

Gold star to Kuluin early learner recycling champions

The Sunshine Coast environment can breathe easier thanks to the terrific efforts of students, staff and families of Kuluin Early Learning Centre diverting a huge 42% of their waste away from landfill.

As part of Sunshine Coast Council's Waste 2 Resource STARS Program, the Centre was presented with a certificate of achievement today in recognition of their hard work and dedication to working towards a sustainable environment.

Division 7 Councillor Ted Hungerford said everyone connected with the Centre should be very proud of how much they had improved their sustainable waste management through the STARS Program.

"In early 2014, the Centre was looking for assistance to identify strategies for waste reduction, and improve levels of recycling and collection of food scraps for composting and worm farming," Cr Hungerford said.

"All staff, along with the children and families of Kuluin ELC were eager to build on the sustainability initiatives they had started and to learn more about becoming better recyclers, composters, worm farmers, and reducers of waste.

"Through joining the STARS program and improving the use of their recycling collection and organics programs, Kuluin ELC is now recycling 29% of their total waste and diverting 13% to organics recycling. That means 42% of their waste is being diverting away from landfill.

"This is not to mention some very crafty reuse of some interesting items."

Environment Portfolio Councillor Jenny McKay said it was fantastic to see our young generation showing us how easy it was to reduce, reuse and recycle.

"Having decided it was time to take action Kuluin ELC sprang into top gear rolling out a recycling collection program using 10 yellow recycling boxes donated by council to help sort and separate recyclables," Cr McKay said.

"The STARS program trained the Centre to recycle right, and they then busied themselves installing infrastructure and signage for comingled recycling, and teaching everyone to be great recyclers.

"The Centre also rolled out an organics collection program for food scraps and other organic waste items able to be composted.

"A compost bin was set up with the help of Council's Waste 2 Resource STARS Program and three organics caddies were donated to help collect and separate organics waste materials to feed the compost and worm farm on site.

"The STARS program trained Centre staff on how to look after and maintain the composting and worm farming systems."

Kuluin ELC has taken further waste reduction steps including:

- implementing initiatives such as regular Nude Food Lunch Days;
- encouraging parents and children to consider packing lunches so that no waste was brought into the Centre;

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- switching most of its communication with families and other administration to electronic formats to reduce paper use;
- fostering other waste reduction initiatives with families by promoting National Recycling Week through events such as Swap Parties, where children bring unwanted books to swap with other children rather than sending them to landfill.

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