



Guidelines for Applicants Eco Schools Program 2008

Background

The Environmental Trust provides these guidelines for people wishing to apply for a grant under the Eco Schools Grant program. The aim of the Trust's Eco Schools Grant Program is to give 60 schools each year the opportunity to involve their community and students in developing and implementing environmental management projects. These projects may be within the school and school grounds or be an area outside the school grounds of community concern in which the school can be involved. The projects can involve the community, students and staff or a cluster of schools.

Environmental education in schools encompasses all key learning areas from Kindergarten to Year 12. In addition to a wide range of restoration and rehabilitation projects, Eco Schools initiatives may include: conservation of natural resources; environmental monitoring programs; energy management; water use and stormwater management; litter reduction; waste avoidance and minimisation; setting up environment clubs; cluster activities between schools; developing school grounds and other areas as resources for learning.

To assist schools in preparation of their Trust application, the following guidelines have been developed. It is intended that these will clarify the criteria by which the grants are assessed.

Program Objectives

The overall objective of the Eco Schools Program is to support schools to develop best practice in environmental education and innovative solutions to environmental issues. The program will fund school environmental management projects aimed at one or more of the objectives below.

Students:

- to promote the development of students' knowledge, values and behaviour that supports environmental sustainability
- to promote participation of some or all students in identifying, designing, implementing and monitoring solutions that improve the quality of the school and local environment.

Teachers:

- to assist teachers to integrate school environmental management projects into school programs and therefore maximise student learning
- to enable project related professional learning for teachers to gain practical and pedagogical skills and knowledge about the environment.

School development and management:

- to encourage a whole of school approach to sustainable management of school operations
- to fund schools to utilise the natural and built environment to facilitate student learning
- to encourage schools to link with the local community (including other schools) to undertake activities which address local environmental issues.

Environment

- to promote more efficient resource use and improve the quality of the local environment
- to enable schools to address community and government environmental concerns and priorities

The ultimate goal of the Eco Schools Grant Program is the development of ecologically sustainable schools.

Eligibility

To be eligible for an Eco Schools grant:

- The applicant must be a registered NSW school. *Preschools are not eligible to apply.*
- The applicant's school must not have been funded in the previous year.
- The project must be a new project or a separate and additional stage of a previous project, not simply ongoing work.
- The project must be aligned with one or more of the program objectives.
- Your school must be registered on the Sustainable Schools NSW website www.sustainableschools.nsw.edu.au.
- You must complete all relevant parts of the application form clearly and legibly.
- Your application must be received by the closing date. Late applications will not be accepted and will be returned.

Unless your application satisfies all of the above conditions, it will not be forwarded to the Technical Committee for assessment.

Note that:

- Any school may lodge only one application in any funding year.
- Schools receiving a grant will be required to complete a final report on the form provided on the Trust's website: www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au. *It is recommended that you read the reporting requirements prior to completing your application as they detail your obligations at the conclusion of your project.*
- Schools receiving a grant are required to acknowledge the Trust's assistance by using the Trust logo on publicly available material associated with the project.

Your Project

Definition

Define your project clearly. This may include indicating where it sits within the broad environmental management plan for the school and its community.

Feasibility

Consider the feasibility and breadth of your project. Sound planning secures community participation and moves the project from "*we will approach...*" to "*we have secured...*". Quite often school/community members are happy to provide professional level advice as their contribution to the project. Seeking broad student input from design to implementation is often the key to a successful project.

Sustainable Use of Resources

When planning your project, consider whether the use of the resources is sustainable. Will your use of materials cause environmental disruption elsewhere? Are there alternative ways of achieving the same results?

Assessment Criteria

The assessment process involves your application being considered first by the Trust's Technical Committee, then by the Trust. Eligible applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria below. Applications will be judged on merit and also in relation to issues of equity and need.

Eco Schools Program Assessment Criteria

Questions in the application form relate to each criterion as shown.

Beneath each Assessment Criterion are points that the Technical Committee will consider in determining how well your Application meets that criterion.

1. There is a proven need and tangible benefits in relation to one or more of the Eco Schools Program Objectives. See Questions B1.ii, B2, B3 of the Application Form.

- Clear description of the need for the project and how the project will make a difference.
- The project has tangible, measurable outcomes.
- The project clearly relates to Eco Schools program objectives.

2. Project activities will ensure student learning through the curriculum. See Question B5 of the Application Form.

- Students are involved in rich educational tasks and active learning.
- The project is part of the schools teaching-learning program.

3. The project implements the school environmental education / management plan. See Question B6 of the Application Form.

This will be a School Environmental Management Plan – SEMP – for government schools, or an equivalent for non-government schools.

- Evidence is provided that the school has a current environmental education / management plan.
- The project clearly links to the school environmental education / management plan.
- The school is registered on the Sustainable Schools NSW website.

4. The project is feasible and its outcomes are evaluated. See Questions B1.i, B1.ii, B2, B4, B9 and Section D of the Application Form)

- The scope of the project is clearly described.
- Outcomes can be achieved in a realistic timeframe.
- The project and its activities (including sites) are authorised by the principal.
- There is a method for evaluating success.

5. School Staff have the necessary knowledge and skill to effectively implement the project. See Question B7 of the Application Form.)

- The applicant understands what knowledge and skills are needed to implement the project.
- Professional learning associated with the project is identified.

6. The project makes a contribution to a sustainable school community. See Question B8 of the Application Form.)

- There is an awareness of the project amongst relevant parts of the school community.
- Appropriate use is made of community expertise and resources.

Total Program Funds

Sixty grants of \$2,500 totalling \$150,000.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

It is assumed that all schools are registered for GST. Do not include any GST in your budget when you fill in your application. You must also provide an approved Tax Invoice for \$2,500 (plus GST if applicable) made out to the Environmental Trust before any payments can be made. If your school is not registered for GST, please telephone the Trust for advice, on the number below.

Refunds The GST also applies to refunds of grant monies from registered entities.

Submitting your Application

Acknowledgement of receipt of applications

You should expect acknowledgement of your application within 2 weeks of the closing dates. This confirmation will include a unique reference number, which should be provided in all correspondence to and from the Trust. If you do not receive acknowledgement within 2 weeks, please contact the Environmental Trust on (02) 8837 6093.

Note: If you email your application, the Trust will acknowledge receipt of your email within 2 working days. If you have not received notification of receipt of your email within this time, it is your responsibility to contact the Trust to ensure that your email has been received.

Notification of grant decisions

The Minister for the Environment, as Chairperson of the Trust, will publicly announce the successful applicants. This is expected to occur in October 2008. Applicants will also be notified in writing. Successful projects will receive funding by early 2009.

Further Information

If you need any help with your application, call the Environmental Trust on (02) 8837 6093.

You may also find the following sites useful:

www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au for ideas on curriculum links in schools:

All schools applying for Eco Schools grants are required to register their school on the Sustainable Schools website.

www.sustainableschools.nsw.edu.au the Sustainable Schools NSW program is a partnership between DECC, DET, Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools. The program supports school communities in realising their environmental vision by bringing together teaching and learning and sustainability activities. It assists schools to create a School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and supports this with links to teaching and learning programs, resource management, school grounds management, whole school planning and the ability to track environmental savings.