Winter 2017

Little Green Steps
Western Australia

Winter 2017 Newsletter

Time of ***Makuru*** and ***Djilba*** in the Nyungar calendar

A Little Update and Looking Ahead

It's been a busy and exciting few months for Little Green Steps WA and for the many early years educators who've been building their skills for embedding sustainability as a natural and valued part of young children's education and care.

We welcome Kylie Hosking back to the LGSWA team, in her Education Officer's role in the Cities of Cockburn and Armadale. We therefore say farewell to Anne Pettit, who has been filling in for Kylie over the last 6 months.

Anne's sustainability knowledge and passion for embedding sustainable actions into early years has been absolutely invaluable over this time. Anne will continue with the program as a member of the LGSWA committee and we hope to continue to tap into Anne's expertise through some special future projects.

Celebrating NAIDOC Week this year (2nd to 9th July), the theme was 'Our Languages Matter' and the importance, resilience and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages was the focus.

A new initiative of special interest for the early years is the wonderful 'Lullabies' project, which celebrates and seeks to revive Nyungar language through the power of song.

For more information about the project and examples of the lullabies and how they are being created and shared in early childhood settings see videos here and here and an article about the importance of learning Indigenous words here.

As we move into August and September - Djilba season, the season of conception - you might like to explore some early years activities and notice what's happening around us in nature at this time of year.

Taking little green steps in Family Day Care

Toni Duff runs a small FDC service in Spearwood.

Discovering that common types of non-recyclable packaging can be reused - for example for storing things and for children's activities - rather than thrown away has enabled Toni to reduce waste, and it's become part of how she shows children that we value *all* resources.

Toni is making much more use of her small garden beds and pots outdoors for children's learning activities, including involving children hands on in preparing garden beds, choosing the right plants for the season, caring for plants, and harvesting and preparing the produce to eat. It's great to see the increasingly 'alive' environment Toni is creating - with little resourcing.

We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we work on. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contributions they make to the land and the life of Western Australia.

LGSWA Happenings

City of Cockburn Continues LGSWA Support

At a special City of Cockburn celebration event in May, Little Green Steps and a large number of community groups were awarded grants and donations in various categories for initiatives that benefit the local community and environment.

The City's support for Little Green Steps will continue for a further two years, to mid 2019, and with great appreciation we look forward to continuing to deliver and further develop our programs for early childhood educators across the region.

Exploring and Respecting Diversity in Padbury

Following Little Green Steps WA's Cultural and Social Diversity workshop at Padbury Education and Child Care Centre, educators are making changes to curriculums and practices. Educational Leader Chantal Robson says:

'This session has reminded our educators that culture is not necessarily about ethnicity, and that each family has their own culture. Educators have been inspired to reconnect with the families in their rooms, and to reflect on their own practices.

Educators in one of our rooms have decided to post a question of the week, which is displayed at the 'sign in' area. Families can write their answers on a post-it note. The first question was "Describe your family in one word'. Not only has this allowed educators to understand families better, it has built connections between families.

Another room is using critical literacy as a strategy to encourage children to think about culture and stereotypes. They have ensured that they have a wide selection of books which depict a variety of cultures. Educators ask children questions while they read the book to help children think about the similarities and differences between people.'

Making the most of organics

Nido Early School in Willetton and Goodstart Early Learning Mt Nasura have started composting and worm farming and they are involving children at every step. Food and garden 'waste' provides lots of opportunities for developing skills and learning about organics, reducing food waste and how living things, including microorganisms, insects and worms help to recycle energy and nutrients to benefit our gardens.

At Nido, each room has its own compost bucket and families can also take food scraps home for their chickens. Even the youngest children participate in composting, investigating their own worm farm, and planting seedlings.

Goodstart is starting to grow vegetables and flowers in the garden and indoor plants in the Kindy room. The compost and worm liquid and castings will eventually help them all thrive. Children are also upcycling flowers from old bouquets etc. to make potpourri.

Plastic Free July

From its beginnings here in Perth several years ago, Plastic Free July (PFJ) has developed quickly into a world-wide community event, popular with all ages. Raising awareness and involving young children in reducing 'single use' plastics and other plastic waste gets them off to a great start in developing *reduce, reuse and recycle* habits for their whole lives.

With PFJ as the catalyst, Nido Early School focussed on ways to reduce plastic use and change behaviours at their centre and at home. This has included aiming to make it the norm to buy in bulk to reduce plastic and other packaging all year round.

The centre is reusing packaging that can't be avoided for craft projects and seedling planting, using used certified compostable cups, plates and napkins that they compost on-site, and recycling 'soft and noisy' plastics through REDcycle.

LGSWA Happenings

EYES Conference

With its 'Let's talk about getting hands on in nature' theme, the LGSWA presentation at this years EYES Conference in May explored the notion of 'nature' and engaged educators with examples and discussion of ways to build how young children can 'connect to care' for their world. From hands on experiences in the garden - such as planting and caring for veggies and native plants, observing growth and development - to simply 'being in nature outdoors, anywhere', to touch tables, water and mud play and bush kinder, all have value in themselves that educators can add to by noticing opportunities to develop children's 'ecological' vocabulary and awareness about the connectedness of living things and the natural world.

Mundarda is Switched On

In June, Mundarda Child Care Centre in Seville Grove, supported by Little Green Steps WA, was recognised by *Switch your thinking* as a *Switched On School* - as management and educators continue to explore and implement practices that support the Ecological Footprint and Social Handprint of sustainability in how the centre is run and in children's education and care.

At the celebration and plaque presentation at the centre, by *Switch your thinking* and the City of Armadale, children joined in by preparing and serving afternoon tea, which was a lovely example of how Mundarda fosters children's sense of belonging and contributing to their community.

Love Nappies, Hate Waste

Every week many hundreds of disposable nappies (which should be placed in rubbish bins) arrive in recycling bins at the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and other council waste recovery facilities, where they contaminate recycling.

Inspired to tackle the problem and misconceptions around nappies, local environmental organisation Green Skills started a *'Love Nappies, Hate Waste'* campaign in partnership with the City of Cockburn.

A Hello Baby stall and nappy workshops at library story-time and new parents groups introduced modern cloth nappies 'in the flesh' - not just on the internet - and demonstrated how to use and wash them, and reminded parents and others that *disposable nappies can't be recycled* and that they belong in the green bin.

LGSWA worked in partnership with Green Skills to share this message at our Reducing Waste Together workshops over the past few months, to show educators just how feasible and useful cloth nappies are as an alternative to disposables. Saving money is a major benefit.

This project was supported by a Waste Authority grant through Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery. For more information, email the Green Skills Project Manager Aline Brion or call (08) 9360 6667.

So Cloth Nappies can be the solution....

Lady Gowrie Centre, Thebarton, in South Australia, has been using cloth nappies for well over 10 years. These days supplied pre-folded (and with inserts) by a linen service, the used cloth nappies are put in a 240 litre bin and collected weekly.

At the start barely 20% of families used cloth but now nearly 80% of parents of children attending the centre are happy to use the provided cloth nappies, while others supply their own single use ('disposable') nappies. The centre stopped purchasing single use nappies in 2013. Behaviour change happened not by lecturing people but because those using disposables would sometimes not provide enough and so their children went home in cloth and they became converted. **Procedures are set up to make the system of cloth work!**

Upcoming Workshops

Upcoming LGSWA Workshops to help you continue your sustainable journey in the second half of 2017

Sustainability in Early Years Settings Workshops

These workshops are supported by local governments, making them free for early childhood professionals in the relevant area. Come along if you want to explore the meaning of sustainability, learn new information and discover activities and resources to help you plan your next sustainable steps.

Tuesday 8th August - 6.30 - 8.30pm Introduction to Sustainability in Early Years Settings - **City of Cockburn,** in Coolbellup. Click here to download the flyer and register.

Wednesday 16th August - 6.30 - 8.30pm Energy, Air & Transport in Sustainability in Early Years Settings - **City of Armadale.** Hosted by Riverdale Child Care Centre. Click here to download the flyer and register.

Thursday 14th September - 6.00 – 8.15pm Introduction to Sustainability in Early Years – **City of Canning,** at CREEC. Register your interest with Megan Mentz via email here.

Thursday 9th & 16th November – 6.30 pm – 8.45 pm over 2 evenings

Day to Day Sustainability in Early Years Settings – **City of Canning -** hosted by Warooga Childcare Centre, Riverton. Register your interest with Megan Mentz via email here.

Reducing Waste Together Workshops

Supported by the Waste Wise Schools program these workshops are free for early childhood professionals and are tailored to your local area. You'll learn about the problems waste causes, find out what happens to waste in your local area, share ideas for reducing waste, discover new learning experiences for young children and take away a copy of the Reducing Waste Together kit.

WATCH THIS SPACE for more Reducing Waste Together workshops in these areas in coming months:

- **Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council**
- **Western Metropolitan Regional Council**

If you'd like LGSWA workshops to be available in your area consider approaching your local council about forming a partnership with us. Contact Us if you have any questions.

We are also available to deliver one-off workshops at your service. Find more details here.

Shredded snowman art from recycled paper – permission Nido Early School

If your service has participated in a Little Green Steps WA workshop and you would value a visit or just a catch up chat to discuss more 'little green steps' you can take, contact us at lgs@aaeewa.org.au

Cooking with Kids

PUMPKIN

Pumpkin is a colourful and versatile food. It stores well and can contribute to dishes both savoury and sweet, cooked and raw.

Pumpkins are rich in Vitamin A, C and E and important minerals - and great fun to grow, with their creeping vine habit that conceals them as they mature! Pepitas, pumpkin seeds from certain varieties, are a source of protein, vitamins, minerals and omega-3 fatty acids - a healthy snack for children.

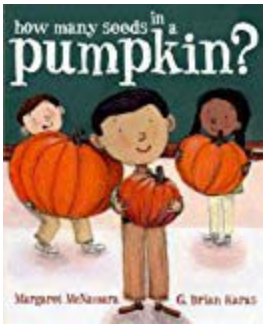
Use your imagination! Pumpkins can also provide a basis for across-disciplines learning in language, maths, science, art etc. and the Environmental Footprint and Social Handprint of sustainability. For example: Biodiversity - exploring varieties (Butternut, Kent, Ironbark), seeing germinated seeds emerge as seedlings, bees pollinating flowers and perhaps other insects making the big leaves their home or food.

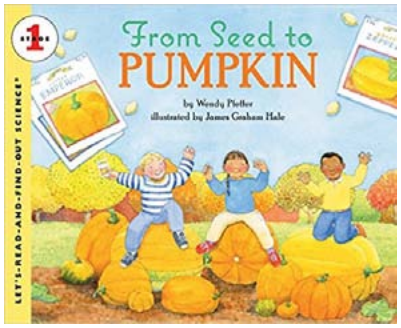
Energy - the plants using the sun's energy to grow, providing energy for us as food, and recycling energy when the spent plants and the skins and seeds are composted.

Cultural and Social Diversity - try other cultures' pumpkin recipes.

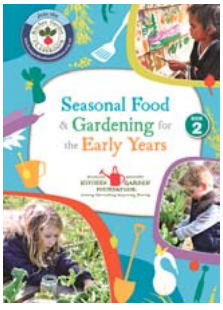
Economics and Built Environment - saving resources by growing our own food, generating income for garden projects from selling our produce.

Read a book before you cook?





'How many seeds in a pumpkin?' is about estimating numbers of seeds in different pumpkins before trying to find the answer. 'From Seed to Pumpkin' tells the story of growing a pumpkin patch.



The Kitchen Garden Foundation has a new resource - *Seasonal Food & Gardening for the Early Years* , with activities, recipes and advice for introducing young children to fun food education.

Tasting familiar and unfamiliar fruits and vegetables in season in our area can help connect young children to sustainability through food. It's interesting to compare what's in season with what can be planted at this time - and get growing.

PUMPKIN FRITTERS

As a soft fritter pumpkin appeals to young children because of its natural sweetness. This recipe is very simple and suitable for young children to help prepare. Obviously the cooking in a frypan would need to be monitored closely if you think this is a skill for children to learn at this time.

1 cup mashed cooked pumpkin (cool)

1 cup S/R flour

1 egg (add milk if needed)

Pinch salt

Optional 1 cup grated zucchini

Combine all of the above and cook on a frypan as fritters.

Send us your hit recipes and food/ cooking-related children's learning and activities to share on the Little Green Steps WA website blog.

Sustainable Schools WA

Sustainable Schools WA Little Green Steps WA is part of the Sustainable Schools WA Alliance where we work with many organisations to support schools and early learning services to reduce their ecological footprint (EF) and increase their social handprint (SH). The EF and SH model provides a framework for educators to use in their planning to embed sustainable practices.

Regional Network Groups

These groups are for teachers, school administrators and other members of school communities (including early childhood professionals) to meet, learn from one another and guest speakers, and share ideas about sustainability in educational settings, including accessing a range of support resources.

Meeting dates in Term 3 for the groups can be accessed from the Sustainable Schools website. Click here

- Armadale
- Canning
- Mandurah/Peel
- Mundaring/Perth Hills
- Padbury
- Wembley
- Albany
- Bunbury
- Geraldton
- Port Hedland

Details of Meetings in Term 3 for Early Years in Armadale and Canning regions

The Armadale Network meeting was held on 19th July. It was hosted by Clifton Hills Primary School and had a focus on nature and nature play, as well as Community & Partnerships. Lively discussion and sharing stories, a wet but very inspiring tour of the early years and school grounds, and scones with jam and cream all contributed towards getting the new term underway with motivation and skills for actions for sustainability. Contact Kylie Hoskings for details of the network and future meetings: lgs@aaeewa.org.au

South Metro Regional Network meeting:

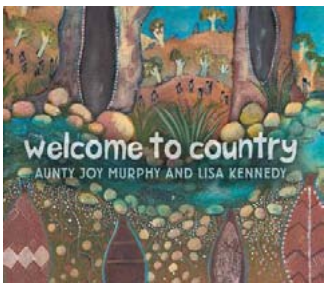
Tuesday 8th August - 3.45 - 6pm at

Bannister Creek Primary School, Lynwood. Contact Hayley Bullimore at CREEC for more details

Book Review

Book Reviews from your Local Librarian

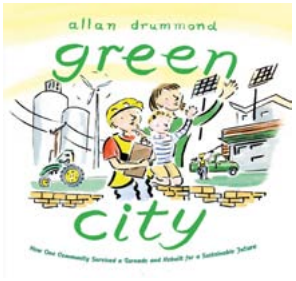
The Library



Welcome to Country

By Aunty Joy Murphy with illustrations by Lisa Kennedy

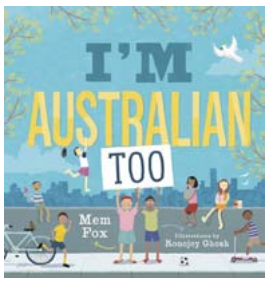
Traditionally, to cross the boundaries between Aboriginal communities, permission was needed from the neighbouring community. When this permission was granted the ceremony now called Welcome to Country took place. Through Aunty Joy Murphy's welcome words and the beautiful illustrations, everyone can become aware of this important ceremony. Aunty Joy Wandin Murphy is a most respected senior Wurundjeri elder of the Kulin alliance. Shortlisted for Picture Book of the Year at this year's Children's Book Council of Australia awards.



Green City: how one community survived a tornado and rebuilt for a sustainable future

By Allan Drummond

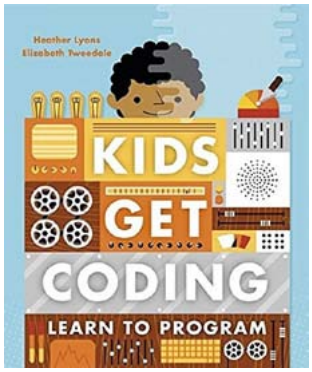
The town of Greensburg, Kansas, was destroyed by a tornado. This is the story of how the community of Greensburg came together to not just rebuild but to create a completely green town.



I'm Australian Too

By Mem Fox with illustrations by Ronojoy Ghosh

Communities can be large or small, and the great big community that is Australia is made up of millions of people. Whether they came recently or their families have lived in Australia for generations, *I'm Australian Too* looks at all of the different types of children that call Australia home.



Kids Get Coding: Learn To Program

By Heather Lyons

Not only do we have a community where we live but there are communities we can be part of that are digital. The language of these communities is based around computer coding. Learning to code, and the language of our digital world, opens up a brand new community to us.

These reviews have been written by Jessica Donald, Young People's Services Coordinator at City of Cockburn libraries.

Thanks Jessica

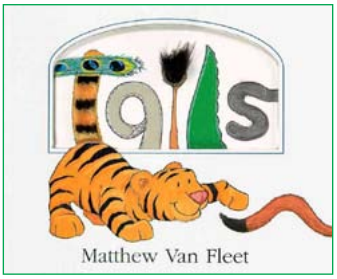
Resources

Resources & Ideas for your Early Years Service:

Nature Play WA 2017 Conference - weekend of August 5th & 6th. Click here for details and here for early childhood resources.

Riverton Children's Library has a new mural
Officially opened in June, its *Our River: Connecting our Communities* theme represents the flora and fauna of the Canning river through the eyes of local school children who were involved in the collaboration to create it with artist Samantha Hughes, the City of Canning and CREEC. Open to the public during Library hours.

Nature Play Park in Beckenham
Part of the Mills Park, this nature play space is large and spread out, and has been integrated into the existing wetlands and creek.



Discovering Diversity through 'Tails'
Tails by Matthew Van Fleet

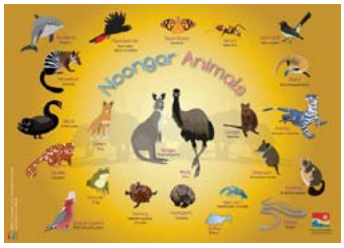
An appealing and useful little hardcover book for demonstrating diversity in animals. Pull-tabs and flaps, textures to touch, and a scratch-and-sniff scent provide interactive surprises on every page as a cast of cavorting critters demonstrates opposites, actions, counting and more.

SERCUL Incursions & Excursions
The South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare offers a range of education opportunities from Kindergarten upwards.

Reconciliation Action Plan Assistance and Resources
The Narragunnawali Platform is a website you can register to which will assist your early years service in creating a Reconciliation Action Plan and also provides access to free Reconciliation curriculum resources for early years. Click here to join.

This colourful 'Noongar Seasons' poster is available for $5 at LGSWA workshops, from our Coolbellup office, and from SERCUL.

Batchelor Press also has a great selection of Noongar story books to purchase at reasonable prices.



South West Aboriginal Land Sea Council (SWALSC) also has some great poster resources for early years services to purchase - see order form link here.

LGSWA has large (A1) sheets of white paper available at our workshops, or be in touch if you can use some for activities with children. They are used on one side. Contact Megan via email.

Waste Awards
If you are proud of what your service is doing, look into the Waste Authority Infinity Awards under the Waste Champion section. The deadline has passed for 2017 but it is worth planning a submission for next year.

What's On?

City of Cockburn Sustainable Events

Many of these workshops are free. For more information see the City of Cockburn website.

12th August - Simply Raw & Sweet (making simple and nutritious sweets).

16th August - Dads 'N' Tods Mud Trek - a guided wetland adventure.

18th August & 13th October - Community Bus Tour of Henderson Waste Recovery Park.

2nd September - Composting Workshop at Yangebup Community Centre.

7th September - Wasteless Pantry workshop

16th & 17th September - Sustainable House Open Day

Visit the City's Children and Families website for activities and information

City of Canning Sustainable Events

The City offers many events at a highly subsidised cost, if not FREE. For great advice on Canning's Sustainable Living incentives and initiatives for residents click here for the guide.

Dates to remember:

17th – 20th August - National Science Week – Frontiers of Science experience. To browse the flyer click here.

Sat 19th August – Book into Robotics for beginners age 4 years up an 8.30 am session. Register via email to CREEC.

Sun 20th August – Family and educator fun with kids at the Community Expo where you can have a go at multiple hands on experiences while also getting in touch with Science and Sustainability.

Toddler Story time at the Canning libraries will feature some themed sessions to celebrate National Tree Day end of July and Threatened Species day on 7th Sept – so contact your local Canning library

City of Armadale Sustainable Events

Monday 7th August - Flying HighA slideshow of stunning photography of eagles of the Perth Hills, with Simon Cherriman.

Sunday 20th August - Soil Secrets - composting and worm farming Kelmscott Primary School

Tuesday 22nd August - Step into Volunteering Kelmscott. How to get started to volunteer in your community.

Friday 25th August - Sing with me Children's Book Week event for 2-3 year olds. Armadale Library

Saturday 2nd September - Lego with Dad! Armadale Library (for 6-12 year olds)

Sunday 6th August - Landcare Weeding Day in Harrisdale with Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group

Sunday 13th August - Landcare Weeding Day in Roleystone with Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group

Monday 14th August - Soil Secrets Revealed. To register, contact City of Gosnells Library on 93916000 or Library_queries@gosnells.wa.gov.au

switch YOURTHINKING.COM

Switch Your Thinking Rewards for Residents Program in Member Councils of Armadale and Canning.

If you are a Family Day Care Educator, then you fit into this resident category. Provides you with discounts on energy efficient and waterwise products including pool covers, rainwater tanks, water and energy audits to name a few.

For further information on how to purchase products and to check whether you operate within a Switch Your Thinking Member Council - the Click here

What's On?

Ideas for Biodiversity

Make up a Nature Toolbox and take it with you wherever you go. Use your own imagination or Join Ready Set Wonder for free and download an early years resource to help you.

Expand your 'touch table' to include...feathers , shells, seeds, rocks, leaves and bark BUT please do not take these from National Parks – 'rescue' them only from the ground in local parks or source them from your parent community.

Your Service can help children connect to the nature through the Early Years Curriculum linked program and resource kit **Backyard in a Box** – Grant funding is available too.

Develop curiosity about turtles by hiring the Turtle watch kit from CREEC – email to borrow.

Borrow the LGSWA Frog kit for a small fee – email Megan.

Read large picture books and stories to children like Creature Features.

Get down low and study insects with magnifying glasses.

Dates to Remember

4th Aug - National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

9th Aug - International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

12th Aug - International Youth Day

12th-20th Aug - National science Week

21st-27th Aug - Keep Australia Beautiful Week

September is National Biodiversity Month

7th Sept - National Threatened Species Day

21st Sept - International Day of Peace

22nd Sept - World Car-free Day

24th Sept - World Rivers Day

7th Oct - Walk to Work Day

Making animal tracks in the sand for Earth Day

We're on Facebook... and we're sharing lots of great ideas, links and food for thought. Look for us here. We'd love you to send us pictures of anything sustainable you're doing too.

Have any questions, comments or requests for the next newsletter? Contact the Little Green Steps WA Program Manager: lgs@aaeewa.org.au

Little Green Steps WA is proudly supported by:

City of Armadale · City of Canning · City of Cockburn · SERCUL South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare · Waste Authority WA...too good to waste · WasteWise Schools Program