

Quick Guide: Waste Module

The Waste Module helps a school understand waste and litter volumes and how to reduce these.

This guide helps a school to work through the Waste Module. Where activities link to module actions, the action number is noted in brackets.

To get Waste Module certified, 7 compulsory actions and at least 27 of the 39 optional actions in the Module checklist need to be completed.

Kickstart Waste Module

- Speak to your ResourceSmart Schools (RSS) Facilitator for advice on completing your waste and litter audits and use the audit templates for support. Upload a summary of your audits to RSS Online. (A1.1, A1.2)
- Establish a baseline and monitor waste generation by logging waste bills into RSS Online. (A1.3)
- Discuss any gaps in the findings of the audit and potential solutions with your team. Could your school:
 - introduce or improve an existing recycling program?
 - install compost bins or worm farms for organic waste?
- Talk with students about how much litter is at your school and its location, particularly in “hotspots” such as the canteen. Develop litter reduction strategies by asking:
 - are there simple ways to encourage school users to use bins provided?
 - are the right types of bins in the right locations around your school? (A7.1, A7.6)
- Prepare a Waste and Litter Reduction Annual Action Plan using the template available. You could use the Waste Module checklist as suggestions to develop actions for your plan. Have it endorsed by your oversight group e.g. school council/board. (A2.1)

Progress Waste Module

- Work through actions in the Waste and Litter Reduction Annual Action Plan and record them as you go. Use this plan, as well as the mandated curriculum, to develop

activities that link waste education and circular economy actions to your school's education program. (B1.1, B1.2, B1.3, B1.5)

- Describe how the student action and sustainability teams are achieving the goals and actions of the Waste and Litter Reduction Annual Action Plan. (C2.2, C2.3, C3.2)
- Link up with local environment groups or the local council to develop or participate in waste management projects such as Clean Up Australia Day. (B1.3, C3.1, C3.2)
- Learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and strategies for waste management. (B1.4)
- Encourage staff to attend waste or circular economy professional development. The RSS newsletter contains information about professional development opportunities. (A2.2)
- Apply for grants to support your school's efforts to reduce waste and litter such as funding for new and improved waste management systems. (A2.3)
- Make sure there are enough labelled bins in your school grounds and run an awareness campaign to ensure students know what goes into each bin. (A7.6)
- Create and display interpretive signs to educate students on appropriate bin usage. This is a fantastic learning activity for students. (A2.4)
- Ensure your Green Events Policy is current and has been endorsed by your oversight group. Refer to template available. (A2.5 and Water C1.3)
- Reduce "lunchbox litter" by encouraging students to use multi-use containers and bees wax wraps. Ensure there are plenty of bins close by. (A3.1, A3.2, A7.2)
- Introduce a system where students can place food waste in compost bins to feed worms or chickens or turn food waste into compost for fertilising garden beds. (A3.3, A3.4, A4.1, A4.2, A4.3)
- Speak to the local council for ideas about managing food waste if your school produces more food waste than it can process on site. For instance, your local council may be able to collect food waste. (A3.3, A3.4, A3.5, A4.2, A4.3)
- Implement a paper reduction plan to reduce consumption and waste such as:
 - containers in classrooms to collect paper for re-use
 - use left-over paper for craft
 - set photocopiers so they automatically print double-sided
 - send out newsletters and school reports electronically. (A5.1, A5.2, A5.3 A5.4)
- Place recycling collection containers in locations around your school to:

- collect items to assist a charity or social enterprise
- re-use materials such as plastic bottles or cardboard for craft. (A6.1, A6.3, A6.4, A6.5)
- Participate in a recycling scheme such as collecting ink cartridges and e-waste including mobile phones. (A6.2,)
- Work with your canteen to find ways to reduce waste and litter related to the products sold. (A7.4)
- Find ways to recognise and celebrate improvements around litter management efforts. (A7.3)
- Share tips and ideas with your community to encourage them to be more waste wise at home. (C3.3)
- Create a school learning story with students about your waste and litter reduction progress. Review RSS Online Tips section throughout the module for ideas on creating school learning story content. (C1.2)
- Share your school learning story with your community by:
 - utilising your school newsletter, website, social media platforms and local media (C1.1, C3.2, C3.3)
 - sharing it with the wider community through networks and environment groups. (C1.2)

Reach out for assistance

RSS Facilitators can help you:

- plan or promote your program
- locate additional resources to help complete the module including information on legislation regarding single use plastics and e-waste to landfill
- 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