



NSW Youth River Health Conference

The 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference is the culmination of a process. This process involves students working with expert mentors many months prior to the event, and results in curriculum materials that will be in NSW Schools for many years after the event. Most importantly, the process is about promoting kids teaching kids as the highest form of learning and aiming for a cultural change in the way we view, use and perceive the environment and the resources and industries that it supports.

When: 19 & 20 November 2007

Where: Inverell, New South Wales

Who: All NSW schools – years 5 to 11

Cost: \$ 38.50



Australian Government



Queensland Government

Competitions

H2O Challenge

The challenge is open to students in years 5 – 9 attending state schools in areas affected by level 5 water restrictions. Groups submit a PowerPoint presentation containing an audit of their school's water usage and their strategies for improvement. Winners receive \$5000 for their school to implement their recommendations on how their school can conserve more water. Winning students receive \$500 to buy a water saving device for their home.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/h2o/>

Energising Sustainable Communities

An international schools competition to design a sustainable city is being held in conjunction with the 2008 International Solar Cities Congress. The competition is open to all school students and requires students to produce a design for the redevelopment of an existing city or neighbourhood to demonstrate how more sustainable human settlements can be achieved. The submission may take a range of forms including a report, poster, drawing, poem, song, interviews or essay (or any combination of these) in hard copy or electronic form.

http://www.solarcitiescongress.com.au/Schools%20Competition260307_lowres.pdf or email: schools@plevin.com.au

Switch Awards

The Origin energy Switch Awards focus on energy, the environment, and community. Winning schools will share in prizes worth \$30,000, including two fully installed solar systems (each valued at \$10,000). Entries can include models, posters, debates, video/audio recordings, newspaper articles and websites. To register, call 1800 659 511 (freecall), or submit your details online at www.originenergy.com.au/switch

Resources

Lab on Legs

The Brisbane CSIRO Science Education Centre (CSIROSEC) offers an exciting range of curriculum relevant "hands-on" science programs to schools throughout SE Queensland. They primarily come out to visit schools through the "Lab on Legs" outreach program but can also host classes in centre. Check out their website www.csiro.au/briscsirosec for a full list of programs available.

Sustainability online resource list

This comprehensive resource list is arranged by topic. Follow the links to the Sustainable Schools teacher resources and web links page.

<http://www.maroochycatchmentcentre.org.au/>

Funding Opportunities

Mitre 10 Junior Landcare Grants

This grant scheme provides funds to enable young people to participate in local Landcare projects. Visit www.landcareonline.com or

www.mitre10.com.au/landcare/grant.asp.

Closing dates for applications in 2007 are 3 August and 18 October.

Indigenous Small Grants—Foundation for Young Australians

These grants provide an opportunity for organisations working with Indigenous people and communities to support innovation and expansion of existing successful initiatives. Maximum grant is \$5,000. More information is available from fya@youngaustralians.org, freecall 1800 252 316.

Closing dates for funding rounds are 20 August and 19 November 2007.

Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund

Educational institutions are ineligible, but incorporated P&C groups can apply for funds. Successful applications have been made in the past for monitoring equipment. See www.gcbf.qld.gov.au for more information.



The Discovering Landcare Forum is supported by:

Supported by



Queensland Government
Department of Communities



An Australian Government Initiative



Landcare Link

Newsletter of the Landcare Discovery Centre

July 2007

Amazing Events in Semester Two

Roma Set to Discover Landcare—28 and 29 August 2007

Preparations continue for the 2007 Discovering Landcare Forum. An exciting line up of guest speakers and presenters is planned:

- Learn about the environment with **Yamba the Honeyant**
- See a real **bilby** with Emily Chandler from Save the Bilby Fund
- Explore **gene technology** with the CSIRO
- Investigate the science behind **playing the didgeridoo**
- Consider the potential of **biodynamics** with Hamish Mackay
- Examine the implications of **soil carbon** with Christine Jones
- Be inspired by the **environmental projects** of schools in the region

Students and teachers from all year levels are welcome to attend. A separate primary and secondary program will be run to cater for the needs of the various age groups. Separate day and evening activities are also open to the community.

Registration

Numbers are limited so you will need to get in quick. Student costs: \$8/day or \$14 for both days. Parents and staff are encouraged to come along and support their students. Registration forms can be obtained by emailing Renee or Pam.



Yamba the Honeyant



Surat Students at 2006 event

Accommodation and Catering

Accommodation is free for schools camping at the venue (Basset Park Showgrounds). The showgrounds are fully equipped with amenity blocks but schools will need to supply their own tents and bedding.

Catering will be supplied by the Isolated Children's Parents Association (ICPA) for \$35/head for meals from Monday evening to Tuesday lunch. Day visitors will need to bring their own meals.

Property Planning Goes to Spring Gully

The Property Planning field day at Spring Gully is scheduled for 30 and 31 July 2007. Teacher manuals have been sent out to participating schools so students can begin their preparation for the field day.

For those of you not involved, Property Planning is a hands-on property management program designed for senior secondary students. Students are guided through the process of developing a working property management plan and examine natural resource management, cultural heritage and primary production. In addition to hands-on learning the field trip will also provide students with the opportunity to discuss careers with a range of science and agricultural professionals.



Spring Gully property



Farewell

Laura Weedon has left QMDC to pursue travel and work overseas. She wanted to pass on her thanks and best wishes to all the schools she had involvement with over the last two years. We all wish Laura happy travels and hope to see her back in the region in the future.

QMDC is still committed to working with schools and the rest of the Education team is here to assist you with your enquires and projects.



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Become a Sustainable School

QMDC can assist you to become involved in the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI).

AuSSI is a partnership of the Australian Government, the States and Territories that seeks to support schools and their communities to become sustainable. AuSSI involves participants in a whole-of-school approach, to explore through real-life learning experiences, improvements in a school's management of resources and facilities including energy, waste, water, biodiversity, landscape design, products and materials. It also addresses associated social and financial issues.

The program is extremely flexible and will be customised for each participating school

QMDC provides participating school with the following:

- A customised sustainability education program for each school
- Coordination of the whole program
- Access to scientists and Natural Resource Management specialists via a range of QMDC run activities, field days and student forums
- Professional development for teachers on a range of topics (see photos right)

QMDC facilitators also provide assistance with:

- Sustainability audits
- Setting targets and developing a School Environmental Management Plan (Sustainability action plans for operations and curriculum)
- Implementation of action plans and School Environmental Management Plan
- Specialised student activities linking curriculum to practical action
- Cost-saving ideas and assistance to apply for grants and funding
- Follow-up and monitoring outcomes
- Celebrating achievements and successes via QMDC and school events and publications

To read the stories of schools involved in Sustainable Schools across Australia visit <http://www.environment.gov.au/education/aussi/case-studies.html>

Working Towards Sustainability—Yelarbon Environment Group

Tammy Small from the Yelarbon Environment Group shares the groups successes.

The Yelarbon Environment Group was formed with two purposes in mind, one to show children at Yelarbon State School how food waste could be converted to compost using worms and secondly to give the children an introduction to the local biodiversity. Committed local community members attend the weekly session at the school to ensure the ongoing success of the project. The majority of these community members are from the Yelarbon Garden Club.

The students were divided into five project groups. Some examples of what each group has achieved follows.

1. **Veggie-garden** – The students learnt to do pH testing and then matched vegies that would grow best in the various pHs of the garden bed. They prepared the garden using manure provided by the students and learnt the procedures for sowing and transplanting plants. The gardens are now producing Chinese vegies, lettuce, white cabbage, tomatoes, carrots, silver beet and beetroot. The students were surprised at how great the vegies taste. During the holidays, two students have taken on the responsibility of going to school to keep them watered. It is planned that some of the vegies will be used for tuckshop lunches or offered for sale during next term.



Teaching for tomorrow:

Hands-on professional development designed to build the confidence, skills and capacity of teachers and community members to teach a range of environmental topics.

2. **School-gardens** – These students have been busy creating a habitat for small birds and lizards. It was noticed that a baby blue-tongue was already a resident of the garden area. Students undertook the tasks of putting in more groundcover plants, a water receptacle and hollow logs to improve the habitat. A water-wise garden using succulents has also been created which will also be suitable as a habitat area for the lizards. The front gardens of the school are following the theme of a flowering-garden to attract birds, bees, insects, spiders etc. Throughout this process students have been learning about the importance of different animal groups. This group is also responsible for the paper composting bin and monitoring the composting process.



Above: The Noon flower, a local succulent.

3. **Propagation** – This group is responsible for all plant propagation using seeds and cuttings. The students have learnt about collecting seeds, sowing and how to prepare cuttings. This group generates plants that are used in the vegie-patch and the other gardens. They are conscientious about reducing water use.
4. **Nature and design** – The purpose of this group is to record what the different groups are doing and to help with the design of areas to enhance the natural attributes. The stories that are collected provide a historical record of the Yelarbon Environment Group. The students have also designed pictures to decorate the composting bins.

5. **Composting Worms** – These students have learnt about the worm life cycle, anatomy and the conditions required to keep worms healthy and able to breed. They have also had the task of engaging the younger students (P-2) to educate them about the uses of worms, ensuring that the smaller students become involved in the reduction of food waste that would normally go to landfill. This group provides nutrient rich compost, used as potting mix, by the propagation group. Liquid fertilizer is another product being generated by the worms for the gardens and for sale to the public.



Above: Yelarbon's composting worms.

In addition to the projects completed in the different groups, students record their sightings of birds and reptiles on observation charts. This information keeps a record of the biodiversity present and can be used for future reference. This activity encourages the students to be more observant and knowledgeable about some of the animal biodiversity present in their local area.

Congratulations to the Yelarbon Environment Group for their efforts to make Yelarbon State School more sustainable. If your school is taking on environmental projects. We'd love to hear about it. Send stories and photos in to one of the team.

