

# Amaroo Primary School

- Ground Crew • Sustainable Schools Initiative Pilot School
- Community Recycling Program • Ring-pulls • Passport for a Tidy School
- Environmental Specialist Teacher

## Background

Amaroo Primary School, in the town of Collie, 200km south-east of Perth, is leading the way with its community links.

A pilot school for the Sustainable Schools Initiative, Amaroo played a central role when Collie was selected as State and National Winner for the Tidy Towns competition in 2005.

Amaroo Primary School's community mindedness was apparent in the initial days of Waste Wise at this school. As one of five primary schools in a town of just over 9000 residents, Amaroo recognised there was not only a need for recycling facilities within the school, but for the local community as well.

The school went to work with local businesses to set up a recycling facility and an Environmental Action Program. The program's success is communicated through teacher notices, community newsletters and local media.

To support the program, an Environmental Specialist Teacher is employed at the school one day per week. Amaroo's environmental policies are ingrained in the school's ethos and everyone from students to the Principal, the cleaners to the gardener, play an active role in the program.



AMAROO PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Ground Crew

The Ground Crew Team is an active and enthusiastic group of students from Years 5-7 who look after the worm farms, maintain the gardens, or monitor the recycling program during their lunchtime.



STUDENTS ADDING THEIR TOUCH TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL MURAL.

## Special Events

Exciting events packed the school's 2005 calendar including visits from Captain Cleanup and the Waste Wise mobile display; Earth Day activities and National Tree Planting Days.

A student buddy system to clean around the local community was a great success on Clean Up Collie Day, while students built mascots from reused materials and designed environmental t-shirts on World Environment Day.

## Gardens

Amaroo Primary School is set within tranquil, extensive gardens enjoying an abundance of native plants which the school is keen to maintain. Environmental murals developed by Amaroo's artist-in-residence together with students, complement the gardens.

Green waste is mulched at the school and the mulch is used on the gardens – making them more water-efficient. New reticulation systems at the school should also improve water conservation.

Castings and liquid fertiliser from the eight worm farms, plus compost also help to keep the gardens healthy. Compost tumblers were supplied by Premier Coal.

Amaroo's gardener is the pivotal person for maintaining the gardens, supporting Waste Wise activities around the school and in helping the students grow great tasting vegetables. **Thirty gourmet lettuces were grown to supply the school canteen in 2005.**

The school's Indigenous students are also busy researching local flora and fauna for the development of a new Aboriginal garden near the library.

“Since the program is voluntary, students are motivated to come back as they know that they have the flexibility to choose the times and activities where they can help.” *Mary Molloy, Environmental Specialist Teacher*



The Recycling Program with Worsley Alumina's Ruggies Program has raised more than \$70,000 over the past two years for Princess Margaret Hospital and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

## Community Recycling Program

Amaroo runs a very successful recycling program, where the facilities are used not just by the school but also by the local community who are encouraged via newsletters and the local media to place their recyclables in the easily accessed bins at the school.

Recyclable materials such as paper, newspaper, plastics, steel, glass and liquidpaperboard are collected in crates donated by Bunnings.

The Year 4 *Waste Busters* collect these crates weekly and sort the materials. Co-mingled recyclables are placed into two skip bins donated by Worsley Alumina.

Aluminium cans collected at the school are reduced in size by the Year 5 *Crushers* via wall-mounted crushers donated by Bunnings. The aluminium can skip bin donated by Westfarmers Premier Coal, is serviced by Collie Bin Hire about four times a year.

Through *The Great Ring-Pull Competition*, Amaroo students contribute to a program which helps the environment as well as people in need. Ring-pulls have been used to make prosthetic limbs for people in Thailand and so this program is a very clear environmental and social link for sustainability.

Classes compete to fill their recycled containers with aluminium ring-pulls and students have taken their appeals to the local community, raising public awareness.

**The ring-pulls are collected by Collie Rotary, who awarded the school a Certificate of Appreciation for collecting almost 100 kilograms of aluminium ring-pulls in 2004.**



THE CO-MINGLED RECYCLING BINS ARE SERVICED BY SOUTHWEST WASTE TWICE WEEKLY AND MORE FREQUENTLY AT PEAK TIMES OF THE YEAR SUCH AS APPROACHING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS



AN AMAROO STUDENT WITH HER PASSPORT.

## Litter Reduction

*Passport for a Tidy School* leads Amaroo students on a clean up trail around their school. Duty teachers award passport stickers to students who pick up 20 pieces of litter at lunch time. A full passport takes a few weeks to achieve and is rewarded with a lucky dip at the fortnightly student assemblies.

Yellow-lidded bins are located around the school for recyclable lunch packaging. Posters, donated by Worsley Alumina, remind students of what to place in these bins. There are plans to further these reminders with a 3-D display of recyclable packaging on the canteen wall and beside the bins.

## Other Activities

- Amaroo participates in the "Adopt a Park" project through the Collie Shire.
- Amaroo has been selected for the Worsley Alumina Sustainable Energy Schools Project and the Sustainable Energy Development Office's Solar Schools Program. As part of this, the school will reduce fossil fuel energy consumption through using solar, and possibly also wind, energy.

## Savings and Benefits

- **Amaroo is diverting an estimated 18 tonnes of recyclables from landfill each year.**
- Amaroo's successful programs have led to other schools in the area setting up their own community skip bin for recycling. **At the end of 2005, at least 17 cubic metres of recyclables were collected from Collie school communities each week.**



## Awards and Public Recognition

- 2005 – Collie took out the National Tidy Towns Winner title, due in no small part to the Waste Wise efforts of Amaroo Primary School. The 2006 Tidy Towns media launch was then hosted by Amaroo, with the school gaining coverage on GWN. The community of Collie and its partnership with Amaroo has been praised in many local news articles.
- 2005 – Amaroo Primary School was runner-up in the Premier's Sustainability Award.
- Tidy Towns: Certificate of Merit – Leadership and Excellence in Environmental Awareness and Practices.
- Keeping Up Appearances Garden Competition.
- A WA 175th Anniversary Grant of \$5000 was used to purchase a mulcher, two worm farms, garden tools, shelving and materials for a 3-D environmental mural.



*A THREE-DIMENSIONAL NATIVE MONARCH BUTTERFLY IS MADE OF RECYCLED MATERIALS AND IS THE SPECTACULAR CENTREPIECE OF A RECYCLING-THEMED WALL.*



*ONE OF THE INSPIRING MURALS SUPPORTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS AT AMAROO PRIMARY SCHOOL.*

