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| **School Volunteer of the Year**  *This category celebrates the contributions of school volunteers who gift their time and expertise to contribute to sustainability outcomes at school. As members of the community, the role of school volunteers is valuable in connecting the school with beyond the school gate.*  **Special eligibility: Individual or group must not be remunerated for their time.**  *Please note: this sample entry was inspired by several entries submitted by different schools. The examples here showcase the wide range of sustainability initiatives being undertaken by schools.* | | | |
| **Contribution to School’s Sustainability Goals:** Tell us about this individual/group. How are they contributing to your school’s sustainability goals. Please highlight skills, knowledge or outcomes.  **300 words** | | | |
| SAMPLE ENTRY  Mary and Charles are active parent volunteers at our school. They first became involved in 2023 when they helped the school to undertake a biodiversity audit.  They are both farmers from the neighbouring area and have been generous in sharing their knowledge of permaculture with our students.  In 2025, Mary and Charles spend about two hours each week working in the garden, involving students in decisions about what to plant, for both our edible and native gardens and teaching them what it takes to keep a garden healthy.  As a result of their efforts the school edible garden has improved and is filled with herbs, vegetables and fruits. It now fully supports the school’s Kitchen Garden Program, as well as being available to the school canteen.  Significantly reducing the need for the school to buy produce not only saves the school money, but also food packaging going to landfill and transport emissions or ‘food miles’.  The school has already saved 10% on buying food to stock the canteen and this number will only increase as the garden grows.  Mary and Charles’ advice to school council on how to improve the school’s wildlife corridors has led to positive outcomes. Their knowledge of indigenous plant species local to the area has significantly helped to boost biodiversity in the school garden and ecosystem health as can be seen in the results of biodiversity audits.  Mary and Charles’ property is now the location for science and geography excursions. Students visit the farm to study ecosystems, supply chains and agricultural practices.  *‘Last term, with the science class, we were at Mary and Charles’s farm. We had such a great time! We learned how to avoid chemicals by using companion planting to manage pests. I had no idea about this option’ James, Year 9.* | | | |
| **Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details** | | | |
| **1 Point** | **2 Points** | **3 Points** | **4 Points** |
| **Engagement with the Broader Community:** Explain how this individual/group has been working with the broader community to enhance the sustainability program at your school. **300 words** | | | |
| SAMPLE ENTRY  Through being property owners with a keen interest in biodiversity, Mary and Charles are extremely well connected to groups such as Trust for Nature, Traditional Owner groups, Landcare, nurseries and Friends groups. They link the school with these organisations both through the gardening work they do on campus, and via the science and geography excursions to their farm.  Through Mary and Charles’ encouragement, the school applied for and won a Landcare grant and became a finalist in the Junior Landcare Awards.  These experiences have helped to fund more biodiversity projects on campus as well as promote our work to the broader community via local newspaper and radio.  Our Year 9 Student Action Team were on local radio talking about our biodiversity corridor project.  This year, the school garden renovation could not have been done without Mary and Charles and the connections to the local community. The garden beds are made from recycled railway sleepers which were donated by the local salvage yard and the tree guards are on loan from the local Friends group.  Mulch is currently delivered to site from the nearby transfer station. Later in the year, Mary and Charles hope to organise someone from local council to come and speak to the students about how mulch is made, and how it is used in gardening.  The plants themselves have been propagated by Natalie from the local indigenous plant nursery who through Mary and Charle’s invitation came to the school and spoke to the VCE Biology class about propagation.  Local First Nations groups have come to the school to educate students about the how particular plants are used in indigenous culture. They suggested to build a fire pit and, in the future, host native food and cooking classes.  The project is always evolving! | | | |
| **Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details** | | | |
| **1 Point** | **2 Points** | **3 Points** | **4 Points** |
| **Impact on Sustainability Knowledge and Practice:** Explain the impact of the work of this individual/group and how it enhanced sustainability knowledge and practice for students/teachers. **300 words** | | | |
| SAMPLE ENTRY  Mary and Charles generosity with their time, knowledge and connections with the broader community have left a lasting impact on the culture of the school in just three years. Work is continuously evolving, and we are grateful for Mary and Charles’ energy and enthusiasm for our school's sustainability goals.  Having local experts be involved in the student’s education at school has had an impact on the number of students choosing to take VCE Biology and Agriculture units.  These connections beyond the school gate have also resulted in the school having money to fund biodiversity work, and to promote the school as an environmentally conscious learning community.  Having the school veggie garden has tangibly saved the school money from buying produce from elsewhere, and students are more engaged in the supply chain of the food they purchase from the school canteen.  The veggie garden and indigenous garden provide alternative locations for onsite learning, the Geography Teacher has been using the veggie garden to talk about food miles in year 9 ‘Biomes and Food Security’ and year 7 art students have been using the indigenous garden as a place to practice their botanical drawings.  Since Mary and Charles began volunteering at our school, the school has saved money, increased its local amenity for biodiversity learning, and attracted more community support to the school, reducing the burden on the teaching staff.  The most recent biodiversity audit suggests that due to Mary and Charles involvement the school has improved the biodiversity score by 30 per cent. | | | |
| **Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details** | | | |
| **1 Point** | **2 Points** | **3 Points** | **4 Points** |
| **Summary of Impact:** In 50 words or less, please summarise the impact of this individual or group on the school’s sustainability goals.Please submit at least ONE media ready photography with signed consent form/s. | | | |
| SAMPLE ENTRY  Mary and Charles’ work on biodiversity corridors and in renovating our edible garden has saved the school money, increased its use for learning about biodiversity, and attracted more community support to the school. Their work helps us to promote our school as a great place to learn about environmental sustainability. | | | |
| **Scoring rubric- see judging guide for details** | | | |
| **1 Point**  COMPLETE ENTRY with photo and consent form | | No **Points**  INCOMPLETE ENTRY- either consent form or media ready photo not submitted | |