

Implementing Comingled Recycling in your School

- As part of the Free School Recycling Program provided by your local council through Hunter Resource Recovery (HRR) your school is asked to implement and promote comingled recycling across the school.
- Recycling should be a part of the SEMP and come under your schools Waste Management Policy and actively promoted to all staff, students and wider school community (don't forget the cleaners!). Success is dependent on the Principal's full support.
- Recycling education should be reflected in the school scope and sequence through class activities and/or whole school programs to develop a sound understanding of what, how and why recycling is important. Eg units of work, focus events, recycling programs.
- The REAL Team Education Co-ordinator is available to come to your school and provide recycling presentations, workshops for staff and students at no charge.
- Form a Student Environment Group or use the SRC to drive and monitor the recycling programs and initiatives so students are actively involved and have a sense of ownership.
- Conduct an annual waste audit to get a snapshot of what is happening in your waste stream, ie how much, what type, where from. This will identify areas of focus and provide benchmark data which can be compared with future audits to measure the success of minimisation strategies. It's a great way of giving students an understanding of the waste in their school.
- Investigate how much is currently spent on waste each year as well as the volume and frequency of collections. Streaming your recyclables out of your general waste can provide substantial savings for the school.
- Waste minimisation initiatives empower students with the basic skills and motivation to participate in waste avoidance and recovery at school, home and in the community (eg reuse, smart shopping, composting, worm farms and recycling). They can then act as waste-wise ambassadors who can spread the message with their families and peers.

Key Points to Remember

- **Everyone understands** why its important and how to reduce waste and the right bin to use.
- **What will you be collecting** – ie recyclables / fruit scraps / green waste;
- **Identify areas of focus** – set small achievable goals;
- **How – What bins will you use** – recycling bins / colour coded – yellow / red / green;
- **Where – Collection points** – office, canteen, staff room, class room, playground;
- **Convenience** – provide recycling and waste bins next to each other, clearly identified through coloured lids, labelling and signage. Have students involved in designing the posters;
- **Who, how, when will the bins be emptied.** (make sure the cleaners are involved and understand the schools recycling policy)
- **Monitoring** – who will be responsible, when?
- **Events** – Binless playgrounds – nude food days, green days
- **Incentives** – class / house competitions, playground E awards for good recycling;
- **Communication** to the school and wider community – assemblies, SRC, newsletters, photos, multimedia displays (great for grant applications);
- **Acknowledge achievements** (it's easy to lose focus on how far you have come)

Be positive and remember any improvement is great. Rome wasn't built in a day and a journey of 1000 kms starts with one step!!