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Sustainability Champions Award - Moreton Bay Regional Council

Council's Rethink waste, Let's get it sorted program includes the annual Sustainability Champions awards developed to award excellence in sustainable waste management at schools and early learning centres in the Moreton Bay region community, with or without Council's waste minimisation program support.

2020 Champion award winners

During 2019 and 2020, 7 schools and 3 early learning centres committed to improving waste management onsite using waste hierarchy strategies to avoid, reduce, reuse, and recycle materials. Student and staff driven processes are successful when fun, educational, easy to implement, and included into their day to day activities. Council training to conduct bin audits and record data support their waste avoidance and reduction, recyclables/organics diversion, and identifies where more education and engagement support is required.

The 7 school and early learning centre Champions awarded in 2020 for sustainable, best practice waste management include:

- Burpengary Meadow State School
- Genesis Christian College, Bray Park
- Mount Samson State School
- Our Lady of the Way Primary, Petrie
- St Columban's College, Caboolture
- Goodstart North Lakes Winn St early learning centre (Previous Winner 2018 and 2019)
- Living Faith early learning centre, Petrie



Repurposed timber
Sustainability award trophies



Leaf day with student
and staff pledges at
Genesis Christian



St Columban's College: Cash 4 containers program using old light covers to make collection cages (left) and café furniture from recovered pallets (right)



Students immersed in the Mount Samson State School's Stephanie Alexander Garden Kitchen Program gardening (above) and in food preparation training (below).



Goodstart North Lakes kids daily trips to the multiple diversion bins (right) & recycling station (left).

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Successful waste reduction programs by our Sustainability Champions 2020

Students and staff plan, implement and maintain sustainable waste onsite with support from their families and the local community. Schools or early learning centres reporting fully actioned criteria on their Sustainability Champions Site Report receive a Council onsite inspection and meeting. Council provides a Report card showing fully actioned or well in progress waste strategies and recommends further strategies to implement across the waste hierarchy.

General waste management

- Staff and students are well engaged in regular monitoring, with bin inspections, audits and collection of data to identify resource loss in general waste to be diverted.
- Ongoing education/promotion provided for the school or early learning centre community to maintain and improve waste management.
- Reduced general waste collections from 3 to 2 collections per week at Our Lady of the Way Petrie due to programs implemented by Year 6 Sustainability Ministry students.
- Reduced waste generation by 20% at Living Faith early learning centre Petrie, with Signs for cleaners not to empty specified bins (staff or students manage the diversion).
- Genesis Christian College students conduct regular primary classroom audits and collect data to identify resource loss. "Bin Buddies" in Year 4 were engaged to help students choose the correct bin awareness campaign.

Recycling Diversion

- All award winners are recycling well in Cardboard/Paper and/or Comingled recycling programs with minimal contamination found at bin inspections.
- Burpengary Meadows student Waste warriors reported a 10% increase in Paper and cardboard bins + 40% increase in comingled recycling bins!
- Mount Samson primary provided recycling for soft plastics, Containers 4 change drink packaging, plastic bottle lids, and paper towel from staff bathrooms.

- With rescued metal mesh from light covers made into Containers 4 change bins, St Columban's students raised \$900 for a nominated charity from drink bottles and cans in a few months.
Comingled recycling was also extended to extracurricular activities and events including hire of facilities.
- Student Bin buddy's from Genesis Christian College monitored and maintained the recycling onsite, and expanded recycling for soft plastics, Containers 4 change materials, plastic bottle lids, and writing instruments through Terracycle.
- Year 6 Sustainability Ministry students at Our Lady of the Way are vigilant in auditing and recording data plus educating the school community to recycle right and reduce waste. Additional recycling programs implemented are soft plastics, writing instruments through Terracycle, and mobile phone recycling.
- Living Faith early learning centre commenced a recycling disposable gloves collection program through Terracycle.

Organic diversion (food scraps and garden waste)

Students move food scraps from eating areas and tuckshops to the composting and worm farming area onsite, and to feed chickens/animals where available.

- Burpengary Meadows primary increased from 1 compost bin and worm farm to 3 of each to support the tuckshop garden onsite.
- Mount Samson State School implemented the [Stephanie Alexander Kitchen garden program](#) with school vegetable gardens around the grounds, a native food garden developed from Containers 4 change refunds, classroom munch and crunch food scraps composted, tuckshop and lunch food scraps to neighbour Trevena Glen farm animals, native bee area, and cooking lessons.
- To increase organic collection across the school population and process up to 80 litres of food and garden organics per day, Genesis Christian College organised a grant to procure 4 x worm habitat grande units from Griffith University.

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- All 7 winning schools and early learning centres increased organic collection and processing onsite with some material feeding chickens, pigs or mulched vegetation at a Council waste facility.

Hazardous waste management & diversion

Hazardous waste awareness and responsible diversion from general waste is defined in Council's program.

- St Columban's College diverts hazardous materials such as printer cartridges, batteries, and white goods for safe resource recovery.
- Batteries, scrap metal, printer cartridges, tyres, gas cylinders, light bulbs and e-waste are diverted for recovery by Genesis Christian College.
- Our Lady of the Way primary recovers fluorescent light bulbs and e-waste.
- Early learning centres also segregate hazardous items responsibly with Goodstart North Lakes saving mobile phones, batteries and printer cartridges, plus Living Faith diverting light bulbs and gas cylinders.



Genesis College collects used fluorescent tubes and globes for recycling (left) and provides community engagement with a sustainability stall at their Festival including a waste sorting activity (right).



St Columban's student repurposing unwanted pallets into café furniture.

Avoid and Reduce waste initiatives

- Council previously awarded Mount Samson primary as Regional Recycler 2019 Winner for their Zero ziplock plastic bags campaign removing these single-use soft plastics from tuckshop and promoting reusable containers to their staff and community. This and other initiatives listed in this case study, has reduced total waste generation by 25%.
- Regular weekly lunch waste reduction programs at Burpengary Meadows (plastic free lunch day), St Columban's (Trash free Tuesday), and Our Lady of the Way (Wrapper free Wednesday).
- Genesis College uses paper use reduction program [PaperCut](#), and exploring unnecessary plastics for Humanities students in a Business/Marketing Unit.
- Our Lady of the Way primary monitor and provide data on photopaper usage to staff, and use electronic stationery ordering and student permission forms.

Reuse initiatives

- St Columban's students and staff incentive program has increased reusable water bottles and coffee cup use. Paper reuse, Share-a-book, and car boot sales promote the value of used items. Repurposing protective cages from light fittings as C4C bins, and timber pallets as café furniture are visible reminders saving resources from the scrap pile.
- Our Lady of the Way primary reuse programs include a friendship club reusing A4 paper, requesting newspaper donations for STEM projects, a makerspace reusing materials, and promoting reusable water bottles and coffee/tea cups for staff and student families.
- Burpengary Meadows primary changed to reusable slushie cups and promotes reusable straws for students using the tuckshop.
- Genesis College sold and promoted keep cups at their Festival, encourage selling pre-loved items to staff and families, use recycled rags from Lifeline and [100% composite and recycled plastic products](#) for school infrastructure.
- Other winners used pre-loved items to decorate their Year 6 graduation, provided

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information on sustainable life tips to families in electronic newsletters, reusable containers/cups, herbs and worm tea for families, and donated items for school/centre projects.

Strategic communications and data management

- Living Faith early learning centre developed an Environmental and sustainability strategy, and Mount Samson State School produced a School waste management policy managed by a Committee identifying aims and direction and actions that evaluates their progress.
- Staff and student involvement in St Columban's environment committee, Our lady of the Way's committee of staff with the Year 6 sustainability ministry students, Genesis College's designated Sustainability officer and student GEcko environmental committee, plus less formal staff and student environmental stakeholders reinforce the benefits for schools and early learning centres in Rethinking waste at school or kindy, at home and at work.
- Collecting and auditing waste data from bins, other waste diversion programs and driving behaviour change develops leadership skills in local youth to manage and implement sustainable waste initiatives with the data proving benefits to their community.
- Displays and communication mediums regularly promoting sustainable waste tips and data on managing waste raises awareness in the community with easy to adopt behaviours that will become 'normal'.



Mount Samson State School promoting their Litter free lunch program on Winn Road.

Other sustainable waste initiatives

- Student and staff collaboration for sustainable waste initiatives at local schools or early learning centres with Council's waste minimisation program support and training is creating exciting learning outcomes in the Moreton Bay region.
- Schools and early learning centres conducting regular nature walks to collect litter from local areas and participating in Clean Up Australia Day create individual responsibility for this issue, with some schools auditing the waste to record data on plastics and other materials in the [Australian marine debris initiative](#).
- Collaborating and training staff and other students support the awareness and key operations of the sustainable waste program.
- Providing recycling and reuse opportunities at events with the families and general public.
- Genesis College ran a successful New Leaf day with staff and student pledges for sustainable actions.

New leaf day pledge



- Mount Samson primary students and staff who check school bins around the school also turn off fans, lights and smartboards to reduce power usage.
- Council's waste minimisation program (2009-current) for schools and early learning centres educate and develop waste hierarchy skills and confidence to produce an average reduction in general waste of 20% in schools and 33% in early learning centres with over 50-60% reduction of waste generation at some sites, an average increase in recycling of 28% for schools and 32% in centres, with over 2% diversion of organics diverted to onsite composting or as feed for animals.