approaches which can be considered to supplement or complement other educational approaches. When you need a method which stands out, is different and will attract the attention of your target group, consider using one of these approaches. This method has been used successfully in schools, colleges and at events and celebrations. Special

talent and skills such as conceptual development, scripting, performing and prop production are required. There are a number of theatre groups which offer these skills and talents, and some have extensive experience in educational theatre.

### Strengths

- are 'different'
- can be entertaining and educational.

### Weaknesses

- development and performance costs can be expensive
- the message can be lost in the fun
- it can be difficult to delineate what is real and what is fantasy.

### Tours, open days and field days



Tours and related events may involve organised talks, displays, demonstrations and distribution of print material. They usually take place on a site which has been chosen because it allows practical demonstration of some aspect of an educational project, e.g. field days on farms to demonstrate a buffer zone; or tours of sewage treatment plants to show problems caused by

inappropriate disposal of items in the sewerage system.

### Strengths

- provide opportunities for semi-personalised informal discussion about an issue of interest to participants
- because they are held on-site, provide opportunities for demonstration of skills, technologies, etc.
- present a non-threatening, relaxed environment which encourages openness and exploration of concerns
- encourage interaction.

### Weaknesses

- require considerable organisation
- require skilled and knowledgeable demonstrators/presenters
- require publicity to ensure participants attend.

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**Training, train-the-trainer and training modules**

Training is a planned and systematic method used to modify or develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve performance in an activity or activities. Training is often work- or job-oriented with a focus on the processes by which something is done. It generally emphasises uniform and predictable responses which are learnt and reinforced by practice and repetition. Training methods aim to bring participants to a desired level of attainment or competency. Train-the-trainer programs are designed to ensure that those involved in providing courses or instruction in your program are accredited and therefore maintain the course standards.

**Strengths**

- can provide a pool of people to support your program
- allow your program objectives, principles and content to be spread in a way that maximises quality
- promote the sustainability of a program and increase your program reach.

**Weaknesses**

- require ongoing commitment and support
- resource-intensive in terms of preparing programs and supporting those who have been trained.

**Workshops**

Workshops are used to seek other ideas with a view to developing a collaborative product. They are often used when there are different points of view about a particular issue. Workshops should be kept small to encourage involvement of all participants. A draft agenda or plan for the workshop needs to be prepared to give some initial direction. This would then be discussed, amended or accepted at the beginning of the workshop program. Skills in facilitation are important for workshop group leaders.

**Strengths**

- encourage communication and acceptance of other viewpoints
- are useful when the solutions to problems are not clear
- are useful for small groups where there is a common interest or concern.

**Weaknesses**

- can be difficult to keep focused and clear about the purpose and desired outcome
- can be dominated by forceful individuals.

## Glossary or 'learning the lingo'

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Affective learning	Learning concerned with emotions, values, beliefs and attitudes
Aim	The primary purpose or goal to be achieved
Attitude	A relatively constant feeling, predisposition, or set of beliefs and values directed towards an object, person or situation
Belief	Accepted as true by a person or group
Cognitive learning	Learning related to knowledge and intellect
Collaborative	Working in partnership
Community	A large or small number of people with some common characteristic
Community development	A process of developing or building up communities to enable empowerment, self-sufficiency and control over their environment
Community education	A process concerned with influencing people's knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour
Curriculum	The total planned learning experiences resulting from and provided by an educational organisation (includes goals, objectives, content, methods, evaluation)
Educational objective	A target to be reached in relation to people's knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes, practices and behaviour
Educational output	Tangible educational products resulting from a project
Goal	The primary purpose or aim
Impact evaluation	The process of assessing the overall effectiveness of a project in meeting its objectives
In-kind support	Resources provided instead of money to assist a project, e.g. a printing company may offer to print material free of charge
Involve	To include and to seek input
Objective	A target to be reached, relating to the goal or aim
Outcome	A result or effect
Peer education	Provision of education by members of a community to members of the same or an equivalent community
Process evaluation	The process of describing and reviewing the operating procedures of a project
Program	A set of planned projects designed to achieve specific objectives over time
Public involvement	Consultative interaction with the community or public
Social marketing	The use of marketing principles and techniques to increase the acceptability of a social cause, idea or behaviour
Stakeholder	A person or group interested in, affected by, or involved in an issue
Strategy	A broad program to enable the achievement of goals and objectives
Syllabus	Content areas to be taught and assessed; a syllabus is part of a curriculum
Target group	The group you are aiming to influence, reach or educate. In community education, your target group will have participating, advising and learning roles
Training	Planned, systematic action to modify or develop knowledge, skills and attitudes through learning experiences; often work-related
Train-the trainer	The training of people who provide courses or instruction to others
Values	Personal convictions about the worth of an action or object; a preference shared and transmitted within a community
Vocational education	An education program that emphasises content and skills for an occupation.

## Useful reading

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*Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education*. Canberra, AACE, ISSN 1035–0462 (published three times a year).

## Your comments

We would appreciate your comments and advice on the content and style of this publication.

Please respond to the following questions and return this page (or a copy) to:

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Were sections of the publication useful? Please circle your response.

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Background</b>	very useful	useful	not useful
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Planning, step-by-step</b>	very useful	useful	not useful
		<b>Case study example for each step</b>		
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Sample projects</b>	very useful	useful	not useful
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Useful methods—strengths and weaknesses</b>	very useful	useful	not useful
		<b>Glossary</b>		
		very useful	useful	not useful

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