

Quick Guide: Biodiversity Module

The Biodiversity Module helps a school understand biodiversity in the school grounds and ways to improve the local environment.

This guide helps a school to work through the Biodiversity Module. Where activities link to module actions, the action number is noted in brackets.

To get the Biodiversity Module certified, 7 compulsory actions and at least 17 of the 25 optional actions in the Module checklist need to be completed.

Kickstart Biodiversity Module

- Speak to your ResourceSmart Schools (RSS) Facilitator about ways to undertake your biodiversity audits and use the audit template for support. This will result in a score out of 100 which is the Habitat Quality Assessment Score (HQAS). (A1.1)
- Upload a summary of the audit and your HQAS to RSS Online. (A1.3 and school settings)
- Discuss any gaps in the findings of the audit and potential solutions with your team.
Could your school:
 - plant more trees
 - install bird boxes
 - introduce mulch garden beds.
- Prepare a Biodiversity Improvement Annual Action Plan using the template available. You could use the Biodiversity Module checklist as suggestions to develop actions for your plan. Have the plan endorsed by your oversight group e.g. school council and/or board. (A2.1)

Progress Biodiversity Module

- Work through actions in your Biodiversity Improvement Annual Action Plan and record them as you go. Use this plan, as well as the mandated curriculum, to develop activities that link biodiversity related actions to your school's education program. (B1.1, B1.2, B1.3, B1.5)
- Describe how your student action and sustainability teams are achieving the goals and actions of the Biodiversity Improvement Annual Action Plan. (C2.2, C2.3, C3.2)

- Link up with local environment groups, such as Landcare and Coastcare, or local council to develop or participate in biodiversity projects like National Schools Tree Planting Day. (B1.3, C3.1, C3.2)
- Learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives about biodiversity. (B1.4)
- Encourage staff to attend professional development on biodiversity and associated themes. The RSS newsletter contains information about professional development opportunities. (A2.2)
- Apply for grants such as Junior Landcare Grants to support your school's efforts to improve biodiversity. (A2.3)
- Liaise with your school gardener or groundskeeper to learn about planting procedures, soil and garden management (including managing garden waste) and protection of conservation areas or remnant vegetation. (A2.4, A3.1, A3.2, A4.1, A4.2)
- Consider introducing habitats to your school grounds such as a frog bog, sensory garden, nest boxes, butterfly gardens, lizard lounges or wildlife corridors. (A3.3)
- Protect existing biodiversity by using guards and fences around sensitive vegetation areas or plants. (A3.4)
- Think about creating some interpretive signs in your school grounds to identify trees, types of plants and habitats. This is a fantastic learning activity for students. (A3.5)
- Plan how litter is managed in your school grounds, so it does not impact on biodiversity. (A5.1)
- Raise funds via school and community initiatives to support conservation projects in Australia or around the world such as Zoos Victoria or World Wildlife Fund. (C3.6)
- Create a school learning story with students about your biodiversity progress. Review RSS Online Tips section throughout the module for ideas on creating school learning story content. (C1.2).
- Share tips and ideas with your school community to encourage them to be more biodiversity aware and active at home. (C3.3)
- Share your school learning story with your community by:
 - utilising the school newsletter, website, social media platforms and local media (C1.1, C3.2, C3.3)
 - sharing it with the wider community through networks and environment groups. (C1.2).

Reach out for assistance

RSS Facilitators can help you:

- plan or promote your program
- locate additional resources that will assist you to complete the module
- conduct audits with students
- organise activities for your student action team
- find networks of like-minded staff and students to support your work
- progress your RSS module completion and certification.

To connect with your local facilitator email schools@sustainability.vic.gov.au

For support with RSS Online email help@resourcesmartschools.vic.gov.au

ResourceSmart Schools is a free program offered by Sustainability Victoria that supports Victorian schools to embed sustainability across the school facilities, community and curriculum, while saving resources and money for the school.

To register to become a ResourceSmart School, visit:

<https://my.resourcesmartschools.vic.gov.au/>

or email schools@sustainability.vic.gov.au