



# The why and how of auditing

## What is auditing?

Auditing is the process of reviewing a process or situation and recording information on how well (or not) something is being done. An audit can be carried out at home, in your classroom or wider school, or in the local community or, depending on the type of audit, virtually. It's good to start by identifying the questions you have about the process or situation, so that you can collect the specific data you need to answer those questions.

We have tools to help you audit different sustainability initiatives including waste, water, energy and biodiversity. These are explained in more detail below.

## Why is it important?

It's important to do an audit before you begin a new project so that you have a clear picture of what's already being done. Once you know this, you can identify areas that need extra work, allowing you to more effectively plan and set goals.

You can also use the information you collect as part of your audit to track your progress- collect some data again in the middle or at the end of your project and you will be able to see the difference you have made. For example, if you choose to audit waste at your school and find out lots of people are putting soft plastic into landfill, you might design a project focussed on recycling and collecting soft plastics- then measure the amount at the school again at the end of the year, to see how much of a reduction there has been. This is a great way to clearly show the results of your project.

## How can I carry out an audit for my project?

Before you carry out an audit, ask yourself the following questions:

- What exactly do I want to find out?
- How will I find out?
- Can I use an existing audit tool, or will I need to design something myself?

Decide on your theme, and then you can start researching what tools are already out there. The Green Adelaide Education team has a number of auditing tools you can use, including equipment you can borrow. More details are on our website in the [Loan Library](#) section. You might also like to check out the 'Getting started- auditing' table on the [YEC website](#).

## Existing auditing tools

### Energy

Measuring energy use, either at school or at home, can be done easily with the right tools including:

- [home energy toolkits](#), which are available for loan from most local libraries and contain equipment to monitor energy use
- the ABC Science website which has a [carbon calculator](#) you can use to estimate your own energy use

### Waste

If you are looking to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill from your school, here are a few websites to get you started:

- [Wipe Out Waste](#) has a number of different auditing tools that are easy to use, including their [bin audit webpage](#)
- KESAB has a number of online tutorials and virtual tours related to waste auditing on their [events page](#)
- If you are particularly interested in microplastics, you can find out more about auditing them through the [Australian Microplastic Assessment Project website](#)

### Water

If your project is focussed on water, we have a number of tools on our [Water auditing webpage](#) that relate to both water use, and water quality in your local creek or wetland.

### Biodiversity

If you want to restore or create habitat or a native garden, try the following starting points:

- Search for your local [Landscape SA](#) region to find out what plants and suppliers they recommend, and who you might contact for support

Find more ideas on our [plants and animals page](#), which is broken down by habitat type.