

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Friday, 2 August 2024

VICTORIAN SCHOOLS LEADING IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Allan Labor Government is celebrating the achievements of young Victorians and school communities promoting sustainability within their schools and across the community.

Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos visited the 2024 ResourceSmart School of the Year today to congratulate the school on its outstanding leadership in sustainability and their positive environmental impacts.

Chewton Primary School received the top award for their collaboration with local Indigenous organisations to incorporate First Nations perspectives into their curriculum. The school also work with Connecting Country, River Detectives, Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation and Friends of Post Office Creek on sustainability projects.

Students undertook a STEM biodiversity unit investigating the sustainability practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and created a series of storyboards to display as part of a Reconciliation Walk, with 300 members of the local community, along the banks of Forest Creek to Me-Mandook Galk, the 'grandmother tree'.

Last year, Chewton Primary School introduced a dedicated sustainability teacher and weekly sustainability lessons for all students at the school and disconnected their final gas appliances and are now a proud to be an all-electric school. The school also has a large solar system installed.

The school was also recognised for their revegetation projects at Forest Creek, and their student-led Dog Poop Protest initiative, educating walkers around Forest Creek about the danger of leaving dog poo near the waterway.

Another Benigo recipient, a team of three teachers at Epsom Primary earned the Primary Teacher of the Year award for their dedication to sustainability education, student leadership, work with local schools, and initiatives showcased at the Bendigo Sustainability Festival.

Over the past 15 years, more than 1,600 schools across Victoria have participated in the program, collectively reducing their energy costs by over \$60 million, saving 74,000 tonnes of emissions and diverting almost 170,000 cubic metres of waste from landfill.

For more information about this year's finalists, visit sustainability.vic.gov.au/rss-awards-2024-winners.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos

"This year's finalists are not only driving climate action in their schools but promoting sustainability within their homes and wider communities – helping to create a climate resilient future for all Victorians."

"Our students are passionate environmental advocates and the quality of entries in this year's awards really demonstrate how acting now will create a better future for our community and all Victorians."

Quotes attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

"I'm incredibly proud of Chewton Primary for their dedication to environmental stewardship, setting a shining example of how education can drive real change through creative and innovative projects like this."

"The exceptional work of our local students and teachers not only benefits our community but also inspires the next generation to lead with purpose and a vision for a thriving and greener future for Victoria."

Media Contact: Emma Muscatello 0439 837 862 | emma.muscatello@minstaff.vic.gov.au

2024 ResourceSmart School Award winners:

- ResourceSmart School of the Year – Chewton Primary School, Chewton
- Emerging School of the Year – Wandin North Primary School, Wandin North
- Campus Infrastructure and Operations School of the Year – St Michael's Grammar School, St Kilda
- School Volunteer of the Year – Port Melbourne Primary School, Port Melbourne
- Primary Teacher of the Year – Gillian Davey, Sarah Chamings and Erin Salm, Epsom Primary School, Epsom
- Secondary Teacher of the Year – Andrew Feher, Mt Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale
- Student Action Team of the Year (Primary) – Castlemaine Steiner School & Kindergarten, Muckleford
- Student Action Team of the Year (Secondary) – St. Monica's College, Epping
- Community Leadership School of the Year (Primary) – Joint winners - St Patrick's Port Fairy, Port Fairy and Tecoma Primary School, Tecoma
- Community Leadership School of the Year (Secondary) – Mt Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale
- Curriculum Leadership School of the Year (Primary) – Heathmont East Primary School, Heathmont East
- Curriculum Leadership School of the Year (Secondary) – St. Monica's College, Epping