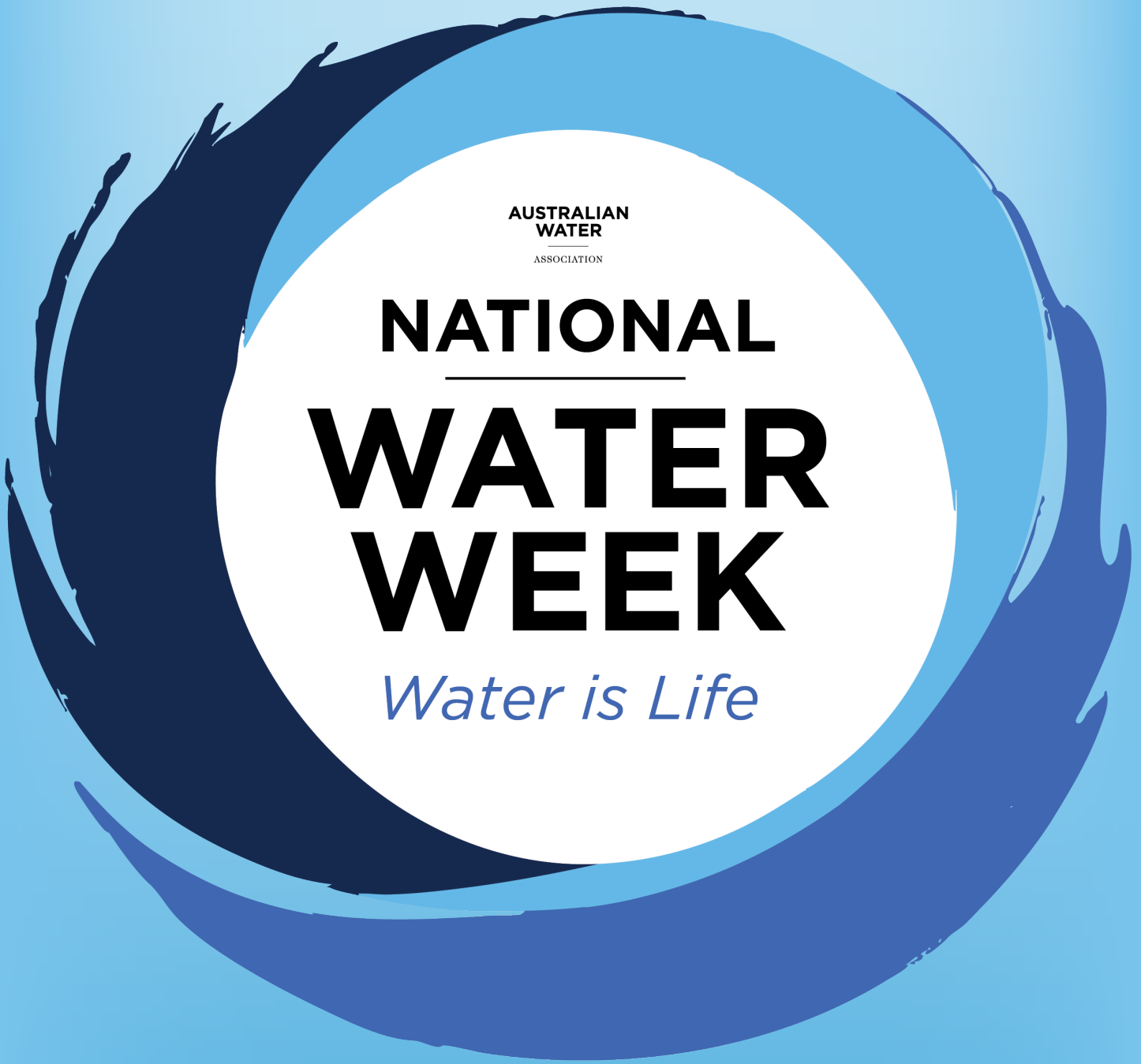




AUSTRALIAN
WATER

ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL

**WATER
WEEK**

Water is Life

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION KIT



National Water Week School Participation Kit

Easy ways to explore Water Connects Everything

National Water Week is a chance for students, teachers and school communities to explore the many ways water connects our lives, health, cultures, environment, food, energy, cities, towns and future.

Your school's participation can be as simple as a classroom activity, library display or poster competition entry, or as ambitious as a whole-school water expo, fundraiser, local waterway walk or community event.

This kit includes easy ideas to help your class, year level or whole school get involved in National Water Week.

1. About National Water Week

National Water Week is an annual opportunity to recognise the essential role water plays in our lives, communities and environment.

Led by the Australian Water Association, National Water Week brings schools, water organisations, councils, communities and individuals together to build awareness of water's value and inspire action.

In schools, National Water Week can support learning across science, geography, sustainability, technologies, civics and citizenship, health, the arts, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Whether your students are learning about the water cycle, caring for Country, water efficiency, healthy waterways, climate, engineering, sanitation, or future careers, National Water Week is a great way to make water learning visible, practical and fun.



2. 2026 theme: Water Connects Everything

The 2026 school theme is: **Water Connects Everything**

Water connects people, places, plants, animals, weather, food, energy, culture, health and technology. It connects our homes to rivers, our cities to catchments, our farms to communities, and our everyday choices to the future of our environment.

Students can explore the theme by asking:

- Where does our water come from?
- Where does water go after we use it?
- How does water connect to health, food, energy and climate?
- How do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples care for water and Country?
- What can we do at school, at home and in our communities to use water wisely?
- What water careers help keep communities healthy and sustainable?

3. How your school can get involved

There are many ways to participate in National Water Week. You can choose one quick classroom activity, run a year-level challenge, invite a guest speaker, enter the poster competition, create a library display, or hold a whole-school event.

Use the activity matrix below to find an idea that suits your students, timetable and resources. Activities range from quick classroom discussions to whole-school events, excursions and community projects.

Schools are also encouraged to contact their **local water utility or council** to ask about education resources, incursions, excursions, classroom activities, competitions, grants or local support available during National Water Week.

AWA does not currently provide school grants for National Water Week, but some local water authorities and councils may offer support for school-based activities.



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Activity Key

Recommended age group



Early years / Foundation–Year 2



Primary / Years 3–6



Lower to middle secondary / Years 7–10



Senior secondary / Years 11–12



Whole school

Time required



15–30 minutes



One lesson



2–3 lessons



One week



Ongoing or project-based

Effort level



Low effort



Medium effort



Higher effort

Cost



Free



Low cost



Moderate cost



Higher cost / excursion or external provider



Activity matrix

Activity	Recommended age group	Time	Effort	Cost	Good for
Water connects everything brainstorm					Introducing the theme, everyday water connections
Hidden water in your lunchbox					Food systems, water footprints, sustainability
Mini water cycle in a bag					Water cycle, observation, weather
Stormwater detectives					Catchments, school grounds, local environment
What should go down the drain?					Wastewater, behaviour change, sewer safety
Water words from Country				 	Local language, place-based learning, cultural respect
Invite a Water Ambassador					Careers, local water knowledge, real-world learning



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Activity	Recommended age group	Time	Effort	Cost	Good for
Poster competition		 			Creativity, visual communication, theme exploration
School water audit		 			Data, sustainability, maths, science
Leak Week challenge					Water efficiency, student leadership, action
Build a water filter challenge					STEM, design thinking, water treatment
Pipeline challenge					Engineering, teamwork, problem-solving
Water tower challenge					Engineering, gravity, pressure, design
Design a water-wise garden		 		 	Biodiversity, planning, water efficiency
Flood-ready town challenge					Climate, urban planning, resilience



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Activity	Recommended age group	Time	Effort	Cost	Good for
Older students teach younger students	   				Peer learning, leadership, communication
Library water display	   				Literacy, whole-school visibility, creativity
One-minute water video	  				Digital literacy, communication, creativity
Water story writing challenge	  	 			Literacy, creativity, water journeys
Water connects everything mural	   	 			Visual arts, whole-school participation
Create a water museum	   			 	Inquiry, objects, storytelling, display
School water news desk	  				Student voice, communication, daily engagement
National Water Week assembly	    				Whole-school awareness, celebration



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Activity	Recommended age group	Time	Effort	Cost	Good for
Water expo or fair				 	Community engagement, STEM, student showcases
Local waterway walk				 	Place-based learning, geography, environment
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural experience		 		 	Cultural learning, Country, local knowledge
Mufti/free dress fundraising day					Social action, school community, global water
Walk for Water-style challenge		 		 	Global water access, health, community action
Containers for change fundraiser		 			Recycling, fundraising, sustainability
Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize					Research, innovation, science extension



4. Start small: 15-minute and one-lesson ideas

You do not need a big event to take part in National Water Week. These simple activities can be run in one lesson or less.

Water connects everything brainstorm

Ask students to list all the ways they use or depend on water in one day. Encourage them to think beyond drinking water to food, clothing, electricity, sport, gardens, pets, cleaning, weather, transport, culture and local waterways.

Students can turn their ideas into a mind map showing how water connects different parts of their lives.

Extension idea: older students can create a systems map showing the links between water, health, food, energy, climate, cities, farms and ecosystems.

Hidden water in your lunchbox

Students investigate how water is used to grow, produce, process and transport common lunchbox foods.

This activity can introduce the idea of “hidden water” or water footprints and encourage students to think about how water supports food systems.

Possible prompts:

- Which foods need water to grow?
- How is water used before food reaches us?
- How does water connect farms, shops, homes and schools?
- What food choices help reduce waste?

Keep the tone curious rather than guilt-inducing. No sandwich shaming required.

Mini water cycle in a bag

Students create a simple water cycle model using a zip-lock bag, a small amount of water and a sunny window.

Over time, students observe evaporation, condensation and precipitation.

This activity works well for younger students learning about the water cycle and weather.



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Stormwater detectives

Students walk around the school grounds to identify where rainwater goes when it lands on roofs, paths, gardens and play areas.

Discussion prompts:

- Where does stormwater flow?
- What might it pick up along the way?
- Where are the drains?
- Are there places where water pools?
- How could the school slow, soak or clean stormwater?

This activity can lead into conversations about healthy waterways, pollution, urban design, flooding and water-sensitive schools.

What should go down the drain?

Create a sorting activity using everyday items such as wipes, tissues, oil, food scraps, paint, medicine, toilet paper, cotton buds, leaves and hair.

Students decide whether each item belongs in the toilet, sink, bin, compost, recycling or hazardous waste collection.

This is a simple way to introduce wastewater systems and explain why “flushable” does not always mean sewer-safe. Sneaky wipes, we see you.

Water words from Country

Where appropriate, students learn local place names, waterway names or words connected to water, guided by Traditional Owners, Traditional Custodians or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education providers.

This should be approached respectfully and locally, with proper permissions and attribution.

Schools could connect this activity to:

- local waterways
- seasonal knowledge
- caring for Country



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- language learning
- mapping activities
- local history and geography

5. Go bigger: class, year-level and whole-school ideas

These activities can support year-level projects, assemblies, peer learning, school events or community involvement.

Invite a Water Ambassador

Water Ambassadors are water professionals who can help students understand why water matters and how people work every day to protect, manage and deliver water services.

A Water Ambassador visit could include:

- a classroom presentation
- a school assembly talk
- a careers Q&A
- a local water challenge discussion
- a water cycle or treatment activity
- a poster competition launch
- a National Water Week event appearance

Students can ask questions such as:

- What does your job involve?
- How did you get into the water sector?
- What problems are you helping to solve?
- What skills do you use?
- Why is water important to your community?
- What can students do to care for water?

Register your school:

<https://www.nationalwaterweek.org/get-involved/register-your-school>

Enter the poster competition

The National Water Week Poster Competition is a creative way for students to explore the annual school theme.

For 2026, students are invited to respond to:



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Water Connects Everything

Poster prompts:

- Show how water connects people, places and nature.
- Show where water comes from and where it goes.
- Show how water supports health, food, animals, plants or communities.
- Show how we can care for water.
- Show how water connects your school to your local environment.
- Imagine a water-wise future.

Teachers can use the poster competition as:

- a visual arts activity
- a science communication task
- a sustainability lesson
- a library display
- a homework activity
- a whole-school competition

Poster competition details:

<https://www.nationalwaterweek.org/get-involved/competition>

Run a school water audit

A school water audit helps students investigate how water is used across the school.

Students can look at:

- taps
- bubblers
- toilets
- gardens
- irrigation
- kitchens
- cleaning areas
- sports facilities
- rainwater tanks
- stormwater drains

The activity can link to science, maths, geography, sustainability and civics. Students can collect observations, identify opportunities to save water and present recommendations to school leaders.



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Simple process

Step 1: Map water use around the school

Students identify where water is used, including bathrooms, taps, bubblers, gardens, kitchens, science rooms, cleaning areas, sports facilities and irrigation systems.

Step 2: Collect observations

Students record what they notice. For example:

- Are there leaking taps?
- Are bubblers working properly?
- Are toilets running?
- Are garden beds mulched?
- Is irrigation used during the day?
- Are there signs reminding people to save water?
- Are there rainwater tanks?
- Where does stormwater go?

Step 3: Analyse and discuss

Students group their findings into themes:

- leaks and maintenance
- behaviour and habits
- garden and irrigation
- stormwater
- signage and awareness
- opportunities for improvement

Step 4: Recommend action

Students prepare a short report, poster, presentation or letter to the principal, facilities manager or school council.

Step 5: Share your results

Schools can share their audit activity as part of National Water Week and register their participation with AWA.

Useful link:

AWA Water Education Toolkit:

<https://www.nationalwaterweek.org/hubfs/FINAL%20AWA%20WATER%20EDUCATION%20TOOLKIT%20-%20UPDATED%20290224.pdf>



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Leak Week challenge

Run a school-wide “Leak Week” where students become leak detectives.

Students can check for:

- dripping taps
- leaking bubblers
- running toilets
- wet patches near irrigation
- taps left on
- broken fittings

Classes can record what they find, report maintenance issues and estimate how much water could be saved by fixing leaks.

This activity works well as a student leadership challenge and can be supported by local water utilities or councils.

Possible student outputs:

- leak report
- maintenance request
- water-saving poster
- assembly presentation
- before-and-after update
- school newsletter article

Build a water filter challenge

Students design and test simple water filters using safe classroom materials such as plastic bottles, sand, gravel, cotton wool, fabric or coffee filters.

The goal is not to make drinking water. The goal is to explore how filtration works and why water treatment is important.

Challenge questions:

- Which materials remove the most visible particles?
- What order should the filter layers go in?
- What changes after filtering?
- Why is clear water not always safe to drink?



Pipeline challenge

Students work in teams to build a simple pipeline that can move water from one point to another with minimal leakage.

Possible materials:

- paper tubes
- straws
- cardboard
- cups
- recycled containers
- tape
- foil
- guttering
- string

Challenge options:

- move water over a distance
- move water around an obstacle
- move water without spilling
- build with limited materials
- design a repair for a leaking section

This activity introduces students to water infrastructure, engineering, teamwork and problem-solving.

Water tower challenge

Students design a tower that can hold a small container of water at height.

This activity can introduce concepts such as:

- gravity
- pressure
- structure
- stability
- materials
- design testing
- town water supply

Students can test which designs are strongest, tallest or most stable.



Design a water-wise garden

Students design a garden that uses water efficiently and supports local biodiversity.

Their designs might include:

- native plants
- mulch
- shade
- rainwater tanks
- drip irrigation
- compost
- habitat for insects and birds
- stormwater capture
- permeable surfaces

This can be a design-only activity or an ongoing school garden project.

Flood-ready town challenge

Using blocks, cardboard, maps, digital tools or drawings, students design a town that can handle heavy rain and flooding.

They need to think about:

- homes
- roads
- schools
- parks
- drains
- wetlands
- rivers
- safe evacuation routes
- emergency services
- places where water can safely spread or soak in

This activity links water to climate resilience, urban planning, geography and community safety.

Inspiration link:

[Ready for Floods – a Game of Community Resilience](#)



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Older students teach younger students

Older students can design short water activities and run them with younger classes.

Activity ideas include:

- water cycle demonstrations
- drain sorting games
- water filter challenges
- water-wise garden tours
- mini catchment models
- poster workshops
- water trivia
- water careers Q&A

This supports student leadership and helps older students deepen their own understanding by teaching others.

Create a library water display

Turn the school library into a National Water Week hub.

Display ideas include:

- books about rivers, oceans, rain, wetlands, drought, climate and Country
- student posters
- water facts
- local waterway maps
- student questions
- “Did you know?” cards
- water career profiles
- a voting wall or quiz
- recycled-material water artwork

Schools could also run a library display competition between classes or year levels.

Inspiration link:

[Urban Utilities library display competition example](#)

One-minute water video

Students create a one-minute video explaining one way water connects to everyday life.

Topics could include:



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- where drinking water comes from
- where wastewater goes
- how water supports sport
- how water grows food
- why wetlands matter
- what happens in a drought
- how to save water at school
- water careers
- how water connects to Country

Videos could be shown in class, at assembly or as part of a school display.

Water story writing challenge

Students write a short story, poem, comic, picture book or script about water.

Prompts could include:

- A drop of water travels through the water cycle.
- A river tells its story.
- A future community solves a water challenge.
- A student discovers where water goes after it leaves the drain.
- An animal depends on a healthy waterway.
- A water worker solves a problem in their town.

This activity connects water learning with literacy, creativity and communication.

Water connects everything mural

Each student contributes one water connection on a paper drop, fish, leaf, ripple or tile. Together, the contributions form a whole-school mural.

The mural could show how water connects:

- people
- homes
- schools
- farms
- animals
- plants
- rivers
- oceans
- weather
- sport



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- food
- culture
- technology
- the future

This is a highly visible way to celebrate the theme across the school.

Create a water museum

Students bring, draw or photograph objects connected to water.

Examples:

- drink bottle
- tap
- shell
- gumboot
- rice
- cotton shirt
- sports drink
- watering can
- raincoat
- plant
- map
- photo of a river
- toy boat
- washing basket

Each item gets a label explaining its water connection.

This activity works well as a classroom display, library exhibition or whole-school event.

School water news desk

Students create short daily announcements for National Water Week.

Each announcement could include:

- a water fact
- a local waterway profile
- a student question
- an action of the day
- a water career profile
- a poster competition reminder



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- a water-saving tip
- a “where does water connect?” challenge

These can be shared over the school PA, in newsletters, on screens or during assembly.

National Water Week assembly

Run a special assembly to celebrate National Water Week.

Assembly ideas include:

- student presentations
- Water Ambassador talk
- poster competition launch or showcase
- water quiz
- water-saving pledge
- local waterway story
- school water audit results
- fundraising announcement
- student video screening
- acknowledgement of local waterways and Country

This can be a simple one-off event or the centrepiece of your school’s National Water Week activities.

Water expo or fair

Host a classroom, year-level or whole-school water expo.

Each class or group can create a display, activity or demonstration on a water topic such as:

- the water cycle
- drinking water treatment
- wastewater treatment
- stormwater
- water and food
- water and health
- water and climate
- local waterways
- water and sport
- water careers



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- water and culture
- water-wise gardens
- floods and droughts

Families, local councils, water utilities or community groups could be invited to attend.

Take a local waterway walk

Visit a local creek, river, wetland, beach, dam, lake, stormwater feature or water-sensitive urban design site.

Students can observe:

- plants and animals
- water flow
- litter
- erosion
- signs of flooding
- human use
- stormwater outlets
- habitat features
- cultural or historical significance

This can be a powerful way to connect classroom learning with local place.

Schools should follow usual excursion planning, safety and permissions processes.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning experience

Where available, schools can book a guided walk, cultural education session or on-Country learning experience with Traditional Owners, Traditional Custodians or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators.

These experiences can help students learn about the cultural significance of water, caring for Country, seasonal knowledge, waterways, plants, animals and local places.

Examples include:

- Koorie Heritage Trust cultural experiences
<https://kht.org.au/visit-us/cultural-experiences/guided-walking-tours/>
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation education tours and cultural walks



<https://www.wurundjeri.com.au/services/education-tours-cross-cultural-awareness-training/cultural-walks-and-experiences/>

Schools should seek local, place-based opportunities wherever possible and ensure cultural knowledge is shared with permission and properly acknowledged.

6. Take action: fundraising and community challenges

These activities help students connect water learning with community action, sustainability and global water challenges. Schools can choose a cause or project that aligns with their values and local context.

Mufti/free dress fundraising day

Hold a mufti, free dress or “wear blue” day to raise funds for a water-related cause chosen by your school.

This could support an organisation working on water, sanitation and hygiene, such as WaterAid, or a local school sustainability project such as water-wise gardening, refill stations or stormwater improvements.

Students could also create posters or short presentations explaining why the cause matters and how water connects to health, education, equality and community wellbeing.

Possible student activities:

- wear blue or water-themed clothing
- create a coin trail in the shape of a water drop
- run a lunchtime water quiz
- share water facts at assembly
- create posters explaining the chosen cause
- set a school fundraising goal

Walk for Water-style challenge

Run a walking challenge to help students understand that many people around the world do not have safe water close to home.

Students can walk laps of the oval, a mapped route around the school, or a local walking track while learning about access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.



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This activity can be linked to a fundraiser, awareness campaign or classroom discussion about how water connects to health, education, gender equality, climate resilience and community wellbeing.

Possible formats:

- each class walks a set number of laps
- students walk in teams and record their distance
- the school sets a shared distance goal
- students carry an empty bucket or bottle for part of the walk to prompt discussion
- students collect donations for a water-related cause
- senior students create information stations along the route

Discussion prompts:

- Why is safe water important for health?
- How would school life change if students had to walk a long way to collect water?
- Who is most affected when water is not available close to home?
- How does water access connect to education and opportunity?
- What organisations work to improve access to safe water and sanitation?

Schools could connect this activity with WaterAid's Walk for Water campaign or choose another water-related cause.

Useful link:

WaterAid Australia Walk for Water:

<https://fundraise.wateraid.org.au/event/walkforwater/home>

Containers for Change fundraiser

In participating states and territories, schools can collect eligible drink containers and direct the refund proceeds to a water-related cause, student sustainability project or school improvement initiative.

This activity links water, waste, recycling, fundraising and environmental care. It can be run during National Water Week or extended across a term.

Possible approaches:

- set up a school collection point for eligible containers
- run a class or house group challenge
- donate proceeds to a water-related cause



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- use funds for a school water project, such as garden mulch, native plants, water-saving signage or refill station improvements
- track the number of containers collected and calculate the refund total
- create student-led communications to encourage participation

Learning links:

- recycling and circular economy
- waste reduction
- waterway health
- maths and data collection
- community action
- sustainability leadership

Students could also investigate how litter, especially drink containers and plastics, can end up in stormwater drains, creeks, rivers and oceans.

7. Promote the Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize

Secondary students with a passion for science, sustainability, innovation or water research can learn about the Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize.

The prize recognises outstanding student research projects related to water and sustainability. The Australian winner receives an all-expenses paid trip to Sweden to compete for the international Stockholm Junior Water Prize. The international winner receives a Diploma of Excellence and USD 3,000.

This is a strong opportunity for students who are already undertaking science investigations, STEM projects or sustainability research.

Useful link:

[Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize](#)

8. Connect with your local water utility or council

Your local water utility or council may offer school programs, classroom resources, incursions, excursions, competitions, grants or community education activities during National Water Week.

Schools may wish to ask about:

- classroom presentations
- treatment plant tours



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- water education resources
- local waterway activities
- poster competitions
- water efficiency programs
- grant opportunities
- community events
- guest speakers
- stormwater education
- sustainability programs

AWA does not currently provide school grants for National Water Week, but some local water authorities and councils may offer local support.

Suggested email copy for schools:

Hello,

Our school is planning activities for National Water Week and would like to know whether you offer any local education programs, resources, incursions, excursions, competitions, grants or guest speakers for schools.

*This year, we are exploring the theme **Water Connects Everything** and would love to connect our students with local water learning opportunities.*

Thank you.

9. Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives respectfully

Water is deeply connected to Country, culture, language, identity, knowledge, responsibilities and community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Schools are encouraged to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in National Water Week in ways that are respectful, local and guided by the appropriate people.

This may include:

- inviting Traditional Owners, Traditional Custodians or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators to lead learning
- learning about local waterways and their cultural significance
- exploring seasonal knowledge and caring for Country
- attending a guided cultural walk or cultural education session
- using approved local language resources



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- acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where your school is located

Important considerations:

- Seek permission before using cultural knowledge, language, stories, images or materials.
- Use local resources wherever possible.
- Attribute knowledge and contributors appropriately.
- Avoid treating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives as a one-off activity or add-on.
- Follow your school's cultural safety and curriculum guidance.

10. Register your school activity

Let AWA know how your school is participating in National Water Week.

Registering your activity helps AWA understand and celebrate the many ways schools across Australia are getting involved.

Your activity does not need to be large or public. You can register:

- a classroom lesson
- a poster competition activity
- a Water Ambassador visit
- a school water audit
- a library display
- a fundraiser
- a local waterway walk
- a whole-school event
- an internal school activity

Registering your activity helps build a national picture of water education and school participation.

Register your activity (Private Event):

<https://www.nationalwaterweek.org/get-involved/register-an-event>



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11. Useful links and resources

National Water Week event/activity registration

<https://www.nationalwaterweek.org/get-involved/register-an-event>

Engage with a Water Ambassador

<https://www.nationalwaterweek.org/get-involved/register-your-school>

National Water Week Poster Competition

<https://www.nationalwaterweek.org/get-involved/competition>

AWA Water Education Toolkit

<https://www.nationalwaterweek.org/hubfs/FINAL%20AWA%20WATER%20EDUCATION%20TOOLKIT%20-%20UPDATED%20290224.pdf>

Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize

<https://www.awa.asn.au/awards/student-awards/asjwp>

Urban Utilities library display competition example

<https://www.urbanutilities.com.au/newsroom/blogs/calling-all-super-schools-we-ve-got-a-water-mission-for-you-MCCCW3BHAA2JEAZMJNWH5GR366XY>

Koorie Heritage Trust cultural experiences

<https://kht.org.au/visit-us/cultural-experiences/guided-walking-tours/>

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural walks and experiences

<https://www.wurundjeri.com.au/services/education-tours-cross-cultural-awareness-training/cultural-walks-and-experiences/>

However your school chooses to participate, every activity helps students understand the value of water and the role they can play in caring for it.

Start small, get creative, connect locally and help celebrate National Water Week.