

Eco-Committee Manual



Primary School Students



Australian Government

This project received grant funding from
the Australian Government

Keep 
Australia
Beautiful®

Introduction



What is an Eco-Committee?

An Eco-Committee is a group of mostly students that are concerned about the environment and are committed to learning, raising awareness and taking action for environmental and sustainable issues.

The Eco-Committee is the driving force of the Eco-Schools program, making sure the themes are chosen well and the seven steps are carried out. You may feel small, but you are part of a global community of over 20 million other Eco-Students!

The most successful Eco-Committees have a mix of:

- Students from most grades making up 50% (Eco-Students)
- Teachers, to help and guide students and implemented learnings into the curriculum (Eco-Teachers)
- Non-teaching staff, such as your G.A.
- Some parents or community representatives
- Endorsement/ help from your Principal or Deputy Principal

This manual will cover how to start your Eco-Committee, get people involved, run meetings and make sure things get done!

This is Step 1 of your 7 Eco-Steps

Introduction



How to start your Eco-Committee

You probably heard about Eco-Schools from a teacher, who has spoken a little bit about the program and you are interested. We will call teachers who help you with the Eco-Schools program "Eco-Teachers". Hopefully more than one teacher is an Eco-Teacher at your school, and you can always ask your classroom teachers to help as well!

Remember that Eco-Teachers are here to guide you, but it is for students (YOU) to drive! When you are ready to start:

- 1.** Find your Eco-Teacher(s), and ask them to find a base for your Eco-Committee meetings i.e., spare classroom, garden, hall, library.
- 2.** Advertise that you will be holding a meeting for people who may be interested in joining at assemblies, in newsletter, on posters around school, asking all students, teachers and school staff to attend. You will find graphics for this at the end of this booklet.
- 3.** At this initial meeting, present what you want to achieve with Eco-Schools to the group, and use the presentation from your Eco-Teacher to explain the program.
- 4.** Let everyone know what your regular meeting time will be, and for everyone who is interested to leave their name and class with you. You can use the sheet on page 9.
- 5.** In the next meeting, you will discuss roles. You may want to choose your theme in the second official meeting.

Introducing Eco-Schools



Meet to recruit Eco-Members

1. This is an informal meeting, just to talk about Eco-Schools and why people should join. Before you start, write down what you want to talk about, maybe with your Eco-Teachers help. This meet should be about 15–20 minutes long.

Talking points:

- What the Eco-Schools Program is, and why you want people to join. You can ask your Eco-Teacher to share the PowerPoint presentation with you to use, or write a speech.
- The different positions students and teachers will have. Use pages 6 & 7 as a guide

2. Ask all students who are interested in joining to write down their names, and any positions they are interested in doing. Use page 8. If you find that too many people want the same position, you can ask everyone to vote in the next meeting.

3. Thank everyone for coming and tell them when and where the next meeting will be.



Meetings



Your first official meeting

1. Before the meeting, write down what you are going to talk about. This is called your "meeting agenda" For this meeting, it would be good to talk about:

- The different positions students and teachers will have. Use pages 6 and 7 as a guide.
- What your next steps will be.

2. Ask your Eco-Teacher to take minutes for this meeting, until positions have been assigned.

3. If too many people asked to be in in the same position, you can discuss who would be best or take a vote. Your Eco-Teacher may like to assign the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

4. When everyone has their positions, write them up, using page 16. Sometimes, Eco-Students will have more than one position.

5. If you can, take a photo and use this position list to write an article for your school media / newsletter.

6. Let everyone know when the next meeting will be, and that you will be deciding which theme you will be working on.

Meetings



Your second official meeting

1. Before the meeting, write down your meeting agenda. For this meeting, it would be good to talk about:

- Deciding your theme
- What your next steps will be

2. Ask the Minute Taker to take notes and write down who is there. Welcome and thank everybody for coming.

3. If you know which theme you want to cover, introduce this to the group. If not, do the environmental review to help you decide. Your Eco-Teacher can pull this up on the website for you.

4. When your theme is decided and talked about a little, brainstorm and research some things you would like to do. Your Eco-Teacher may have some guidance here.

5. Write down what your next steps will be (actions), and who is responsible for each action.

6. Make sure everyone understands what they will need to do before the next meeting, thank everyone for coming and keep the minutes.

You can take it from here for all your meetings now! Just remember to always write down actions and who is responsible in all meetings, and read through a summary of your last meeting at the beginning of every new meeting. Use copies of pages 13 to 16 to keep these minutes if you like, or create your own on a computer.

Positions explained



Chairperson:

The chairperson is responsible for keeping the meeting on topic and running. They are not "in charge", as no-one in a committee is in charge, you are all working together using your different skills. They also make sure people can get the tasks assigned to them done, and finding other people to help if they can not.

Deputy Chairperson:

The deputy chairperson helps the chairperson keep the meetings and tasks on track, and will step in to run meetings when the chairperson is unavailable.

Treasurer/s:

You may require funds (money) to help with some initiatives. One of your Eco-Teachers will let you know how much there is, and you can work on where the money would best be spent. The treasurer/s may also calculate how much money your Eco-Initiatives have saved the school!

Minute Taker/s:

You only need one minute taker per meeting, but it would be good to have a couple of designated minute takers in case someone can't make a meeting. Their task is to write down what is talked about in meetings next to a copy of the agenda- there is an example of this on pages 10 & 11.

Communications Team:

The "comms team" will be responsible for advertising Eco-Schools meetings, projects and successes to the school and wider community (parents, caregivers and other interested people) They may create posters, write and take photos for the newsletter or social media and talk at assemblies.

Positions explained



Eco-Students:

Eco-Students will make up the majority of your Eco-Committee. Eco-students help with all of the above tasks when needed and all of the Eco-initiatives around the school. This includes any audits, building or putting in infrastructure (things like bins), explaining to other students, teachers and parents how the new systems work.

Eco-Teachers:

Eco-Teachers are here to help and guide the Eco-Committee, but not to lead it. Eco-Teachers will talk to the National Eco-Schools Operator, submit your surveys, audits and reports to the national operator as you go through the seven-steps and obtain different awards.

They should be present for meetings, help find a location for meetings, with projects in the school and most importantly, incorporating Eco-themes into their teaching. If possible, they will help find funding and grants.

Remember, you the students are the driving force. Eco-Teachers are amazing people who are here to help you.



Committee award criteria



Bronze Award Eco-Committee

Your school has an Eco-Committee that meets at least once a term, and members include:

- Students
- Teachers

Minutes are kept of meetings and progress are reported back to the school.

Silver Award Eco-Committee

Your school has an Eco-Committee that meets at least once a term, and members include:

- Students
- Teachers
- Parent or P&C representative

Minutes are kept of meetings and progress are reported back to the school. Students share responsibility with adults running the committee.

Green Flag Eco-Committee

Your school has an Eco-Committee that meets at least once a term, and members include:

- Students from a range of year groups
- Teachers from 3 or more classes or departments,
- The Principal or Deputy
- Parent or P&C representative
- School facilities staff member (e.g. G.A.)

Minutes are kept of meetings and progress are reported back to the school. Students take significant responsibility for running the committee.

**It may seem like a lot, but remember, one step at a time.
You can do it!**



First meeting agenda



Topic 1: Eco-Committee Positions

Chairperson:

Deputy Chairperson:

Treasurer/s:

Minute Taker/s:

Comms Team:

Eco-Students:

Eco-Teachers:

These positions will be decided by:

Topic 2:

What we are going to do in the next meeting: decide on which theme we are going to do.

Before the next meeting, everyone needs to:

First meeting minutes



Date:

Members present:

Topic 1: Eco-Committee Positions

Chairperson:

Deputy Chairperson:

Treasurer/s:

Minute Taker/s:

Communications person:

Recruitment person/s:

Eco-Students:

Eco-Teachers:

These positions were decided by:

First meeting minutes



Topic 2:

What we are going to do in the next meeting: decide on which theme we are going to do.

Actions:

Before the next meeting, everyone needs to:

Meeting Agenda



Date:

Members present:

Meeting Minutes



Date:

Members present:

Apologies:

(people who couldn't make it)

Reflection:

(Look at the last meeting minutes, what got done, did people get to do the actions assigned to them?)

Meeting Minutes cont.



Actions:

(What actions did you decide in this meeting, who will do them and by when?)

Action:

Person responsible:

By when:

Next meeting:

Date, time and location of your next meeting.

Next Steps



We are looking for Eco-Students to join!



Eco-Schools
Australia

Meeting Time and Place:



eco-schools.org.au

Keep 
Australia
Beautiful®

**Looking for students
who want to help the
environment!**



**Eco-Schools
Australia**

Meeting Time and Place:



eco-schools.org.au

Keep 
Australia
Beautiful®

Green Flag Questions



Eco-Committee

- We have an Eco-Committee representative of the whole school community that meets at least once a term.
- The core members of your Eco-Committee and which groups they represent (e.g. Students, teachers or other staff members, principal or representative, parent or guardians).
- Students take significant responsibility for running the committee, e.g. chairing, voting, taking minutes (At teachers' discretion, based on age and strengths of students)
- The school displays photos or a list of Eco-Committee members in a prominent location.
- We have an agreed method for electing and training new members to ensure continuity of the Eco-Committee and its initiatives? Tell us about this process.
- Please explain how Eco-Committee meetings are run:
 - Who chairs/organises the meetings
 - Who takes the minutes/records the proceedings of team meetings?
 - How often has the committee met to date?
 - How often has a member of the extended school community (e.g. parent, volunteer, local expert) attended the meetings?
 - What is the Eco-Committee's decision making process?
 - How does the Eco-Committee communicate with the rest of the school and the community?
 - How can students who aren't members of the Eco-Committee volunteer ideas or suggestions?