



What is a Cool Cubby?

A Cool Cubby is the short and easy name for a sustainable cubby house. By adding sustainability components (i.e. rainwater tank, solar panel, veggie garden, native plants, worm farm and weather station) to cubby houses of community preschools, they will become 'Cool Cubbies' and demonstrate wise management and use of our key resources, e.g. water, energy, waste and biodiversity. This project aims to raise awareness about sustainable living with young children, their teachers, parents and community. You can find Cool Cubbies in seven Early Childhood services on the NSW North Coast in the Lismore, Ballina and Richmond Valley council areas.

Project partners

This project is organised through a collaboration of Rous County Council, Richmond Landcare Inc., Evans River K-12 School Green Team, and supported by the Northern Rivers Environmental Trust. The success of the Cool Cubbies Project is reflected in the strength of the local community partnerships. The project greatly appreciates sponsorship from Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, Richmond Landcare Inc. and Rous County Council. As well there was vital financial and building support from Nickel Energy, Duraplas, Bunnings Warehouse, Xylosinuous building and design, Evans River K-12 School Green Team and Ballina High School building students.

Further information

Visit the Cool Cubbies webpage at www.rous.nsw.gov.au (select 'Your water account' 'Your school' from the menu) for further information about the project, including children's picture story book, sustainability teaching notes, sustainability component icon cards, photography gallery and useful links.

Enjoy learning together about sustainable living with your Cool Cubby. Please ensure you educate all the children and staff about safe use and care of all the sustainability components. We hope the Cool Cubbies Project provides you with inspiration and information to get started or further the education for environmental sustainability at your Early Childhood Centre.

Cool Cubbies Team, October 2011.

What do I need to create a Cool Cubby?

You need a cubby house at your preschool to retrofit. Most designs will be ok as long as it has a tin roof suitable for catching the rain and attaching the guttering. Some of the cubbies used on the NSW North Coast are shown in the photographs here:

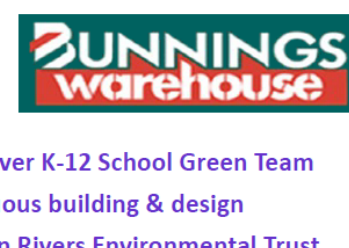


You also need to organise, purchase and install the sustainability components. Think about getting help from your local Council and water/solar suppliers.

More information over page ...

Creating a Cool Cubby

A3 poster



How do I set up the five sustainability components explored with the Cool Cubbies Project?

Supervise children at all times around all components.

Keep a worm farm

Turn your food scraps into healthy garden soil.



Set up a 3-bin system, i.e. food scraps, recycling and landfill.

Worm farms can be sourced from you local council or hardware shops. Worms can be purchased from hardware shops, or sometimes local community gardens.

Ensure hand washing after worm farming.



Install a solar panel

Power a light with the sun's energy.



Get a licensed electrician to install a solar panel, light, inverter and safe switch.

Try asking local solar power businesses for support and advice.

Educate children about using the light switch carefully and safely.



Grow native plants

Protect native plants, animals and their habitats.



Join the local landcare group. Ask for help in choosing and sourcing local natives.

Keep records of what you have planted and understand the changes, e.g. flowers, pods, seeds and leaves.

Use suitable plants for children. Sensory plants are a wonderful way to introduce children to gardening. Herbs and bush tucker plants are great examples.

Ensure hand washing after working with soils.



Install a rainwater tank

Use outdoors and save water from the town supply.

Clean roof and trim back all close and overhanging trees. Check that it is a good site for the tank. Fit guttering to the cubby house roof.

Build a solid base, e.g. big pavers, concrete, or blue metal.

Get a licensed plumber to install a small tank, e.g. 450 litre slimline, with a stand and clear tube to show water level.



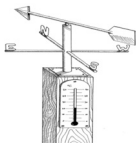
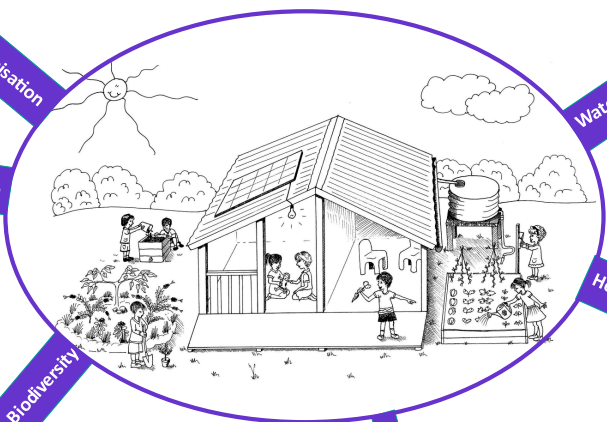
Waste minimisation

Energy conservation

Promoting Biodiversity

Water conservation

Healthy local food



Make a weather station

Install a wind vane, rain gauge and thermometer.

Empty water each day and record. Use this information to help plan garden watering beds.

Build a veggie garden

Grow your own fresh and healthy food.

Purchase a suitable garden bed and fill with soil, plant seedlings and mulch, e.g. sugar cane. Site near tank. Check there is enough sun for growing vegetables.

Mulch regularly.

Cook with or sell produce to parents or at a local market.

Handle soils and mulches with care, follow instructions on the bags or from the supplier.

Ensure hand washing after working in the garden.

