

Little Green Steps

Western Australia

Autumn Newsletter 2024



Kaya Bulup – Welcome to the Noongar Season of Djeran.

The Noongar season 'Djeran' is represented by the colour green as it is the time of the year where the cooler weather begins. A key indicator of the change of season is the cool nights that bring a dewy presence in the early mornings.

Djeran is a time of red flowers, like the red flowering gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*). Banksias start to display their flowers bringing nectar food sources for the many small mammals and birds that rely upon them.

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos and Red-Tailed Black-Cockatoos visit gardens in Perth so choose native plants for food, flowers, seeds and grubs. Go to the [BirdLife initiative](#) to learn which plants suit your area. What about a bird bath to support them this autumn?

Launch of New Waste Recycle Book for Early Years



Funding from the Waste Authority Resource Recovery (WARR), through the WasteSorted Grants - Community Education program, meant that LGSWA was able to work with a local author and illustrator to create a novel waste sorted story book and teacher resource.

Bin Sprites is an illustrated story aimed at children aged 3-7, their families, carers and educators. Bin sprites live in rubbish bins. The sprites draw on the residual power of the materials in the bin and can take a physical form. They thrive (are happy and playful) in well sorted bins. They are sad, listless and grumpy in badly sorted bins. The emphasis is on material that is or used to be a living thing (paper, cardboard, plastics, food waste) however they can connect with resources (metals and glass) that draw their zest from the earth (a much slower kind of energy).

The story draws attention to sorting waste so that it can be re-duced, re-used, re-cycled or re-fused. The illustrations are created by photographing puppets that are made using re-used waste materials. The story and character concept can be used by children to create their own stories and characters and process the ideas of waste sorting. There is a educators resource package available.

On 28th March 2024 Darren West MLC, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Environment, and His Worship Mayor Logan Howlett, City of Cockburn, spoke about the importance of sustainability and waste minimising. They were intrigued by the characters in the book that were made from reclaimed materials and the great messages to share.

Thank you to Sandra Taylor and the team at the City of Cockburn Family Day Care Service for all their help with the launch and the educators who came to share the morning celebrations.



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 News



SeaWeek 9th - 16th March 2024

SeaWeek is an annual event organised by the Australian Association for Environmental Education.

Bush Pods Ocean Adventures

Our Nature School in McLaren Vale, Bush Pods has regular kindy classes where children are encouraged to take risks, experience outdoor learning and explore natural environments.

SeaWeek was a great initiative for our students to explore life on the ocean. Our dramatic play session in the morning, ignited by students, began with discovering recipes in the ocean kitchen. The children made a feast for their friends in the underwater world including Sharks, little Fishes, Whale Sharks, Jellyfish, Starfish and an Octopus. It was fascinating to hear what each one liked to eat as we fully immersed in fantasy play with them. This helps develop their confidence, social skills, wellbeing, language development, emergent literacy skills, visualising, creativity, the list could go on.

We boarded a Pirate ship to explore the ocean and then a storm came with rain and wind. There were HUGE waves and the Captain kept us all safe and steered the ship to harbour. The Captain took us to our cubby and we were able to have afternoon tea while we painted our ocean pictures.

We love the ocean so much that we turned Bush Pods into Beach Pods a week later with our all mixed age group for homeschoolers. The children had to navigate some pretty tricky rock pools while searching for crabs. We counted 22 in total. Such a fun way to develop students feet and core strength, build resilience and connect to the ocean with deep appreciation.

Amy Charlotte, Teacher & Content Creator
www.bushpods.com.au



Learning Circle - Sea & Waterways

The Early Childhood Sustainability Alliance presented a free online National Learning Circle - Sea & Waterways that was a catalyst for exploring the new EYLF 2.0 Sustainability Principle. There were two early years educators who presented about their work.

Karen Anderson is a kindergarten teacher at Balnarring Preschool in Victoria on the Mornington Peninsula. She established a beach kinder program some years ago and has incorporated learning about First Nations People's. Karen is a past convener of the Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network (ECOLN) and currently, manages and implements their training package. Also, she co-authored Early Years Learning in Australian Natural Environments, published by Oxford in 2022.

Fiona Harris is an experienced educator and advocate for nature-based learning and has worked for a large not for profit organisation in NSW for 15 years. Fiona initially worked as a teacher and director at the picturesque KU Wombarra Preschool. Her enthusiasm for connecting children with nature and fostering their ecological identity flourished where she facilitated regular Nature Play outings, connected children with place and encouraged sustainable action. Fiona is dedicated to inspiring educators to create enriching learning environments that nurture children's connection with the natural world and empower them to take action for a sustainable future.

The recording is available at
www.eeec.org.au/sustainability-alliance

Upcoming Workshops

Upcoming LGSWA Workshops

Cockburn Workshops: Introduction to Sustainability

Face to face and Online

Wednesday 17 April 2024 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

This is a hybrid workshop, so it can be attended in person or online. This workshop provides a solid foundation for anyone working in early years settings with practical examples on how to embed sustainability in your service. Using the Sustainable Schools WA ecological footprint and social handprint, educators are introduced to sustainable actions by engaging in a variety of activities and topics relating to waste, biodiversity, culture and more.

This event is sponsored by the City of Cockburn, in area tickets are \$5 and out of area tickets are \$20, use the [ticket link](#) to purchase tickets.

Watch our [website](#) and FB page for updates on future workshops in the City of Cockburn.

LGSWA Reducing Waste Together Workshops

These workshops supported by the Waste Authority are FREE for early childhood professionals and are tailored to your local area. They are action-driven to help educators embed reducing waste strategies with children as well as supporting behaviour changes into the future.

City of Canning - 20th March

Early Year Educators from the City of Canning and adjacent suburbs attended the latest Reducing Waste Together Workshop at the Canning River Eco Education Centre. The workshop was also attended by Julie Brockman the Strategic Waste Officer from the City of Canning to share information about waste systems and areas they can support early years centres. Here are some comments from those who attended the workshop.



"Thank you very much I learn a lot tonight, especially compost and nappy cloth information."

"Lots of information to redirect my concepts of recycling."

"The various ways I can compost with children and how to reduce waste in my early years setting."

Participants received the updated copy of the Little Green Steps WA Reducing Waste Together Kit.

The 'LGSWA Reducing Waste Together Kit' is available for SALE \$40 for non-members. [BUY IT HERE](#)

Sustainable Education Networks

We encourage Educators in WA to continue to network and learn from each other and guest speakers via the Sustainable Schools WA meetings.

These groups focus on reducing the Ecological Footprint (EF) and increasing the Social Handprint (SH) and this model provides a framework for educators to use in their planning to embed sustainable practices. Check the [Sustainable Schools WA website here](#) to find a meeting in your area.

Term 2 meetings for the South West regional network, contact Howard Flinders to attend via Howard.Flinders@education.wa.edu.au



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@aaaeewa.org.au

Book Reviews

Book Reviews with Sustainable Themes

The books recommended by Karen Anderson in the SeaWeek Learning Circle



Benny Bungarra's Big Bush Clean-Up

Author: Sally Morgan
Illustrator: Ambelin Kwaymullina

An environmental tale for Early Childhood and Lower Primary readers that shows how animals are affected by rubbish left in their habitat by humans. Ambelin Kwaymullina's illustrations are an explosion of colour and cleverly show the perils faced by our native animals. When the animals work as a team to come up with ways to look after the bush, they decide to ask the humans to REDUCE, RECYCLE and use RUBBISH BINS. But it is Benny Bungarra who has the bright idea of a BIG BUSH CLEAN-UP so the animals can also help look after the bush.



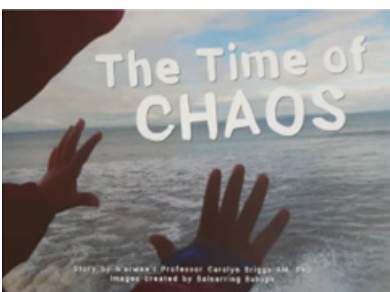
Dear Earth

Author: Isabel Otter

This inspiring picture book celebrates the wonders of our world and reminds us that if we all work together to spread the message that Earth is special and worth saving, we can keep our planet beautiful for many years to come.

Dear Earth is an inspiring story of a young girl named Tessa, who writes a love letter to the Earth in celebration of its many wonderful components. Tessa has the opportunity to blow bubbles with majestic whales, soar with the birds, and join in the noise and excitement of the rain forest.

Tessa believes that if we all work together to spread the message that Earth is special and worth saving, we will be able to keep our planet beautiful for many years to come. Included are ways to help save the Earth and a letter template for children to write their own letter to Earth.



The Time of Chaos

Author: N'arwee't Carolyn Briggs
Illustrator: Balnarring Preschool

Many years ago the biik we now call greater Melbourne extended right out through the large grassy flat plain. The Birrarang now known as the Yarra River, flowed out through the grassy plain.

This story, the third collection of stories of the Boon Wurrung language group, represents the collaborative relationship between N'arwee't Carolyn Briggs Parbin-ata Boonwurrung, the children, the teaching team and the Balnarring Pre-school community. The collaboration, where the children (bubups) were the illustrators, aims to provide teachers, early childhood educators and the community with a resource to begin or continue their journeys of reconciliation. It is hoped the readers can see the possibilities beyond the story. Embedding First Peoples perspectives within education programs can create many amazing stories.

These stories have been written by Dr Carolyn Briggs and passed onto Balnarring preschool for the children to illustrate and the preschool to publish.

Cooking with Kids



Strawberry Bliss Balls

The nutrient composition of oats is well-balanced. They are a good source of carbs and fibre, including the fibre beta-glucan. Oats are also a good source of high quality protein, with a good balance of essential amino acids. Oats are loaded with important vitamins, minerals, and antioxidant plant compounds.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1/2 cup desiccated coconut
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- Extra desiccated coconut, for rolling, optional

Instructions

Add the rolled oats, frozen strawberries, desiccated coconut, maple syrup, chia seeds and coconut oil to a food processor. Process until the mixture is smooth and well combined.

Take tablespoons full of the bliss ball mixture and roll into balls. Coat the bliss balls in the extra desiccated coconut if using.

Store the bliss balls in an airtight container in the fridge.

The recipe was found on [Bargain Mums](#) website.

Book about Strawberries and sharing.

Here is an engaging book about a mouse who wants to eat a strawberry and recorded as a video for you to share. The Goodnight Lighthouse series brings you the best in children's books to ignite imaginations and inspire young minds! "[The Hungry Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry and The Big Hungry Bear](#)" by Don and Audrey Wood, read by Miss Dorothy.

In this charming story, a little mouse discovers a plump, juicy strawberry and is determined to keep it all to himself. But as he tries to hide the strawberry from the big hungry bear, he realises that he might need some help to keep it safe. With Miss Dorothy's engaging narration and the delightful illustrations, your children will be captivated by the story's humor, suspense, and heartwarming message about sharing and friendship. They'll also learn valuable lessons about problem-solving, empathy, and cooperation.



Use this [seasonal food guide](#) to understand which fruit and veggies are in season now in South West WA

Highlight on Resources

Sustainability Case Studies on LGSWA Website

How Using Cloth Nappies Can Work in Childcare Settings – Coburg Childcare Centre



Coburg Childcare Centre is a 120 place child care centre offering long day care and kindergarten and they have been using cloth nappies for over 30 years, even through COVID times.

A commercial laundry service (South Pacific Laundry) is used to administer the collection, cleaning and delivery of nappies to the centre.

According to Educational Director, Michelle Hocking the following section from page 11 of 'Staying Healthy 5th edition' supports their sustainable practices for using cloth nappies:

“The guidance and procedures in Staying Healthy represent best practice. Education and care services are strongly encouraged to adopt these practices. However, some services may choose to develop policies that do not follow all of the advice in Staying Healthy. For example, some

services may have a philosophy of environmental sustainability, and a consequent greater emphasis on considering the resources they use. They may have policies and procedures in place to minimise waste or the use of chemicals. Education and care services that choose not to use the best-practice advice in this document should ensure that their policies and procedures minimise the spread of infection.”

Go to the LGSWA website to read the full story [here](#).

Educational Posters for Sale

Life Cycle and Noongar Symbols and Language posters

The South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) have created a fantastic new set of Life cycle posters covering the life cycles of the Frog, Turtle, Butterfly, Dragonfly and Mosquito, and a Web of Life poster about the native Mistletoe plant. The posters are in colour, A2 in size (594 x 420mm) and focus on Western Australian plants and animals. They are double sided with the main poster on one side and a fact sheet plus three activity sheets (aimed at various ages) on the other side. The fact sheet and activity sheets can be copied for use in the classroom!

They have also updated the Noongar Symbols and Language posters and added four activity sheets on the other side.

You can check them out in the images below and purchase them at www.sercul.org.au/shop/.



What's On?



City of Cockburn Sustainable Events

Nature Storytime Trek - 2024



Get ready for more adventures in 2024 as Cockburn Libraries teams up once again with the City's Sustainability and Climate Change crew to bring you an array of fantastic events tailored for the little ones aged 2-5 years.

During each school holiday, we'll be venturing into the heart of nature to embark on a journey filled with stories, bushwalking wisdom, and sensory exploration of the flora and fauna that surrounds us. Rain or shine, our events are on, so be prepared for any weather. Don your raincoats, wellies, sunscreen, and perhaps pack an umbrella - we're ready to trek through rain, sun, or wind!

Remember to dress your young explorers appropriately, and don't forget the essentials: a hat, water bottle, and a sense of curiosity. Join us for an unforgettable experience connecting with nature and fostering a love for learning among our little adventurers!

For more information and to register go to the [City of Cockburn website](#).

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



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.



Highlight on Water Awareness and Water Wise Gardening

Become leak detectives - check taps for leaks with the kids, apply food colouring to the toilet cistern and wait 10 mins to see if it enters the toilet bowl - Educators [Seek A leak](#) yourselves.

Looking for a Waterwise plant that birds and bees love?

During spring and autumn, Callistemon Little John forms masses of large bright red bottlebrush flowers. It is a compact evergreen bird attracting shrub growing to about one metre. Keep it compact with pruning after flowering and can be shaped into a small tree form. Will tolerate moderate coastal exposure and short periods of dryness. Callistemon Little John is water wise and has a low water requirement once established.

Check out our native plants for play spaces on the [LGSWA website](#).

DATES TO REMEMBER

8th - 18th April [Nature Play Week](#)

22nd April [Earth Day](#)

5th - 11th May [International Compost Awareness Week](#)

6th - 12th May [National Family Day Care Week](#)

10th May [National Walk to School Day](#)

13th May [World Migratory Bird Day](#)

13th - 19th May [National Families Week](#)

20th - 26th May [National Volunteer Week](#)

20th May [World Bee Day](#)

22nd May [International Day for Biological Diversity](#)

23rd May [World Turtle Day](#)

26th May [National Sorry Day](#)

27th May - 3rd June [National Reconciliation Week](#)

5th June [World Environment Day](#)

7th June [World Food Safety Day](#)

8th June [World Oceans Day](#)

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