

Wastewise Schools Program

Tweed Shire Council



This kit contains all of the necessary information to set up a colour-coded bin system in your school, which will form an integral part of your school's waste management program. If you require further advice, contact Council's Environmental Education Officer Sascha on (02) 6670 2523 or by email on education@tweed.nsw.gov.au

Creating Bin Stations

To help students separate their lunch and playground waste into recycling, composting and garbage, set up bin stations in your school.

Creating bin stations helps students become accustomed to sorting their waste. The aim is to reduce what is sent to landfill while at the same time highlighting that much of what we consider 'rubbish' can be used again through compost, recycling or re-use.

You can create your bin stations by making use of the bins you already have. You will need three bins per bin station (One station = **one red bin** + **one yellow bin** + **one green bin**).

These three colours match our Australian Standards for mobile bin colours - keeping the message consistent both inside and outside of the school.

It is very important to keep the bin station complete i.e. three coloured bins together. This enables students to decide which bin to put their waste into as opposed to the convenience of using the 'closest bin'.



Get as creative as you like! These students have painted their bins to create their bin stations.



Involvement

The challenge is to ensure your project is ongoing and sustainable – this means that collective knowledge on how to run the project is widespread, so it will survive staff and student turnover. It is also important that everyone knows why your school is going to be involved in the project and why they should recycle.

Students:

Create or use your environmental club to run the program. Greater student involvement inspires ownership of the program. The group can inform other students through:

- School assembly announcements;
- Classroom discussions and displays;
- Information or posters around the school ground, canteen, displays, noticeboards;
- Taking part in recycling education programs such as those outlined in Council's Environmental Education Program;
- monitoring the bins, doing waste audits and reporting any progress or issues back at school assembly.



Students can also be involved in painting the bins / or bin lids, putting recycling/garbage/compost stickers on (available through Council) and determining the best locations for their bin stations.

Staff:

Inform staff through:

- Staff room noticeboards;
- Staff communications and meetings.

Ensure all staff (including cleaning, canteen and grounds staff), are aware of your program and what it involves. You will need to discuss the project with all staff that will be involved – especially those who collect and remove waste in the school – and also ensure you gain permission to go ahead and for any associated costs. There may be a staff member responsible for organising the collection of the waste in your school, this person will need to be involved to organise what collection services may be required for your new system.

It is suggested to have one or two teachers nominated to motivate the project and offer support – the students can be the ones driving and implementing the system.

Parents:

Inform parents through:

- School newsletters;
- Parent / teacher nights or information sessions;
- Any parents or friends' associations connected to the school.

Parents will need to be informed particularly if you are introducing Litter Free Lunch days. It is good for parents to know the progress of the project and some alternative suggestions to lunches to help with your program. For example, students may find that the red 'garbage' bins are full of wrappers from smaller pre-packaged items – these could be replaced with buying in bulk and using containers to separate food into smaller, lunch-time proportions.

Community:

Inform your community about what you are doing, places could include:

- Nearby or other schools in the area;
- Community and environment groups;
- Local businesses;
- Local newspapers and other local media.

Steps on how to create your Bin Stations:

1. Questions to ask yourself

Determine what your recycling requirements may be and what you may need to consider when you set up your waste management program. This can be done by a selected class or group of students (eg. Environment Club).

- Where are our bins now? Draw a mudmap of your school and mark them on.
- Where are the litter hot spots? Take a walk after lunch and mark these on your map too.
- Why are these litter hotspots? Are there bins in this area already? Are they visible?
- Are there any areas that need more bins relocated from other areas? Mark these on your map.
- Think about your lunch breaks - are students able to return containers to their school bags once they have finished eating? (some parents prefer to send children to school with pre-packaged items so they don't lose containers)

2. Time to do a Waste Audit!

Follow the waste audit sheets in the Litter Free Lunch Kit to see what your school waste is made up of. This will give you an idea of the types of litter you are dealing with. See how much you have that is recyclable, compostable and what needs to go to landfill. You may find the only rubbish going to landfill is from crumpled plastic / soft plastic packaging which could be avoided altogether by promoting Litter Free Lunches where this type of waste is banned & students need to bring lunch in re-useable containers.

The recyclable items in your audit sheet can all go into the one 'recycling bin' and do not need to be separated. The recycling facility that all recyclables get sent to will do the sorting!

3. Look at your bin services



Count how many wheelie bins or skip bins you have (these are the bins put out for collection - not small lunch time bins)

- How many are recycling wheelie bins? (yellow lids)
- How many are garbage wheelie bins?
- How many skip bins do you have for garbage?
- How many are for another type of recyclable collection - eg. paper bin and how big is this bin? Is this bin always full? Did you know that paper & other recyclables are all sent to the same recycling facility? If your paper bin is never full, you could swap it for some co-mingled yellow lid recycling bins (360L or 240L sizes) and also use these to put your lunch-time recycling into.

Find out who in your school is responsible for coordinating your bin collection service and have a chat to them. They can contact your waste service provider & discuss some options on how to introduce recycling if you don't have it or you may like to swap your 240L recycling bins for the now available larger 360L recycling bins.

Once you have your bin stations working, you might be able to reduce the size of garbage bins/skips and put on more recycling (which are cheaper!)

Does your school need a compost bin? Council can donate a compost bin to those schools who haven't already received one. Council's Environmental Education Officer will also set the bin up with your environment group so you can get it working.

4. Setting up your stations

Count the number of small lunch-time bins in the school and divide this by three. This will give you the amount of stations you can create with your current bins. Draw where you would like to position your stations on your mud map.

It is a good idea to speak to your cleaner, as they would know how full the bins usually get and whether more bins would be needed.

5. Time to paint!

Purchase some yellow, green and red paint. It's up to you how much of your bins you paint – either the whole bin, just the lids or paint a band of colour around the bins. Whatever you choose, make sure the colour is very easy to see. This is a fun activity for students to be involved in.

6. Stickers

Tweed Shire Council provides A4 sized recycling, garbage and food waste stickers free to all Tweed schools. Count how many you need and let Council's Environmental Education Officer know.

7. Group your bins

Create your bin stations by placing one red garbage bin, one green food waste (organics) bin and one yellow recycling bin in a cluster. It is suggested to have at least one bin station at each end or corner of your lunch time eating area (for larger schools) or one station near the middle for smaller schools. Remember – the three different coloured bins need to be placed **together** for them to work effectively. By doing this, students are not tempted to simply throw something into the 'closest' bin.

8. Let everyone know about it

- Design posters showing what can go into each bin - put these around the school or near your bin stations
- Speak on school assembly about the program - why you are introducing it, what the bins look like, some common items that can go into each bin (eg. see if you can borrow items from the school canteen to show which bins the waste from each item goes into) and who are the 'go to people' if someone needs assistance (eg. Environment Club).
- Promote the program in your school newsletter, through local media etc.

9. Monitor and evaluate

Your environment club or a group of students could be responsible for monitoring the bins and emptying the food waste bin into the compost. These students could report back to assembly on the progress of the system and let students know of any items that seem to be going into the wrong bin.

10. Reward!

Put a reward system in place (this could be as simple as a certificate) to encourage students to be involved and take initiative in litter solutions.



Free A4-size bin stickers available for Tweed Schools from Tweed Shire Council

Case Study: St Anthony's Catholic Primary, Kingscliff

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School was selected as a pilot school for Council's Waste-wise School's Program.

The school was keen to improve its recycling efforts and get everyone on board with the new program. They already had a worm farm in place, however wanted to introduce and encourage recycling through the rest of the school.

Bin System:

The school's bin system included a skip bin (size 3, which is equivalent to 2.28 cubic metres or 9x 240L wheelie bins) in which they disposed of all rubbish (garbage, recyclables and compostable items), and one divided wheelie bin for the canteen. They had 11 smaller 'lunch-time' bins for the lunch area.

What was done:

The school ran a litter free lunch day. They conducted waste audits before and after this day to determine how much waste was generated on an average day and what difference a litter free lunch would make.

In the initial waste audit (before their litter free lunch), 67% of all waste generated for one day was 'garbage', 25% was 'organic / food scraps' and 8% was made up of items that could be 'recycled'.

Following their litter free lunch, the 'litter free' content of all bins increased while 'garbage' decreased - 24% of all waste generated for the day was 'garbage', 66% 'organic / food waste' and 10% 'recyclable' items. The litter free lunch therefore made quite a difference in the amount of 'garbage' generated, however food scraps were higher. Please note: The 'Litter free' content in these figures included those items that were food waste or able to be recycled. The

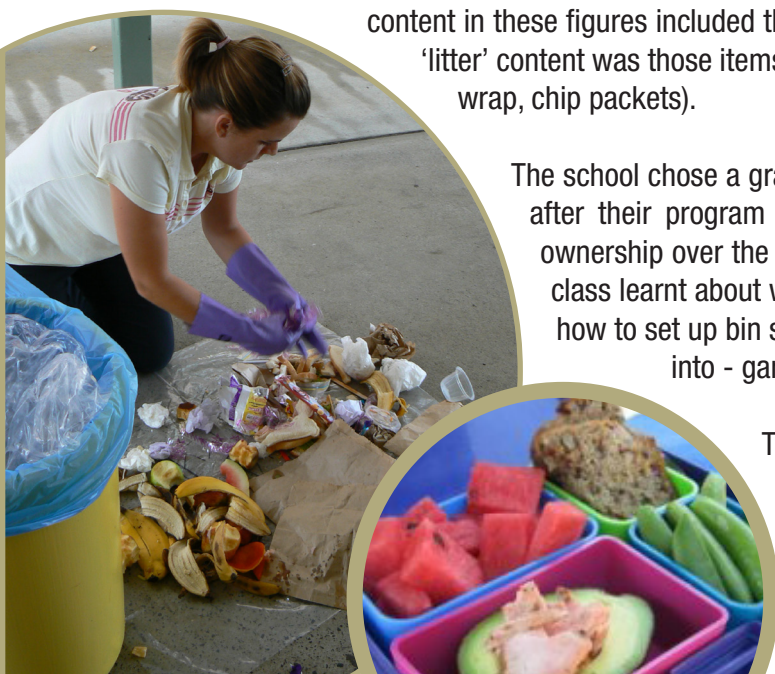
'litter' content was those items that could only be sent to landfill eg. plastic wrappers (cling wrap, chip packets).

The school chose a grade four class to be responsible for coordinating and looking after their program (with teacher support). This meant that the students had ownership over the improved waste management program for their school. This class learnt about what could and could not be recycled in the Tweed Shire and how to set up bin stations in their school to help students separate their waste into - garbage, recyclables and food waste.

This grade four class communicated what they had learnt to the rest of the school on assembly. Students painted their bins - red (for garbage), green (for organics / food scraps) and yellow (for recyclables) and created bin stations (one



This photo shows students from St Anthony's Catholic Primary School in Kingscliff standing by their colour-coded bins, which they painted themselves (Green for food waste / organics, yellow for recycling and red for garbage). Stickers had been put on the bins and Recycle Right posters hung nearby to highlight what can and cannot be recycled. The three bins are kept together as a 'bin station'.





Co-mingled recycling bins can take all household recyclables collected in the Tweed.

station = 1 red + 1 yellow + 1 green bin in one location). Students also created their own posters to put up around the school, near their bins and on classroom doors as a constant reminder of what can and cannot be recycled.

The school introduced two co-mingled recycling wheelie bins to collect their recyclables and plan to eventually be able to reduce the size of their skip bin for collection of 'garbage'.

They also put four compost bins in place to remove the food waste generated (and grass clippings from the groundskeeper), rather than disposing of this into the skip bin - which ends up in landfill and creates methane gas.

The school also organised more senior students to be responsible for adding soil, dry leaves and paper to the compost bins, to balance the amount of 'wet material' (fruit and vege scraps) with 'dry material'. A further suggestion is to complement a compost system with either a chicken coop or sending food scraps to local farms / students with chickens that are happy to take the extra food.

Benefits to the school:

By reducing the amount of 'garbage' generated, the school should be able to save money on having to dispose of this waste - garbage service charges are higher than recycling service charges. Running litter free lunch days on a regular basis gets both children and parents into the habit of buying in bulk and separating food into smaller portions by putting it into containers. The idea is that eventually, this becomes the norm. Litter free lunch days also help to reduce the amount of 'garbage' generated, as food scraps become the bulk of the waste - which can either be composted, put into worm farms or fed to chooks if the school later introduced a chook pen. If too much food waste is being generated, maybe parents should know - smaller food portions may be required.

Education:

Children learnt how to separate their waste and the importance of reducing the amount of waste they send to landfill. By practising this at school, they also put it into place at home and spread the word to their families. They learnt about the waste hierarchy - there are often a number of options that should be considered before simply throwing something into the bin. Re-using or recycling is an alternative to simply just throwing something away, however buying items that have less packaging to begin with or that are made from recycled content helps us reduce waste even more.

Teacher Paul Monahan of St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, is happy to be contacted for further information about the success or suggestions with this program: pmonahan@lism.catholic.edu.au

Useful websites for additional information:

Tweed Shire Council website
www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/waste

Recycling Near You - find out what you can recycle in your local area and who takes these items
www.RecyclingNearYou.com.au

Solo Resource Recovery
www.solo.com.au

Visy Recycling
www.visy.com.au

Planet Ark
www.planetark.com.au

Keep Australia Beautiful
www.kab.org.au

The Gould League
www.gould.edu.au

Keep us updated!

Don't forget we are here if you need any advice on your program, talks on assembly about recycling or help with excursion planning. And of course we would love to hear how your program is going. If you have developed a system that works well with your school, please let us know about it, as other schools may find it easier to work off the same system. Likewise, if you encounter any problems please let us know - the more idea sharing between schools we have the better.

Tweed Shire Council contact details:

Sascha Piotrkowski - Environmental Education Officer
Ph: (02) 6670 2523
Fax: (02) 6670 2557
Email: education@tweed.nsw.gov.au