newsletter

Spring 2012

Time of Djilba and Kambarang in the Noongar calendar

Spring is a time of growth and new beginnings, so when better to launch a new program in Western Australia. Introducing… Little Green Steps!

Little Green Steps

The Little Green Steps program supports early learning centres (facilities for children aged 0-8 years) to make sustainable activities and behaviours part of day-to-day practice.

Little Green Steps was created in New South Wales by Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils, and has been running successfully since 2004. Inspired by the philosophy and achievements of the program, the Australian Association for Environmental Education WA Chapter (AAEEWA) began to seek funding and support to introduce the program to Western Australia.

In 2012 funding was secured through a significant Lotterywest grant to engage a Project Manager to deliver a 12 month pilot of Little Green Steps. This program provides resources and direct support to three not-for-profit Childcare Centres south east of Perth, one each in the City of Canning, Gosnells and Armadale.

Little Green Steps WA Launch, 01.09.12

Left to right:
Mr Malcolm McCusker,
Mrs Tonya McCusker,
Mayor Joe Delle Donne

The Official Launch of Little Green Steps in Western Australia

On Saturday 1 September 2012, the Little Green Steps pilot program was launched with a warm speech by His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia, Malcolm McCusker. Around 30 people attended the Launch, including Mayor Joe Delle Donne OAM JP of the City of Canning, Mrs McCusker, Lotterywest representative Mrs Jan Stewart, AAEE National President and AAEEWA Convenor Dr Jennifer Pearson, members of the AAEEWA, and staff from the Childcare Centres.

Also present were employees from the City of Canning, City of Armadale, Canning River Eco Education Centre, South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare, the Department of Environment & Conservation, and the Department of Education, along with children and others. This diverse attendance demonstrates the range of people who are participating in and supporting the exciting trial of Little Green Steps in WA.

The Journey

Over the 12 month pilot the Childcare Centres will be supported to extend their recycling systems, create vegetable gardens, reduce their energy and water use, and incorporate a range of other sustainability initiatives. Children will be engaged in day-to-day behaviours for sustainability as well as special activities throughout the program.

Little Green Steps takes a strong community focus, and Childcare Centre staff and families will also be linked with local sustainability initiatives and community events.

While only three Centres will be directly supported in the pilot, all early years educators are invited to use the resources that are developed by Little Green Steps to support Education for Sustainability in their own early learning environments. These will be added to our website as they are developed.

The Little Green Steps WA Newsletter will be published quarterly, at the beginning of each new season. The purpose of the Newsletter is to profile the sustainability initiatives that the Childcare Centres develop throughout the pilot program, to promote local programs and events, and provide a general resource for educators and others interested in day-to-day sustainability.

Sustainability in Spring

September is National Biodiversity Month

The following are some picture books about Australia's native flora and fauna that young children will enjoy looking at or having read to them. You should find copies at your local library or bookshop.

- *One Woolly Wombat*, Kerry Argent (1982)
- *Bush Bash*, Morgan & Kwaymullina (2012)
- *Special Land*, Wendy Notley, illustrated by Kowanyama State School students (2009)
- *Little Wallaby's Big Adventure*, Michele Coxon (2000)

Eat in Season

Buying and eating fruit and vegetables when they are in season ensures that you are getting the freshest produce and means that it probably hasn't travelled *too* far to get to you. Seasonal produce is generally cheaper and more nutritious too. Local markets are a great place to buy produce at its peak.

What's in season in Spring?
Fruit: apples, avocados, bananas, most berries, citrus fruits, melons, mangos, passionfruit, pears

Vegetables: Asian greens, asparagus, beans, beetroot, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, chillies, garlic, lettuce, mushrooms, spring onions, peas, potatoes, silverbeet, spinach

The *Go For 2&5* program has lots of information that will keep you in tune with what's in season in your area. Seasonal charts, recipes, posters and brochures are available on the website:
www.gofor2and5.com.au

What to Grow in Spring

Spring is a great time to plant a range of vegetables including cucumbers, beans, peas, beetroot, zucchinis, squash, carrots and lettuce.

Visit your local garden supplies store, and get some tips from these websites:

Sustainable Gardening Australia
www.sgaonline.org.au

Gardening Australia
www.abc.net.au/gardening

Networks & Conferences

Click on the logos and hyperlinks to go to websites

The Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) is a national, not-for-profit organisation that connects and supports people who are interested in environmental education and Education for Sustainability.
AAEE members can join the *Early Childhood Education Special Interest Group* which is coordinated by Sue Elliott, a very passionate and well published educator for the early years.

Creating Our Next Courageous Steps is this year's theme for the AAEE's 17th biennial national conference. Members of the AAEE WA Chapter will be making the trip to Melbourne to attend and present at the conference from 30 September-October 3.

The AAEE WA Chapter, in partnership with the WA Department of Fisheries, are presenting a half-day *Sustainable Education Forum* on October 31. Community members, researchers, educators and EfS providers are invited to attend, to learn, share and celebrate the achievements of Education for Sustainability (EfS) in WA.

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) also offers support and resources to early years educators who are interested in sustainability. There are many books available through ECA's website.

Perth is hosting *ECA's national conference* this year, from October 3-6. Little Green Steps WA will be represented at the conference, and a poster presentation about the pilot program will be delivered on the afternoon of Friday 5th.

Little Green Steps NSW Project Officers have been very supportive of the AAEEWA's efforts to transfer the program to WA.
Many of their fantastic resources are available on the council's websites:

Gosford City Council
Wyong Shire Council

Recycling: Know Your Systems

Did you know that waste & recycling systems differ between councils in Western Australia?

For example, residents in Gosnells and Armadale use their yellow-topped bins only for plastics labelled 1-7, glass bottles and jars, paper, cardboard, steel and aluminium cans, and cardboard drink containers. Other general household rubbish goes into the green-topped bin. Residents in these areas can find out more at www.rrc.wa.gov.au

In the City of Canning, yellow-topped bins take a much wider range of waste such as polystyrene, ceramic items and ALL plastic items including clingwrap. Green-topped bins are used only to dispose of organic waste such as food scraps, grass clippings and small garden prunings that can be composted. Find out more at www.canning.wa.gov.au

Surprised? Check your council's website or reception area for information about how to use *your* bins correctly for household waste disposal and recycling in your suburb. It's important that we use our bins correctly to minimise the waste that is sent to landfill and maximise our recycling efforts.

Many local councils and waste management contractors provide educational resources to help engage children and students in the topic of waste management. Planet Ark also has some great resources and ideas for re-using and reducing your waste. See www.recyclingweek.planetark.org/kids-teachers.

All of the Childcare Centres involved in the Little Green Steps WA pilot program use their recycling bins, but we will be working together to make sure that they are being used correctly, as well as looking to extend the scope of what is recycled. During National Recycling Week in November, children and staff will participate in some waste education activities at the Centres.

How to Recycle Other Items

The following items can be recycled, but should **not** be disposed of in your green or yellow-topped bins.

Dry Cell Batteries: (AA, AAA, C, D, button batteries, 6V, 9V) Check at your council building, local waste transfer centre and local library for battery collection boxes. Battery World and Ikea stores around Australia also have battery collection boxes. *Even better, buy rechargeable batteries.*

Used Printer Cartridges: Check at your council building, local waste transfer centre and local library for Cartridges 4 Planet Ark collection boxes. Officeworks, Australia Post, JB Hi Fi, Harvey Norman, Dick Smith and The Good Guys stores support the recycling program, and you can log on to www.recyclingnearyou.com.au/cartridges to find your closest drop-off point.
Even better, get your empty cartridges refilled with ink at Cartridge World stores.

Mobile Phones: Check at your council building, local waste transfer centre, local library, Post Office or telecommunications store for collection boxes. Mobile Muster collects phones, chargers, USB modems and phone batteries too. Log on to www.mobilemuster.com.au to find your closest drop-off point.

Electronic Waste (E-waste): This includes computers, monitors, printers, copiers, TVs (CRT & flat screens), fax machines and other audio/ visual equipment. Find out what your council collects at their waste transfer station or during verge collection. You can also see if there is a local recycler at www.recyclingnearyou.com.au

Blankets, towels, old carpet, general pet accessories such as leashes & collars: Offer these items to your local pet rescue centres such as K9 Dog Rescue (08 9581 9005) or Cat Haven (08 9442 3600) in WA.

Books, Clothing, Furniture, Shoes and Bric-a-Brac still in good condition: Offer these items to your local op shop. Some will collect large items from your home.

Spectacles: In association with non-profit organisation Optometry Aid Overseas, Laubman & Pank sends used spectacles to Third World countries. Old glasses can be dropped at any Laubman & Pank store.

Find out what your local School, Kindergarten or Childcare Centre collects to use in craft activities.

Good sources of information about recycling:

*Recycle Right (SMRC Western Australia) www.recycleright.net.au
*Recycling Near You (Planet Ark Australia) www.recyclingnearyou.com.au

Things to do in Spring

Local events

Free or low cost activities in the City of Canning, Gosnells and Armadale

City of Canning:

***City of Canning Eco Fair:** 8 December, 12-5pm
Details will be available at www.canning.wa.gov.au

City of Gosnells:

***The Great Front Yard Competition**: free entry, closes 19 October, www.gosnells.wa.gov.au

***Community Water Festival:** 27 October
Details will be available at www.gosnells.wa.gov.au

Guided walks and talks:
Gold coin donation, bookings essential 9397 3111

***Wetland Discovery Walk at Mary Carroll Park**
Saturday 22 September, 10am-12pm

***Night Stalk at Ellis Brook Valley**
Friday 5 October, 6.45pm-9.30pm

***Breakfast with Birds at Mary Carroll Park**
Sunday 28 October, 7.30am-10.30am

***Night Stalk at Mary Carroll Park**
Friday 23 November, 7pm-9.30pm

School holiday activities

The Department of Environment & Conservation offers a range of 'Nearer to Nature' activities at the Canning River Eco Education Centre (Kent St, Wilson) and Perth Hills Centre (Mundaring).
Note: these are paid activities, www.dec.wa.gov.au

Not so local

***Hulbert Street Sustainability Fiesta**
Hulbert St, South Fremantle, 22-23 September
Information, stalls, demonstrations and activities for the whole family! Find out more

***Kings Park Festival, Perth**
1 September- 7 October
Lots of activities for the whole family! View the brochure at www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/festival

Green dates

Follow the links to find out how to get involved!

National Biodiversity Month: September
www.environment.gov.au/**biodiversity**/**month**.html

National Landcare Week: 3-9 September
www.landcareonline.com.au

National Threatened Species Day: 7 September

Sustainable House Day: 9 September
www.sustainablehouseday.com

World Car-Free Day: 22 September

Walk to Work Day: 28 September
www.walk.com.au

Buy Nothing New October: all month
www.buynothingnew.com.au

World Habitat Day: 1 October

National Organic Week: 5-14 October
www.organicweek.net.au/core/

National Water Week: 21-27 October
www.nationalwaterweek.org.au

Children's Week WA: 20-28 October
www.childrensweekwa.org.au

WA Grandparents Day: 28 October
A new initiative in 2012!

National Recycling Week: 12-18 November
www.recyclingweek.planetark.org

For more information

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lotterywest supported

Australian Association for Environmental Education, WA Chapter

The WA Chapter is unique, involving a broad cross-section of environmental educators from diverse areas such as schools, government agencies, industry, universities, technical and further education centres, zoos, museums, parks and reserves, environmental education centres and community and conservation groups.