

SUSTAINABILITY AND SOLAR



Funding
Information

Green Schools Collective builds momentum for sustainable practice

Sustainability in schools can be ambitious but fragile, often relying on a small number of passionate individuals and informal initiatives. It can be isolating wanting to drive this sort of change at a school. Do you have a supportive principal? Do you have other parents willing to help out?

Green Schools Collective provides a structured, collaborative, and local approach that helps schools maintain momentum, embed environmental practices, and involve entire communities. Jenni Hagland reminds educators that there is always support available. She hopes that in time, sustainability will become so ingrained it is simply normal practice rather than a special initiative.

Mosman as a model for local collaboration

Green Schools Collective began in Mosman with nine schools spanning public, independent, and Catholic sectors. It was created to provide continuity and shared learning around sustainability practices, ensuring initiatives continue when passionate students, parents, or teachers leave. Each term, a different school hosts a meeting to showcase projects, exchange resources, and celebrate progress. Schools approach hosting with genuine excitement, with one school postponing a meeting to allow its garden to grow before presenting, demonstrating commitment and pride.

This rotating model fosters accountability, motivation, and a healthy sense of competition. Networks of fewer than twenty schools work best, encouraging strong relationships, consistent participation, and meaningful contributions. Over five years, Green Schools Collective has grown from a voluntary initiative into a council-supported program. Structured meetings, quarterly newsletters, and community clean-ups provide ongoing support and reinforce the importance of environmental action.



Renewable energy opportunities and challenges

Renewable energy presents both opportunity and challenge for schools. Programs such as Solar My Schools previously made it straightforward for public schools to install solar panels, with state funding covering half the cost.

More recently, funding was announced for community batteries on school grounds to store energy and contribute to local virtual power plants. Jenni Hagland has contacted state education departments and local councils for guidance, but there have been no updates since the announcement. Schools are waiting to see how funding and support for these batteries will develop.

Embedding sustainability through curriculum and community

Green Schools Collective supports embedding sustainability into the curriculum and daily school life, connecting classroom learning with practical environmental action. Through projects such as recycling programs, waste-free initiatives, gardens, and energy projects, students apply what they learn while taking ownership of activities within their schools.

When students bring these lessons home, they influence family habits and inspire parents to adopt environmentally responsible behaviours, creating a feedback loop that reinforces sustainable practices both at school and in households.

This momentum naturally extends into broader community engagement. Hands-on experiences, including the quarterly clean-ups coordinated by Green Schools Collective, involve students, staff, and families, turning abstract environmental concepts such as waste and microplastics into tangible action.

Schools actively contribute to planning and running these events, fostering ownership, pride, and a sense of environmental responsibility.

Green Schools Collective provides guidance and support to help schools organise and sustain projects, encouraging student leadership and community involvement.



Practical guidance for schools

Schools interested in establishing a Green Schools Collective network can draw on Jenni Hagland's guidance and support. She has helped set up networks in multiple local government areas including Mosman and North Sydney Council, showing how a small, well-supported group of schools can collaborate effectively. Jenni advises on forming sustainability teams, engaging school leadership, structuring meetings, and involving the wider community to ensure projects are meaningful, accountable, and actively maintained. Schools are encouraged to engage their local council when setting up a network, as council involvement is central to success.

When council representatives, including mayors or environment officers, attend meetings, it strengthens the program by providing legitimacy, recognition, and practical support. With Jenni's guidance and council endorsement, schools can maintain continuity, foster collaboration, and embed sustainability as a student-driven, community-supported initiative.

Lead sustainability initiatives with your students and staff and take concrete action to make a difference in your community. Visit the Green Schools Collective website now and launch your school's Green Schools Collective-inspired network.

Follow us on Instagram @greenschoolscollective



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