Campus Infrastructure and Operations School of the Year

Sample entry for ResourceSmart Schools Awards

This category celebrates schools that have been making significant improvements to their school campus through infrastructure improvements or changes to everyday operations and processes. Informed by data and research, best practice schools work together with their school community and beyond the school gate to achieve their sustainability goals.

Please note: this sample entry was inspired by several entries submitted by different schools. The examples here showcase the wide range of sustainability initiatives being undertaken by schools

Question 1- Scope of Improvements

Tell us about the environmental sustainability improvements your school has made to your campus infrastructure and/or school operations. E.g. How the project came about? What did you do? Who was involved? Etc. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

This year our school focused on the infrastructure and operations of the school canteen. Through collaboration with the student body, school council, canteen staff and waste contractors, we have reduced the amount of energy and water used by the canteen and the amount of waste going to landfill by nearly 75%.

Resource audits in the canteen showed some areas needed upgrades, we started with fixing leaking pipes and installing low flow taps to conserve water. We installed a water bottle drink tap out the front of the canteen with the same low-flow features. The decision to upgrade our dishwasher to a higher energy and water rating has also made an impact on our billing data. (The old dishwasher was bought by a parent and is having a second life in a family home!)

The lighting was replaced by LED down lights with motion sensors so that extra power isn't used if someone has forgotten to turn off the lights. The hot water service was replaced by a solar water heater, and panels were installed on the top of the canteen.

Most significantly, the amount of waste going to landfill has reduced by 75%. The waste coming from the canteen has been reduce and there is a is transition from highly processed foods to including more supplies from a local farm. The canteen manager is training parent volunteers who assist in creating some more lunch items for the students including salads and soups. Students eat their lunch out of a bowl, and this is brought back and washed by the volunteers.

In cases where packaging can't be avoided, the student action team have launched a campaign 'Small Acts, Big Impact' with great bin signage helping our school community to know which bin our waste goes in.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 2- Use of Data or Research

Tell us how data and/or research was used to inform these changes. e.g. did you use audits, research, surveys etc.? 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

Our first data set came from a February waste audit which showed us that majority of the items in our bins were coming from the school canteen. A lot of these items, such as tetra packs and soft plastic wraps couldn't be recycled. The student action team planned to reduce our waste to landfill, and it was clear the focus should be on the school canteen.

When it came to the water and energy audits, students paid careful attention to the infrastructure in the canteen. They noticed that a lot of the appliances were old and could be replaced by other appliances with higher ratings which might have an impact on energy and water.

On the energy bill, it was identified that the gas water heater was extremely expensive to run. The student action team presented to school council that getting a solar water heater would be a worthwhile investment. They also recommended having a plumber inspect the pipes, fix the leaks and to suggest options for water saving taps. Since 2023, whole school energy bills are down by 20% and the water bills have been reduced by 15% respectively as a result of the changes in the canteen.

When teaching the Year 9 geography coursework on 'Biomes and Food Security', staff organised some local farmers to speak to students about supply chains. One of the speakers, Gail, expressed an interest in supplying the canteen with local produce. With research suggesting a negative correlation between highly processed foods and mental health, the school council supported the change.

We completed a waste audit again at the start of term 4 and had a reduction in landfill volume by 75%. The increase in signage and knowledge about what goes where as well as the changes to the menu are showing that the efforts of the student team this year have been worthwhile.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 3- Impact of Working Together

Tell us about how the school has worked with the student body and/or the broader community on these campus infrastructure and school operations improvements. Please highlight the impact of working together. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

The success of the canteen project is the result of solid collaboration between students, staff, parents and school council.

The students conducted audits, researched alternatives and made recommendations to school council. School council employed local plumbers and electricians to upgrade the infrastructure. Staff helped by including some links in the curriculum, which in turn brought about a change to the food systems promoted via the school canteen. These partnerships included Gail who owns a local farm and Emma a council waste officer who talked to the students about how waste is processed at the nearby transfer station. These experiences combined with the data from the resource audits convinced the student body that Changes to the canteen infrastructure and food sources was a great way to reduce waste.

Our canteen model has promoted our school as a leader in sustainability and healthy menu. Our ResourceSmart School Facilitator invited us to talk about our canteen project with other schools, via hosting canteen tours on Teacher Environment Network days and applying for grants and awards programs. Our school was featured in the media promotion for a statewide food festival for children.

The amount of waste, energy and water our school has saved through this project is often a feature on our school's social media channels. Furthermore, the parent volunteer model has helped to embed the school in the heart of the local community. Parents meet each other through volunteering in the canteen.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Summary of Impact

In 50 words or less, please summarise how the improvements made to your infrastructure or school operations have impacted your school in their sustainability goals.

Please submit at least ONE media ready photography with signed consent form/s.

SAMPLE ENTRY

We have made significant improvements to our school canteen. Investing in appliance upgrades have reduced our energy and water bills. The commitment to increasing fresh food and a focus on improving our waste management has helped to reduce waste to landfill fees.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details	
1 Point COMPLETE ENTRY with photo and consent form	No Points INCOMPLETE ENTRY Either consent form or media ready photo not submitted

CDS Vic Excellence Award

Sample entry for ResourceSmart Schools Awards

This category celebrates schools using the Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme (CDS Vic) to achieve sustainability goals. Through implementing CDS Vic at school, schools are encouraging creativity, innovation and leadership within their school and/or their local community.

<u>Special eligibility:</u> Schools entering this category must be signed up as a 'donation partner' with Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme (CDS Vic) as well as be an active ResourceSmart School

Please note: this sample entry was inspired by several entries submitted by different schools. The examples here showcase the wide range of sustainability initiatives being undertaken by schools

Question 1- Addressing the school's sustainability goals: Tell us how your school participated in Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme (CDS Vic) and how it has supported your school to achieve its sustainability goals. 300words

SAMPLE ENTRY

As the Eco Crew, we are responsible for driving sustainability initiatives in our school all year round. These initiatives range from anything between implementing composting in school, planting trees to building worm towers. To sustain these initiatives and execute more projects, we often require funds. We saw CDS Vic as not only as an opportunity for securing a steady source of income to fund our Eco Crew's sustainability initiatives but also as a chance to educate our community on the benefits of recycling.

To get started, we set up cardboard boxes as makeshift collection bins around the school campus to collect eligible drink containers.

The bins had signage to help the school community know which drink containers were eligible. We also designed and put up posters around the campus to notify everyone of our participation and to encourage them to drop of eligible drink containers in the dedicated bins. The posters also highlighted the benefits of circular economy and recycling through CDS Vic

Our Eco Crew wrote an article in our school newsletter, explaining what the CDS is and how to use it which encouraged more families to get involved and to support the school via recycling their bottles. The CDS has opened a new way for families to support our school and for our Eco Crew to show leadership.

Every Friday, volunteers of our Eco Crew then returned the collected drink containers at the nearest refund point to our school. In less than three months of our participation, we have collected $500 dollars that has helped us fund our sunflower beds for our next sustainability project.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 2- Challenges and Innovations: Tell us about any key challenges you experienced when implementing the scheme and the strategies you used to overcome them. Please highlight any innovation and creativity when explaining the strategies used. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

One of the key challenges when implementing CDS Vic in our school was the issue of bin contamination.

Often when our Eco Crew were getting ready to take the collected drink containers to a refund point, we realised that the bins were contaminated with food waste or other types of containers that were not eligible for a 10-cent refund.

While our Eco Crew manually sorted through bins to separate waste from eligible drink containers, we realised there was a need to educate our school community.

To do this, we regularly used school assemblies as a forum for show and tell – demonstrating examples of eligible and ineligible drink containers. To make this engaging, our Eco Crew created a comedy skit and gave the characters names, the skit asked people to check for the 10c mark on the bottle before putting them in the CDS bin.

The initial performance was successful in attracting attention to the cause. The skit inspired the campaign posters and subsequent 'show and tell' at school assemblies. Using the same characters to educate the school on CDS contamination issues.

From trial and testing, we understood that boxes were not a great container to collect bottles and cans as it was much smaller than the bins, they were next to and placement was important. When the CDS Vic bin was next to yellow bin and red bin, people were less likely to dispose their rubbish or co-mingled waste in the CDS Vic bin. So, we made sure that every CDS Vic bin had clear signage and that it was placed next to the yellow bin and red bin in high foot traffic areas.

After three weeks of implementing the solutions, we saw a clear difference in the contamination levels we received, making the return of drink containers easier for our Eco Crew.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 3- Leadership: Tell us how you have used CDS Vic to encourage or show leadership in your school and/or community. Please highlight examples. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

By implementing the CDS, our Eco Crew developed leadership skills within our school. The Eco Crew used data to design creative campaigns which involved presenting at school assemblies, and crafting posters, newsletter articles and placement of bins. Members of the Eco Crew oversaw bin audits, collecting the refund money, and working out how to spend the funds.

The Eco Crew presented on the scheme at inter-school events and sustainability summits and used these events to collect drink containers and prompt other schools to use the CDS. These conversations fostered leadership skills within the Eco Crew, who were asked to give advice to other schools on what has worked, and the lessons they've learned in conducting a whole-school educational campaign.

The school partnered with a local environmental organisation who conduct clean-up activities in our area. They donated eligible drink containers found during the clean-up. This further helped to boost the funds we were able to raise during the scheme.

The funds raised by use of the CDS has empowered us to take on more sustainability initiatives such as our school garden. Due to the amount of money raised in the last year, we have been able to build new garden beds and plant sunflowers. We hope that our garden will continue to expand, and with it our school's biodiversity score, and an increase of educational offerings in the garden.

We often use social media to promote our work on the CDS and how these funds are helping us to improve our school garden and biodiversity score. One of our recent posts about our $500 milestone and the building of our sunflower beds was reshared by our local council and received over 50 interactions.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Summary of Impact

In 50 words or less, please summarize the impact of CDS Vic on your school. Please submit at least ONE media ready photography with signed consent form/s.

SAMPLE ENTRY

Participating in CDS Vic has helped our school raise important funds to undertake more sustainable initiatives throughout the year. It has inspired our community to recycle more consciously and prompted them to consider their role in the circular economy by considering what happens to things we purchase and their reuse.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details	
1 Point COMPLETE ENTRY with photo and consent form	No Points INCOMPLETE ENTRY Either consent form or media ready photo not submitted

Curriculum Leadership School of the Year

Sample entry for ResourceSmart Schools Awards

This category celebrates schools that have demonstrated significant efforts to embed sustainability as a cross-curriculum priority. Best- practice schools are connecting sustainability learning across learning areas and beyond the school gate to what's happening in their communities.

Please note: this sample entry was inspired by several entries submitted by different schools. The examples here showcase the wide range of sustainability initiatives being undertaken by schools

Question 1: Upload a curriculum document: Please demonstrate via evidence how your school is addressing sustainability as a cross-curriculum priority.

Examples include images of activities, links to the school's webpage (if applicable), documentation of teaching and learning scope/sequences, units/lessons, or communications that reflect work undertaken as part of a curricular activity. You can find examples of curriculum documents on RSS Online in 'An Example RSS School'.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 2: Creativity and Innovation in Sustainability Approach: Tell us how sustainability, a cross-curriculum priority is reflected in across learning areas. Please highlight any creative and innovative approaches your school has adopted in its sustainability curriculum design and delivery. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

Our school has taken a whole school approach to the teaching and learning of sustainability by introducing a new specialist subject 'Nature School'. Every class participates in 'Nature School' weekly. The class is hands on, conducted outside and has a focus on group work.

Being a ResourceSmart School has inspired us to structure 'Nature School' around the four resource modules. Throughout the year, the work done in 'Nature School' is referred to in other subject areas, inspiring sustainability to be implemented as a cross-curriculum priority.

In 2024, our focus for 'Nature School' has been the biodiversity module. The evidence attached shows the work done in 'Nature School' across the year, per year level, on this module, but also how other subject areas are linking to this hands-on subject. For example, the Design and Technology learning for middle primary students for Creating Designed Solutions involved investigating, generating, planning and managing an indigenous native food garden. Foundation to Level 2 in science explored which plants and animals are best suited to the climate, and how to care for them. (Thanks to them we haven't put sun loving plants in the shade, and know what chickens like to eat!)

The focus of group work and applied learning of 'Nature School' is to encourage critical and creative thinking capabilities. Students, working in small groups must apply their literacy, numeracy, science and design skills to real-life situations. For example, students working out how to attract more birds to the bird bath, or why a plant looks unhealthy.

A staff survey on 'Nature School' found that 70% of staff noticed that school culture had improved with the introduction of the subject. This is attributed to having a common link between year levels. Student curiosity and confidence have also been improved with the introduction of the subject.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 3: Connection with Community: Tell us how the school's curriculum connects beyond the school gate, with the broader community. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

'Nature School' provides hands-on, immersive learning opportunities that encourage students to learn collaboration skills and how to follow an inquiry process. 'Nature School' takes place in a school portable on the side of the oval, and over the past 3 years, has grown to include a chicken coop. The kitchen and native gardens are expanding.

To help with the improvements to this site, students have been involved in brainstorming ideas and what will work best. To help with this Laura, a Biodiversity Officer at the local council came by to support us in a biodiversity audit, and to explain our results, and what we needed to work on first. Laura suggested that attracting more lizards and frogs would help with biodiversity.

Year 5 and 6 students investigated habitats for lizards and frogs and came up with the ideas and designs for a frog bog and a lizard lounge at the back of the Nature School portable. When asked how this project would be implemented and managed, the students made a list of the things required and agreed that a roster of student representatives would check on the habitat each week at Nature School.

When Nature School focused on the water module in 2023, we developed a partnership with the River Detectives Program. In 2024, we have kept up our school's participation in this citizen science project for the health of the local stream. Throughout the program students have collected data and been able to evaluate which behaviours lead to waterway pollution, and what can be done to improve water and habitat quality.

Student learning at Nature School also connects to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with students connecting their knowledge about climate, habitat, biodiversity, waterway health to goals such as Zero Poverty and Zero Hunger (evidenced in curriculum document).

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Summary of Impact: In 50 words or less, please summarise how your school's curriculum is exemplifying best practice sustainability education at school. Please submit at least ONE media ready photography with signed consent form/s.

SAMPLE ENTRY

The introduction of 'Nature School' has inspired sustainability to be addressed across all learning areas at our school. In 2024, Nature School focused on the RSS Biodiversity module and students developed their collaboration, critical thinking and creative thinking skills through undertaking biodiversity related actions such as creating habitat for lizards.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details	
1 Point COMPLETE ENTRY with photo and consent form	No Points INCOMPLETE ENTRY Either consent form or media ready photo not submitted

Emerging School of the Year

Sample entry for ResourceSmart Schools Awards

This category celebrates schools that have newly joined the ResourceSmart Schools Program. Using research and data, schools have worked to get started on their sustainability goals.

Special eligibility: Must have joined ResourceSmart between 1 July 2025 and 28 February 2027 OR set a resource baseline for the first time during this period.

Please note: this sample entry was inspired by several entries submitted by different schools. The examples here showcase the wide range of sustainability initiatives being undertaken by schools

Question 1: Working Together: Tell us about how the school community (school leadership, teachers, staff, students and families) have worked together to begin their ResourceSmart Schools sustainability journey. e.g. What initiatives were undertaken, who participated and what were the outcomes? 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

Our journey with ResourceSmart Schools began after our principal identified, together with our school council and staff, the increasing school bills for energy, waste and water. As an action, our science teacher Jane Smith organised a presentation on her investigation into the ResourceSmart Schools Program. The presentation was attended by staff, school council and parents in the community.

In addition to inspiring the school to signing up to ResourceSmart Schools, the presentation also sparked parent interest in the leaking taps on campus, with a few parents volunteering to fix them.

One of our first steps with ResourceSmart Schools was our school captains (with the guidance from staff) establishing a Student Action Team. This team conducted a water audit of the whole school and developed the school's action plan. The school captains and Student Action Team presented at our school assembly to raise awareness about what they discovered and the plans, to minimise water wastage in the school

Jane Smith (our science teacher) shared our water action plan with the local council and from there we developed a connection with our local catchment authority. From this relationship we accessed some teaching and learning resources for our local waterways. This gave us the opportunity for the students to be citizen scientists through the River Detectives program and get a better understanding of the health of our waterways. Additionally, the council donated mulch to spread on our gardens so that we could prevent water loss through evaporation.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of our staff, principal, parents, school council and local council we have started our journey in the ResourceSmart Schools program with much momentum. We are now looking to our energy module and have applied to the Green School Building Initiative.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 2: Use of Data and Research: Tell us about how data and/or research were used to develop the school's action plan and sustainability targets. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

Our action plan for saving water at our school was informed by several data sources. We entered two years' billing data and were able to track a steady increase in our water usage and bills.

The maths coordinator downloaded this data and used it as a teaching and learning resource for the year 9 maths classes. The students used information about seasonal patterns and water usage to come up with a hypothesis for increased water usage.

Our Green Team completed our water audit to identify areas for improvement. They designed a survey that asked students about their attitudes and behaviours related to water. *i.e. when you wash your hands, which tap do you use - hot or cold? What have you noticed about water usage at school?* They used the information from the survey as part of the action plan.

Through the relationship with our RSS Facilitator and our local catchment authority, our school also signed up for the Schools Water Efficiency Program (SWEP). This tool gave us access to even more data about daily water usage and we could see when significant spikes in usage were occurring and also that we had several leaks that needed to be addressed.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 3: Engagement beyond the school gate: Provide evidence of how the school's sustainability achievements were shared with the community.

Examples include copies of school newsletters, articles on the school website, the school's sustainability webpage (if applicable), posters or any other communications that highlight the work undertaken by the school.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Summary of Impact: In 50 words or less, please summarise how momentum has been achieved with sustainability projects at your school.

Please submit at least ONE media ready photography with signed consent form/s.

SAMPLE ENTRY

Our school joined ResourceSmart Schools in July 2025, focusing on the water module. Students, staff, and parents have collaborated to understand our baseline data, identify improvement opportunities, and engage local stakeholders to help improve our water usage. We are building community relationships through citizen science programs like River Detectives to improve local waterway health.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details	
1 Point COMPLETE ENTRY with photo and consent form	No Points INCOMPLETE ENTRY Either consent form or media ready photo not submitted

ResourceSmart School of the Year

Sample Entry for ResourceSmart Schools Awards

This category celebrates leading sustainable schools that have embedded sustainability into everything they do, on their campus, in their curriculum and in the way they engage with the community and neighbouring schools. This category celebrates innovation, creativity and leadership in school sustainability programs.

***Special eligibility*: School must be at least a 3 Star ResourceSmart School.**

Please note: this sample entry was inspired by several entries submitted by different schools. The examples here showcase the wide range of sustainability initiatives being undertaken by schools.

Question 1: Sustainability Initiatives: Tell us about the sustainability initiatives being undertaken at your school. Please highlight any sustainability actions being done on your school campus or your school operations. 300 words.

SAMPLE ENTRY

Our school has made significant efforts to include sustainability in everything we do. In the last 18 months, we have made changes to our campus and operations and the curriculum connected to the new building that replaced three portable classrooms.

By working in close collaboration with school council, the architects designed the new school building that balanced the school's heritage features with sustainable design principles. The renovated buildings have high rated insulation and double-glazed windows to improve passive heating and cooling, and to improve natural light and air flow. Only electric appliances were installed

As part of the renovation, our school worked to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. Old appliances and furniture were sold or gifted to the community. School leadership worked closely with tradespeople to make sure they used the correct bins to reduce waste. In terms of water and energy usage efficiency, students made signs to remind everyone (including visitors) to turn off taps, lights and to check thermostat settings.

Students were included in the renovations by looking at the design and in brainstorming what 'sustainable design' might look like for our school. Year 5 and 6 students undertook an inquiry into 'passive houses' which asked them to build their own 'passive house' model.

Alongside the renovations our school has been focused on rejuvenating our vegetable garden by increasing the soil quality. Students have learnt about soil quality, healthy bugs and organisms, composting and worm farming. We have installed new wicking beds and have quadrupled the amount of produce we harvest to use in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program.

The final product includes a solar system, electric vehicle charging station and a rejuvenated vegetable garden with shade sails for an outdoor learning space. We are currently working on incorporating a yarning circle fire pit.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 2: Innovation and Leadership in Sustainability: Tell us about how your school is demonstrating innovation, creativity and leadership in sustainability and/or sustainability education. Please highlight the impact/s from your approach. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

Our approach to sustainability acknowledges First Nations peoples as the world's oldest culture and experts in caring for Country. Through partnering with local First Nations groups, we have been able to transform our school curriculum and elements of our school campus to address environmental sustainability at their core.

We employ John, a local First Nations Education Officer, to come to the school 1-day a fortnight. John teaches all our students across a four-week cycle and assists the teachers to meaningfully include First Nations perspectives across the curriculum. The value of these experiences is apparent through the number of students referring to their time with John across the curriculum, such as in writing, art and science classes (see evidence).

We host the regional sustainable schools network meeting. Local schools can see sustainability in action and meet other sustainability educators' local sustainability experts in our community. At a network meeting this year we delivered a professional learning session with John about our successes in integrating indigenous perspectives into our curriculum.

We use social media to promote these network meetings, making sure to mention the partnerships we have with local groups. One of our recent posts about 'Small Acts, Big Impact' about litter prevention and food waste was reshared by our local council and received over 100 interactions.

As a 5-Star ResourceSmart School, our achievements have been published in local newspapers, and our school has received visits from the Minister for the Environment. These events provide our students with leadership opportunities and demonstrate what even a small school like ours can achieve!

We participated in the development of the first Environmental Sustainability in Schools Policy with the Department of Education. Our school features in the information video as an example of how the policy could be adopted by any school in Victoria.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 3: Embedding Sustainability into Curriculum: Please attach evidence to explain how your school embeds sustainability into the school's curriculum.

Examples include images of activities, links to the school's webpage (if applicable), documentation of teaching and learning scope/sequences, units/lessons, examples of student work or communications that reflect work undertaken as part of a curricular activity.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 4: Collaboration with school and local community: Tell us how your school has been working together, as a school, and with the broader local community on sustainability and/or sustainability education. Please highlight the impact of working together. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

Our school community works together to achieve great things. Our student action team, our staff leadership team and school council have prioritised partnerships with First Nations, Landcare, Water Management, as well as with local businesses, parents and volunteers. We acknowledge that sustainability cannot be the responsibility of one person at our school.

First Nations representatives have played a valued consultative role in the design of our school campus, advising us that a yarning circle and fire pit would be great resources for our sustainability curriculum. We have Welcome to Country, Smoking and Cultural Learning as key parts of our school year.

Local Landcare groups have had a role in helping us to select native plants that are fire resistant as well as encourage as biodiversity in bugs and birdlife. Landcare donated tree guards to help our garden become established. Our local Junior Landcare Facilitator comes to the school to teach students how to propagate, plant and look after our school garden. Our Grade 6's participated in a Landcare revegetation project next to the secondary college with secondary school students as part of the Year 7 transition program.

Representatives from the water management groups visit through our participation in the River Detectives Program and help to connect the learning and citizen science on school campus with what is happening beyond the school gate.

We use social media to promote the work we are doing. Due to our work our school has entered and from being a 5-Star ResourceSmart School we receive media attention for our achievements. By sharing our stories, more small schools like ours will realise what can be done especially through local partnerships.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 point	**2 points**	**3 points**	**4 points**

Question 5: Working with Other Schools: Tell us how your school has been working together with other schools on sustainability and/or sustainability education. Please highlight the impact of working together. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

With the support of our ResourceSmart Schools Facilitator, our school hosted a regional learning day earlier this year. We hosted students, teachers and school volunteers from neighbouring schools to share learnings and ideas about sustainability. Our student action team prepared presentations for students on our River Detectives progress and gave our guests a tour of our newly renovated buildings and gardens. We had 40 people attend the day from 8 different schools- both primary and secondary. From the day, we made plans to collaborate on next year's Reconciliation Week activities, as well as revegetation projects organised by our local Landcare group.

We see representatives from this network at conferences such as Kids Teaching Kids, ResourceSmart School Awards, Energy Breakthrough, Local Landcare Awards and Teacher Environment Network Meetings.

Our principal meets quarterly with a principal's reference group who are focused on sustainability leadership and climate action. As a result, our principal was interviewed on ABC Radio talking about the cost savings and wellbeing benefits of being a sustainable school.

In addition, our teaching staff presented on our curriculum work at the Sustainability Victoria online Professional Learning Series 'Show and Tell' which attracted approximately 50 attendees from Victorian schools.

Through connecting with other schools, we have shared our passion for reconciliation and caring for Country. We have encouraged schools to be more sustainable and created networks and resources to help and support them. We have contributed to the Environmental Sustainability in Schools Policy which guides all schools should they wish to be a sustainable school. We take every opportunity to share our successes, with the hopes they will inspire others to reach out and get involved.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	**2 Points**	**3 Points**	**4 Points**

Summary of Impact: In 50 words or less, please summarise why your school is a leading ResourceSmart School. Please submit at least ONE media ready photography with signed consent form/s.

SAMPLE ENTRY Our school has been transformed to reflect sustainable design and our care for Country. We collaborate with our community, in particular, First Nations groups to provide locally relevant sustainability education. As a 5-Star ResourceSmart School, we actively engage with other schools, sharing our sustainability successes to inspire others.

1 Point COMPLETE ENTRY with photo and consent form	No **Points** INCOMPLETE ENTRY- either consent form or media ready photo not submitted

School Volunteer of the Year

Sample Entry for ResourceSmart Schools Awards

This category celebrates the contributions of school volunteers who gift their time and expertise to contribute to sustainability outcomes at school. As members of the community, the role of school volunteers is valuable in connecting the school with beyond the school gate.

Special eligibility: Individual or group must not be remunerated for their time (this involves in-kind benefit)

Please note: this sample entry was inspired by several entries submitted by different schools. The examples here showcase the wide range of sustainability initiatives being undertaken by schools.

Question 1: Contribution to School's Sustainability Goals: Tell us about this individual/group. How are they contributing to your school's sustainability goals. Please highlight skills, knowledge or outcomes. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

Mary and Charles are active parent volunteers at our school. They first became involved in 2022 when they helped the school to undertake a biodiversity audit. They are both farmers from the neighbouring area and have been generous in sharing their knowledge of permaculture with our students.

In 2026, Mary and Charles spent about two hours each week working in the garden, involving students in decisions about what to plant, for both our edible and native gardens and teaching them what it takes to keep a garden healthy.

As a result of their efforts the school edible garden has improved and is filled with herbs, vegetables and fruits. It now fully supports the school's Kitchen Garden Program, as well as being available to the school canteen. Significantly reducing the need for the school to buy produce not only saves the school money, but also food packaging going to landfill and transport emissions or 'food miles'. The school has already saved 10% on buying food to stock the canteen and this number will only increase as the garden grows.

Mary and Charles' advice to school council on how to improve the school's wildlife corridors has led to positive outcomes. Their knowledge of indigenous plant species local to the area has significantly helped to boost biodiversity in the school garden and ecosystem health as can be seen in the results of biodiversity audits.

Mary and Charles' property is now the location for science and geography excursions. Students visit the farm to study ecosystems, supply chains and agricultural practices.

'Last term, with the science class, we were at Mary and Charles's farm. We had such a great time! We learned how to avoid chemicals by using companion planting to manage pests. I had no idea about this option' James, Year 9.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 2: Engagement with the Broader Community: Explain how this individual/group has been working with the broader community to enhance the sustainability program at your school. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

Through being property owners with a keen interest in biodiversity, Mary and Charles are extremely well connected to groups such as Trust for Nature, Traditional Owner groups, Landcare, nurseries and Friends groups. They link the school with these organisations both through the gardening work they do on campus, and via the science and geography excursions to their farm.

Through Mary and Charles' encouragement, the school applied for and won a Landcare grant and became a finalist in the Junior Landcare Awards. These experiences have helped to fund more biodiversity projects on campus as well as promote our work to the broader community via local newspaper and radio. Our Year 9 Student Action Team were on local radio talking about our biodiversity corridor project.

This year, the school garden renovation could not have been done without Mary and Charles and the connections to the local community. The garden beds are made from recycled railway sleepers which were donated by the local salvage yard and the tree guards are on loan from the local Friends group.

Mulch is currently delivered to site from the nearby transfer station. Later in the year, Mary and Charles hope to organise someone from local council to come and speak to the students about how mulch is made, and how it is used in gardening.

The plants themselves have been propagated by Natalie from the local indigenous plant nursery who through Mary and Charle's invitation came to the school and spoke to the VCE Biology class about propagation.

Local First Nations groups have come to the school to educate students about the how particular plants are used in indigenous culture. They suggested to build a fire pit and, in the future, host native food and cooking classes. The project is always evolving!

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 3: Impact on Sustainability Knowledge and Practice: Explain the impact of the work of this individual/group and how it enhanced sustainability knowledge and practice for students/teachers. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

Mary and Charles generosity with their time, knowledge and connections with the broader community have left a lasting impact on the culture of the school in just three years. Work is continuously evolving, and we are grateful for Mary and Charles' energy and enthusiasm for our school's sustainability goals.

Having local experts be involved in the student's education at school has had an impact on the number of students choosing to take VCE Biology and Agriculture units. These connections beyond the school gate have also resulted in the school having money to fund biodiversity work, and to promote the school as an environmentally conscious learning community.

Having the school veggie garden has tangibly saved the school money from buying produce from elsewhere, and students are more engaged in the supply chain of the food they purchase from the school canteen.

The veggie garden and indigenous garden provide alternative locations for onsite learning, the Geography Teacher has been using the veggie garden to talk about food miles in year 9 'Biomes and Food Security' and year 7 art students have been using the indigenous garden as a place to practice their botanical drawings.

Since Mary and Charles began volunteering at our school, the school has saved money, increased its local amenity for biodiversity learning, and attracted more community support to the school, reducing the burden on the teaching staff. The most recent biodiversity audit suggests that due to Mary and Charles involvement the school has improved the biodiversity score by 30 per cent.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Summary of Impact: In 50 words or less, please summarise the impact of this individual or group on the school's sustainability goals. Please submit at least ONE media ready photography with signed consent form/s.

SAMPLE ENTRY

Mary and Charles' work on biodiversity corridors and in renovating our edible garden has saved the school money, increased its use for learning about biodiversity, and attracted more community support to the school. Their work helps us to promote our school as a great place to learn about environmental sustainability.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details	
1 Point COMPLETE ENTRY with photo and consent form	No Points INCOMPLETE ENTRY Either consent form or media ready photo not submitted

Student Action Team of the Year

Sample entry for ResourceSmart Schools Awards

This category celebrates the work of students working together as a sustainability action team. Best practice student action teams will demonstrate leadership by working together to contribute to sustainability both within school and beyond the school gate.

Please note: this sample entry was inspired by several entries submitted by different schools. The examples here showcase the wide range of sustainability initiatives being undertaken by schools.

Question 1: Contribution to School's Achievements in Sustainability: Tell us about your Student Action Team. Please highlight innovative activities and practices led by the students that promote sustainability across the school. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

Our green team consists of 20 students from Years 4 to 10. They have been a driving force for improved environmental stewardship and have raised the bar for student leaders at our school. The team has led several innovative initiatives and school-wide practices that have significantly contributed to our overall sustainability achievements.

Under the guidance of the sustainability coordinator, the team developed the Green Action Policy in 2024 which guides their overall work, and how they will work together. The student green team meets weekly to check in on their progress, to brainstorm ideas and to provide support to each other.

The green team has been split into committees which focus on different tasks. The Garden and Canteen committee, made up of upper primary students play a vital role in maintaining our garden and promoting 'nude food' days. They have created informative posters which highlight the impacts of litter and food packaging on waterways and habitat. They have spoken at school assemblies to raise awareness and to encourage positive changes within the school.

The Events and Communications committee, composed of Year 6 and 7 students has been pivotal in promoting sustainability beyond our school. They established the Green Teams Southern Network (GTSN) in 2024 to facilitate collaboration between schools. Their new podcast series, released in February, has inspired other schools in the network to launch similar initiatives, expanding the reach of sustainability achievements.

The RSS Modules committee, years 8 to 10 supports the teachers in completing resource audits and action plans. In 2024, this committee set out to improve waste separation which included strategically placing CDS collection points around the school and an information campaign. Their work resulted in approximately $400 worth of containers being collected which was used to buy soil and replant two neglected garden beds with natives.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 2: Working Together: Tell us about how the team works within your school and the broader community to encourage and promote sustainability. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

The Green Action Policy documents the teams' overall objectives, and the weekly meetings are run by the Year 10 students to check in on the progress of all the committees and for the team to get support, feedback or ideas for their projects.

The meeting is just for 15 minutes every Thursday lunchtime, which means each committee nominates a spokesperson to update the greater team on their progress.

Sometimes, when there is a bigger topic to discuss, the team meets for longer. Extra time was given to develop the Green Action Policy and to decide on how they were going to communicate this to the school.

This policy has been submitted as evidence.

Three of the ten goals include:

- To complete audits of our school's biodiversity, energy, waste and water every year.
- To educate our school and other schools about sustainability through a podcast; and
- To reduce waste going to landfill through widespread usage of the container deposit scheme.

Students were encouraged to think about which topics would be easy and more challenging and what leadership opportunities they would like to take on.

Examples of student leadership:

- Interviewing our council biodiversity officer on the Green Teams Southern Network podcast. The podcast series is often shared by local sustainability and education organisations to reach a larger, community audience.
- Sharing the school's sustainability achievements on social media including the Minister for Environment's recent school visit to celebrate our success with the container deposit scheme.
- Speaking at school assemblies and visiting classrooms to collect food waste for the school compost bin.
- Recruiting student volunteers to assist with audits, and then writing a report on the findings. The report was sent to school council to review. Because of the green team's advocacy, leaks in the toilets became known and were fixed.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 3: Upload Evidence of Students Work: Please provide evidence of the work carried out by your student action team

Examples of evidence could include links to any activity mentioned in the answers above such as newsletters, images, social media posts, website links or any other documentation regarding the work carried out by the student action team.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Summary of Impact: This In 50 words or less, please summarise the impact of this Student Action Team and their sustainability work at your school. Please submit at least ONE media ready photography with signed consent form/s.

SAMPLE ENTRY

This self-organised student action team are making progress on the school's Green Action Policy. They have gathered data through audits and have achieved success with collecting containers and raising funds through the Container Deposit Scheme. They promote sustainability beyond the school gate via a podcast, making them community sustainability leaders.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details	
1 Point COMPLETE ENTRY with photo and consent form	No Points INCOMPLETE ENTRY Either consent form or media ready photo not submitted

Teacher of the Year

Sample entry for ResourceSmart Schools Awards

This category celebrates sustainability educators who are embedding sustainability into the school's curriculum and activities, fostering connections beyond the school gate and contributing to tangible impacts on the school's sustainability program.

Please note: this sample entry was inspired by several entries submitted by different schools. The examples here showcase the wide range of sustainability initiatives being undertaken by schools.

Question 1: Best Practice Sustainability Educator: Tell us about this educator or teaching team. How do they demonstrate best practice in sustainability education at school? Please highlight the impact of this educator or teaching team on the school's sustainability program. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

For this award we nominate Rhonda, our geography teacher and all-round sustainability star. Rhonda has over 15 years' experience as a sustainability teaching expert, and we are fortunate that she has been at our school for seven. Throughout her time at our school, she has made tangible changes to our whole-of-school curriculum, our school campus, students' love of learning, staff development and the partnerships the school has with the community.

Rhonda has been a driving force for embedding sustainability as a cross-curriculum priority. Her coaching and mentoring of the staff body has allowed the school community to work alongside her, making our school a sustainable school. Rhonda has taken the time to build relationships with local experts who can provide professional learning and student incursions, which support the staff. Furthermore, she is generous in connecting staff to likeminded networks, relevant (and often free) professional learning opportunities) and resources and lesson plans.

As a result of Rhonda motivating the staff body to embed sustainability into their coursework, the school council has invested in campus improvements to facilitate the school's growing priority for sustainability education. Most significantly, the Outdoor Classroom was built in 2025, designed in collaboration with school council, the student representative council and the staff body. Rhonda made sure that local First Nations' groups were consulted on the space, as it is hoped the space will be used to incorporate more First Nations perspectives into the school curriculum. Parent volunteers and local Landcare groups were also involved in planting days to get the classroom established.

Already, 18 months after being built, the Outdoor classroom is used for visual art, science, geography and English classes. Rhonda has brought to our school a passion for the natural environment.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details			
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 2: Embedding Sustainability in Curriculum and Activities: Tell us about how this educator or teaching team is embedding sustainability into the curriculum and/or school activities and practices. Please highlight any creative and innovative approaches to sustainability education. 300 words
SAMPLE ENTRY

As part of being a ResourceSmart School, Rhonda leads an annual whole-school curriculum review and audit on sustainability as a cross-curriculum priority. Rhonda is able to motivate staff members to reframe their curriculum plans to include more sustainability learning. In 2024, Rhonda supported the year 7 English teachers to include texts that had environmental and climate themes. Rhonda is skilled at supporting teachers who are feeling underconfident or need extra support.

As a result of her advocacy and mentorship, our arts, design and drama departments are focusing on 'futures thinking' in their coursework, exploring themes of circular economy and climate resilience. Our science program is focussing on the themes of regeneration and are using the Outdoor Classroom to track biodiversity improvement.

Rhonda has a passion for getting students out of the classroom as a way for them to develop a relationship with and value, nature. This is a priority when she is teaching her own subject of geography. Fieldwork is a priority across years 7-12 in Geography, making it a very popular subject across the school. In 2026, the Year 7 students investigated places and liveability through riding the no. 48 tram from end to end, documenting the changes they see from the window. The year 8 students practice cartography skills through completing orienteering courses on the school grounds and Year 9 students investigate Biomes and Food security through partnering with the local Tech school on agricultural science and supply chains.

Rhonda presented on the impacts of getting students outdoors at the 2026 Geography Teachers Association of Victoria annual conference. The opportunity to have experiential learning allows for students to connect to the learning in their local places.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details

1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Question 3: Connection with Community: Tell us how this educator or teaching team is connecting the student body with the broader community on sustainability projects. Please highlight the impact of these connections. 300 words

SAMPLE ENTRY

The philosophy that Rhonda has brought to our school is that the school is the community asset, and therefore the community should be involved in supporting its success. As mentioned above, through curriculum reviews and staff mentoring about sustainability as a cross-curricular priority, Rhonda connects staff to local experts to support them to deliver a sustainability focused curriculum.

Rhonda organises an annual student survey asking students what matters to them regarding climate action and environmental conservation on school campus, and this data contributes to the work of the student representative council the following year. This data was also used by student representative council to form their opinions on the new Outdoor Classroom design.

In addition to students, the building of the Outdoor Classroom involved First Nations groups, school council, and volunteers from Landcare and the parent body to participate in planting. The student representative council has been heard on community radio talking about the outdoor classroom and has presented to local council.

As a result of Rhonda's connections, science classes now work with River Detectives Program to provide valuable citizen science data to the local waterways management committees. The school participates annually in Energy Breakthrough, working to build a solar powered car, and race in Maryborough. Clean Up Australia Day, Earth Hour, Bike Education events have been taken on by other staff members due to Rhonda's encouragement, which all bring community volunteers into the school.

Rhonda has worked with local council and our ResourceSmart Schools Facilitator to host Teacher Environment Network days on campus. The days are attended by more than 10 local schools and are an opportunity to share successes, challenges and resources when it comes to teaching sustainability.

Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details

1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points

Summary of Impact: In 50 words or less, please summarise the impact of this teacher on sustainability education at our school. Please submit at least ONE media ready photography with signed consent form/s	
SAMPLE ENTRY Rhonda's work to embed sustainability as a cross-curriculum priority has inspired our school to prioritise sustainability education, resulting in an increase in community partnerships and the building of an Outdoor Classroom. Rhonda's advocacy for getting students outdoors through fieldwork has fostered a deep appreciation for nature among the student body.	
1 Point COMPLETE ENTRY with photo and consent form	No Points INCOMPLETE ENTRY- either consent form or media ready photo not submitted