

Eco-Schools Australia Program

Keep Australia Beautiful National Association (KABNA) has partnered with the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) to open the international Eco-Schools program to Australian schools. Eco-Schools is a sustainability education and awards program. Approximately 60 countries run the program, across most continents, meaning that participating schools become part of a global community of Eco-Schools.

The program enhances sustainability work in schools, focussing on:

- Student **leadership, democracy** and active **citizenship** - local and global community
- Curriculum development - '**Education for Sustainability**'
- Successful **environmental management** of school grounds and facilities

Eco-Schools has been operating for 20 years and long-running programs such as Eco-Schools England and Eco-Schools USA have demonstrated great long-term impacts in these focus areas. See eco-schools.org; eco-schools.org.uk; nwf.org/Eco-Schools-USA

Opportunities for Schools & School Networks

1. Low cost

It costs just \$100 per year to take part in the program. A 40% discount rate and additional support is available for networks of schools. This is a great option for a **regional forum, network or council** wanting to establish Eco-Schools strategically with schools across a region.

Registration Type	Annual fee	Description
Standard	\$100 + GST	Individual school registration
OR		
Regional Registration	\$60 + GST (per school)	KAB assists a network of 10+ schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 40% group discount rate• Program launch presentation for participating teachers & stakeholders (in person or webinar)• Regular reporting on Eco-Schools activity



2. Quality Environmental Management & Education

Eco-Schools program can result in reduced Carbon Footprint amongst participating schools – an average 30% reduction over 5 years. (*Eco-Schools England, July 2013*); Financial savings and resource efficiencies – ~80% schools report energy and waste reductions. (*Eco-Schools England, July 2013*). The program has been shown to improve student behaviour & engagement, critical thinking skills and attitudes to learning due to the hands-on, real-life nature of Eco-Schools projects. Eco-Schools USA highlight that environmental programs are linked to a 5-17% boost in literacy and numeracy attainment. 91% teachers say the Eco-Schools program has a positive effect on student wellbeing (*Eco-Schools England, July 2013*).

3. Improved Environmental Reporting

Eco-Schools Award status (Bronze, Silver or Green Flag) is a useful broad indicator of schools' sustainability engagement and activity, while specific data on Litter, Waste, Energy, Water and Biodiversity is collected from every school at initial registration and annual award applications. Participants can access this information at any time via their online Eco-Schools profile. KABNA can evaluate Eco-Schools activity centrally across an LGA or a whole state or territory, to assist State of the Environment (or similar) reporting. Local environmental issues can be promoted to a region's Eco-Schools to assist in addressing these as a community.

4. Positive Communications, Media and Promotion

Eco-Schools is an additional, co-ordinated platform for schools to be able to access other relevant programs, events, conferences, grant programs & campaigns. Eco-Schools programs add value to other local youth and community engagement initiatives. KABNA facilitates case studies and local media opportunities linked to Eco-Schools in action, to promote achievements and contribute to a positive image of all Eco-Schools in their respective communities. Eco-Schools Green Flag Award presentations or the launch of larger scale Eco-Schools projects are particularly excellent opportunities to engage the local media, community leaders like the Mayor or other VIPs, including Sister Cities or overseas visitors.

5. Stronger Sustainability Education Network & Skills

Eco-Schools as a common approach across a region fosters a community of interest and peer-to-peer support between educators – See: [Camden Eco-Schools Pilot](#). Eco-Schools in Australia are linked into a national and international network via the Eco-Schools Australia website, with opportunities to take part in knowledge and cultural exchange via Eco-Schools Connect, a forum which enables direct contact between Eco-Schools worldwide. Councils & NGO's can also become registered members of the Eco-Schools program, to access the network & resources, view participants (schools and other organisations) in both local and neighbouring councils.



What's involved for schools?

1. Register via a simple online registration form.
eco-schools.org.au/register
2. Adopt the Eco-Schools framework to carry out sustainability projects of their choice.
eco-schools.org.au/homepage/7-steps/
3. Use the milestone awards structure – Bronze, Silver and Green Flag – for ongoing motivation and engagement. Schools receive a certificate at each milestone and a flag at Green Flag level.
eco-schools.org.au/homepage/awards/

The Eco-Schools Australia website contains the online registration and awards application forms and a range of guidelines and resources for establishing a successful program. New resources, grant and support opportunities will be advised via email to participants.

Eco-Schools work through the program at their own pace and self-assess which award to aim for and when to apply, although an annual award application is the recommended timeframe. The program is equally suitable for schools who are inactive, somewhat active, or extremely active in sustainability education and action. The program is very flexible in terms of the content and projects that schools incorporate into their program, however the themes of litter, waste and resources (including energy, water) and biodiversity, as well as global and social justice issues will be strongly encouraged and promoted.



1 HARRINGTON PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL ECO-ACTION TEAM

“Eco-Schools membership has significantly increased the authenticity of learning experiences for the students at our school. Their ability to work in groups and creatively problem solve real-life challenges has been greatly enhanced. The new Australian Curriculum delivery can be supported greatly by joining up to Eco-Schools and I urge all schools to give it serious consideration. Benefits to the school also include great savings to the budget e.g. in one year our school reduced its utilities bill by \$10,000 with student led initiatives. Teachers and students also report higher levels of student engagement across all key learning areas as a result of being involved in the program.”

Andrew Best, Principal, Harrington Park Public School, NSW