

ResourceSmart Schools

ResourceSmart is a program developed by Sustainability Victoria to help Victorians find sustainability solutions, ideas and advice to help them learn how to shrink their impact on the environment. It involves a range of programs for households, educators, business and government.

ResourceSmart Schools is the collective name given to a suite of school programs including the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative Victoria (AuSSI Vic), ResourceSmart Schools Certification, the ResourceSmart School Awards, including the Rubbish Free Lunch Challenge (RFLC), Victorian Solar in Schools Initiative and the, Professional Learning for ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic.

The **Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI)** is a partnership of the Australian Government, States and Territories that supports schools to work towards a sustainable future.

ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic is the local application of this national initiative.

Partners in **ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic** include:

Sustainability Victoria (SV), Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), CERES Community Environment Park, Victoria Association of Environmental Education (VAEE), Catholic Education Offices Sandhurst and Melbourne, RMIT, Swinburne's National Sustainability Centre, the Australian Catholic University, Greening Australia, Planet Savers and Zoos Victoria.

ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic is a holistic approach to sustainability for primary and secondary schools:

- Involving a whole school approach
- Providing students with real-life learning experiences
- Leading to improved management of the school's facilities and resource use (including energy, waste, water, products and materials, biodiversity, landscape design).

The ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic framework and modules address:

- School facilities and operations - the social and logistical systems of schools
- Curriculum - the formal and informal delivery of student learning outcomes
- Wider school and community engagement - the way in which schools engage and relate to parents, the local and wider community.
- Teacher Professional Development.

What does ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic mean for schools?

A ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic school will:

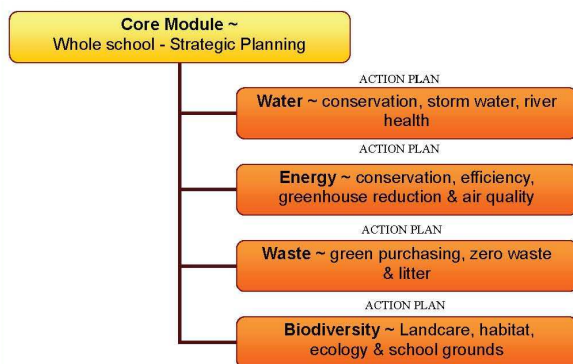
- save energy, water and conserve biodiversity
- reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions

- support implementation of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) in the school curriculum
- change the behaviour of the school population towards sustainable practices

ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic is a framework that guides schools through **modules** to go beyond awareness raising to strategic planning, then onto action and in many cases environmental leadership.

The program consists of a **Core Module** (ideally completed first) and four resource **modules** (Waste, Energy, Biodiversity and Water) which schools can complete over time in whichever sequence suits them. The process aims to build on existing achievements and generate a high participation of students, staff, the wider school community, environment agencies, community groups and other organisations.

ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic Framework



Core Module

This strategic planning module embeds sustainability into the school's operations, curriculum and wider community engagement. This could take the form of a School Environment Management Plan (SEMP), curriculum plan, school policy with goals and targets or scoping document.

The process includes:

- collection of baseline data and resource use (a review of the current State of the School)
- establishing a data monitoring and reporting system
- a visioning process for school staff and active school community participants
- recognition of prior achievements and identifying opportunities for improvement
- reviewing sustainability themes in the curriculum
- policy development
- setting goals and targets for each module
- developing an action plan addressing all modules
- planning for student leadership/involvement
- building links with environmental agencies and the wider community

- developing a Communications Plan (including annual reporting) for the school's sustainability achievements
- development of a strategic plan.

The Core Module will establish a strategic, whole school commitment and identify specific ways the school will incorporate sustainability in its curriculum, practices and school operations.

Resource Modules

There are four resource modules, Waste, Energy, Biodiversity and Water. These modules help schools to develop the activities and projects that fulfill the targets and aims of the action plans developed in the Core Module.

Waste Module (as an example) covers:

- Understanding waste issues
- Establishing a team approach at the school to reducing waste (planning team, student action teams)
- Compiling baseline waste data (waste and litter assessments)
- Establishing a waste data monitoring and recording plan
- Developing a waste action plan with targets (using the Waste Checklist)
- Implementing waste reduction actions (selected from the Waste Checklist/school's action plan)
- Encouraging the school to report on its waste reduction achievements to the whole school community and beyond
- Developing a waste reduction policy and a green purchasing policy (to be taken to School Council for endorsement)
- Encouraging waste curriculum at all year levels and providing curriculum support and planning

Education Officers with Waste Management Groups or Councils or other waste educators may be able to assist schools with advice or hands on help for some of the above tasks.

For the Water, Biodiversity, and Energy Resource Modules assistance may be sought from:

Education staff working with water agencies may be able to assist with the Water module while LandLearn, Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) Forest Education, Zoos Victoria and Greening Australia education staff may be able to assist with the Biodiversity module. Apart from the above mentioned organisations, there are a variety of other organisations that can assist you in working through the resource modules. To get started refer to the resource list at the end of this document.

Schools Environmental Tracking System (SETS)

The school needs to collect data on their water and energy use and production of waste, and have some way of keeping good records of their data over time. The Schools Environment Tracking System (SETS) allows

schools to enter and track their sustainability efforts online. The user can then select from a range of reports, then copy and paste them into Word, Excel, Powerpoint etc. Schools are encouraged to sign up for SETS.

SETS is not only a tool for tracking performance and targets, it is an educational tool that can be used to drive behavioural change. A read only access section allows students and teachers to view all the reports, without having access to changing any of the data. These can then be used in school projects, newsletters etc. To sign up for SETS involves a cost of \$250 for the first year then \$150 per year afterwards. Further information on SETS is available through school energy savings at www.schoolenergysavings.com.au

ResourceSmart Schools Certification

There are **five ResourceSmart Certification Tools**. Each tool has a set of criteria that is linked to each of the five ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic modules. Schools may choose to “work backwards”, using these tools, identifying what they have achieved and what they still need to do to achieve certification in the module.

Schools are certified by ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic facilitators who verify school performance with the required criteria of the ResourceSmart Certification tool as specified by Sustainability Victoria.

Verification of any module will gain the school a Certificate of Achievement.

Schools can attain multiple Certificates of Achievement for all modules but will only enter the 5 Star ResourceSmart Certification system when the Core Module is completed.

When the Core Module is completed and verified all other completed modules allow for the school to be rewarded the appropriate star rating through a certificate and a sign.

Sustainability Victoria is the only body that can certify the fifth star.

ResourceSmart Schools Certification- Star Scale

- 1 Star - Core Module
- 2 Star - Core plus two other modules
- 3 Star - Core plus three other modules
- 4 Star - Core plus four other modules
- 5 Star - Core plus all other modules plus demonstrated Education for Sustainability leadership.

The criteria for 5 Star Certification is currently (March 2009) undergoing clarification and writing. When complete it will be uploaded to this website.

Professional Learning for ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic

Educators can participate in a Professional Learning Program delivered by Victorian Association for Environmental Education (VAEE) on behalf of Sustainability Victoria (SV), about the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic program and may also subsequently complete a mentoring program to further build their capacity to deliver AuSSI Vic. There are two training schedules for 2009

- Round 3 – May 7th & 8th, and June 18th & 19th
- Round 4 - October 8th & 9th, and November 26th & 27th

To find out more about the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic Professional Learning contact VAAE Project Officer Bridgid Soames bsोames@vae.vic.edu.au

Community of Practice

The Community of Practice (**CoP**) is a gathering of participants from the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic professional learning program, designed specifically to share experiences and to identify learning needs after the program. Through this process, the progress of participants can be tracked and linked to mentoring sessions offered by CERES (conducted in the field). The CoP is convened by VAAE.

Mini RoundTable forums

The Mini RoundTable forums are an opportunity for sustainability educators to share experiences, ideas and methods of delivery with fellow participants and with a wider field of experienced practitioners. Sharing of experiences and ideas is one of the best ways to develop sound educational practice.

To find out more about these forums and scheduled dates, contact VAAE Project Officer Bridgid Soames bsोames@vae.vic.edu.au

Some options for the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic sustainability journey:

- Work through the ResourceSmart Certification Tools (download from ResourceSmart website).
- Use freely available resources on your own or with assistance from Education Officers from Councils, Regional Waste Management Groups, environment agencies and others.
- Use the support of trained educators who have completed the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic training with VAAE. (Contact VAAE for the name of a ResourceSmart facilitator near you).
- Visit the CERES Sustainability Hub website to view school sustainability projects and sustainability education information.
- Visit the 'For Educators' section of the ResourceSmart website to access the teachers guide *How to Reduce Reuse and Recycle Waste in Schools*, energy education resources and information on grants.
- Contact CERES to request an Expression of Interest form for a funded Core or Waste Module. Funding from Sustainability Victoria is being provided to CERES for delivery of the Core Module to 60 schools and the Waste Module to a further 30 schools per year from 2008 to 2011.
- Seek a funding contribution e.g. towards cost of a module or SETS from a local source such as Council, or apply for a grant that can be used to implement some of your planned ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic actions.
- Contract CERES directly to self fund the delivery of a ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic module to be delivered by CERES staff.
- Work through the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic Checklists (These checklists are only a guide to assist your school to keep on the sustainability track, downloadable from DEECD website).

Resources:

ResourceSmart Certification tools
Sustainability Victoria
resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_educators/waste_and_recycling_2573.html

The Teachers Guide *How to Reduce Reuse and Recycle Waste in Schools*,
ResourceSmart http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_educators_1193.html

ResourceSmart Schools Award Case Study booklet (2008)
resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_educators_1193.html

Educating for Sustainability guide (EfS guide) (DEECD)
Department of Early Education and Childhood Development (DEECD)
Administrative Guidelines for Education for a Sustainable Environment
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/deptpolicies/environment/resources.htm>

CERES Sustainability Hub website
<http://sustainability.ceres.org.au>

Free workshops for teachers.
<http://sustainability.ceres.org.au>

Professional Learning for ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic
www.vaee.vic.edu.au

School Environment Tracking System (SETS)
www.schoolenergysavings.com.au

Further information about ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic contact:

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