

## Energy wise schools program

Supporting local schools to raise energy awareness and reduce climate footprints

### Summary

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) sponsored the Energy Wise Schools program from 2007 to 2009. The program, which is delivered by the Holloways Beach Environmental Education Centre, works with local schools to improve their energy efficiency and to raise awareness among students about energy use behaviour and the implications for the Great Barrier Reef.

### Background

Energy Wise Schools is an environmental education program delivered by the Holloways Beach Environmental Education Centre — a Queensland Department of Education hub. The objectives of the Energy Wise Schools Program include:

- reduction of energy consumption and costs for schools
- increased awareness among younger generations of energy use behaviour, its implications and the actions that can be taken to save energy and money and help the environment.

- spreading of energy efficiency practices to homes, other schools and the wider community.

### Objectives

The sponsorship project aimed to support the Energy Wise Schools program in improving energy efficiency within participating schools (the overall target was 10 per cent reduction in kilowatt hours used in the first year) leading to lower energy bills and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.



Students from Edge Hill State School (left) showcase their achievements at the 'Be Clever, Have Energy Forever' presentation day. Images courtesy of the Cairns Post.

**Project name:** Energy Wise Schools Program

**Project code:** 4.3B.414.1.07

**Outcomes:** D2.1 & D2.2

**Year:** 2007-2008

**Bulletin type:** Final

## Actions

The GBRMPA sponsored the Holloways Bay Environmental Education Centre to aid in implementing the Energy Wise Schools program. Funding covered three years (2007 to 2009) and contributed to Objective 4: Reducing Climate Footprints, of the *Great Barrier Reef Climate Change Action Plan*.

Under the program, a Memorandum of Understanding document was drafted with each participating school. The memorandum indicated intended actions regarding energy efficiency practices and also set agreed targets and performance indicators.

## Outputs

An Action Plan was developed by each school to embed Energy Wise activities into the school's curriculum.

Progress of the six participating schools in 2009 is summarised in the *Energy Wise Schools Program Annual Report 2009*. Annual reports discuss energy efficiency practices implemented by the schools, milestones and performance indicators.

## Outcomes

Participating schools for 2009 were Edge Hill State School, Cairns School of Distance Education (CSDE), Trinity Beach State School, White Rock State School, Gordonvale State School and Gordonvale State High School. Implementation of the program varied between schools, with differing emphasis placed on curriculum, energy efficiency measures and awareness raising. All schools, except CSDE, used a team of students to implement Energy Wise strategies throughout the school. The schools implemented energy efficiency measures under their Action Plan and



Edge Hill State School students receive their Energy Wise Schools gift bags. Image courtesy of the Cairns Post.



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*Energy Wise Schools* voluntarily implemented a range of energy-saving measures in 2009. These included switching to energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs (left) and installing solar panels (right).

encouraged staff and students to save energy at home and at school.

## ***The program aims to ensure that students develop a deeper understanding of energy conservation and of the actions that can be taken to reduce climate footprints***

Three of the schools achieved their targeted 10 per cent reduction in energy usage for the 2009 school year: Gordonvale State School (14.7 per cent), Trinity Beach State School (19.6 per cent) and White Rock State School (30 per cent reduction) – leading to similar per cent savings in energy bills and greenhouse gas emissions. Of the other schools, Gordonvale State High and Edge Hill State School engaged in extensive building refurbishments that may account for a lack of energy savings. CSDE (1.3 per cent reduction) had already implemented energy efficiency practices prior to entering the program.

The GBRMPA's sponsorship of the Energy Wise Schools program has helped local schools promote sustainable thinking and initiatives to reduce carbon footprints, and help protect the Reef from climate change.

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