

Sustainability Learning Guide: ten ways for local government to work with schools

CONTACT

LGNSW is interested to know of other ways to assist sustainability practitioners as they encourage schools on the sustainability journey, so please contact us so we can update this guide. Contact sustainability@lgnsw.org.au or phone 02 9242 4000.

About this guide

This guide has been developed to assist council sustainability practitioners as they work with schools on the journey towards sustainability. This journey can be defined as a process for providing the awareness, knowledge, skills, and values to help all current and future generations achieve good health, economic security, social equity and stability while restoring and sustaining the earth's life support systems. The information collected in this guide has come from practitioners who have shared their initiatives with Local Government NSW.

Ten ways to work with schools:

1. Provide in-council programs
2. Provide in-school programs
3. Promote community projects, green events
4. Offer incentive, grants & awards
5. Provide information and services
6. Develop resources - teaching units & games
7. Provide natural resource management assistance
8. Encourage whole school planning
9. Foster Corporate Social Responsibility
10. Promote regional programs

Action	Activities	Council Projects
1. Provide in-council programs	Where the school comes to the council community facility or reserve	Council, depot and community nursery visits, field study excursion e.g. wetlands, botanic gardens, coastal and riverine habitats, waste facility excursions,
2. Provide in-school programs	Where council officers take the education program to the school	Lessons on sustainability (stormwater, energy, waste, water etc), guest speaker, working with planning process e.g. strategic visioning
3. Promote community projects - green events	Using <u>green dates</u> to support and engage schools in activities	Enviro expo, World Environment Day, Clean Up Australia Day for schools, National Tree Day, Water Week, Local Government Week Forums, Weed Busters Week
4. Offer incentives, grants & awards	Reward and recognise schools for environmental works, provide funding opportunities for environmental initiatives	<u>Eco School grants</u> , certificates, perpetual trophy, art or photography competition, giveaways such as water tanks and compost bins, Sustainability Challenge

Action	Activities	Council Projects
5. Provide information and services	Sharing of information that is stored within council	youth forum, Principal gathering, newsletters, GIS, maps and photos, raising awareness of resources available, equipment, education centres, expert advice, grant writing assistance, mulching, general labour
6. Develop resources - teaching units & games	Develop resources to support student learning on specific issues	Supported lessons, games, videos, dramas and songs developed, trailers, kits
7. Provide natural resource management assistance	Support and engage schools in all aspects of Natural Resource Management, waste, biodiversity, water, energy	Bushcare/ landcare school and community, recycling, environmental monitoring e.g. fauna, weeds or water (support & providing equipment etc.), community gardens, permaculture garden, green corridors, adopt an animal program, fauna (or other icon) awareness, drain stencilling
8. Encourage whole school planning	Working with the whole school community to create behaviour change	Environment committee, staff meeting and in-service opportunities, sustainability days, waste reduction programs e.g. waste free lunch, walk/ bike to school days, Catchment Days, Learnscapes: landscapes for learning
9. Foster Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	Schools tap into sustainability programs that incorporate wellbeing and social justice issues	Sustainability street, linking with global communities, partnering with businesses that have a CSR program
10. Promote regional programs	Facilitate and encourage school interaction within the region	Catchment Day, School Eco forums, competitions e.g. debate, calendar of regional events , planning workshops

Some expected outcomes for councils that engage meaningfully with schools.

- Creating sustainable communities
- Local environmental outcomes, connection to place
- Governance outcomes through partnerships
- Improved citizenship outcomes of young people
- Community wellbeing improved, schools as key multipliers
- Link school journey to wider community movement

Council Teacher Networks

LGNSW, working with Sustainable Schools NSW (Office of Environment and Heritage), encourages council educators to work with their schools and where possible develop an environmental educators' network. These operate in many local government areas, either run by Council staff or the local [Environmental Education Centre](#).

Resources

- [OEH tools and resources](#) that will help you connect with your local community and improve local environments.
- [Does My Project Make a Difference](#) - to help plan and evaluate your project.
- [Write it Up](#) booklet on writing case studies.