

Quick Guide: Creating a student action team

The student action team is a group of students who work together to assist the school to achieve its sustainability goals and targets. A student action team is a great way to build student voice and agency within the school.

The key to a successful student action team is to choose a structure and approach that is right for your school.

This guide will take you through the considerations required to build a student action team.

Team structure

- Consider any existing student leadership structures within the school as there may be an opportunity for the student action team to fit within this structure.
- Consider your school size and how many students are interested in sustainability
- Consider how a student action team will work alongside a timetabled environment or sustainability education subject.
- Consider including a student action team leader on the school's sustainability team to align the work of the team with the overarching goals of the Sustainability Team and your School's SEMP.

Recruiting members

- Consider deciding how many representatives from each year level, class or age group are required to obtain an even spread of voices from across the school.
- Ask interested students to write down why they should be selected to the student action team. For younger students, ask them to draw a picture or show their interest using a photo.
- Use a more random approach and pull names out of a hat to join the team.

Student leaders

- Develop a leadership position description to clearly describe what is expected of the students and how they will be supported to develop leadership skills in the role.
Select leaders for the student action team. These are commonly students from the upper year levels who can be appointed by voting, interview or a combination of both.

Take action

- Explore with the team what they want the team to look like and what vision they have for sustainability at your school. Use their suggestions to frame the plan for the team.
- The number and variety of suggestions made by students may be overwhelming. You can focus your efforts on one ResourceSmart Schools (RSS) Module at a time – Energy, Water, Waste, or Biodiversity – and get started with an audit. Or you may choose to focus your efforts on a specific project.

Enhancing your work

- Student action teams can host guest speakers and organise incursions or excursions.
- Draw on expert knowledge to enhance the team's knowledge and skills.
- Excursions that involve the students, such as tree planting on National Schools Tree Day (include a presentation from Landcare) or litter collection on Clean Up Australia Day (include a session with your local waste educator) are particularly engaging.

Celebrate and build momentum

- Celebrate the steps you take towards achieving larger projects with your community. Don't wait until the project is completed to celebrate your achievements.
- Build on your work and the momentum it creates.
- Promote your sustainability work widely using a range of channels. Refer to the Quick guide to promoting RSS progress.

Reach out for assistance

RSS Facilitators can help you:

- plan or promote your program
- locate additional resources that will assist you to participate in the Program
- conduct audits with students
- organise activities for your student action team
- find networks of like-minded staff and students to support your work
- progress your RSS module completion and certification.

To connect with your local facilitator email schools@sustainability.vic.gov.au

For support with RSS Online email help@resourcesmartschools.vic.gov.au

ResourceSmart Schools is a free program offered by Sustainability Victoria that supports Victorian schools to embed sustainability across the school facilities, community and curriculum, while saving resources and money for the school.

To register to become a ResourceSmart School, visit:

<https://my.resourcesmartschools.vic.gov.au/>

or email schools@sustainability.vic.gov.au