



**SUSTAINABILITY AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION  
PLAN 2023**

*The Highmount Preschool community acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work, learn and play. We pay our respects to indigenous elders, past, present and emerging.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Highmount Preschool community is committed to taking an active role in caring for the environment and promoting and contributing to a sustainable future. We believe sustainability education in early childhood is an imperative part of the curriculum.

Children and educators respect and appreciate the natural environment, and participate in sustainable practices such as the reduction of waste, pollution and greenhouse gases. We are committed to the actions of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rethink how our actions effect the environment.

We believe maximising children's engagement with the outdoor environment and integrating access between the indoors and the outdoors enables children to actively engage and explore nature, diversify their play experiences and learn to be environmentally responsible.

By providing intentional and planned learning spaces, we promote growing and preparing food, waste reduction and recycling. The use of recycled, reclaimed and natural materials also encourages deeper thinking and learning to promote sustainable environmental habits.

## **CURRENT PRACTICE**

Key sustainability elements in our outdoor play space are gardens consisting of seasonal fruit, vegetables and indigenous plants, serviced by a rainwater tank. Large native trees and a thatch hut also provide natural shade for outdoor play.

The Preschool provides cloth hand towels for each child to use in place of paper towel, and children's bathroom taps turn off automatically to eliminate water wastage.

Children are encouraged to bring healthy, package-free food in their lunch boxes. Compost tubs are provided for food scraps, and the children take turns to empty scraps into the compost bin in the playground. Worm juice is collected from the compost bin and families are welcome to use it as natural fertiliser in their own gardens.

Recycling is heavily promoted across the Preschool, with labelled bins in the classroom to support appropriate disposal of waste. Children also participate in recycling workshops.

Natural materials such as wood are used throughout the Preschool wherever possible, and recycled and sustainable craft items are sourced from Reverse Art Truck and Resource Rescue. Children are also encouraged to bring materials from home for construction and craft.

## RECENT INITIATIVES

Over the past year, we have introduced further measures to support our sustainability practices. These include the development of a bush tucker and native plant garden, which children help to maintain with water from the rain tank.

All water used in waterplay activities is sourced from the rainwater tank, and is disposed of on the garden at the end of play.

Additional signage has been added around the kindergarten, including clear labels for waste bins (compost, recycling and landfill), composting life cycle visual, learning outcomes, and what we are in our garden.

Children and educators re-use paper, cardboard and craft items where possible, and lights, air-conditioners, power points and appliances are turned off when not in use.

All correspondence is electronic where possible, including the use of Story Park for the documentation of children's learning and communication with families.

Large format books about recycling and composting were purchased to support children's learning and knowledge about sustainable practices, and Monash council facilitated a composting workshop.

Our local Bunnings store at Notting Hill has generously supported the kindergarten by running gardening and composting workshops, and donating items such as soil, plants and gardening tools.

In term 1, 2023 we engaged Holly's Bees to facilitate an interactive workshop for the children to learn about the importance of bees in our environment.

## FUTURE ACTIONS

To continue our commitment to sustainability, each year the kindergarten will engage a representative from Monash to facilitate composting, recycling and sustainability workshops.

We are also planning to introduce a Bush Kinder program in 2023 where we will visit local nature reserves to learn about biodiversity, eco systems and natural habitats.

We will continue to encourage children to talk about the environment and sustainability at home, and share ideas and information with their families to support the implementation of sustainable practices in the home.

An environmental audit will also take place each term whereby educators and children will look at an area of the action plan, discuss our progress, and identify where improvements can be made.

A log of further actions to be implemented can be found in [Attachment 1: Sustainability Action Plan](#)