



Wipe out Waste



Golden Grove High School

2014, school population approx 1,382

Case Study

Golden Grove High School has active initiatives to divert material from landfill. The school has been working with several organisations and staff, particularly Business Manager Sue Ruciack and maintenance officer Paul Howieson to embed sustainable practices.

They include Wipe out Waste (WOW), Tea Tree Gully Council programs delivered by KESAB *environmental solutions*, Natural Resource Management (NRM) Education and Land Care. The Environmental Action Team (EAT) work to achieve the goals outlined in the Site Environmental Action Plan or SEMP.

In 2011, a WOW Bin Materials Audit found that over 1300 litres per day were going into landfill. Two years later, another audit showed that only 996 litres were going into landfill - a reduction of 33%.

The school has installed a series of bin banks: red for general waste, yellow for 10c drink containers and green for food scraps. The red bin has an opening for easy disposal and the yellow bin has a rosette to feed bottles through.

Yellow bins are regularly emptied and sorted through. Each term, around \$300 is raised and funds go to the school's student council. The rosette system for 10 cent drink containers has proven effective in reducing contamination with food or packaging.

There is also a box for paper recycling in every classroom and in office areas. The school's Landcare class empty these bins to a larger paper and card skip once a week.

The school's maintenance officer, Paul Howieson, and Landcare students also sort through the paper recycling bins to turn single-sided paper into notepads. They produce around 100kg of notepads a term.



A paper collection box and single-sided paper reuse to make notepads.

Paul is passionate about sustainability and is always looking for ways to reduce waste to landfill. With his support, the school has adopted a number of initiatives:

- Paper recycling bins in every classroom and office
- Collects e-waste for recycling
- Collects and sells wiring from contractors who do work at the school
- Donates discontinued library books to charities
- Installed solar panels and shade sails
- Collects printer ink cartridges and mobile phones for recycling
- Saves unused exercise books and folders for Student Services Officers to issue to students requiring stationery support
- Acquires donated mulch from tree lopping companies
- Works with the canteen to introduce compostable food packaging like cardboard
- Collects fluorescent tubes for recycling.



Golden Grove High School's bin banks

Fluoro lights & ALL electrical materials are BANNED from landfill, fines apply. Discuss safe collection options with your contractor.



Government of South Australia
Zero Waste SA

WOW - Wipe Out Waste: a program of Zero Waste SA
delivered by KESAB *environmental solutions*



Paul believes that educating students about sustainable practice is important.

“There is a need to educate staff and students because if you cannot do it at school, you will have no success after leaving school.”

Paul has noticed an improvement in certain areas since he has been at GGHS but believes there is still more to achieve. For example, paper usage can be reduced by checking one copy before printing out multiple copies, printing and photocopying double-sided and turning off lights in unattended rooms.



GGHS hosted a day for grounds and facilities staff from other sites to see their programs and systems. Picture shows fluorescent light collections.

Liam Hayes and Golden Grove High School's EAT.

The Golden Grove High School Environmental Action Team (EAT) includes staff, students, community, KESAB and NRM educators who meet once a month. Liam enjoyed his time as a member of EAT because it allowed him to contribute to the school's environmental goals from a student's perspective. It also taught Liam more about the school and how it operates.

During his time on the EAT, he assisted with rolling out the three bin system.

An issue that he and the EAT have discussed is contamination in the three-bin system. To help reduce contamination, Liam talks at assemblies to remind students about what goes in each bin. He hopes that by doing this,

“it will be a mindset change and will educate and make students aware of the consequences of how we're harming our environment and the effect it has.”

The EAT has worked on a number of projects, including a butterfly garden to increase biodiversity.

They have also been working with Land Care students to remove non-native plants and replace them with native plants.

The EAT's projects aren't always successful. In the past, an Indigenous Native Plant Food Garden was established but there were difficulties getting the garden to flourish. This was because of problems with the soil and a lack of student interest to maintain it. There are plans to try again!

What next?

The school has an application for a recycling centre, which will allow the school to sort and distribute recyclable material. The centre will be used as an educational tool and further reduce the amount of materials going to landfill.

Liam says that their next project may be to establish a food garden for the Home Economics Centre. This could save the school money in the long-term and teach students about growing their own food for the kitchen.



Liam putting food scraps in the green bin.

