

# LGSWA Case Study – A Whole School Approach to Collecting Hard to Recycle Items

## Leaning Tree Steiner School

Leaning Tree Steiner School (LTSS) is a regional school located in Geraldton, with 134 (K-Yr 9) students. In the past few years, LTSS has implemented a whole school approach that supports students and staff to work together towards achieving a sustainable school community.

This case study highlights LTSS’s successful implementation of a waste reducing program, in particular, the collection of hard to recycle items.

The school’s ‘Waste Sorted’ collection hub, is strategically located at the front of the school site, allowing for both school and community access to sort waste for recycling and reuse. Waste collection infrastructure at the hub provides for Containers for Change containers, paper, cardboard and plastic recycling. In addition, the LTSS hub is also a community collection point for hard to recycle items. This is achieved via [Terracycle](#), an online recycling ‘collect and return’ program.



The schools publicly accessible Waste Sorted Collection Hub

The LTSS Terracycle program began as a parent initiative in 2018, and is now led by the school’s ‘Waste Warriors’ student team. The program commenced with the collection of coffee pods. Once this proved successful, the school community gained the confidence to collect other hard to recycle items. The program has since expanded to include the collection and recycling of oral care items, ziplock bags and cling film, writing instruments, dish and air care products, skincare items and hair care products.



The Rivergum class sorting and cleaning the Dish and Air Care items collected

### Links



#### EYLF:

**Outcome 2:** Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

**Outcome 3:** Children have strong sense of wellbeing.

**Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners.

#### NQs

**1.1** The Educational program enhances child’s learning and development.

**3.2.2** The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

**6** Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

#### EFP:

Water

Energy

Purchasing and waste

#### SHP:

Community partnerships

Economics and built environments

#### SDG:

**Goal 7:** Affordable and Clean Energy

**Goal 12:** Responsible consumption and production

Each class is assigned responsibility for the coordination and collection of a category of waste for recycling. Students participate by establishing signage, collection boxes and information sharing. The 'Waste Warriors' take on the role of monitoring and encouraging students to use the program. This shared responsibility across the whole school helps to support program engagement, ownership and success.

The Waste Collection Hub is regularly used by students, parents and the wider community. A local hairdressing salon uses this collection hub for all their hair care product waste. Once the minimum volume of items has been collected, they are mailed to Terracycle for recycling, which currently occurs twice a year.



The Seabreeze class sorting through the writing implements collected.

The collection, recycling and reuse of resources not only promotes a circular economy, there is also a financial benefit. Terracycle offers redeemable reward points, with the school earning almost \$100 towards their sustainability fund. In addition, money raised from the refund of drink containers via the 'Containers for Change' (CfC) program has already helped towards purchasing a CfC collection bin.

During the past few years, LTSS has succeeded in collecting and diverting 175kg of waste from going to landfill. What a great achievement!



Waste Warriors Team displaying their waste station information.

Broader sustainability initiatives within the school include the installation of solar panels to reduce electricity usage and a wastewater recycling system which feeds into the underground reticulation system for the lawns. Food waste is also reduced across the school via waste-free lunch program. Collected lunch food scraps are used to nourish the compost, worms, and chickens daily. The Kindy and Pre-Primary students take responsibility for managing the school's worm farm, with the worm castings and juice used to enhance the gardens.



A feast for the Rainbow playgroup worms.

The early years classes also reuse the photocopier scrap paper for spelling practise and drawings, whilst other items such as egg cartons, boxes and bottle caps are re-purposed for craft activities.

The Leaning Tree Steiner School has had great success with the implementation of this system and will continue to collect these hard to recycle items. These initiatives not only collectively promote sustainability, but also encourage students to contribute towards taking responsibility for caring for their community and environment.