

**Sustainability Policy**

Meruka Childcare Co-operative aims to encourage and increase awareness of environmental responsibilities and implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children will be supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment. Where possible, environmentally sustainable practices will be embedded into the operations of the centre and involve educators, children and families in order to be successful.

**Goals**

**Meruka will endeavour to:**

* Ensure the environment is safe, clean and well-maintained
* Promote children’s awareness of the environment through daily practices, resources and interactions
* Encourage sustainable practices
* Encourage educators, children and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.

**Strategies**

**Meruka’s Committee and the Centre Co-ordinator will:**

* Recycle where possible
* Use Council and Government departments as sources of information on sustainable practices and resources within the local community. They will also liaise with the Council and Government departments for possible grants available to put in place water and energy conservation practices in the Centre
* Purchase equipment that is eco-friendly, where possible, with the view to reduce the amount of plastic and disposable equipment purchased and promote the selection of materials that are made of natural materials and fibers.

**Educators will:** Make sustainable practices a part of the daily routine. These include:

* Recycling
* Gardening
* Energy conservation
* Water conservation
* Role model sustainable practices
* Discussing sustainable practices with the children and families as part of Meruka’s educational programming
* Providing information to families on sustainable practices that are implemented at the education and care service and encourage the application of these practices in the home environment
* Sharing ideas between educators, children and families about sustainable ideas, implementation and resources. This may be through a variety of methods including Committee meetings, emails, newsletters and conversations
* Setting up and use a worm farm or composting bin to reduce food waste. Children will be encouraged to place food scraps into separate containers for use in the worm farm or the composting bin. Educators will discuss with the children and families which scraps worms can eat and which foods can be composted. The children will be involved in maintaining the worm farm and compost.
* Role modelling energy and water conservation practices on turning off lights and air-conditioning when a room is not in use, emptying water play containers onto garden areas.

## *Related policies/legislation*

## *Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:*

* Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
* Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
* National Quality Standard

**Links to other Meruka Child Care Co-operative policies and procedures**

* Behaviour Guidance Policy
* Child Protection Policy
* Excursions and Service Events Policy
* Food Safety and Hygiene Policy
* Occupational Health and Safety Policy
* Sun Smart Policy
* Water Safety Policy

**Referenced National Quality Standards**

* **Quality Area 3 – Physical Environment**
	+ **3.3** The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future.