



Media Release

For immediate release

Aussie kids join the War on Waste and compete for great prizes in the Schools Recycle Right Challenge

Students across Australia are taking part in the Nature Schools Recycling Right Challenge, as part of Planet Ark's National Recycling Week (13 – 19 November).

Last year 17,000 students across Australia took part in the Challenge at early learning centres and primary and high schools across Australia.

This year the Challenge runs for seven weeks from Monday 2 October until Friday 17 November and is an opportunity for children of all ages to learn about responsible waste management and the environmental benefits of recycling.

Teachers and students can participate in as many recycling-related activities as they like, including the School Recycling Games, art and craft activities using reclaimed materials, talks from waste or environmental education officers, compost and worm farming demonstrations, or they can even create a new recycling system for the school or classroom.

In partnership with Cool Australia Planet Ark has also developed curriculum-aligned lesson plans for teachers to use during the Challenge. The lessons cover a range of recycling topics and are available via the National Recycling Week and Cool Australia websites. For example, students can learn about closing the loop by recycling paper or find out what happens to mobile phones that are recycled thanks to MobileMuster, the official recycling program of the Australian Mobile Phone Industry.

Ryan Collins, Planet Ark's Recycling Campaigns Manager, says the Challenge is an important part of National Recycling Week.

"The Nature Schools Recycle Right Challenge is designed to be a fun way for children to learn how they can have a positive impact on the environment through recycling and reducing waste," Collins said.

"Our children will be the environmental caretakers of the future, so it's important we take the time to teach them why it's so important to recycle and not waste resources, and to close the recycling loop by buying back products made from recycled materials. They will also be the innovators of the future, so the next big advance in recycling technology may well come from a SRRC participant!"

As part of this year's competition, a school or childcare centre from each state and territory will win a Replas outdoor seat made from recycled soft plastics worth \$439, with three runners-up receiving a raised eWood garden bed, made from mixed plastics (computers, televisions, car parts and printer cartridges) by eWood Gardens.

Rebecca Coll, a School Support Officer from Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School in Wollongong, and the school's student-run sustainability committee, have prepared a busy schedule of activities for students including overhauling the school's waste food recycling procedures, creating recycled art, waste-free lunches, and the Recycle Right Quiz.





"As a school we have always managed recycling within our classroom setting and we saw a need to improve on our already existing playground practices. With the help of our energetic and diligent year 5 and year 6 sustainability committee we conducted an audit of the packaging that can be recycled from our school canteen and everyday lunches," Coll said.

"With the introduction of bin monitors, recycling and our current waste free lunch and composting practices we hope to reduce our school carbon footprint and make children aware of their responsibility to the environment."

This year's theme for National Recycling Week, **What Goes Around: Why Buying Recycled Matters**, highlights why recycling is only part of the battle. To win the War on Waste consumers and businesses need to close the recycling loop by purchasing products that contain recycled content.

New research from Planet Ark shows that 88% of Australians already purchase products that contain recycled materials, and 70% said they would be more likely to purchase products and / or packaging if they contained recycled content.

The good news is we are surrounded by these products, and to help consumers find them, Planet Ark has created a handy online directory and resource to raise awareness that these products are available and plentiful.

For more information visit www.schoolsrecycle.planetark.org or www.recyclingweek.planetark.org or call the **National Recycling Hotline on 1300 733 712**.

National Recycling Week Events:

The **Schools Recycle Right Challenge** (2 Oct – 17 Nov), the **Friday File Fling** (Fri 17 Nov), **Buy It Back Day** (Sat 18 Nov) and the **Big Aussie Swap**.

Sponsors:

National Recycling Week 2017 is kindly supported by Major Sponsor **Naturale Tissue Products**, Associate Sponsors **Bingo Industries** and **'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark'**, Supporting Sponsors **MobileMuster**, **Planet Ark 100% Australian Recycled Paper (Australian Paper)**, **Tetra Pak** and **Tyre Stewardship Australia**, and Prize Partners **Biome**, **eWood Gardens** and **Replas**.

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