

ResourceSmart Schools 5Star Sustainability Certification

Biodiversity Checklist



How biodiversity smart is your school? This checklist is useful if your school is working on the Biodiversity Module as part of ResourceSmart Schools Sustainability Certification. It will help provide an audit of what your school is doing and where there are opportunities for further action.

To complete the Biodiversity Module your school needs to **complete a minimum of 34 actions** from the list below (48 actions in total) including **ALL the actions in section A1 *Current status and research***.

A Workplace/operational

This section is about how your school assesses the way it uses its natural resources through processes such as biodiversity audits, creating a biodiversity improvement development plan, managing the habitats in your grounds, protecting remnant vegetation and planting regimes.

A1 Current status and research

All actions in section A1 are compulsory

- A1.1** Have you completed biodiversity assessments for your school's grounds, including the identification and recording of:
 - > Indigenous/native plants and animal habitat quality (trees, understorey, ground cover weeds and soil management)?
 - > Linkages of school vegetation and habitats with surrounding areas?
- A1.2** Has your Habitat Quality Assessment score been entered as your baseline data?
- A1.3** Have you identified, monitored and documented the native animals at your school? For example, using motion-sensing cameras in nesting boxes, visual audits, scat and track identification, bird observations or photo point monitoring?

A2 Development and planning

- A2.1** Do you have a 3-year whole-school biodiversity plan to improve biodiversity in your school?
- A2.2** Have your biodiversity policies, targets and biodiversity plan been approved by your school council and/or planning committee?
- A2.3** Is there professional development for staff on biodiversity and associated themes?
- A2.4** Has your school applied for biodiversity related grants and/or entered into any environmental awards or competitions (e.g. ResourceSmart Schools Awards, Junior Landcare)?
- A2.5** Does your school have biodiversity monitoring systems in place and is your baseline data (Habitat Quality Assessment score) updated annually?
- A2.6** Are planting regimes in line with local considerations (e.g. local provenance planting, drought tolerance)?

A3 Habitat creation and maintenance

- A3.1** Are environmentally sensitive soil management and stormwater management processes for school grounds in place?
- A3.2** If your school has conservation areas and remnant vegetation, are they maintained and protected?
- A3.3** Are habitat development areas established or underway along with aesthetic works to enhance the school yard (e.g. frog bog, sensory gardens, wildlife corridors, wildscapes, nest boxes, butterfly gardens)?
- A3.4** Has your school developed a raingarden?
- A3.5** Does your school have appropriate fencing and guarding (especially of sensitive areas or trees)?
- A3.6** Are there nature trails and interpretative signage evident at your school?
- A3.7** Is your school's Habitat Quality Assessment score increasing following regular auditing (where feasible)?

A4 Food production and animal husbandry

- A4.1** Does your school have vegetable and/or food gardens and/or animal husbandry activities established?
- A4.2** Is mulching, weed control and litter management regularly undertaken in school grounds and gardens?
- A4.3** Is garden waste composted or mulched or chipped?

A5 Biodiversity: litter

- A5.1** Are school yards and other areas litter free with signed rubbish bins with or without lids (as appropriate) or no bins?
- A5.2** Are meals eaten in designated eating areas or classrooms or is there a process to minimise litter in the school yard (e.g. no wrapped food outside)?
- A5.3** Does your school have a system in place to collect litter in the school yard (not used as a punishment activity)?

B Learning and teaching

This section is about what activities your school has built into your curriculum so students are directly engaged in learning and taking action to conserve and increase biodiversity.

B1 Land care, habitat, ecology and sustainable land management

- B1.1** Do you have an action plan that clearly targets classroom activities across the school to address biodiversity, local land care and/or natural resource management, habitat and ecology issues?
- B1.2** Are your classroom activities in biodiversity, land management issues and/or sustainable food production clearly linked to the AusVELS cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability?
- B1.3** Are your classroom programs linked to practical, hands-on activities that encourage:
 - > The use of school grounds as an authentic learning space for nature-based, informal and outdoor learning about biodiversity and land management (e.g. vegetable and food gardens, husbandry activities)?
 - > Improvement in biodiversity within the school grounds and/or local areas?
 - > Excursions to provide students with first-hand experience of land management, coast management (or environmental management), conservation sites and/or earth education centres, botanical gardens, conservation, wildlife and community education centres, zoos and endangered species?
 - > Links to home-based projects and behaviour change in biodiversity, land care, habitat, ecology and/or sustainable land management?
- B1.4** Does your school program provide students with the opportunity to take responsibility for classroom activities and programs in land management, land care, animal and habitat care issues and school ground planning?
- B1.5** Does your school engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning perspectives in curriculum development and relate this to biodiversity?
- B1.6** Do you have visitors to school to provide students and teachers with knowledge and motivation around biodiversity, land care and/or sustainable land management?
- B1.7** Are you using the biodiversity data you collect as a curriculum activity to monitor progress in improving biodiversity in the school grounds and/or local areas?

C Whole school community engagement

This section is about how your school is going with a whole school community approach to biodiversity rather than a single teacher, parent or group of students leading on this.

C1 Policy and reporting

- C1.1** Is the whole school provided with regular information about biodiversity, land care, habitat, ecology and sustainable land management activities and programs?
- C1.2** Do you seek regular feedback from the whole school and community on the biodiversity, land care, habitat, ecology and sustainable land management activities and programs?

- C1.3** Have you completed and uploaded at least one learning story that celebrates your achievements in biodiversity issues onto school, departmental or sustainability websites?
- C1.4** Is biodiversity included as a priority or focus area or emphasis in your school goals (e.g. in your school plan, policy, administration and/or curriculum planning documents)?
- C1.5** Do you run school events that incorporate support, improvement and maintenance of biodiversity?

C2 Student and parent leadership

- C2.1** Are students involved in planning and managing the biodiversity and school grounds program (e.g. Student Action Teams)?
- C2.2** Do you institute school environment leadership through students in the school?
- C2.3** Do you have an active School Environment Club or Student Action Team?
- C2.4** Do parents and other members of the school community assist in the planning, management and implementation of the biodiversity plan?

C3 Community and communication links

- C3.1** Does your school liaise and/or work with local government or regional authorities and groups to develop school-based and joint projects?
- C3.2** Have staff and/or students attended local environmental network meetings?
- C3.3** Have staff and students participated in local biodiversity and/or conservation projects or activities to support and maintain local land care, habitat, ecology and sustainable land management activities and programs?
- C3.4** Does your school community or groups of students support wildlife protection and conservation projects by raising funds (e.g. sponsoring an endangered animal, contributing to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), propagating and/or donating trees to property owners)?
- C3.5** Are questions about the attitudes and changes in biodiversity awareness and active behaviour at home included in annual parent surveys and wider school community surveys?
- C3.6** Do you include ideas and activities in school newsletters to families for being more biodiversity aware and active at home?
- C3.7** Do staff and/or students mentor other schools?
- C3.8** Do students and staff communicate about biodiversity-related issues with other schools across the state, nation and globe?
- C3.9** Do staff and/or students give presentations to other schools on your school and community's biodiversity and land care, habitat, ecology and sustainable land management activities and programs?
- C3.10** Does your school liaise with political representatives from local, state and federal governments, local business and local 'friends of groups for support of projects?