



Case Study

Riverland Special School

Years: R - 12

School Population: 75

Location: Berri

Source: Carolyn Trifonoff and Joy Checker

A WOW Support School

Highlights

The school operates a recycling program for the local community which received a KESAB Tidy Towns Zero Waste SA Innovation Award in 2005. This program services 140 homes, including local cottage homes, and operates with the support of local council and recycling depots.

In 2004 the school received a recycled plastic bench (valued at over \$500) through the 'Go for Green' cartridge recycling program for South Australian schools.



Recycled plastic seat through the 'Go For Green' program



2005 KESAB Tidy Towns Awards

Waste Systems and Learning

Waste in Curriculum

Waste and recycling are a curriculum focus and these are incorporated into daily routines and 'Eco time'. Eco time is the first 10 to 15 minutes after lunch when all daily 'waste' is taken to the recycling shed. Students are rostered for a week on tasks such as collecting recycling crates and sorting in the shed. Food scraps are taken to the compost and worm farms. Some classes sweep around play areas and others conduct water and electricity checks (for dripping taps, lights left on).

Reducing

Reduction practices include purchase of materials in bulk to reduce packaging and costs, use of reusable plates and cups, and fruit or vegetable recess twice weekly (with all waste composted).

Reusing

Reuse of single-sided paper occurs throughout the school and a pre-loved clothing collection is also coordinated by the school.

Recycling

Recycling of materials is supported through the purchase of recycled products including photocopy paper and toilet paper to close the recycling loop.

A wide variety of items is collected and sorted for recycling including 5c containers, film (non rigid) plastic, paper and cardboard, printer cartridges, corks, bread tags, ring pulls, and garden waste and food scraps are used in school compost and worm compost systems. Pine cones are also collected and used in enterprise programs. Pine needles from the school are used by a local fibre artist to construct pine needle baskets, which are exhibited and sold as art objects for up to \$2 000.

The community program involves teams of students collecting kerbside materials from approximately 140 homes adjacent to the school.



Wipe out Waste

Getting started and keeping it going

To ensure that the waste and recycling initiatives became part of daily routine, and to assist a change of thinking, additional bins and buckets for separate materials were provided and daily 'Eco-time' was introduced.



School bin / bucket system for waste separation

Whole School Community

Creating a shared 'Eco-school' vision and extending the curriculum into real-life learning through work experience and community programs has embedded waste-reducing thinking and behaviour in the current school culture. Staff and families have the opportunity to bring recyclable materials to school for collection.

Benefits of waste programs at the school include a significant reduction of waste to landfill and savings in disposal costs. Staff and students have an increased awareness of waste issues and actions to minimise waste.

Work experience opportunities for students in local recycling industries have been created, and the school has received positive media publicity regarding the innovative program which benefits the local community and industries as well as the school.

The school was invited to comment on the draft Waste Management Report of the Murray Mallee Local Government Association Region and the Principal and Carolyn attended a special meeting of the Works and Technical Services Committee where the report was considered, indicating the high regard for the schools' program within the community. Representatives from recycling depots, landfill management and waste contractors also attended.



School compost bin



'Closing the loop' by purchasing recycled products