



Services for schools

Transform your school into a learnscape, a living, breathing example of sustainable living that will help shape the citizens of tomorrow

Working with *Living Schools* is an inspiring process of learning and collaboration. We take it one step at a time, ensuring you develop the skills and knowledge to create and maintain your project in the long-term.

The following services are offered to schools either individually or as a package. The latter is a complete process of hands-on guidance through the various stages of learnscape development, with ongoing support and advice via phone and email for up to three months. Each of the five components is delivered as a face-to-face workshop for teachers and participating parents.

A major focus is the development of creativity and problem-solving skills through the creation of outdoor learning areas that mimic native ecosystems. Children learning and playing in such an environment, an environment built by and belonging to them, will grow into adults who value their natural environment. Such adults will be able to offer their society creative solutions for sustainable living.

1. Finding the Money

Because schools receive little money for environmental education and restoration programs, many will require assistance to obtain funding and resources for their project. This may be in the form of a government grant, community in-kind sponsorship, fundraising events or partnerships with other organizations.

Various fund raising options will be discussed with the school and a brainstorming session held to determine all possible sources of funding and resources. A strategy will then be developed that will ensure all costs are covered. Assistance preparing grant applications and sponsorship proposals and making contact with relevant organisations will also be provided.

2. Site Assessment

Teachers and participating parents participate in a tour of the school and various tests for soil quality, a biodiversity audit and waste, energy and water audits are undertaken. Various development options are then discussed and debated.

3. School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP)

The QLD Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) and the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) have recommended that all schools develop a School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP). *Living Schools* can assist schools to develop their SEMP, inline with departmental recommendations, integrating all aspects of their learnscape development process.

Teachers and participating parents and students work together to develop a vision for their school. They also audit the various environmental impacts the school has, as well as specific areas of degradation and concern. Aims and objective for the move towards sustainability will be identified. From this process a detailed and whole of school environment plan is developed collaboratively with *Living Schools* and submitted to the school for approval.

The plan will include recommended plant species, soil and water quality remarks, aspect considerations, topography, probably original vegetation community and potential activities and projects that could be undertaken to reduce environmental impact and expand learning opportunities. The plan will also include a detailed bibliography and contacts for sourcing local natives, heritage fruit and vegetable seeds, bush tucker and/or Permaculture plants.

4. Planning and Design

With their aims and objectives in mind, teachers and students participate in a workshop where tokens representing various elements of a completed learnscape are placed and rearranged on a map of the school grounds. Example may include a frog pond, nature corridor, rainwater tank, veggie patch, bush-tucker area, bird attracting garden or worm farm. The process is guided by a discussion of Permaculture design principles, drawn from close observation of the healthy functioning of natural ecosystems.

Participants will be shown many techniques for maximising biodiversity, with the object of achieving long-term sustainability. From this workshop and the data collected during the site assessment, a professionally drawn design will be produced. This design will be based on principles of sustainable water management, efficient energy and resource use and proven organic growing methods.

5. Skill Based Workshops or Mini Projects

As part of this package, schools receive two practical workshops that result in the creation of the first two elements of their learnscape project. Examples include:

- Building a frog pond
- Planting a habitat corridor and windbreak
- Creating a herb spiral
- Preparing a no-dig garden
- Creating a bush tucker trail
- Building and managing a school worm farm
- Planting a food forest

The workshops are designed to provide motivation, equipping the team with new skills and confidence in their ability to tackle their project in small manageable tasks. Notes will be provided so that participants are able to use and develop management skills, particularly in the long-term when the original instigators move on.

How much will it cost?

Costs are kept to a minimum and are calculated on a sliding scale so don't hesitate to contact us if you would like further information. *Living Schools* will work with your whole school to ensure everyone has a sense of ownership of the project, from the executive to the General Assistant, and will tailor a program that suits your needs.