Over the past year, we at St Peter’s Primary School in Epping have begun our journey to becoming a Resource Smart School. As a Catholic school, we are continually working towards ensuring that we take action to be Stewards of God’s creation.

The first stage of working towards being a Resource Smart School has seen the school community working towards completing the Core module which is one of the five modules involved in Resource Smart accreditation. This has seen us adopt a whole school approach to sustainability while creating policies, goals and undertaking some exciting projects that support our environment. In order to further our structures at school we have also developed both staff and student action teams. With the support of our CERES (Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies) facilitator, all staff were involved in an interactive and informative day to help us along our way. This day was highly valuable as staff made many realisations about our current practices which lead to a deeper understanding of what type of a school we would like to become.

We have collected data relating to our consumption of water, energy and gas as well as the amount of rubbish we generate though reviewing our bills. Using the SETS program we have been able to track our actions to reflect on our practices standing while making realistic goals for the future.

Our school has continued to work towards reducing our footprint thorough initiatives such as Wrapper Free Friday, the development of a frog pond, implementation of compost and worm farms and creation of concrete couches. In late 2012 we had our first ever St Peter’s Green Day in which all students from our school were involved in a day filled with environmental activities. We will again be having Green Day in 2013. This year we aim to make the day more interactive and educational and have made connections through the Kids Teaching Kids Program. We have also supported Clean Up Australia Day (2012-2013). We have broadened our links with the community through connections with the City of Whittlesea, Darebin Creek Management Committee, Zoos Victoria, Merri Creek Management Committee, Bunnings and various local schools.

In 2012, we entered into the Resource Smart awards for the first time in the categories of Waste School of the Year, Biodiversity School of the Year, Teacher of the Year and Student Team of the Year. We were a finalist in the newcomer of the year award along with two other schools. Although we did not receive this award we were thrilled to be nominated and did receive recognition certificates in the categories of Teacher of the Year and Student Team of the Year.

We have created a whole school sustainability policy which was approved by the school board and developed a School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP), which is continually reflected upon when planning for future action.

We continually celebrate our achievements through our school newsletter, assemblies and in 2012 hosted a council network meeting at St Peter’s to share our work on sustainability. We are currently working on maintaining our school’s sustainability blog as another avenue of sharing our work.

By the end of 2013, St Peter’s will have completed all the necessary steps to receive our first star (Core Module). We have already seen a positive shift in the behaviors of students, staff and parents towards environmental sustainability as a result of our current involvement in the Resource Smart program; and we are confident that this will continue to become even more accepted as the general expectation of our school community as we continue on our journey. We believe that through our work on the Core Module we have become much more active and aware citizens when thinking about environmental sustainability. We cannot wait to continue our journey!