

Greenmount Primary School

- Package Free Day • Environmental Coordinator/Teacher • Batteries • Paper Recycling
- Worm Farms

Background

Greenmount Primary School and its 400 students are making a big difference to waste management and minimisation in the Swan District through some innovative strategies.

Environmental coordinator/teacher Jennie Collins has been the catalyst for environmental inspiration at Greenmount Primary School since joining the school in 2004. The Waste Wise program has evolved and gained momentum through her enthusiasm and now the students are leading the way with recycling and reducing waste.

Paper

Recycling paper has been an education and paradigm shift for staff and students at Greenmount who have had to change their preferences for wanting 'nice new' paper to work on, to embracing recycled paper for much of their work.

Staff are encouraged to reduce font size and use both sides of the paper when photocopying.

Two or three times a week, the students collect paper for recycling and place it in the SITA paper recycling bin, which is serviced fortnightly.



MORE THAN 40 CUBIC METRES OF PAPER HAS BEEN DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL.

Batteries

Batteries are collected from the community as part of the Schools Dry Cell Battery Collection Program through the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council (EMRC), where they are encased in concrete for safe disposal.

Students weigh the batteries after collecting them.

In 18 months, they have collected more than 1 tonne of batteries.

Battery mascot soft toy, *Rocko for Recycling* is awarded fortnightly to live in the class which collects the most batteries. The term's leading class wins a \$30 book voucher and the year's leading class wins a *Mystery Tour* – a visit to the Red Hill Waste Disposal Facility, an educational talk from an EMRC representative and a sausage sizzle.

Package Free Day

Reducing waste is the biggest step towards environmental stewardship and this is practised at Greenmount through *Package Free Day* (PFD).

PFD has proven to be a highly effective school-wide strategy where each Tuesday (when the canteen is closed) all students open their lunch boxes and count the number of non-recyclable packages to obtain a class percentage.

The class who has best used reusable or recyclable containers, wrapped food together or purchased food that is not over-packaged, receives a small prize at the school assembly.

This program has produced some outstanding results with one student receiving an award for having no packaging over four weeks and overall a significant drop in the class percentages for non-recyclables. The aim is to reduce class percentages to no non-recyclable packaging.

Curriculum Integration

For National Tree Day, students were encouraged to research information and promote environmental messages through a whole-school poster competition. Teachers used a rubric to evaluate the posters.

“My advice to other teachers who want to initiate environmental programs is to start small on manageable programs. Use humour to encourage others. Also, recruit as much support as you can and find a way to delegate!” *Mrs Jennie Collins, Environmental Coordinator*

Savings and Benefits

- A recent school survey showed that:
 - All staff have noticed an improvement in student behaviour and practices over the past two years.
 - 84 per cent of students report they have changed their behaviour and
 - 92 per cent of all students believe they can make a difference to the future of the environment by what they do themselves.
- **Student donations of 120,000 aluminium ring-pulls to Rotary have been used to make six wheelchairs.**
- 1200 litres of *Wormaliser* have been produced in the past six months. The worm farms have generated much interest and many parents have asked for worms to set up a farm at home.



MIDALIA STEEL DONATED NEARLY \$2000 OF MATERIALS TO BUILD A SPECIAL GALVANISED STEEL ENCLOSURE FOR THE SCHOOL'S WORM FARMS. A WASTE WISE YOUTH GRANT PROVIDED ANOTHER \$1000.

Awards and Public Recognition

- Department of Environment – Finalist in WA's Environmental Awards *Implementing Change* category.
- Department of Environment – Environmental Coordinator Mrs Jennie Collins was a finalist in the WA Schools Environmental Education for Sustainability Awards.
- Letters of thanks have been received from the CEO of the EMRC and the chairman of the Waste Management Board.
- Local news stories have covered the school's worm farm industry and their National Tree Day activities.

