

WASTE MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

All Saints College- St Peter's Campus **Implementation of Waste Stations in the Playground**

The School

All Saints College is a Catholic, co-educational college conducted under the auspices of the Catholic Schools Officer, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. All Saints College comprises three Campuses: St Mary's, St Peter's and St Joseph's. St Mary's caters for students in Years 11 – 12 and St Peter's and St Joseph's cater for students in Years 7 – 10. St Peter's Campus is located in central Maitland and is currently attended by around 850 students.

What did the school do?

Students and teachers of the Student Representative Council (SRC) work on many projects and one project they saw necessary was to look at how the school was disposing of its waste.

In 2006 the school began a process of composting paper and food scraps but found the volume of materials being generated to be too much to continue with this process.

The SRC and teachers then investigated other ecologically sustainable and socially responsible ways to deal with waste being generated in the school to ensure it was not all sent to landfill.

Teachers representing the SRC met Hunter Resource Recovery and Maitland City Council to look at what services were available in relation to waste and what could be achieved in the playground to reduce the current waste being sent to landfill.

The concept was then born to look at replacing the existing general waste garbage bins in the playground with waste stations that contained a bin for general waste, a bin for recyclables, and a bin for food waste.

Students already had some knowledge in this area as most live in Maitland suburbs serviced by the fortnightly kerbside residential recycling service.

What is Being Achieved?

The school has established twelve waste stations throughout the playground each containing a recycling, general waste and food waste bin with additional general waste bins also located throughout the playground. Signage has been placed on the outside of all bins to ensure students can identify the general waste, food waste and recycling bins to ensure waste is separated appropriately.

In establishing the waste stations, the school has removed fourteen general waste bins which were previously located throughout the playground to encourage students and teachers to use the different waste collection options rather than continuing to place all waste in the general waste to landfill stream.

The school saw it important to have openings in the top of all of the bins to ensure students did not have to open bins to use them.

In the first month of waste stations being positioned around the playground approximately 216kg of material was collected for recycling thus diverting this material from landfill. Over a school year it is estimated that around 2.4 tonnes of material will be recycled. Each fortnight the recycling bins are full for collection. It is noted, that the general waste bins are not being used as much any more with students taking the initiative and separating their waste into the different streams.

Food continues to account for in excess of 80 kilograms of material per week. This is fed to the chooks housed at the school and composted using the schools compost area.

In addition to the reduction in waste going to landfill there has been a considerable drop in the amount of litter being found around the playground. It appears that students are more responsible in ensuring that their waste is placed in the appropriate bin and not dropped on the ground for it to blow around the schools playground.

Teachers issue Merit Certificates to students observed to be using the bins appropriately and providing assistance to other students to ensure that the correct bin is used for the disposal of waste.

When students are asked to pick up rubbish, it is no longer a chore but a challenge for them to determine what is recyclable, what is compostable and what is waste.

Teachers report minimal contamination in the three bin types with the main items requiring reinforcement of the correct bin for disposal being glad wrap, straws and chip packets. Students are encouraged to dispose of their waste appropriately through recognition of their efforts. Student notices and tutor group are used to reinforce the correct waste disposal patterns and to recognise the positive contributions students are having in reducing the amount of waste being sent to landfill.

The use of different areas of the school by students due to weather has seen the need for the school to consider the location of the waste stations regularly. In periods of warm weather and rainfall students congregate in different areas of the playground so it has been important for the bins to be moved to areas of congregation to ensure they are used effectively.

One of the unexpected benefits of the program has been that students are taking the recycling and composting message home and educating their families on what can be recycled and composted instead of being placed in the general waste stream and being sent to landfill.



What Does it Cost?

Under the Hunter Resource Recovery schools program St Peter's received six free recycling bins for use and service by SOLO. As these bins did not provide sufficient capacity for the amount of recyclables generated at the school an additional six bins are now paid for by the school. The current fee for the servicing of the additional recycling bins is \$58.00 per year per bin. A one off \$22.00 fee was also payable for the initial connection of these bins to the recycling service.

Based on the current cost of waste disposal to landfill, by implementing the recycling and composting programs, the school has the potential to save \$3294.11 by reducing the frequency of general waste collections in the future.

What Next?

Following the introduction of the waste stations in the playground the SRC is now looking at implementing paper recycling in classrooms and staffrooms. This will see a designated collection area provided in each classroom and staff room with students and teachers taking responsibility for emptying the collected paper into the designated recycling bins.

The school is currently negotiating with its waste contractor to reduce the number of general waste collections that occur as a result of the reduction in the amount of general waste being generated.

The next environmental project for the school will be to look at their current energy use patterns to determine what savings they can make by introducing simple changes to daily practices.

Further Information

For further information on this project contact:

- * Roger Lewis, Hunter Resource Recovery on 1800 838 884
- * Fiona Rowan, Maitland City Council on 49349833.
- * Glenn Horder, All Saints College- St Peters Campus on 49336933

