



## CASE STUDY

### Cecil Andrews Senior High School

#### The school

Cecil Andrews Senior High School is situated in a low socio-economic area, with an average of 95 per cent of students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Students were considered uneducated in environmental issues and lazy in their approach to litter.



#### The litter problem

The litter problem at the school was the usual lunchtime plastic wrappers and drink containers. Enough infrastructure was in place (i.e. bins in appropriate places) however, students were lazy and the education and incentive was not there for them to clean up after themselves.

Another issue is that students do not have designated eating areas. They eat anywhere on campus and at any time during the lunch break. They often move around the school while eating and drop their rubbish in a number of areas.

#### Coordinating the program

The program was coordinated by the media and arts teacher who was very passionate and enthusiastic about addressing the litter issue. While she experienced resistance from a lot of staff who had seen projects fail in the past, she did have the support of the school Principal and was determined to give the Clean Schools program a go.

A small committee consisting of five teaching staff and the student council supported the coordinator in implementing the program. Staff were responsible for running most activities and all staff had to be on board with clip boards at lunchtime in order to gather data. The support was slow to start off with as many were sceptical but gradually people started to realise the benefits.

#### Pre-program research

A litter audit and pre-program survey were completed in order to gather baseline data. The litter audit results were as follows:

Type of litter	Description of items	Total number	Percentage of total
Plastic	Various pieces	102	61.5%
Paper	Milk cartons, gem and nugget packets	40	24.1%
Glass	Beer bottles	3	1.8%
Metal	Yoghurt lids, cans	11	6.6%
Organic	Food scraps	10	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>166</b>	<b>100%</b>

Of these items, about 50 per cent were from home and 50 per cent from the canteen. 80 per cent could have been recycled and 10 per cent were compostable.

The survey to students indicated laziness as the main reason why students litter. When asked "what are your reasons for littering?" 60 per cent answered that they "couldn't be bothered to find a bin".

## Program implementation

### Time

The Clean Schools program ran in the second term of 2011 over weeks one to eight. The data collection period took place in week two with a litter audit and student survey. The program was implemented during weeks three to five. Week six was a post-program period of no activity. During week seven the final student surveys were sent out and the final litter audit was completed in week eight.

### Displays

A display was set up in the library including pin-up boards with photos and information posters for students and staff to view. There was also a display of books and resources on the environment. The library staff kept these up to date.

Posters were distributed to every learning area in the school, advertising the campaign and showing the destruction of our environment caused by litter.

### Daily messages

A message bulletin was read over the PA every Monday morning. It was brief so as not to be too disruptive to classes and stated how the program was progressing and the activities that were happening during the week ahead. There were also messages placed in the daily notices when necessary.

### Activities

A different activity took place each week over a six week period. Due to the attitudes of students and a fear of turning them against learning about litter issues activities were designed to be 'cool' in some way and prizes were often an incentive.

During the first week, there was a viewing of a mini litter movie put together by the program coordinator to educate students on the effects of litter and the importance of keeping the school clean. This took place in the Performing Arts centre at lunchtime and popcorn was provided. Many students attended.

Some art classes participated in designing a bin. They used the Keep Australia Beautiful 'Learning about litter' resource to inform their designs then painted some of the school bins. This intrigued many students and brightened up the school quite a lot. The bins needed extra coats of varnish to prevent other students scratching into the artwork. They can still be graffitied, however the designs were very teenage appropriate and student ownership of the designs has so far prevented them from being vandalised by their peers.

To create a sense of novelty, basketball hoops were attached to the bins with the support of the Design and Technology teacher. Unfortunately, this did not last long as the students became destructive.

A form quiz took place each week. During the 10 minute form class (roll call after recess) each student had to answer five multiple choice questions a day. The student who scored the highest per form got a prize at the end of the week.

Film making students entered the Keep Australia Beautiful 'Trash My Ad' competition and several were finalists.

The Principal even dressed up as 'Percy the Panda' and gave chocolates to students seen doing the right thing on a few occasions at lunchtime.

All year levels (eight to 12) had the opportunity to participate in all activities. The activities were optional so as not to create resistance. Encouragement was the key to educating them so that they would want to do the right thing.





### **Enforcement**

Students at Cecil Andrews do not respond well to forms of enforcement so instead staff worked on positive reinforcement and rewarded those doing the right thing. This then had a chain reaction for students who often littered. Many gradually used the bins like their friends.

### **Celebration**

The plan for week eight, the final week, was to present awards at assembly with a

Keep Australia Beautiful representative attending to congratulate the students and assist in giving out prizes. However, the program coordinator was sick, so this took place at the start of the following term. Spot prizes were drawn at the assembly for students who participated. All students were thanked and there was a write up in the school newsletter.

### **Competitions**

The coordinator caught the attention of students by offering prizes such as stainless steel water bottles, sports bags, iTunes vouchers and movie passes. The student councillors walked around to all classes to show the prizes on offer and create incentive.

The major, ongoing competition was the 'Clean School Champ' – the student who gained the most points for correctly disposing rubbish and volunteering to pick up others' rubbish. This took place over the six week program implementation period. Each staff member had a clipboard while on duty and recorded every student who was placing their rubbish or other peoples rubbish in the bin. There was a point system and the more rubbish they put in the bin, the more points they got towards their clan (school house team) and also individual points towards winning the major prize of a bag or stainless steel water bottle.

A poster competition was run by the Society and Environment (S&E) department for students in Years 8 to 10. Students used 'Learning about litter' in S&E to educate them before completing their posters.

### **Community involvement**

The parents and school community were kept informed through the school newsletter. Adverts were placed before the campaign and updates during the campaign with photos and progress reports. Parents were reminded to encourage their children to put their rubbish in the bin.

Staff support was difficult in the beginning. It wasn't until staff realised the effort being put in by the coordinator, and that it was actually working, that they offered more support.



## Outcome

The following results from the final litter audit show a decrease in the number of litter items by 52 per cent. An incredible result!

Type of litter	Description of items	Total number	Percentage of total
Plastic	Small pieces	43	49.4%
Paper	Mainly nugget packs and wrappers	25	28.8%
Glass	None	0	0%
Metal	Energy drinks and coke cans	15	17.2%
Organic	Food scraps	4	4.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>87</b>	<b>100%</b>

Staff commented that they have seen a huge improvement in littering behaviour with many more students now using the bin. While they were initially cleaning up rubbish ONLY because they wanted prizes, students gradually learnt that there were other reasons to pick up rubbish. Many liked the fact that the school looked nicer and they were helping out.



## Plans for the future

The future plans include continuing the Clean School Champ competition each term, with a major prize awarded at assembly in week eight, and litter information used during some class time for environmental education.

The coordinator recognises that there is still a long way to go to eliminate litter in the school. The aim is to gradually change the culture of the school to one where littering is unacceptable and a Clean School is the norm.