

SCONE GRAMMAR SEALS (SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION LEADERSHIP SQUAD)

overview of the project

Scone Grammar School is a non-government school in the upper Hunter region of New South Wales. The Human Society and its Environment syllabus group implemented the School Environmental Action Leadership Squad (SEALS) project with students, parents and staff. The program was developed as part of the school's Environmental Management Plan and was an educational and motivational program emphasising the importance of sound environmental planning. Using a multi-pronged approach the program instilled in young people an understanding of environmental issues and the basic skills for managing some of these issues. The school observed an improvement in the appearance of the school as a result of the project activities. It also learned that effective planning could reduce the running costs of school organisations by limiting waste disposal expenses and energy costs. The project not only supplemented the school curriculum but provided activities for students enrolled in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, an international leadership program for young people.



Litter collected by the SEALS

how the project was carried out

The SEALS group consists of nine students, five staff members and four to six parent representatives. Students were the drivers of the program, and all decisions were made at student council level. The group met five times a year to plan and report on activities. The first task was to formulate an Environmental Management Plan, this directed the SEALS activities. The group introduced an effective recycling program for paper, glass and PET plastic and set up a partnership with Landcare in a tree planting scheme. They instituted a community outreach program to organise clean-up and other environmental projects in the local area and carried out an environmental awareness campaign among the whole school community by displaying promotional posters. Several external community groups were involved in the project, including the Scone and Parkville Environmental Watch, the Upper Hunter Catchment Trust, Landcare, NSW State Forests and Scone City Council.

outcomes now and in the future

The major outcome from the SEALS project has been the shaping of sound attitudes to the environment and reinforcing the importance of environmental management planning. The project has heightened awareness among the school community about recycling, waste management and energy conservation, and the school now has a thriving recycling system and four worm farms to consume and transform food scraps. SEALS activities were well promoted, with five events advertised in the school newsletter and in posters produced by the students.

The project supported the school curriculum, particularly in the Geography and the Science and Technology syllabus, where students have been learning about the effects of people on the environment. In addition, young people enrolled in the Duke of Edinburgh Award can undertake any of the SEALS activities as part of the community service component.

The program is now embedded in the school's Management Plan and will continue indefinitely. The SEALS group is considering even more thorough attention to waste management in order to account for as much waste as possible and prevent materials unnecessarily going to landfill.

benefits, challenges & lessons learned

Scone Grammar School has successfully demonstrated how a combination of activities can make a difference to the environment and become a permanent and sustainable part of the school Management Plan. The emphasis on student involvement at the management level, with some support of parents and staff, has ensured that the SEALS will remain committed and motivated to continue their environmental management. The program is visible outside the school due to its outreach activities, providing a positive model for the wider community.