

# Good News Stories

## Sustainable Schools Program

### Schools improving our environment

#### Burrumbuttock Public School

Burrumbuttock serves as a model school on student leadership and environmental education. The school works closely with “Wirraminna Environmental Centre” to raise student and community awareness of sustainability. The school propagates some 1500 native species of plants and wildflowers for local projects. Students take a leadership role in addressing local forums and actively maintaining the flora for the community under the tutelage of local artists and a wildlife biologist. More info: [www.burrumbutt-p.schools.nsw.gov.au](http://www.burrumbutt-p.schools.nsw.gov.au).



#### Narrabeen North Public School

In 2002 the school as part of their commitment to environmental education began the process of developing a school environment management plan. New teaching and learning outcomes transformed the traditional science, technology and HSIE syllabus to a more interactive extended classroom-style learning format. Part of the new approach to learning included establishing a parent/student bush care group and hosting practical workshops on sustainable living practices.

Launched under “Go Green Day” the inaugural event incorporated activities to support the development of environmental auditing practices and biodiversity within the school grounds. Follow up days have been held to review and analyse progress.

Participants are encouraged to actively brainstorm solutions to local environmental problems for presentation to the school’s environment committee. The school has incorporated the local community’s many ideas into its School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP). The Committee’s main role is to facilitate the plan’s outcomes, which are

implemented with the support of the school community. The Committee is made up of the school grounds committee, the student environmental group (called the Caneung Club), the parent bush care group, the student representative council, the parents and citizens group, teachers, students, administration and auxiliary staff.

Current targets for the school include:

- Developing and maintaining close links with community and other agencies
- Identifying and maintaining corridor links
- Targeting high threat weeds for removal
- Increasing the variety of bird life, invertebrates and mammals within the school environment
- Establishing a functioning aquatic ecosystem.



## Garden Suburb Public School

Established in 2002, and managed by an appointed environment minister and deputy, the school's environmental team has 60 students and is growing. The students monitor the water of nearby Forest Hill Estate and meet monthly to decide on actions to take to ensure its ongoing quality. The school has also deployed the NSW Government Environment Trust and Lake Macquarie Council's Environmental Education grants to fund the establishment of an organic garden within the school grounds, which the teachers use as an outdoor learning environment for students. Students are also trained in land care management and regeneration through the School Wide Enrichment Model (SEM). Groups investigate the wildlife habitat and flora of the school's bush remnant and actively support students in developing their skills in managing its environment.

## Coffs Harbour High School

The complexity of high schools is often a barrier to achieving effective collaboration between schools, other educators and the community when implementing local environmental education programs. Coffs Harbour High School has been able to successfully cross this divide by establishing teams and committees to support the school's environmental management plan. The teams and committees are drawn from its students, teachers, executive staff, local TAFE teachers and their students. The groups have collaborated to redesign and landscape areas around the school.

The school's environmental committee is made up of teachers and students who meet weekly. Students run the meetings, dividing themselves into four focus areas - resources/recycling material, water, energy and curriculum. Recently they put the school environment management plan into a presentation and presented it to a group of teachers, parents and students from primary and high schools in the local area.

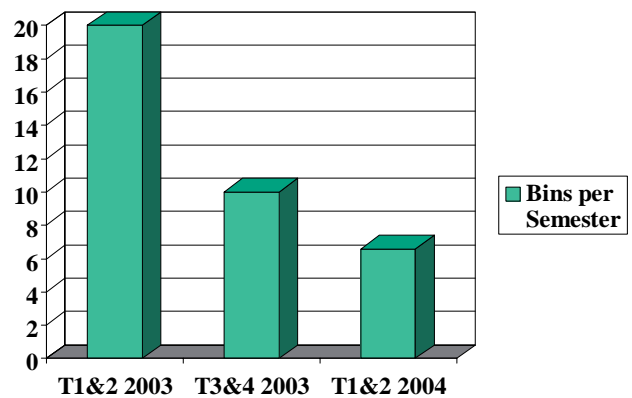
"To see them present was unbelievable and highly regarded by those present," said the support team person for the mid-north coast.

The Year 8 science students have also gained support from local council and VISY, to implement a paper recycling project, where they monitor collection frequency and volume on a monthly basis. More info: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/)

## Loftus Public School

This southern Sydney school has actively decreased its ecological footprint. The school was previously audited by School Communities Recycling All Paper (SCRAP) and a number of initiatives were based on the audit results. The school prioritised the need to reduce the amount of waste they were producing and sending to landfill. They introduced low waste lunch trial days under their Healthy Canteens Initiative. The school community was then surveyed by enlisting the support of their student environmental club, Kids of Loftus Making a Difference (KOMAD). Students identified "cling wrap free zones" as a target for the future. Other student monitoring teams have also been set up including Big Drips (water) and Bright Sparks (energy).

The school reduced waste by 66 percent simply by introducing no waste lunches. The school is a model for others to follow and demonstrates what is easily achievable within the area of waste reduction. The low waste lunch policy is now seen as an essential component of the school's environmental management plan and it is promoted as part of the annual Kindergarten Orientation Program. More info: [www.loftus-p.schools.nsw.gov.au](http://www.loftus-p.schools.nsw.gov.au) and also: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/)



## Waste reduction

Total saved:

\$908.40

Diverted 42 cubic meters from Landfill in 18 mths



Department of Environment and Conservation NSW  
Level 2, 1 Fitzwilliam Street, Parramatta  
PO Box 644, Parramatta 2124  
Phone: (02) 8837 6000 Fax: (02) 8837 6099  
Phone: 131 555 (info and publications)  
e-mail: [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
Website: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)