



Ipswich City Council

SCHOOL **RECYCLING GUIDE**

Introducing Recycling in Schools

INTRODUCTION

Is your school interested in starting a recycling program?

This step-by-step guide outlines Ipswich City Council's recommended approach to establishing a successful and practical recycling program.

There are four important steps in this process:

- 1) Mobilise support
- 2) Plan your program
- 3) Implement your new waste management system
- 4) Monitor and improve your system

This booklet provides practical guidance for your school to work through each stage. Complete the checklist at the end of each section to help plan, implement and maintain an effective recycling program.



Step 1: Mobilise

It is imperative to have support from all users of your waste management system for your program to work effectively.

Everyone in the school community will have a role to play in the program, so rallying support from the whole school community is a vital first step.

Rally support from staff

Support from teachers, cleaners and your school Principal is the foundation of a successful recycling program.

Staff should reach agreement to support the program before approaching the student body, and a Coordinator should be selected to gain support, drive planning and oversee the program.

Rally support from students

The students will ultimately determine the success of your new recycling program. They will ensure the correct materials are placed in recycling bins and that the bins are not contaminated with the wrong type of waste. Commitment to recycling can be encouraged through an understanding of the importance of recycling.

Ipswich City Council offers FREE EnviroEd programs for the classroom. The EnviroEd 'What a Waste!' program can be conducted at your school to share recycling and waste disposal actions.

Establish a student group

Selecting a group of students to assist in your recycling program can help reduce some work allocated to busy staff and motivate others students. The student group – who could be particularly interested in environmental issues – can help promote and monitor the program at your school. Promotion can include events (e.g. National Recycling Week), posters and bin signage, newsletter articles, class discussions and education for new students. The group can also monitor recycling bins and report contamination, promote correct recycling if contamination occurs and award prizes to students/classes for correct recycling.

Share the tasks

A successful recycling program cannot be implemented solely by the program Coordinator or a keen student. To help share the workload among staff and students, and encourage school community ownership of the program, the checklist tasks throughout this booklet have been allocated to different people.

Action checklist for mobilising support

ACTION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETED ✓
Rally support for school recycling from teachers, the Principal and cleaners who will have some responsibility in managing the program	Coordinator Optional assistance from Ipswich City Council	
Rally support from the student body through waste education	Teachers Optional assistance from Ipswich City Council	
Engage students to establish a student group to promote and monitor the program	Coordinator and Teachers	



Step 2: Plan

Now that you've mobilised support in your school community, your school can start planning and allocating tasks.

During this stage, you will need to estimate current waste disposal volumes, arrange infrastructure for recycling and plan promotion for the program's introduction.

Measuring waste disposal

Before your school starts recycling, it's a good idea to estimate how much waste is currently generated in one year, so you can measure your program's success at a later stage. This exercise could be conducted by the nominated student group or as a class activity for older students. If additional assistance is required please contact Ipswich City Council Environmental Education Officer.

First, find out what bins at the school are serviced by Ipswich City Council or a commercial waste company. What is the volume of each bin and how frequently is the waste collected? Once you've identified the volume of your bins, simply follow the steps below.

Waste by numbers – visual assessment

1	What percentage of the bin is full just before collection? Estimate for three collections.
2	Calculate the average percentage for step 1.
3	Calculate the average litres of waste before collection. Use the known volume of the bin and the average calculated in step 2.
4	Calculate how many litres of waste are collected each week. If your waste is collected weekly, use the amount calculated in step 3. If waste is collected more frequently you will need to multiply the figure in step 3.
5	Calculate how many litres of waste would be collected on average in one year.
6	Calculate how many kilograms of waste are collected in one year, assuming one litre of waste weighs 0.6 kg.
7	Calculate the total waste collected for the school. If your school has one industrial bin for all waste, the amount in step 6 will indicate the waste collected for the school. If you have several bins, complete steps 1-6 for each bin and calculate a total for the school.

Arranging bin infrastructure and configuration

To implement a recycling program, you'll need appropriately placed recycling bins and a hired service for collection. Ipswich City Council can conduct a free site visit to determine the most appropriate, practical and cost effective bin infrastructure and configuration for the school, and make recommendations.

Ipswich City Council can also provide free assistance with signs available from Ipswich City Council or the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. Alternatively, students may choose to make their own bin signs, which is a great way to increase their engagement in the program.

Next, assign tasks to individuals who will be responsible for emptying small bins (e.g. in the classroom), managing problems and ensuring material is available for collection. Allocation of these tasks to cleaning staff, teachers or students will depend on existing processes in the school.

Tip

Recycling bins must be placed adjacent to general waste bins to make it as easy to recycle as it is to dispose of waste, and reduce the occurrence of contamination.

Arrange other forms of recycling

Free collection of other materials is available from the following organisations:

- Cartridge Rescue: Printer and fax cartridge collection
www.cartridgerescue.com.au
- Australian Recycling Program: Mobile phone collection
www.arp.net.au
- Battery World: Battery collection (07) 3202 1081

Promotional activities and material

Start planning promotion for the introduction of your recycling program. The Ipswich City Council Environmental Education Officer is available to assist at a school assembly, however this task may be allocated to the nominated student group or others to present them as custodians of the program.

Ideas include:

- Launching the program as part of a school event
- Allowing the student group to conduct a presentation, demonstrating correct recycling
- Advertising to the whole school community in newsletters
- Promotion using bin signs or posters made by students.

Action checklist for planning a school recycling program

ACTION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETED ✓
Measure current volume of waste disposal	Arranged by Coordinator Conducted by nominated student group or class	
Request recommendations from Ipswich City Council on bin infrastructure and configuration	Coordinator Principal Optional assistance from Ipswich City Council	
Select bin infrastructure, configuration and signage	Coordinator Principal	
Arrange additional recycling infrastructure	Coordinator	
Assign tasks to individuals for emptying small bins, managing problems and ensuring recyclable material is available for collection by Ipswich City Council	Coordinator to allocate tasks to cleaning staff, teachers or students depending on existing school processes	
Plan promotion for the introduction of the recycling program	Nominated student group with assistance from teacher or Coordinator	

Step 3: Implement

After your new bin infrastructure is delivered and your grounds person has installed it, your school can start recycling! Don't forget to promote your recycling program when it is first introduced.

Action checklist for implementing your recycling program

ACTION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETED ✓
Bin infrastructure delivered to school	Ipswich City Council	
Install bins in planned locations	Arranged by Coordinator Conducted by grounds person or cleaning staff	
Commence promotion to introduce recycling program	Nominated student group Optional assistance from Ipswich City Council	
Commence recycling	All	
Start emptying small bins and ensuring recycling material is available for collection as scheduled	Conducted by individuals as planned	



Step 4: **Monitor and improve**

A recycling program left without management and monitoring is unlikely to be successful, so it is vital to monitor your new waste management system and make adjustments where necessary to increase rates of recycling and reduce contamination.

Measuring waste disposal

Once your recycling program has been introduced, monitor its success by measuring the volumes of general waste. Use the waste disposal calculation method in Step 2: Plan to calculate how much waste is being diverted from landfill.

Compare the difference in general waste disposal before and after the program was introduced. If the result is positive, it is important to promote the program's achievements in the school community to maintain commitment and motivation.

Monitoring contamination

When recycling bins are contaminated with the incorrect waste, they cannot be serviced by Ipswich City Council. If a contaminated bin is sent for recycling, the contamination must be removed which causes inefficiencies and major problems in the recycling process.

To ensure your recycling bins are always serviced, your nominated student group or cleaning staff should monitor the materials that are recycled using a visual assessment of the top layer of the bins. If contamination is discovered, it should be reported to the nominated student group and Coordinator.

Additional education in the classroom can then help stop contamination.

Adjusting the system

Bin configuration can have a major impact on contamination and the amount of materials recycled. If your school experiences low rates of recycling or excessive contamination, your bins may need to be moved.

Ipswich City Council can assist with revising bin configuration if required.



Education and promotion

Throughout your recycling program you'll need to reinforce the waste minimisation message. After assessing contamination and the amount of materials recycled, staff and students can employ education and promotional activities that target any problems you encounter. Awarding prizes to students or classes that support the program can help reinforce positive messages.

Ipswich City Council can also attend your school to reinforce education on any problems experienced or discuss other forms of waste minimisation. Please contact the Environmental Education Officer for more information.

Checklist for monitoring and improving an existing recycling program

ACTION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETED ✓
Measure waste disposal to monitor improvement	Arranged by Coordinator Conducted by nominated student group or older class with teacher assistance Optional assistance from Ipswich City Council	
Monitor contamination in recycling bins	Nominated student group or cleaning staff	
Adjust bin infrastructure and configuration to improve recycling and minimise contamination (if necessary)	Coordinator with Ipswich City Council assistance if requested	
Conduct education and promotion focusing on any issues experienced (e.g. contamination, litter)	Arranged by Coordinator Conducted by teachers, nominated student group or Ipswich City Council if requested	
Report amount of waste diverted from landfill into recycling and promote achievements	Nominated student group, group responsible for estimating waste volumes or Coordinator	

Summary

A successful recycling program requires support and assistance from the whole school community. This approach is designed to ensure that everyone in the school community is involved and the workload is shared among many people. With some basic planning and willing support from others, including Ipswich City Council, building a successful school recycling program will be a valuable and rewarding task for your school, your students and the environment.

Other ideas

Significantly reducing waste to landfill through a recycling program is just one way your school can reduce its environmental footprint. Your school can also minimise waste by:

- Composting organic material to reduce waste by up to 50%
- Collecting paper for re-use throughout the school
- Collecting cardboard and various waste items for use in school craft (particularly for Prep)
- Considering waste when making school purchases
- Buying recycled paper and other products made from recycled materials
- Reducing packaging provided at school canteens / tuckshops
- Hold a regular 'nude food' lunch day and award prizes
- Contact Ipswich City Council for more information on how to eliminate waste at your school.

Ipswich City Council
Environmental Education Officer
P: (07) 3810 6666
F: (07) 3810 6206
E: enviroed@ipswich.qld.gov.au

Acknowledgements

This booklet was developed based on experiences establishing recycling programs including concepts in Sustainability Victoria's Resource Smart Schools Guide:
www.sustainability.vic.gov.au



IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

PO Box 191

Ipswich Qld 4305

T | (07) 3810 6666

F | (07) 3810 6731

E | council@ipswich.qld.gov.au

W | ipswich.qld.gov.au