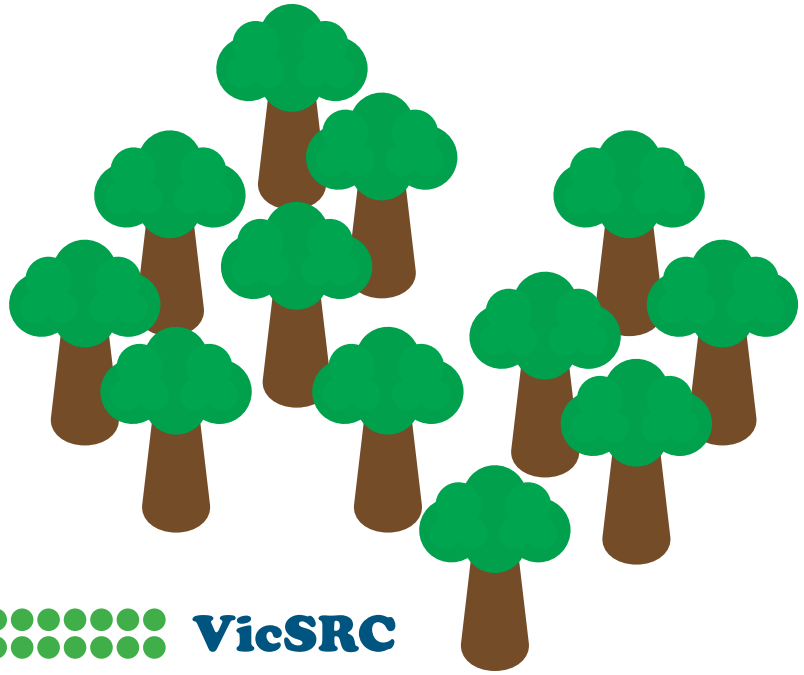




Victorian Student
Representative Council



VicSRC
Environmental
Resource
Kit

A guide to finding support
for environmental action in
your school



Introduction

At just about every VicSRC conference we hold, students tell us that they want their schools to be more environmentally friendly and that they want to be part of making the necessary changes.

When the VicSRC looked into this we found that there are a lot of other groups who want schools to be more environmentally friendly too and are offering a range of services and support to schools and students to make it so. This guide for students and teachers provides a brief introduction to some of the best services we found. It is by no means exhaustive and has been compiled to highlight the services that most involve students in taking action.

We hope you find the information useful in your quest for an environmentally friendly school.

The VicSRC is a network of Student Representative Councils working to strengthen the capacity of SRCs to speak and take action on behalf of secondary students throughout Victoria.

The VicSRC is funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and auspiced by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.

Further copies of this Kit can be ordered from the VicSRC on (03) 9267 3744 or downloaded from www.vicsrc.org.au/publication



To simplify all the different things on offer we have divided them into 5 categories:

1. Incursions and Excursions 4

Groups that will come to your school and help you conduct an audit of your environmental footprint, or have a site you can visit to learn how to reduce your impact.

2. Grants 7

Money available to schools for environmental projects including infrastructure like solar panels and water tanks.

3. Kits 9

Information packs available on how to reduce your environmental footprint or lobby others in the community to reduce theirs.

4. Talks 12

Groups who will come out to your school and provide an educational talk about environmental issues with some basic ideas about what you can do.

5. Networks and Events. 14

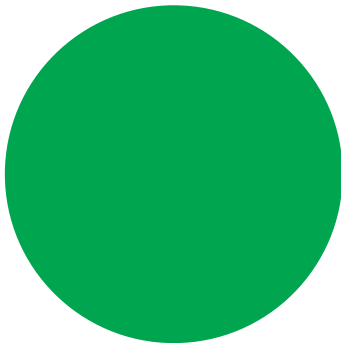
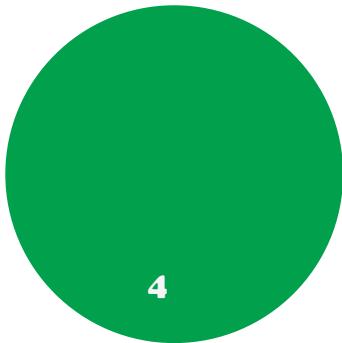
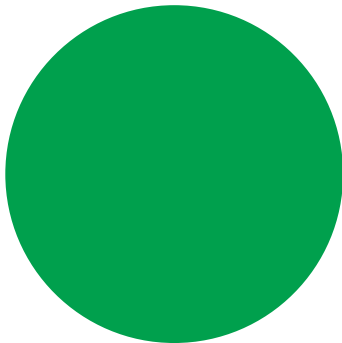
Opportunities to meet students and environmentalists from other schools and organisations, learn from each other and get inspired.



CERES

CERES (the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies, pronounced ‘series’) is an internationally recognised model of a sustainable society. Located in Melbourne’s inner north, CERES provides the most comprehensive and participatory range of environmental action programs for students, including both incursions and excursions. Some programs are so popular there’s a waiting list!

For more information, see: <http://www.ceres.org.au>



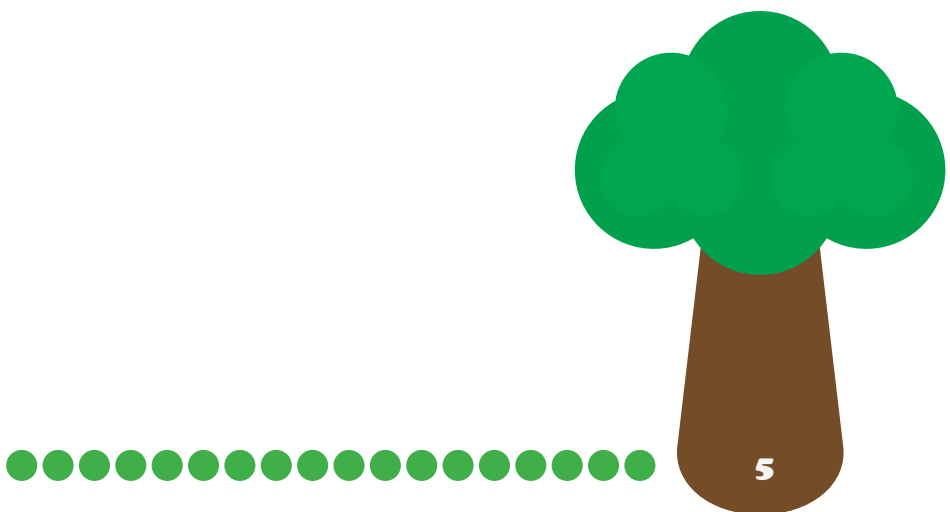
CERES Incursions

CERES will come to your school and work with students, teachers and parents to:

- conduct an audit of your school's energy use, water use, waste production and biodiversity
- set goals for reducing consumption and improving biodiversity
- create a School Environmental Management Plan.

As part of this process you then decide which areas you want to focus on and CERES will assist you to implement your plan and achieve your goals. Implementing your plan is a whole school process involving your school council and student actions teams. CERES even helps teachers to fit the work into the curriculum.

The VicSRC highly recommends this program as one which empowers students to take part in improving schools, as well as achieving educational and environmental aims.





CERES Excursions

These excursions are an opportunity for students to visit the CERES site for a hands on educational experience about issues of your choice. CERES offers a range of programs tailored to meet curriculum outcomes for your age group.

Energy

Students can tour the CERES eco-house that has been built to demonstrate not just energy efficient building design but also to compare these designs with current models so that students can see and measure the difference for themselves. Students can examine a range of fittings from lights and windows, to insulation and floor surfaces. They can observe different forms of energy generation in action and measure carbondioxide levels in different settings.

Water

Students can choose from a range of activities to learn about water and how different uses affect its quantity and quality.

Students can:

- measure the pollution levels and biodiversity of the local stream (Merri Creek)
- check out the water tanks and grey water system installed in the eco-house
- participate in a role play comparing our water use with that of other countries
- learn about the history of land use in the area and the social and environmental impacts of decisions made by local people.

CERES also offers programs on land use and a multi-strand program that provides an overview of key sustainability issues.



Schools can apply to both the Victorian and Federal Governments for grants to install a range of energy and water efficiency products. Brief details are provided here but please visit the websites listed for more detailed information.

National Solar Schools Program

Under this program every school in Australia is eligible to apply for grants of up to \$50,000 to install 2-kilowatt solar panels and a range of energy efficiency measures, such as:

- solar power systems
- lighting upgrades
- sky lights
- shade awnings
- solar hot water systems
- rainwater tanks.

For more information, see:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/renewable/nationalsolarschools>

Victorian Solar in Schools Initiative

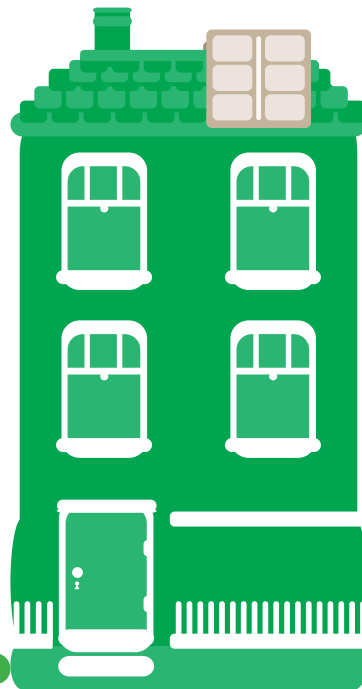
This program is designed to complement the Australian Government's National Solar Schools Program (NSSP) and maximise the funding opportunities for all Victorian schools. Victorian schools are eligible to apply for both the Victorian Solar in Schools Initiative and the NSSP.

Schools are encouraged to consider how the NSSP can support the implementation of sustainability in their schools through a holistic approach that incorporates infrastructure, curriculum, operations and school-community partnerships.

The Victorian Solar in Schools Initiative supports schools to:

- install solar photovoltaic (PV) power systems
- install interactive energy monitoring systems
- provide educational materials on renewable energy and energy demand.

For more information, see:
http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_educators_2425.html



If you want a simple do it yourself guide to action then the best thing is probably to choose from a variety of kits on offer. These are downloadable over the internet for free and can help you achieve a range of purposes.

Australian Conservation Foundation

Eco calculator

This an online tool to help you calculate your eco footprint. Simply enter some basic information about your consumption and you can find out how much water you really use, how much carbon you produce and how much land it takes to sustain your lifestyle. You can find out if you are above or below the Australian average and what other actions you can take to reduce your footprint.

You can find the calculator at:

http://www.acfonline.org.au/custom_greenhome/calculator.asp?section_id=86



Climate Change Action Kit

This is a free kit to help you take personal action on climate change. It contains:

- information on climate change and its solutions
- tips on changes you can make to reduce carbon emissions
- ways to work with others to tackle climate change.

To get a copy sent to you simply go to:

http://www.acfonline.org.au/forms/form.asp?survey_id=14
and enter your details.

Community Climate Action Kit

Want to do more than just change yourself? Want to change the world? Here's a kit to help you take action in the broader community. It contains:

- information you can use to educate others
- tips on how to lobby your local MP
- advice on how to use the media
- a guide to setting up and operating a climate action group.

To download a free kit, go to:

http://www.acfonline.org.au/default.asp?section_id=205

The Wilderness Society's Guide to Environmentally Friendly Paper

Our consumption of paper is one of the biggest reasons why so many trees and forests are being cut down around the world. This is a contributing factor to climate change and also uses a lot of water. The solution is recycled paper but there are so many types and some of them pretend to be environmentally friendly when they aren't. The Wilderness Society has put together a short guide to help you find the right paper.

Download it for free at:

http://www.wilderness.org.au/articles/Victoria_paper_brochure/



Talks

There are a range of groups who are willing to come to your school and talk to students about environmental issues.

These are not necessarily aimed at facilitating student action but work on the premise that students need to be both informed and motivated if they are going to take effective action. So if you're not sure what to do or why, then you might like to contact:

Beyond Zero Emissions

Focus: The latest scientific research into climate change and its solutions. This is no doom and gloom presentation but focuses on how we can solve the problem and how you can help to influence politicians to start investing in the solutions.

phone: (03) 8383 2232 or 0421 616 733

email: matthew@beyondzeroemissions.org

web: <http://beyondzeroemissions.org>

The Climate Project

Focus: The Australian Conservation Foundation has joined with Al Gore to take his climate change message around Australia. Al Gore has personally trained 250 volunteers in the science of climate change, including information of particular relevance to Australia.

The aim of the project is to educate Australians on the issues and consequences of climate change, using the material in Al Gore's famous 'An Inconvenient Truth' slide show.

Trainees come from all walks of life, including professional sports people, actors, executives, priests, school students and interested individuals.

web: http://www.acfonline.org.au/default.asp?section_id=193

The Wilderness Society

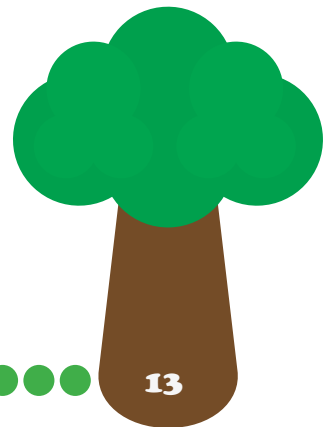
Focus: With studies showing Victoria's forests to be some of the most significant stores of carbon in the world, we believe that protecting forests is crucial in the fight against climate change. As those whose future will be affected by climate change it is vital that young people understand this connection. Our message is simple – Carbon Banks or Climate Change?

The Wilderness Society gives one hour presentations that educate students on the links between forests, greenhouse-gas emissions, paper production, consumption & logging activities. The presentations educate students on these issues and inform students about how to choose the most environmentally friendly office papers for their schools.

phone: (03) 9038 0803

email: scott.alderson@wilderness.org.au

web: <http://www.wilderness.org.au/>



If the talks don't inspire and inform you enough, you may like to go along to a student environment conference. There are several groups who run different events from year to year.

Students of Sustainability

Students of Sustainability (SoS) is an annual five day camping conference for anyone interested in creating a more ecologically and socially sustainable world. It is predominantly attended by university students but is open to change agents of types and stripes. The conference typically uses a skill-share model so they're always on the look out for anyone with skills, knowledge and experience to share. If your student environment group would like to offer a workshop or activity they would love to hear from you.

For more info visit: <http://www.studentsofsustainability.org/>



Australian Youth Climate Coalition

The Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) is a coalition of 27 of the largest youth organisations in Australia united by a common vision for a safe climate future. As a broad network they play a co-ordination role for a range of youth-led projects and hold environmental conferences for young people.

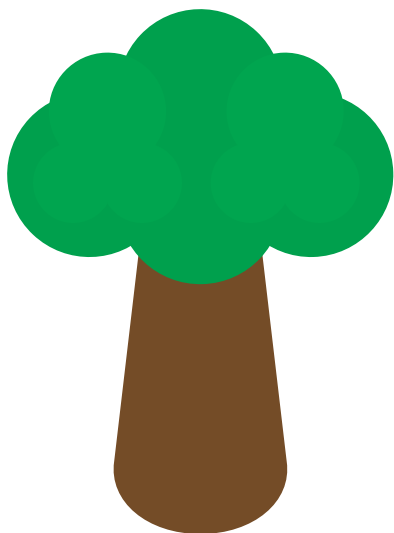
For more info visit: <http://www.aycc.org.au>

Firestarter

Firestarter is a business with broad experience in natural resource management and working with young people. They run a series of conferences for students from different levels which provide opportunities for hands-on student centred learning. The conferences use a model called 'Kids teaching kids' that encourages students to present information on an issue local to them. This is aimed at empowering both presenters and participants and to highlight the fact that students have a powerful role to play in managing our natural resources.

For more info visit: <http://www.onelifeoneworldourfuture.com>

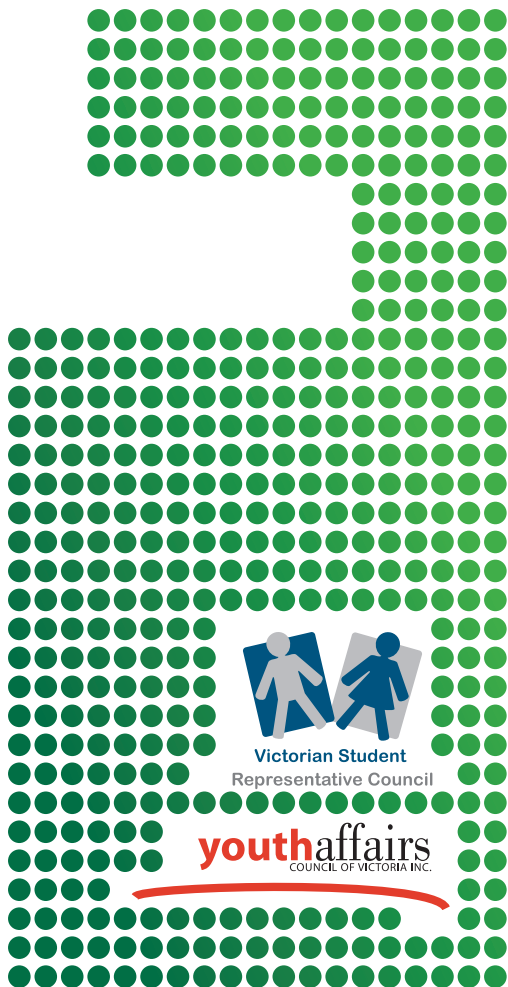




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All care has been taken to ensure that the information provided in this kit is accurate at the time of printing.

Please check with the organisations listed for up to date information.



Sponsored by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.



Department of Education and Early Childhood Development