



***“Our Vision is an active, environmentally aware community that ensures a sustainable future for our shared world.”***

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## Eco centres for Early Childhood Project Update

NSW ECEEN finished rolling out phase one of their Eco Centres for Early Childhood project in the Randwick Botany area. All services involved achieved many great sustainability goals and are inspired to continue to work towards their goals. Moverly Children's Centre hosted the final meeting and was pleased to take on the role as the 'environmental lighthouse' for the area.

As of September, we have been working with services in the Hornsby area as we continue to roll out Hub two of the project.

Over a two year period the plan is to develop 4 regional hubs of expertise in environmental sustainability by inviting staff and families from each service to form an *Enviro Committee* and participate in a series of free workshops.

The workshops conducted by Julie Gaul and Deb Watson provide practical opportunities to enable each service to develop an Environmental Management Plan and begin the change process in a holistic manner. Onsite consultation will be provided to services to support the development of the management plan. The aim is to invite at least two centre representatives from nominated services, ide-

ally one being a parent or family member.

The first workshop was a general introduction to the project where participants could discuss their ideas and identify environmental sustainability goals that they would like to work towards in the future. The concept of 'well-beingness' was also explored.

The next workshop focused on healthy environments, looking at reducing chemical use and the range of water issues that services need to consider.

To build on this focus, Hornsby Shire Council hosted a free public seminar featuring guest speaker Dr Sarah Lantz. Dr Lantz spoke about her book "Chemical Free Kids—raising healthy children in a toxic world" and how to identify and avoid those all too common products that may be especially harmful for children.

Workshops three and four looked at reflecting on the resources we use and fostering that meaningful connection with nature.

The final workshop will bring together all participants again after having a few weeks to go away and work on implementing their identified projects and goals. Participants will

each report back to the group about their successes and challenges that were experienced. We look forward to seeing some inspirational case studies which will be published in the next ECEEN newsletter.

*“Pennant Hills Pre-school has been around for over 23 years, but Sye and I have only taken over it for a little over a year. There is lots to do, but we are young and are happy to take up the challenge. I would like to thank Julie and Deb for running the workshop with passion. We hope to grow our own passion and influence families at our centre.”* Stephen and Sye Chiu, Hornsby Hub participants.

February 2010 will see the start of Hub number three as we roll out the Eco Centres project in the Camden/Campbelltown area. If you are an Early Childhood service or program situated in or close to those areas and interested in being part of the project, please contact Sarah Murray, Project Officer, to register your interest P: 80643625 or E: info@eceen.org.au.

At this stage the fourth Hub is planned to be in the Blacktown region, but will be confirmed early next year.

## 2009 SPROuts Practice Awards

**Sustainable  
Projects  
Recognising  
OUTSTANDING  
PRACTICE**

The NSW Early Childhood Environmental Education Network invites you to enter your project case study before the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2010 for your chance to be this year's SPROuts Practice Award winner and receive a cash prize for your service!

**What is the award?** NSW ECEEN aims to support and acknowledge those Early Childhood Services in NSW who are demonstrating outstanding commitment to promoting environmental practice and sustainability. Each

project case study will be posted on NSW ECEEN's website so you can share your environmental achievements with the network, and at the same time provide inspiration to others wanting to find meaningful ways to help children connect with nature. The award winning entry will receive a cash prize to put towards future environmental projects or resources.



**How do I enter?** This year there are two award categories;

**1. 'An individual project'**

Your activities have involved the participation of staff, children and their families and made an impact on the sustainability of your own particular service OR

**2. 'How you have linked sustainability within your community'**

The focus of your activities have been taken beyond the doors of your service. The project has been a catalyst for change within the broader community

To enter simply complete an entry form and return to ECEEN by 31/01/09. Forms are available to download at [www.eceen.org.au](http://www.eceen.org.au)

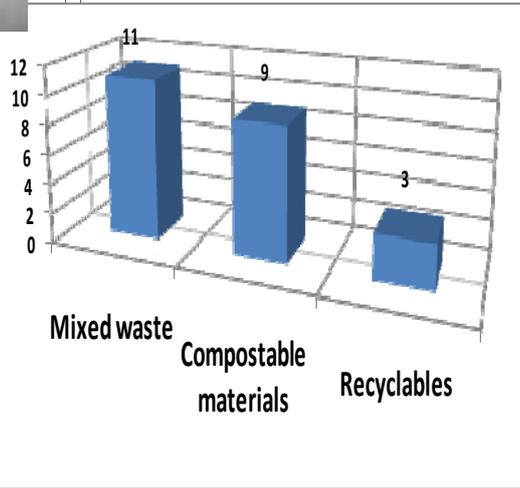
## Como West Primary —Waste Audit

*School Waste Audit - 2nd June 2009*  
I am in year three and very interested in looking after the environment so I became a member of the Green team at my school Como West. The Green Team, Mrs Murray (my Mum!) and students from my class carried out a waste audit. We put down a big plastic sheet and tipped out all the rubbish



from recess and lunch that everyone had thrown away in the bins that day. There was way too much rubbish! We used big long tongs to sort the rubbish into three groups: compostable materials, recyclables and mixed waste. At first we were a bit confused about what went in each bucket but we soon got the hang of it.

The older children helped us to read the scales as we put each bucket on the hook. Each bucket was weighed and the graph shows the findings. Looking at the results we all agreed we needed to reduce the amount of mixed waste that just ends up at the tip, a lot of it takes a long time to break down like the plastic.



## Como West Primary — 'Nude Food Day'



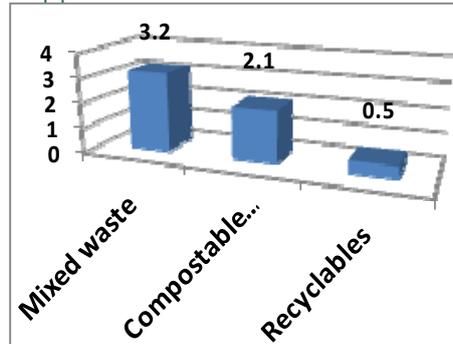
Check out our nude food lunches!



### "Nude Food Day - Tuesday, 23rd June"

This was a great day. Everyone tried really hard to bring things in their lunchbox that didn't have packaging or the packaging could be recycled. Lots of people brought in reusable containers and drink bottles. Thank you to everyone for their support of this day. After collecting the bins, we sorted the rubbish and weighed it just like we did before. Actual rubbish collected had been reduced by 75%. Another great thing was that the playground

had hardly any rubbish left in it and lots of children brought healthy food. Many children have said that they will continue bringing "Nude Food" everyday. I am proud of all our efforts.



## Early Childhood Waste Wise Project Case Study—Woolongbar Preschool

The Early Childhood Waste Wise Education Project is run by the North East Waste Forum. The Forum is a regional waste group with member Councils being Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Tweed Valley, Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley Councils.

The project is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 30 Preschools and Long Day Care Centres have taken part.

The project aims to highlight to Early Childhood Staff, parents and children the importance of reducing waste to landfill. Routines, education and strategies are implemented in Early Childhood Services to support staff in reducing what they throw out. Composting, Recycling and avoiding waste are encouraged.

Woolongbar Community Preschool is located in Northern NSW. Twenty preschoolers per day attend and the preschool has eight staff.

Director Rosemary Gillett has a personal interest in sustainability and indicated interest when the Early Childhood Waste Wise Project was first promoted at a regional ECA conference in 2007.

Georgie Piper, coordinator of the project, first visited the Service in September 2007 and conducted a Waste Audit and a Children's Group time.

A waste reduction action plan was developed with staff and follow up visits included a final audit and another children's group time.

Many outcomes and routines have been implemented which included:

- \*Separation of materials to a high level;
- \*Rubbish thrown out has been reduced; Recycling, composting and avoiding waste preferred.
- \*Labeling system for separating waste into appropriate bins, developed for children.



- \*Focus on low waste lunches to avoid packaging.
- \*Recycling of printer cartridges;

\*New photocopier purchased for double sided printing.

\*Parent involvement encouraged, sharing of information.

\*Worm Farm Silky Chooks and chook pen a new addition to the Preschool. Chickens fed scraps.

\*Newsletters sent by email.

\*Papermaking.

Woolongbar Preschool has also taken part in Rous Water's **Water Aware Centre Program**.

Outcomes from this program :

- \*Water tanks installed. After six months the Preschool used no water from Council supplied mains, only tank water.
- \*Dual flush toilets installed
- \*Flow restrictors in all taps
- \*Gardens have been mulched
- \*Where possible, native trees and plants are used
- \*A water course for water play in the planning stages. Children will use water from the tank

For more info: Georgie Piper, Project Coordinator [childhood@northeastwasteforum.org.au](mailto:childhood@northeastwasteforum.org.au) or Barbara Jensen Coordinator of Rous Water's Water Aware Centre Program [barbara.jensen@rouswater.nsw.gov.au](mailto:barbara.jensen@rouswater.nsw.gov.au)

## One Million Women Campaign

"1 Million Women - A campaign of daughters, mothers, sisters and grandmothers - Committed to protecting our climate, our communities and our future, leading change for the better."

Their goal is to inspire 1 million Australian women to take meaningful action against climate change by cutting 1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which the main greenhouse pollutant.

Check out their website [www.1millionwomen.com.au](http://www.1millionwomen.com.au) and you will see the wide range of inspiring women who have taken up the challenge and pledges to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions covering their household, food, cars and getting around, flights, shopping and renewable energy. Every

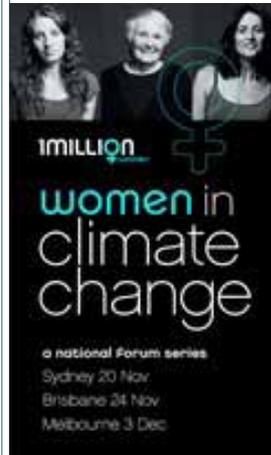
woman who joins has a personal goal to cut 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> from their daily lives within a year of joining the campaign.

On the 1 Million Women website you'll be guided through ways to cut your 1 tonne, and to track your progress as you go along.

Next year NSW ECEEN hopes to work with the Climate Coolers project to educate children about sustainability issues through stories and other early childhood focused activities. Climate Coolers is a not-for-profit, non-partisan women's organisation that exists to engage the women of Australia on climate change and drive practical action to cut greenhouse gas pollution.

Natalie Isaacs is the Co-founder and CEO of Climate Coolers. Natalie is a

mother of four, and like many of us has a deep concern about the world her children are inheriting.



Want to know more? The Campaign is bringing a national forum series to Sydney on Friday November 20, where leading women of Australia offer their

perspectives for climate policy, practical programs and activities that will mobilise women from all backgrounds and cultures to join in cutting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## Gumnut Kidz — written by Fiona Veld, Director



(including natives and bush tucker) and a thriving vegetable garden. Watching the children play in this new environment has been incredibly rewarding. Play is rich with exploration, excitement and natural curiosity. It is a sensory playground and provides physical challenges and opportunities.

In February 2009, Gumnut Kidz Kindergarten was able to fulfil its vision to provide an outdoor natural play space for its children and families. From a playground that consisted of only synthetic soft fall surfacing and cement and lots of commercial plastic climbing equipment, the yard has been transformed into a natural oasis for children, family and staff alike. The new environment consists of many new features, including a sandpit, dry creek bed, frog pond, bark, timber decking, plants and flowers

The primary goal we are working towards now is the implementation of Stage Two of our outdoor natural play space – environmental sustainability and conservation education for staff, families and children in a practical and real way. We would like to purchase and install a rain water tank, worm farm and bird bath as well as focus on plant regeneration. GKK's vision is to be known in the local community as pioneers in educating children in environmental sustainability

through learning and hands on involvement. On a professional level, it is the goal to set the standard for early childhood professionals in the Macarthur region to demonstrate that together we can make a difference.

*NSW ECEEN is looking forward to working with Fiona and everyone at Gumnut Kidz when we begin the third stage of our ECO Centres project in the area early next year.*



# KU Randwick/Coogee Preschool



Look at the carrots that we have grown in our very own garden!

A huge congratulations goes out to the staff, children and families at KU Randwick/Coogee, winners of the 2009 Ecoliving Fair and Garden Awards for *Best School Garden*. Each year the Garden Awards allow residents, community groups, businesses and schools to showcase their gardens and recognise their contribution to beautifying Randwick City and environmentally sustainable horticulture practices.

The award was officially presented to the preschool at the Randwick Ecoliving Fair on September 27. This is a fantastic annual event where the continuing journey towards sustainability is celebrated with more than 50 exhibitors, creative corner, kidspace, workshops and the Conversations Cafe—ECEEN will let you know dates for 2010.

Being environmentally focused can sometimes bring along it's challenges as was experienced recently. Karen Penfold, Director, explains "In September we were visited by DOC's because unfortunately one of our children got a deep splinter whilst at the preschool and had to go to hospital to get it removed. All of the

wooden surfaces were assessed and the mulch was identified as the most likely cause. I got in touch with Julie from ECEEN and together we talked with with *Australian Native Landscapes* who recommended we use their 'Playground Mulch'"

They are really happy with how the mulch is performing and are pleased to report there has been no more splinters! In fact the whole ordeal inspired them to revamp the garden and continue the edging around all of the garden beds.



Environmental Education features in all aspects of the program

## Congratulations!

The Public Grant for Community Savers Stream round 2 has been announced. This provides funding of up to \$40,000 for not-for-profit community organisations wanting to undertake simple, low cost water and energy saving upgrades in their facilities. Of the 247 projects funded (worth \$5.9 million) 67 were Early Childhood Services! What a great effort and fantastic outcome. To see a list of those services go to [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/ccfpfpR2.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/ccfpfpR2.htm)

## Why should I become a member of NSW ECEEN ?

We need your support so we can continue supporting early childhood professionals and families of young children to facilitate meaningful environmental education into their daily experiences.

- Membership Benefits**
- Quarterly newsletter.
  - Resource kits for loan.
  - Free attendance at Meetings.
  - Free entry in SPROuts.
- Practice Awards**
- Liaison with early childhood networks, individuals and organisations at local, state, national and international levels.
  - Affordable professional development and training sessions.
  - Access to our members area which includes a Member forum for questions and discussion, library of articles and resources and photo gallery

**ECEEN also provides training workshops designed for your organisation's needs.**

Download a membership form from our website or send us your request via email.

## All Star Early Learners

Michelle and the team at All Star EL Botany also took up the offer of being part of our first Eco Centres project earlier on in the year.

Michelle believes that children are never too young to learn and value the natural world and therefore ensures a large component of their program is about those connections with nature.

Recently the children engaged in an art project using natural materials. Michelle explains "The children from All Star Learners went in small groups on a nature walk through Botany. They experienced the sensory and tactile side of natural objects first-hand. They collected items from which they had found particularly interesting, such as acorns, flowers, large leaves, empty snail shells, twigs and other treasures. The children were able

to bring back their natural treasures to pre-school and we used them for a wide variety of creative expression experiences. The children used twigs instead of paint brushes to paint with, used acorns for embossed patterns, made wax rubbings with the large autumn leaves behind paper, made 3D collages with leaves, sand and soil. We used rocks and leaves for counting and mathematical activities. We also formed letters of the alphabet using twigs to assist with our letter recognition. It was great to incorporate natural objects into our daily routine of school readiness."



"It was great to incorporate natural objects into our daily routine of school readiness."

"The ECEEN workshops were a valuable driving force in inspiring teachers to think 'outside the square' in relation to environmental issues. More importantly, the seminars helped teachers to incorporate these environmental issues into the day-to-day programming in early childhood."



Michelle realised that it was easy to make many small changes to their program which could easily help in educating our young ones from an early age.

our young ones from an early age.

## Greengables environmental program

Amber and the staff and Greengables were another keen participant in our Eco Centres project in the Randwick/Botany area.

At Greengables they have been busy implementing their environmental program which includes revamping the outdoor area and enhancing the environmental aspect of their program provided for the children.

A major change is the addition of a brushwood screen across the old metal fence in the outdoor play space, creating a softer and more natural touch to the space.

In the two to three year old room a sensory garden has been planted and a mini rainwater tank installed to catch much needed rainwater as there is no access to taps in that part of the yard. The children have also made some wind chime creations and garden ornaments from

recycled materials.

In their three to five year old room, a herb and vegetable garden has been planted. The children enjoy snipping the herbs to take home and use in their cooking, and they try to use the vegetables in cooking experiences during the day. The children have created a scarecrow and named him 'Sam the Sun Smart man' (see photo below) to help protect their precious crops. Like in the toddler room, the older children have had a lot of fun making ornaments and wind chimes for their garden out of recycled materials.



Another of their achievements has been the installation of a worm farm. Children feed the worms everyday from the scraps collected from morning and afternoon tea. The children also collect the 'worm wee' and use it to fertilise the gardens.

To try and also involve parents and families in the environmental program, they have set up a 'parent-home' recycling program. This is where the children and their parents are encouraged to take home a bag full of recyclable materials to place in their bin. This helps with this restricted recycling bin space.

Another creative way the service reuses scrap paper is to shred it and take it to the local pet stores.

'We have been very busy in all areas of the centre; planting, growing and making positive changes to our environment. We are continuing to maintain our gardens and will do so for the future' Amber.



## Green Dates

### November 2009

9th-15th

**National Recycling Week**

Planet Ark

<http://recyclingweek.planetark.org/>

### December 2009

2nd—NSW ECEEN meeting  
"Celebration of 2009"

7th - 13th—Coast Care Week

"Life on the Edge"

Landcare Australia

[www.coastcare.com.au](http://www.coastcare.com.au)

11th—International Mountain Day

'Sustainable Management of Mountains'

[http://www.fao.org/mnts/intl\\_mountain\\_day\\_en.asp](http://www.fao.org/mnts/intl_mountain_day_en.asp)

NSW ECEEN invites you to join us for our final meeting for 2009 and a glass of bubbly!

**Wednesday December 2**  
**KU Children's Services**  
**129 York St, level 1**  
**6.00pm**

**Guest speaker — Catherine Lee.**

You will be inspired by Catherine, Director of 'The Point Preschool' Oyster Bay and proud winner of the 2006 ECEEN SPROuts Practice Award, 2008 ABC Gardening Australia Gardener of the Year Award 'Australian Runner Up', 2008 NSW Community Child Care Co-operative CeeCee Awards Winner 'Director with Vision', and many other outstanding achievements. The Point has a very strong commitment to the environment and education for sustainability, where children are actively involved in sustainable practices every day.

**Bookings are essential. Please RSVP to Sarah Murray Ph: 8064 3625 or E: [info@eecen.org.au](mailto:info@eecen.org.au)**

**'Garla Bauondi': Fuelling the fire**  
**29 September – 2 October 2010**  
**Adelaide Convention Centre, SA**

The S.A. Branch of ECA invites you to Adelaide in 2010 to participate in the ECA National Conference, 'Garla Bauondi': a Kurna phrase meaning 'to fuel the fire'. As we gather and learn together, we keep the fire burning brightly for all children's rights, learning and wellbeing.

**Leading Change; Living for one planet**  
**Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE)**  
**16th Biennial Conference**  
**Australian National University**  
**Canberra 26—30 September 2010**

For information, updates, call for papers and registration go to [www.aee.org.au](http://www.aee.org.au)

This project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through it's Environmental Trust

**WE NEED YOU!** Calling all NSW ECEEN members— share your stories and ideas about all the fantastic work that is being done out there in early childhood services and programs— encouraging children's connection with nature and ability to live more sustainably. Send us an email or better still log on to our members forum on our updated website.



***Our aim is to bring together interested people and organisations in order to promote the paramount importance of integrating environmental education into all facets of young children's lives in NSW***

[www.eecen.org.au](http://www.eecen.org.au)

NSW ECEEN Project Coordinator  
Phone: 8064 3625  
Web: [www.eecen.org.au](http://www.eecen.org.au)  
Email: [info@eecen.org.au](mailto:info@eecen.org.au)