Tackling the Biodiversity Module of ResourceSmart Schools (RSS)

Undertaking the **ResourceSmart Biodiversity Module** at your school is a great way of getting students out and about in the school and local environment to learn about the biodiversity in their area, take pride in it and design ways to improve it. To complete the module, you need to complete **34 actions**.

We recommend tackling the module with the following actions:

1. Start the module with a biodiversity audit. Talk to your Facilitator about the audit template that we can send you.
2. After the audit, talk with your students about where any gaps existed in your audit – could you plant more trees? Could you install bird boxes or mulch garden beds? You can use the biodiversity checklist for ideas.
3. Write up a plan with the ideas you have generated including timeframes and who will be doing which action. This plan can also be put into your School Environment Management Plan (SEMP).
4. Carry out the actions and document them as you go.
5. Use your documentation to let your school community know what you have been doing and also let people know through your newsletter online. Upload photos/student articles/newsletter and/or newspaper reports to the RSS online system as evidence.
6. Revisit the module and work with your Facilitator to complete the module documentation requirements.
7. Set a date 12 months from your audit for the next annual audit to see if your score has changed.
8. *Recommended Action: think about a specific animal or plant species that you could champion at your school and think about how you could improve the school or community environment to assist this animal. E.g. Stratford has the blue tongue lizard as it champion animal and has created a dry river habitat for the lizards which have come to live in the school. It may be a matter of build it and they will come!*

Actions you can undertake in your school to increase biodiversity:

- Carry out a biodiversity audit with your students and plan to do one every year (A1.1, A1.2 A2.5, A3.7, B1.3, B1.7)
- Participate in an animal survey – the Australian Aussie Backyard Bird Count is one and there are also tools on Cool Australia to help you with this (A1.3)
- Create a biodiversity plan as a result of your biodiversity audit and have the plan approved by school Council (A 2.1, A2.2)
- Apply for grants to undertake biodiversity actions at your school or in your community such as Junior Landcare Grants (A2.4)

- Mulch gardens (A3.1, A4.2)
- Plant some trees or plants with your students that are indigenous to your area (your local Council will be able to give you a list) (A2.6, A3.3, B1.4)
- Protect existing biodiversity (A3.2)
- Install, build or create a frog bog, sensory garden, nest boxes, butterfly gardens, lizard lounges and wildlife corridors (A3.3)
- Grow food at school for your school kitchen or to sell to parents (A4.1)
- Create a system to reduce litter at school such as students eating in a designated area, having prizes for picking up litter and bins in eating areas (A5.1, A5.2, A5.3 – also Waste A7.1, A7.2, A7.3, A7.4, A7.5, A7.6, A7.7)
- Mulch your garden waste (A4.3)
- Create a plan to link biodiversity into the teaching and learning at the school (B1.1, B1.2, B1.3, B1.4, C1.4)
- Get your ResourceSmart Schools Facilitator to run workshops with your students (B1.6)
- Learn about Aboriginal land management (B1.5)
- Link up with your local Landcare, Coastcare, field naturalists or other local environmental groups or your local Council (B1.6, C3.1, C3.3, C3.10)
- Write an article for your school newsletter on your biodiversity activities and make suggestions of what families can do at home (C1.1, C3.6)
- Write a learning story and put it on your school website, on the Sustainability Gippsland website or on social media, or use the story for the school newsletter if it is added to the school's website (C1.3)
- Start up a student action team to help drive your biodiversity program (C2.1, C2.2, C2.3 Also Core B1.3, C1.2)
- Raise money to support conservation projects in Australia e.g. Zoos Victoria, or around the world (C3.4)
- Participate in National Schools Tree Planting Day (C1.5, C 3.1, C3.3)