

MEDIA RELEASE



March 12, 2009

"Working together – healthy landscapes, viable communities"

School leaders learn how to go green

Setting up worm farms and chicken pens to help use food wastes are just two of the ideas some innovative students have come up with to help their Queensland Murray-Darling Basin schools become more environmentally sustainable.

Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC) Education Officer Renee Fletcher said students from Teelba, Ballandean and Highfields joined their peers at the Crows Nest State School for the School Sustainability Workshop on Friday and Saturday, March 6 and 7.

"At the workshop, the 21 students developed action plans outlining the steps their school will take during the next nine months to become more environmentally sustainable," Ms Fletcher said.

"This leadership workshop was a chance for the students to exchange ideas and come up with options for tackling some of the challenges they face as they work to increase their school's sustainability."

During the workshop, the students undertook a range of activities, including calculating their ecological footprint.

"Most of the students were really surprised to find we would need about four worlds' worth of resources to fulfil their needs if the whole planet's population enjoyed the Australian lifestyle," Ms Fletcher said.

"This spurred the students into further action and they formed achievable plans for their school communities including everything from hens to eat lunch scraps to photovoltaic panels to supply solar power."

Ms Fletcher said the workshop was facilitated by staff from QMDC and OzGREEN with students, teachers and parents from the Crows Nest State School, Ballandean State School, Mary MacKillop Catholic School and Teelba State School attending.

"These schools are all involved in Queensland Environmentally Sustainable Schools Initiative (QESSI) which, through a hub formed by a partnership between QMDC and the Amaroo Environmental Education Centre, helps support schools on the Darling Downs and across South West Queensland," she said.

"Before the workshops, the students conducted environmental audits of their schools covering their energy consumption, water use, waste generation and the biodiversity on the school grounds and small groups of students were then nominated to attend the workshops."

Ms Fletcher said the students developed a range of actions such as car pools for those not on a bus run, buying chickens to use the school's food scraps and then selling the eggs to fund other sustainability initiatives such as school gardens, changing to energy efficient light globes and adding rainwater tanks.

Media contacts

More information: QMDC Education Officer Renee Fletcher, ph 07 4637 6201.

Released by: QMDC Communications Officer Lisa Yorkston, ph 07 4637 6234 or 0427 468 861.

PLEASE NOTE:

High resolution images of school groups are available upon request.