

Our Environment

In April 2007 the Academy established an ECOmittee to explore ways to reduce our ecological footprint. The group is chaired by the Business Manager and is made up of interested staff from across all units at the Academy. The purpose of the group is to review the Academy's current environmental performance and to develop and implement practical and realistic initiatives to improve environmental sustainability.

The vision of the ECOmittee is to transform the Academy into an example of best practice in terms of environmental business management and to further enhance the Academy's reputation. Furthermore, in recognising the need to include environmental considerations into everyday decision making, the group are lobbying for the inclusion of an environmental business management dimension in management development courses delivered by the Academy.



Thriving native shrubs and trees are home to a large population of birds and small reptiles

The ECOmittee has also extended its focus to include the personal ecological footprint of staff and actively promotes car pooling and cycling to work as environmentally sustainable transport alternatives and serves as a forum for staff to share knowledge and exchange ideas.

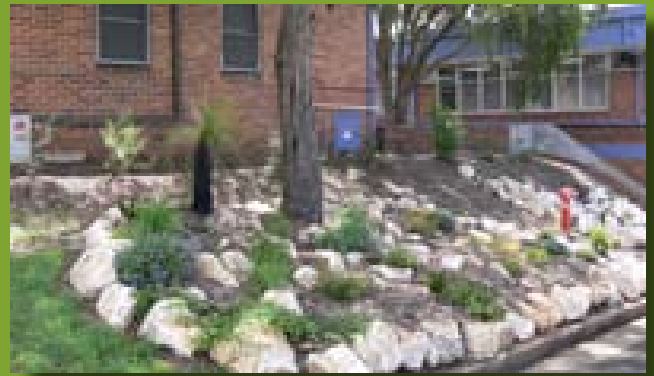
The ECOmittee is dedicated to harnessing the already existing commitment of individuals at the Academy. That existing commitment has already generated significant environmental improvements and through collaboration and teamwork the group hope to channel that energy towards achieving further real improvements in the Academy's ecological footprint and to provide an organised forum to seek funding to support future enhancements.

Waste Management - the Academy has implemented a number of initiatives to improve waste management and reduce waste levels. These include significant reductions in paper usage through the provision of learning materials in soft copy and utilising electronic communication (email, TRIM etc) for disseminating information. Furthermore recycling has been expanded with the inclusion of paper recycling boxes at every workstation and the introduction of waste stream management in the Bistro which has diverted plastics, steel, aluminium and cardboard that would otherwise have been destined for landfill. Foam cups are also progressively being replaced with biodegradable cardboard cups and all organic green waste is mulched on site and used on the grounds to improve soil structure and moisture retention.



Recycling is encouraged across the Academy

Biodiversity Conservation - the Academy has implemented an extensive native planting program to enhance local biodiversity. This has seen over 50 native trees and numerous shrubs and grasses planted throughout the site. All plants selected are endemic to the Eastwood area and provide habitat and food sources for native birds, insects and small reptiles. The Academy is home to a burgeoning population of native birds, many of whom breed successfully each year and numerous small lizard species. We have also implemented a noxious weed removal program that has resulted in a steady decline in woody weeds and the removal of several large noxious tree species. Synthetic fertilisers have been replaced with organic, natural alternatives to protect flora and fauna on the site and to reduce nitrogen and phosphorous contamination of stormwater run-off and groundwater.



Plants endemic to the Eastwood area are used where possible

Water Conservation - in 2006 the Academy installed over 120,000 litres of rainwater tanks. This allows for significant levels of rainwater harvesting and reduces stormwater run-off and damage. Several of these tanks have been connected to toilet facilities to reduce the amount of potable water being used in these areas and a number of buildings have been retro-fitted with dual flush fixtures and water saving shower heads. Rainwater is used for all garden watering and the washing of hard surfaces.



One of the many rainwater tanks used to mitigate storm water runoff and provide water for gardens, lawns and other maintenance tasks



A P&P primary training class plants a tree to offset some of the resources consumed during their training

The Academy is active across a broad range of environmental protection issues - with a particular emphasis on improving natural biodiversity, reducing waste, water conservation and reducing groundwater contamination. We recognise the unique opportunity offered by the Academy in terms of open urban space and is committed to developing innovative ways of creating an environmentally sensitive workplace. We have been successful in obtaining funds for a number of projects that have improved urban design and natural biodiversity and in doing so have also contributed to the social amenity of the local community who are welcome to share the Academy's open space for passive recreational purposes. Through forums such as the ECOmittee and the integration of environmental protection issues into training the Academy hopes to build momentum and commitment and to make a positive contribution to the rate of sustainable development across the Department.