

Case Study

Name of School:	Narellan Vale Public School		
School Post Code:	2567	Project Completion Date:	Ongoing (Bronze award by end of 2014)
Eco-Coordinator:	Beverley O'Meara and Trish Austen	Current Award Level:	
Project Title:	Waste Not, Want Not – Waste minimisation and litter management		

Eco-Schools Topic: Please enter "X" in relevant boxes			
Water:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy Living:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waste:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	School Grounds:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Litter:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Biodiversity:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Global Perspective:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Transport:	<input type="checkbox"/>	General:	<input type="checkbox"/>



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Why did you decide to undertake this project? What aims did you have starting out?

- The opportunity to undertake the Eco-project was presented to us by our “new” Principal, who had a strong background focus in Environmental Education. Combining this with our SRC discussions that had brought to the staff’s attention, the need to address waste issues within the school and the overall litter problems, a partnership between the Eco-project and our SRC was established.
- Originally the aims of the SRC was to combat food waste and to save any unopened food for the poor, however through SRC meetings and discussions the focus for our project turned to waste minimization and litter reduction in the school. The year five SRC members were selected to attend “The Sustainability Excursion” in September of 2013 and at this excursion the school representatives took an oath to “Reduce litter, minimize waste, use reusable containers and to recycle where applicable” –
- which has remained the focus for our SRC since.



ACTION

How was the project delivered? Was the project topic integrated into the curriculum? If so, please describe how.

The project is an ongoing adventure. The SRC have taken ownership of the Eco Project and have endeavoured to communicate to every student and teacher in the school community the projects aims of reducing waste and minimising litter. The project started with the SRC year 5 'Eco reps' attending sustainability workshops at the Camden Environmental Education Centre in Term 4 2013. These 'Eco reps' then taught the other SRC reps how to conduct 'rubbish audits'. From there, each SRC rep conducted a rubbish audit with their class. From the findings the school community came to a consensus that litter and waste in the school needed to be reduced and minimised with the assistance of recycling, reusing and reducing waste products in the school. A 'graffiti wall' of butchers paper was established in the school hall, with all students in the school being given the opportunity to write a message to every other student about their thoughts on littering and waste at NVPS. This graffiti wall was displayed at a whole school assembly and the SRC representatives discussed the matters raised.

From here the SRC has made conscientious and industrious ventures to reduce, reuse and recycle within our school community. All SRC members have made posters to attach to our bins to remind students to recycle and to not waste food. They have organised a roster of classes to monitor and ensure that there isn't any rubbish left lying around the school after lunch and recess breaks. The SRC have also initiated the use of compost bins in the 'Green Team' garden as well as the collecting of apple cores from the 'Crunch and Sip' time for staff members who own horses or other animals that would consume these waste products.

The SRC are now endeavouring to introduce into the playgrounds plastic recycling bins and more compost bins including Bokashi bins. (A new type of compost bin)

As 'Sustainability' is part of the new National Curriculums, the next venture for our Narellan Vale School community and the SRC will be to expand our recycling and reducing initiatives and incorporate more sustainability discussions and activities into everyday learning. By embedding environmental education into key learning areas both staff and students will develop a greater understanding of such a vital concept.

PUPIL LEADERSHIP

How did you get the pupils involved? How did they have ownership?

The SRC have been an integral part of the Narellan Vale School community for a number of years, focussing on school issues such as fundraising and proposing changes within the school from the student bodies point of view (such as introduction of more seating and play equipment). The SRC had raised concerns to the staff in regards to the wastage of unused food being thrown into the bins. The Eco-Project took a natural course and began with the SRC representatives completing rubbish audits within each of their classes and reporting back to the committee meetings. The SRC then took on the responsibility of ensuring the Eco-project was meeting its aims within NVPS. In short- the Eco Project is the SRC responsibility.

FUNDING

Did you have to source funding for the project?

A number of grants were applied for including the 'Teachers Credit Union Sustainability and Environmental Grant'; Keep Australia Beautiful Beverage Container Recycling Grant. Etc. To date, unfortunately our grants have not been successful and we have been relying of funding from our school curriculum budget for Environmental Education. Proposed SRC fund raising ideas have been raised, such as 'Mufti' days and 'Crazy Hair' days.

PROJECT SUPPORT

Did you receive any support from parents, staff or outside agencies in regards to the project?

Ongoing support has been received from the whole staff community and individual parents assisting as required. The Bokashi bins have been sourced from a parent in our school who works at 'Tim's Garden Centre' as a horticulturalist. Our SRC has been supported by all staff and the school SRC co-ordinators, Mrs Beverley O'Meara, Mrs Trish Austen and Mrs Michelle Carr. The Camden Council has been supportive with information and reduced costing for recycling bins while the 'Camden Environmental Education Centre' lead by Mr Brian Trench and Mr Nathan Matthews have been a wealth of knowledge, supporting and educating the Eco Project staff (Mrs O'Meara, Mrs Austen and Mrs Carr). The SEED committee of local schools meeting once a term has also assisted. It needs to be mentioned that Mr Andy Best (Principal Harrington Park Public School) and Mr Darren Martin, also from Harrington Park Public School have been a wealth of knowledge, encouraging, guiding and assisting in the presentation days to ensure the Eco-projects are successful and rewarding for our students and their environment. An incursion from the Environmental Mentors group which highlighted the importance of correct recycling and litter management early in the year also emphasised our key concern of litter management. This was an excellent source of information and "hands on" activities delivered engaged the children and made them more aware of the importance of litter management and correct recycling.



CHALLENGES

Did you have to overcome any challenges to make the project succeed?

For the project to succeed the limited amount of time for teachers to spend with the Eco-students is often restricted to lunchtime meetings. There is always an abundance of ideas to listen to as the children's enthusiasm and initiative is most pleasing and we endeavour to give each child a turn to share their views. The second challenge is that of finances. Though mostly it is small steps we have taken and have not come at a cost, however to continue, now we need to work on applying for grants as we try to set up new Bokashi recycling bins and plastic container recycling bins, which will also have a small maintenance cost

RESULT

How have the pupils benefitted from the project? (E.g. knowledge gained, skills learnt, an improvement in behaviour, attainment or attendance?)

Have there been any other benefits for the school as a result of the project? (E.g. reduced costs, cleaner school, etc). **Please include any figures and analysis if appropriate.**

- The children have developed ownership and continue to develop leadership skills as they begin to feel it is their duty to encourage their peers to make our school environment a better place. Their interest and commitment is evident in the amount of students who regularly attend all SRC meetings in their own lunch time. Students continue to learn to respect their peers opinions and views and understand the skills needed to work as an effective group. Jobs have been allocated to students enabling students to share their expertise where possible, whether it be public speaking, creating visual posters, using IT programs etc.
- The students at Narellan Vale Public school and the overall community have benefitted greatly from this Eco Project. Not only has it produced a cleaner school environment but it has empowered the students to take more responsibility in taking care of their own learning place. Children are also now beginning to think of how their can have a positive effect on the environment outside the school and what possible actions need to be taken.

IMPACT

How did you measure and monitor the impact of the project?

The initial rubbish audits gave the starting points for measuring and monitoring the impact of the Eco Project. With ongoing rubbish audits and the implementation of the Playground Rubbish roster there is visual evidence that the strategies in place are effective. The litter has been reduced and this will continue to be at a minimal level.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Have you used any educational resources or participated in any local or national campaigns or events?

The whole school took part in the Clean Up schools campaign in Term 1. This was then to become a trigger for students to develop their own whole school weekly clean-up roster.

The Keep NSW Beautiful Campaign visited NVPS during term 1 2014 and conducted their Environ-mentors program to stage 2.

LESSONS LEARNED

What advice would you give to schools that want to follow in your footsteps?

Involve students i.e. SRC to take ownership for maximum impact, listen to their ideas and offer guidance as to what is achievable. As it is of the children's own initiative then students have the drive to continue to make the school a better place.

NEXT STEPS

Has this project inspired or driven other Eco-Schools ideas? What is the school working on next?

Our Eco Schools Project will begin to embed Environmental Education into our schools scope and sequence. Through students persistence to their class teachers, we hope to have all staff involved and willing to discuss sustainability and environmental issues in their everyday lessons where possible, without making it an “extra” concept to cover. By doing so we are working at following the National Curriculum Guidelines

The implementation of new recycling bins is to be launched at a whole school assembly over the coming weeks and also continuing to work on writing submissions for grants to help fund further recycling.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Has your school received any local council support with regards to the Eco-Schools Program?

. The Environ mentors program which visited the school is linked to our local Camden Council, together with the Keep NSW Beautiful campaign. At this stage support has been minimal.

**Please return your completed case study and
any relevant photographs to info@eco-schools.org.au**

We will endeavour to publish it on the Eco-Schools website as soon as possible.

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