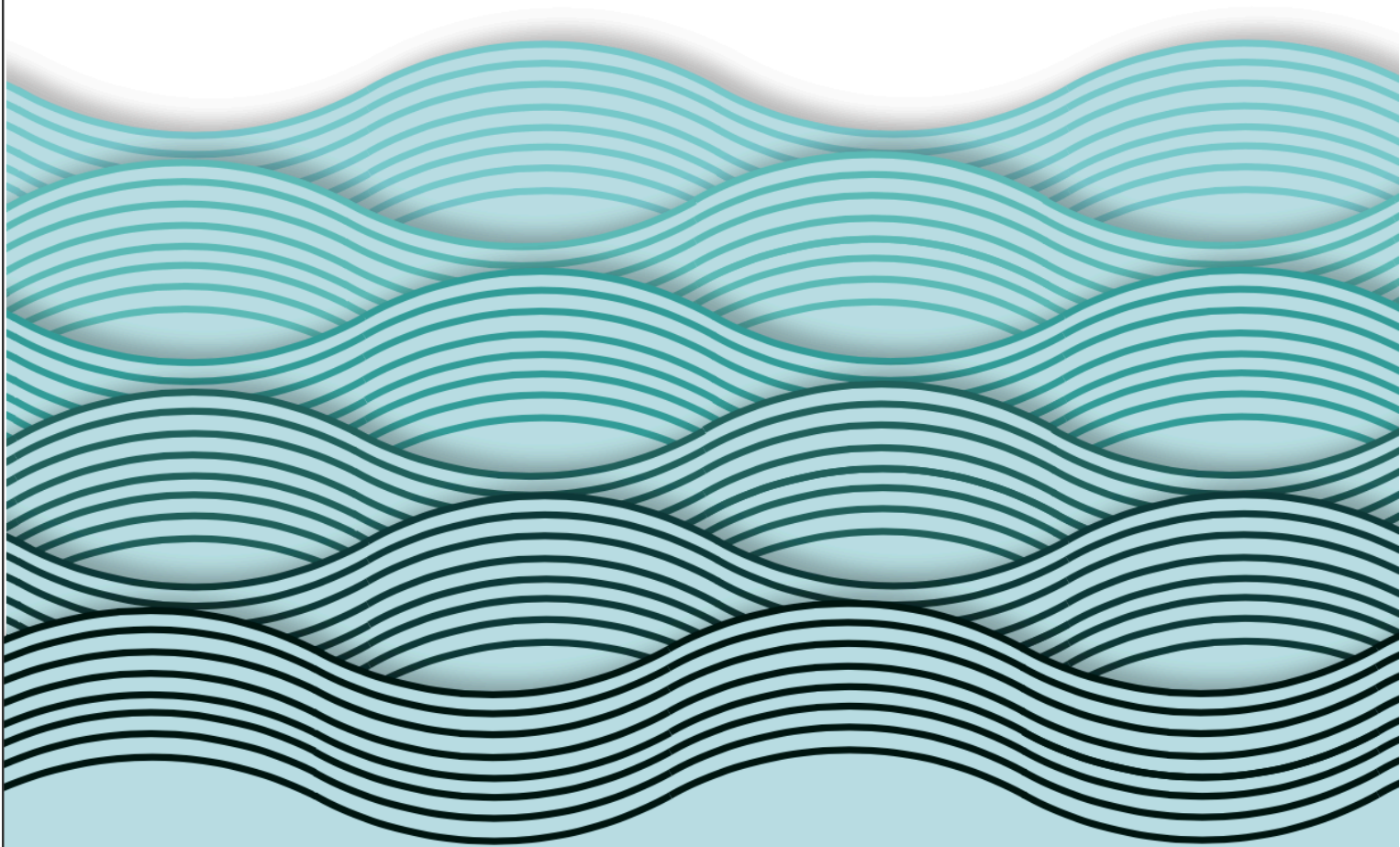




# MARINE CHAMPIONS' SUSTAINABLE STEPS GUIDE

Ensuring what we do today creates a better tomorrow.



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**On average, we each use 53kg of plastic a year, and generate over 300 million tonnes of plastic waste.**

**By 2030, this figure is expected to double.**

Litter, plastics, and marine debris are an identified threat to marine environments throughout the world. Sadly, a major component of marine debris is made up of single-use plastics. About 40% of plastic items we use are single use, and common single-use plastic items include plastic drink bottles, plastic bags, plastic cutlery, and plastic cups; things we use for only a few seconds that can harm and damage our environments for many years.

Unfortunately, we at the Marine Mammal Foundation witness the direct negative impact plastics and marine debris has on our local marine mammals. From debilitating entanglements to mortality from plastic ingestion, plastics and marine debris harm many of the animals we appreciate in our marine environments.

Thankfully, we know we can solve this issue! Simple sustainable choices and actions can have a huge positive impact and make a real positive difference in our environment.

For example, if every Australian household used 1 fewer single-use plastic bags every year, it would prevent the use of over 9.9 million plastic bags; 1 fewer a week would prevent the use of over 478.4 million.

Using our RETHINK mentality, we can consider the way we use plastic, and make simple and effective changes that will have long-term effects, now and into the future.

Dalberg analysis, Jambeck & al (2014). Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean.  
Australian Bureau of Statistics Household and Family Projections (2016-2041) data



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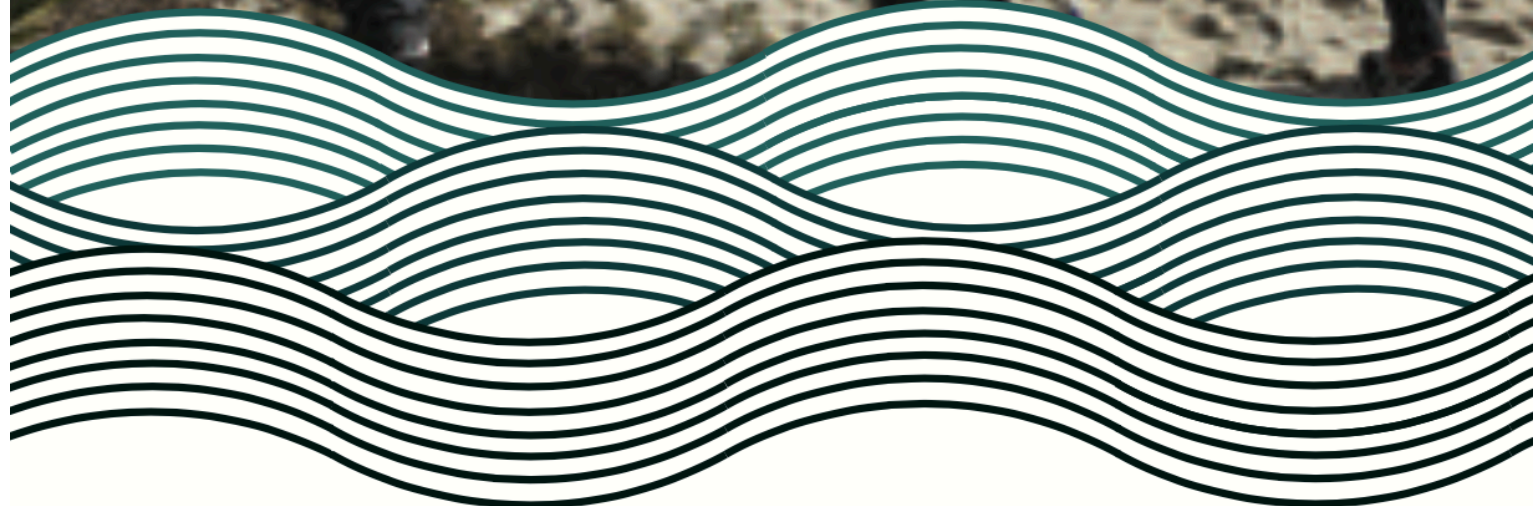
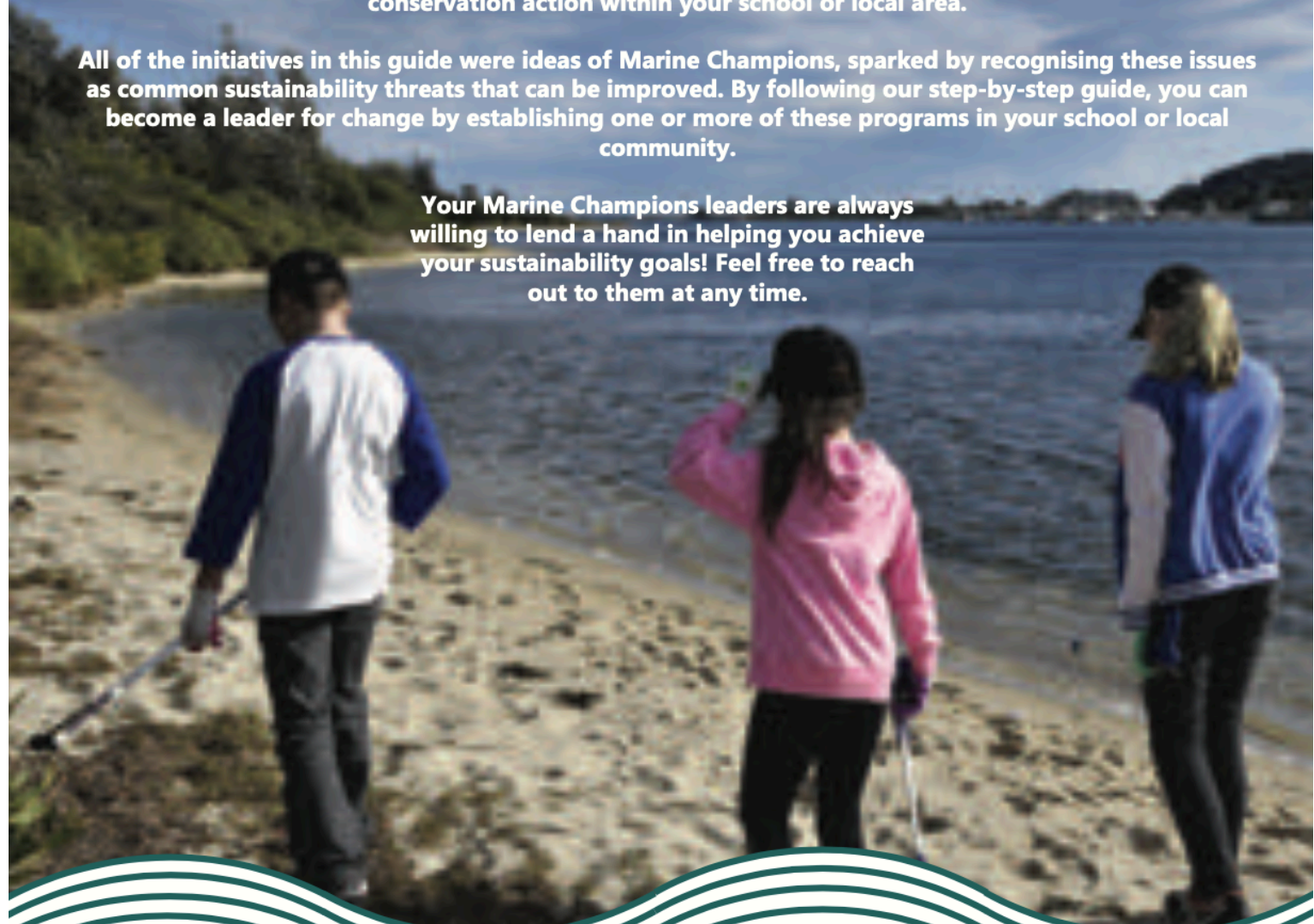
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# Your actions can make a big difference.

The Sustainable Steps Guide is a resource created by the Marine Mammal Foundation's Marine Champions, demonstrating how to make a difference in your community. This guide has been designed to provide you with campaigns, ideas, and handy hints for you to improve sustainability or further conservation action within your school or local area.

All of the initiatives in this guide were ideas of Marine Champions, sparked by recognising these issues as common sustainability threats that can be improved. By following our step-by-step guide, you can become a leader for change by establishing one or more of these programs in your school or local community.

Your Marine Champions leaders are always willing to lend a hand in helping you achieve your sustainability goals! Feel free to reach out to them at any time.



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# PLASTIC FREE CANTEENS

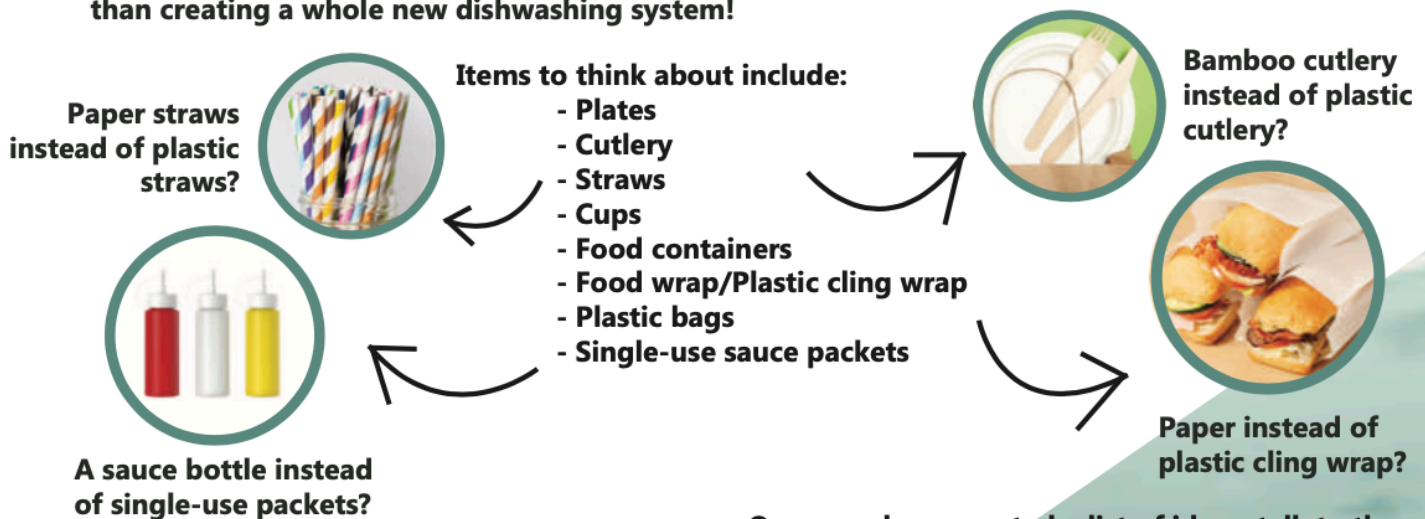
School canteens are usually one of the biggest sources of plastic pollution in a school. Items found in canteens, such as plastic wrap, plastic cutlery, plastic plates and many more are all harmful for the environment, and can be replaced with other sustainable, biodegradable or reusable items.

**1.** Do some research on why plastic is not a good option for your canteen. It's helpful to be prepared and to be able to clearly and confidently say why your canteen should go plastic free. If you can suggest alternatives, it will help you feel more knowledgeable, confident and well-prepared.

**2.** In terms of replacements, you can either replace plastic with reusable, biodegradable or compostable options. For example, if you have noticed your canteen uses single-use plastic cutlery;

As a reusable option, you could suggest reusable plates and metal cutlery. A few of the positives about reusable items is that they are generally cheaper and only need to be replaced if damaged, but you may also need to think about who would clean these items.

As a biodegradable option, you could suggest biodegradable plates and cutlery made out of materials such as bamboo, cornstarch or PLA. This option is a bit more expensive, as these items would need to be frequently restocked to keep up with the demands of your canteen. You may also need to think about waste disposal, does your school have a compost system or school garden, or will these items be thrown away anyway? A positive of this option is that it would require less effort than creating a whole new dishwashing system!



## TOP TIPS

Be patient and respectful. You may not be able to change the minds of others, or they may not be able to get rid of plastic because of sourcing, rules or costs. If you can make small improvements, that's fantastic! Be able to celebrate your achievements, as even a small change can make a big difference.

Companies such as EcoSouLife and Environmental Enterprises produce items such as food containers, plates and cutlery made out of cornstarch and PLA.

**3.** Once you have created a list of ideas, talk to the catering or cafeteria staff. Sometimes you may be able to speak with them directly, but you may have to call or email them, or have a teacher speak with them for you. Always remember to be polite.

**4.** You may have to have a meeting with higher members of school staff, such as your school Board or Principal, to pitch or present your ideas. This is the time to suggest reasons why going plastic free is a good idea and possible alternatives to plastic items. It may be good to bring along a list of plastic items you see in your canteen and possible replacements to give to the other members of the meeting for them to read through later.

**5.** If your ideas are supported, make sure to follow up to ensure items are ordered and changes are being made.



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## TOP TIP

Be aware that if you set up a group, you've made a commitment. Always turn up to meetings unless you have something else that is very important, and let someone in the group know that you won't be able to make it.

# CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT GROUP OR COMMITTEE

Working together for a dedicated cause is one of the most effective ways to make a difference!

1. Speak to a teacher that might be able to help you set up the group or committee. Always make sure to ask for permission first.
2. Find other students who may be interested - create posters to display around school, make an announcement at assembly, or send around an email.
3. Find a time and place to meet. Lunchtimes during the week are usually a good time, and try a classroom or the library.
4. In your first meeting, consider running a get-to-know-you session. Talk about why you're interested in the group, and what you're passionate about!
5. Outline the aims of the group through creating an action plan, with goals you want to achieve. You can then workshop with your group at meetings about ways to achieve your goals.
6. Decide on an action. If you're stuck, try one of the ideas in this guide! Don't be afraid to start small. You can always try larger tasks later.
7. Ask for help if you need it. Talk to teachers or even Marine Champions Leaders.

# MORE BINS!

Having the right bins in your classroom is a great way to reduce waste at school. Having different bins for rubbish, recycling, and soft plastic helps reduce classroom waste and promotes correct litter disposal.

1. Research and investigate the kinds of waste disposal undertaken at school. How many bins does your school have?  
Collect the rubbish from some bins, and undertake a litter audit to discover the types on waste being disposed of in your classroom. This is important to know, so you can make the right changes.
2. Talk to a teacher about your research. Suggest reasons why effective waste management such as soft plastic, compost or recycling, is important.
3. Speak with your teachers and environment leaders about your findings. Discuss what types of bins you will need in the classroom.
4. Once you have a plan, you may need to pitch it, or present it to other people. Remember to be respectful, and understand that these types of changes may not be possible overnight.
5. Trial your new waste management system in your classroom to see if it makes a difference. Once you have tried your new bins in your classroom, invite other classrooms to participate.
- 6.

## TOP TIPS

- Try to find local suppliers or manufacturers to supply bins and places to dispose of these items. Companies like ecobin produce bins, and REDcycle will recycle soft plastics.
- Try to work out how many bins already exist in your school, to calculate how many new bins you might need. Remember to also note the cost of these bins in your research.
- Research recycling systems your local council has in place. They may be able to sponsor your project and provide you with new bins!



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# ORGANISING A CLEAN-UP

Clean-ups are a great way to get many people involved while making a difference in the environment. Whether it is the school yard or a local park, every little bit counts!

1. Identify the area for your clean-up. It can be the whole school, or a certain area, or something that isn't part of your school, like the beach or a local park.
2. Plan a day and time. Also plan a back-up date, in case of bad weather.
3. Make sure you have all the equipment needed for the day. This includes gloves and bags, along with the litter audit data sheet.

Once you've planned the event, make sure to advertise to get people involved! Try posters, posting online, or an announcement over the speakers. Tell family and friends that you're running a clean-up, and invite them to come along and help.

5. If you're in primary school, remember to have a teacher or adult around to assist with any glass or sharp objects.

6. On the day, it's good to let people know the area they will be cleaning up - if it's a beach, let people know where to stop. Landmarks like piers or life-saving clubs are great places for boundaries.

7. After the activity, make sure you share your findings! Display posters with the amount of litter you collected, or make art out of some of the plastic collected.



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# DELIVERING A PRESENTATION

A presentation is a great way to share information with a large audience. You can provide information and share ideas to educate and inspire many people all at once! This can be done at a full-school assembly, or to any interest group.

1. Speak with the teacher in charge of organising the assembly to express your interest in speaking. Give them an overview of what you want to speak about.
2. Set a date for your presentation. It might be a good idea to speak on a special environmental or sustainability day.
3. Work out what technology you will need, such as a microphone, or a screen for a powerpoint presentation.
4. Write your presentation script. Talking about your time as a Marine Champion and everything you've learnt is a great place to start! If you need, MMF can provide you with PowerPoint slides and images for your presentation.
5. Don't forget to practice! Try practising in front of the mirror, family or friends.
6. Rehearse and run through your presentation on the day. It's best to do this in the space with the technology you need.
7. The MMF Team is there to lend you a hand when delivering your presentation. Good luck!

## TOP TIPS

Is this your first presentation?

Congratulations! Public speaking isn't easy for some people, so you're super brave for putting yourself out there.

When presenting, remember to breathe and pause at the end of sentences.

If you do get nervous, don't worry - so does everyone! Your audience won't mind. Practice can help lessen nerves!

There are heaps of online resources on how to deliver a good presentation and how to improve your public speaking skills.

# ORGANISING AN EVENT OR FUNDRAISER

An event or fundraiser is a great way to create awareness of an issue within your local community and raise money to support a cause. There are many types of events that are great to run at school, such as a bake stall, art show, or photo competition. You can even organise a nude-food day each week!

1. Decide if you want your event to be school-based, or if you will hold it outside of school. Always ask for permission from your school first.
2. Choose what type of event you would like to organise. A casual clothes day and gold-coin donation is a great way to get everyone involved and raise some money!
3. Decide what the aim of your event is - do you want to fundraise for a group or charity, celebrate a special day, or raise awareness about an issue?  
Talk to your teachers and friends about your idea, and see if they want to help! Running an event can sometimes become complicated, since there are a lot of tasks and responsibilities involved. Team-work can help take some of the stress out of the process.
4. Create a plan. Now you can start to organise your event. Pick a date and time, and where you would like it to take place.
5. Organise when it will run. If it's an event, will it be at night or during the day? If it's a competition, plan when it will be open for entries, when it will close, allocate time for judging, and the day when results are released!
6. You might also need some equipment for your event, such as tables or blutac. Speak with your teacher and find some equipment that you can use around the school. If you are doing a fundraiser, you might also need a donation tin!
7. Now that your event is locked in, you can begin advertising and letting people know about it!
8. Create and print flyers for display and distribution, ask to speak at assembly, and write a short blurb for the school newsletter sharing information about the event.
9. Now that everything is organised, you are ready to run your event! Don't forget, your Marine Champions Leaders are always willing to help out!



## GETTING CREATIVE

Artwork is a great way to connect with people and spread a message. It's also fun to create!

1. Get inspired! Art galleries, street art, or the internet are great places to start. Doodling and scribbling can also be really helpful. Just make sure that all ideas are your own, and that you're not directly copying someone else's.
2. If you want one, decide on a message. Do you want your piece to tell a story, or be a call for action, or do you simply want to have fun creating art? There are no rules, and while artwork can be about spreading a message, make sure you have fun with it too.
3. Get creative! Your artwork could be anything. You could make a sculpture, take photographs, create a painting, or sew something.
4. Consider showing your art! Many community groups and galleries have art shows where you could display your work. It's a great way to get your art and message out there!



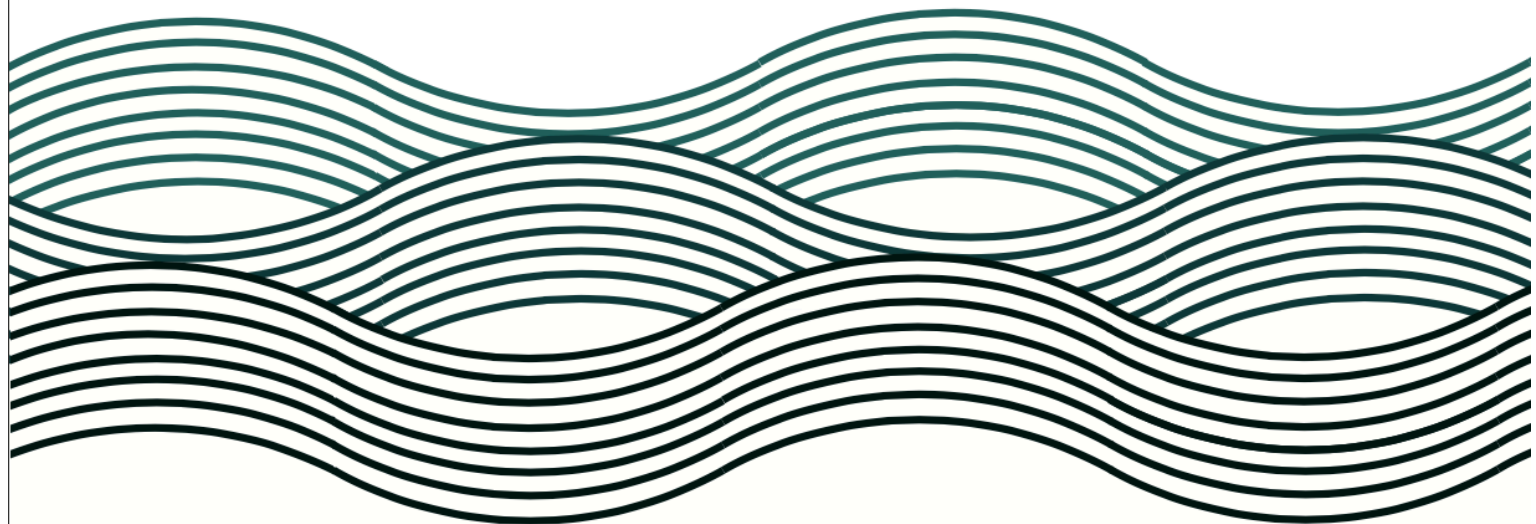
# And that's it!

## Good luck on your sustainability journey!

With these tips and tricks you **can** make a real difference to the world we live in!

Our environment is incredibly precious and it is our responsibility to ensure it is cared for. Using the initiatives described in this booklet, we hope you are inspired to show your friends, families, schools and wider communities how important it is that we respect the environment in which we live.

Remember; we can ensure what we do today creates a better tomorrow.



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# ABOUT THE MARINE CHAMPIONS PROGRAM

The Marine Champions program is the Marine Mammal Foundation's new youth outreach program. Designed for young people to share their passion for marine mammals, conservation and the environment, Marine Champions is an extension program that provides hands-on action opportunities and learning experiences for young people to gain a stronger understanding of marine science and sustainability.

The program runs in two streams of Junior Champions (Grade 4-6) and Youth Champions (Year 7-12). This program is a fun and exciting way to learn more about marine science and explore our unique local environments.

Under the guidance of Marine Champions Leaders, participants are given the opportunity to work with the MMF team, meet other like-minded young people, and participate in a variety of unique activities and guided expeditions, including field trips, boat excursions, workshops, and education sessions.

Marine Champions are provided with the tools and support to create, develop and share their own projects with each other and their community, interact directly with our marine mammal research, and gain leadership skills to make a difference within their communities.



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## **ABOUT US**

**The Marine Mammal Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation, with a vision to be a leading Australian marine mammal conservation, protecting the marine environment through research, community engagement and education.**

## **CONTACT US:**



**We'd love to hear from you!**  
**If you need help with your campaign or want to learn more about the Marine Champions program, do not hesitate to contact us at [info@marinemammal.org.au](mailto:info@marinemammal.org.au), or connect with us on one of our social media platforms!**