

Waste-Free School Programs

Why do we want to participate in waste-free initiatives?

Adopting waste-free initiatives helps your school with litter prevention and minimising waste sent to landfill through the operational practices of 'refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle.' It's a fact that 80% of the plastic pollution in our oceans has come from land, much of which is a result of litter and mis-managed waste. Reducing our consumption of single-use disposable plastic is therefore a vital part of conserving our resources and protecting our environment.

Bottle for Botol

Bottle for Botol is a social enterprise that works with Australian and Indonesian schools to help prevent plastic waste entering our water streams, rivers, and oceans. Their program aims to educate students on the importance of protecting our environment by leading a generational change away from single-use plastics. For every stainless-steel water bottle sold by their Australian partner schools, Bottle for Botol donate an identical re-usable bottle to a student in Indonesia, paired with a water station. Every bottle sold puts students through an educational program about the impacts of plastic on the environment.

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Boomerang Bags

Boomerang Bags is a community driven initiative tackling plastic pollution at the grassroots level. Dedicated schools, community groups, businesses and volunteers get together to make re-useable 'Boomerang Bags' using recycled materials to replace plastic bags. Through Boomerang Bags we start conversations, make friends, up-cycle materials, and work towards shifting society's throw away mentality to a more sustainable revolution of re-use. Your school may wish to help sew bags, cut fabric, craft timber display boxes, or host a sewing bee.

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Take 3

Take 3 works with primary and secondary schools to raise awareness of plastic pollution and encourage simple actions to prevent it. Their approach is to provide students with a compelling reason to act before encouraging them to develop their own ideas to solve the problem locally. Students are encouraged to develop solutions that will: 1. Prevent litter in their school and community. 2. Reduce waste sent to landfill from school. 3. Share information to educate and inspire others.

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Plastic Pollution Solutions

Plastic Pollution Solutions (PPS) is a traveling social enterprise that provides highly engaging presentations, events, and activities about the impact of plastic pollution on our environment. It is their aim to educate students about the problem and its causes and guide them in being part of the solution through their educational program and ongoing projects that focus on litter and single-use plastic reduction. Specific activities include school presentations, guided clean ups, Family Trivia Nights and film screenings.

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Plastic Free July

Plastic Free July – again, the challenge is quite simple. Attempt to refuse single-use plastic during July. "Single-use" includes plastic shopping bags, plastic cups, straws, plastic packaging... basically anything that's intended to be used once and then discarded. If refusing ALL single-use plastic sounds too daunting this time, try the TOP 4 challenge (plastic bags, bottles, takeaway coffee cups and straws). If you can't commit to a month, why not try a week or a day?

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Nude Food

Nude food (day, weeks or month) at schools is an initiative developed to encourage kids and parents to eat well and live well; and eliminate all unnecessary packaging and wrapping that goes into schools. Essentially, kids bring their food – nude! This will reduce the amount of rubbish that goes into the bins, to landfill, or escapes the waste stream entirely and ends up as litter. This is an amazingly simple concept that really empowers the students to create change.

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Responsible Retailers

Students approach local businesses and determine their output and consumption of single-use disposable plastic via surveys. They will then engage these businesses to encourage and assist them in adoption environmentally responsible practices. They can also explore alternatives to disposable plastic and promote collaboration with local initiatives such as Boomerang Bags and Responsible Cafes.



Green Canteen

It's simple – the school canteen does not sell food or drinks which come in disposable plastic. This means not selling water in plastic bottles or pies in plastic wrappers. A reusable and more sustainable alternative is available for everything and you will also find that your canteen will turn to healthier options.



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Plastic Police

Plastic Police is a social enterprise initiative and shared value program to develop more sustainable communities. They educate, engage, and inspire organisations to be part of the solution by rethinking, better managing and reducing soft plastic waste to create a more sustainable future. Soft plastics have low rates of recycling and are a significant contributor to landfill volumes and environmental pollution throughout our communities. The program provides each school with the necessary tools, support, and equipment to engage the school community to recycle clean, soft plastic currently not able to be recycled through traditional kerbside recycling. Your plastic waste can be turned into furniture and equipment that can go back to your school. If you can scrunch it, you can save it through Plastic Police.

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Bin audits

ResourceSmart Schools has developed an audit tool that helps you identify the types of waste generated at your school, where the waste comes from, and how much waste gets recycled, composted or sent to landfill. You will assess your waste management systems (bins, signage, composting and worm farms) and waste collection contracts.

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Planet Patrol

Planet Patrol aims to motivate students to reduce litter and plastic packaging at their school. It involves both project-based learning and enquiry-based learning. One class will take the lead, plan the project, and present it to the entire school. Planet Patrol can be conducted over one or more terms. Students can take turns to patrol and collect litter items weekly from the school grounds over a term. Items must then be sorted into main categories and counted. It could also be of interest to discover the main problem litter items and to investigate source reduction and prevention initiatives in the school.

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Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation is a garden program based on pleasurable food education and teaches Australian children positive food habits through fun, hands-on learning. Pleasurable food education is about children experiencing the joy of digging in the garden, picking fresh veggies, smelling, and tasting the food they prepare, and sharing the experience with their classmates and helpers.

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Schools Clean Up Day

Schools Clean Up Day is a great way to inspire your students to learn about the impact of rubbish on their local environment while playing an active role in their community. It's a day when students and teachers work together to clean up an area which is special to you. It can be the playground, a local park, or maybe bushland near your school - it's up to you. School Clean Ups are categorised for preschools, primary schools, and early education (high schools & tertiary institutions need to register as Youth Clean Up events to ensure the correct sized materials are provided).

Schools and Youth Clean Up Day have event-based resources and a curriculum-linked lesson plans to help teachers maximise the success of their day. There is also a series of lessons to focus student's attention on waste, water, and energy topics by giving them practical things to do as they learn.

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ResourceSmart Schools *VIC only

ResourceSmart Schools is a free Victorian Government program that helps schools benefit from embedding sustainability in everything they do, and take action on climate change. The ResourceSmart School's Sustainability Certification system provides a platform for schools to track their sustainability journey, identify savings, and be rewarded by achieving sustainability modules and stars. The aim for schools is to reach for the stars - from 1 to 5 stars. With 5Star as the ultimate achievement! Many of the activities listed here will contribute towards ResourceSmart School modules.

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Cool Australia



Cool Australia creates units of work and learning activities that can be downloaded from their website and taken straight into the classroom. The learning activities are year level specific, from Early Learning to Year 12. All are linked to Australian Curriculum standards and the Early Years Learning Framework outcomes. They provide an online Digital Library to support learning and teaching. It contains videos, images, infographics, research, and news articles. They also deliver online professional development to help educators build their confidence and skills.

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