

1. Welcome

The Chair, Jodie Savage – Environmental Education Officer from Waverley Council, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. She also thanked Bronte Public School for hosting the meeting. Jodie introduced Bronte PS teacher Kylie Maunsell to address the group.

2. Sustainability at Bronte Public School

Kylie explained that the school has recently partnered with Cool Australia (www.ourcoolschool.com.au) to roll out a number of school programs. She showed a variety of videos created by the school in partnership with Cool Australia and encouraged other schools to consider becoming a Flagship Cool Australia school.

Sustainability projects at the school include:

- Keeping 4 chickens on site
- Nude Food lunch every Wednesday (and did whole week of Nude Food during Enviro Week)
- 2 x rainwater tanks
- Vegetable and native gardens
- Composting and worm farming
- Have 'green team' of students that help with projects
- Recently took part in National Tree Day with lots of parental help
- About to start Energy Savers program in the school

3. Council Updates

Fiona alerted schools that the National Community Garden Network are calling for Expressions of Interest to present or run workshops at *Eco-topia* - the national school and community garden conference happening at the Randwick Sustainability Education Hub. See <http://events.communitygarden.org.au/workshop-idea/> for more information.

See **Appendix 1** for full council updates from Waverley, Woollahra and Randwick councils.

4. Native Plants & Biodiversity – Group Discussion

Jodie facilitated a group discussion on the various native and biodiversity projects schools had undertaken and the lessons learnt from each project. This was a great time of sharing ideas and resources.

We even received a story in the lead up to the meeting from Renee Ferster Levy who was unable to attend...

Picture a verandah high over a gully in Bellevue Hill, with a beautiful Eucalypt rising from below - its canopy at eye level. For hours every day, a pair of tiny spotted birds with red and yellow highlights could be seen flitting over the leaves pecking at the numerous scale insects for their sweet coating. Each spring these birds would fly to a sandy space and dig a long burrow for their nest, frequent feeding visits ensued once the chicks hatched.

In the garden was a big piece of sandstone bedrock, whose natural hollow would fill with water. Five tiny, long-tailed Fairy-wrens would hop tentatively out of the bushes on the cliff edge to drink and bathe - the bright blue male often on alert for danger. There would be frequent displays with Wrens from neighbouring territories, as there were many in the area. Tiny Silvereyes would also nest in a bushy tree in the garden ...

The tiny canopy peckers are Spotted Pardalotes, their three-part call was a feature of my childhood, and is now almost absent. There seem to be only two or three families of Fairy-wrens left in the whole of Bellevue Hill, and Silvereyes do pass through but don't seem to stay for long.

This reduction in small bird diversity is being repeated all over the country in urban and semi-urban areas and seems to be due to an increase in aggressive and large birds, and a decrease in dense bushy habitat for small birds' feeding, shelter and nesting.

But we can help! We can:

1. *Become familiar with our local bird species (e.g. with programs like BirdLife's "Answering the Call")*
2. *Work with the school to identify areas for planting, ideally as part of a master plan*

3. *Select suitable endemic plants using advice from Council and “Guidelines for Creating Bird Habitat” (<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/Guidelines-Creating-Bird-Habitats>) to create “structural diversity” i.e. layers from herbs, grasses, small bushes, taller bushes, and creepers – not just lawn and trees*
4. *Use tiny tubestock plants – they’re inexpensive and once have taken, thrive better long term*
5. *Involve students in planning and planting; document/photograph and celebrate every step of the way*
6. *Monitor bird numbers using the Birds in Backyards data input; & sharing results with each other.*

A summary of the notes made from the discussion is listed in **Appendix 2**.

General helpful resources and Council support available were also discussed. See full list in **Appendix 3**.

5. ESSSN Sustainability Awards 2012

Jodie announced that at the Term 4 meeting we will award the inaugural round of the ESSSN Sustainability Awards.

All schools in Woollahra, Waverley and Randwick are encouraged to submit a nomination for one or more of their 2012 school projects to be considered for the awards. Award categories include energy, water, waste, biodiversity and student empowerment & leadership.

For the award guidelines, and to nominate a project, visit www.reduceyourfootprint.com.au/projects/esssn/.

6. Meeting Close and Thanks

Jodie thanked everyone for attending, drew the lucky door prize and reminded everyone about the Term 4 meeting.

It will be held at the **Randwick Sustainability Hub** and will run from **4:15pm - 6pm** (note the later time!).

This will be a great opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the year, so don't miss it! Stay tuned for more details.

Meeting closed at approximately 5:05pm.

Some attendees undertook a tour of the school to see their sustainability initiatives.

Next Meeting:

Term 4 Meeting & ESSSN Sustainability Awards Ceremony

Thursday 6 December 2012

4:15pm – 6pm

Randwick Sustainability Hub (Randwick Community Centre)

27 Munda Street Randwick

Appendix 1 – Council Updates

Waverley Council Update

Small Grants Program, round 1 (2012-2013 Financial Year) closes Friday 24 August, 5pm.

Round 2 closes 22 February 2013

http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/community/grants_and_donations/grants_guidelines

Sustainable House Day, Sunday 9 September

www.sustainablehouseday.com/

Tour is fully booked but you can visit Barrett House & others on the day.

<http://reduceyourfootprint.com.au/events/barrett-house-open-house/>

Bushcare Major Day Out – Sunday 9 September

www.bushcaresmajordayout.org/

2012 Green Awards

- Nominations for the Waverley Council Garden Awards are now open for 2012
- Costa Georgiadis of ABC's Gardening Australia is our guest judge and host awards function / Garden Tea at Bronte House in October
- **GREEN KIDS AWARD** – recognising great kids' gardening. This category is open for individual or group gardens.

Sustainability Workshops

- Booked until the end of the year and details will be on our events page

http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/environment/whats_on

- Related to today's theme there is: Surviving the Coast: Plants & Processes; Superb Fairy Wrens & Friends
- Also trialing Energy Smart @ Home & Water Smart @ Home

For schools we offer free energy and water audits via the Sustainable Business Program. Please contact me if you want to do it soon to get a good baseline this year. This will help with planning for programs next year and then you can measure your improvement.

<http://reduceyourfootprint.com.au/projects/sustainable-business-program/>

Food Waste Challenge

- 3-Council Program won a grant to run a Food Waste Challenge
- 2 workshops this year in November

<http://reduceyourfootprint.com.au/projects/the-food-waste-challenge/>

Schools Sustainability Survey

- Sending it out in next couple of weeks and looking for responses by mid Sept
- Designing a new resource (pulling together resources) for our schools
- The survey will be asking questions about general sustainability in your school but will also ask about your needs
- If any teachers want to be on a working group please let me know

I am doing a coastal management walk for a school out of our area in Bronte Gully – it is something I could do for any of our schools. I want this to be part of our Sustainable Schools program next year.

Monthly eNews - topics

- **Container Deposit Scheme (CDS)** www.boomerangalliance.org.au/cash-for-containers.html
- **Bag It: film and discussion night** - Friday 24 August at 6.30–9.30pm in Seagull Room, level 1, Bondi Pavilion
- **Draft Coastal Risk Management Policy is on exhibition**
- **Bioretention for Bondi Junction**

Please email me if you would like to receive the monthly eNews.

jodies@waverley.nsw.gov.au

9369 8045

Woollahra Council Update

2012 Woollahra Environmental Schools Sculpture Prize

- 2012 theme is **Plants and Animals**. Entries must be submitted to Council by 19 October 2012.
- Sculptures will be on display from Monday 29 October – Friday 9 November 2012
- **Free teaching resource** *Precious Plants and Animals Environmental Sculpture Resource Kit* online!
- Visit www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/environment/essp for information about all of the above

Share your projects online at Community Creators!

- Community Creators is a brand new website developed by Woollahra Council. It's a place for community members and groups to share ideas and work together on local, cultural and environmental projects.
- To get involved: jump online to www.communitycreators.org.au, sign up and start creating!
- For more information, contact community@woollahra.nsw.gov.au or 9391 7959.

40% Discount for Woollahra Schools at Marine Discovery Centre in 2012

- All Woollahra schools are eligible for a 40% discount on visits to the Marine Discovery Centre, Bondi. Plan your excursion now on 9300 0242 to take advantage of this subsidy from Woollahra Council.

Update on Recycling in Schools

- Earlier this year, Council's Community and Environment Committee resolved to make provisions for a schedule of rates for the collection of commingled recycling from schools in the negotiation of the next recycling contract in 2014. This means that we are aiming for schools to have access to a good rate for recycling collection through Council's 2014 negotiated contract.
- We support schools to encourage State Government to provide comingled recycling for public schools.

Talks and Schools Support

- Council's Sustainable Business Officer can audit your water & energy use. Register on 0409 333 145.
- Contact Melissa Sellen on 9391 7095 for any other environmental education support.

Randwick Council Update

WASTE

Council's waste contractor is offering **lessons around waste** for Stages 1-3. Topics include:

- What a Waste: rubbish today, resources tomorrow - Stages 1-2; school waste audit - stage 3 only
- Know your product: smart shopping - stages 1-3; live (bi)cycles - Stage 2-3
- Compost critters: the world beneath our feet - stages 1-3; closing the loop on organics - stages 1-3.

BIODIVERSITY

In 2013 Council will be launching a **school native haven and food garden grant program**. This program will help your school develop a native garden that can link into the wider 'Green Corridor' program that aims to link areas of bush to in backyards, parks and school grounds to provide habitat for our local creatures and bird. It is also aimed at your school providing food gardens that provide rich learning experiences for students.

EVENTS

Creating Eco-schools & Services course - for primary and early childhood services teachers, scheduled for 6 Wednesday nights starting 27 February. Enhance children's learning through nature-based activities by creating gardens, frog ponds, composting, using low-chemical cleaning practices and improving energy and water use.

Discover your coast school holiday program, 25-28 September, 10am - 3pm. Join the fun activities including 'Under the Sea' touch tank, 'Mini Beast Muster', coastal discovery walk, boomerang painting, storytelling, traditional Aboriginal games and Rockpool Ramble. Cost \$5 per person per activity. Bookings call 1300 306 776.

RESOURCES

Randwick libraries have a **Sustainability Collection**. If there are books/resources you would like us to collect contact Council's Sustainability Education Officer.

CONTACT DETAILS

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Waste Education | Matshepo Molala | (02) 9665 9031 |
| Sustainability Education | Fiona Campbell | (02) 9315 7244 |
| Randwick Council Nursery | Nick Renneberg | (02) 9399 0933 |

Appendix 2: Native Gardens and Biodiversity Group Discussion Notes

Things that worked well

- Use Randwick Community nursery
- Have a weekly garden club for your native plants as well as your veggies etc
- Make plant markers by taking a photo of the plant, printing on photo paper and adding the common and botanical name. Then laminate and cable tie to a stake to put next to each plant
- On the class phone list at the beginning of the year, provide an option for parents to tick a box if they want to be a 'green parent' – then you can call on them throughout the year to help with things!
- Enter competitions and use Council support and grants
- Parent involvement and help is important, but getting the kids involved is the best!
- Find ways to help students make strong connections with the gardens – e.g. plant a lemon myrtle tree and make lemon myrtle damper as a class. Even if you have to buy lemon myrtle to use in the actual cooking (so you don't strip the plant!) you can still walk down to the tree and discuss its properties as they eat the damper.
- Build gardens into lessons and the curriculum. Use them as much as possible for teaching, and enable other teachers to do the same
- Encourage students to get involved with the gardens in any capacity – even if it's just watering the plants near them at lunch time with a cup of water! Let them choose how they want to help (i.e. doesn't have to be 'attend gardening club every week for a whole year' or nothing).
- Sidetrack conversation onto no-waste lunches: have a 'golden lunchbox' prize that gets passed around to the best class each week or take photos of good examples of no-waste lunches as kids bring them in and stick them on a poster/bulletin board where parents can see to give them inspiration

Challenges & Lessons Learnt

- Bush tucker: what we grow in a space all together matters. Indigenous Australian intentionally create small interacting ecosystems of bush tucker plants that they know compliment each other. We shouldn't just throw plants in!
- Bush tucker: try to gain insights from local Elders (try contacting ESORA) and grow what's local to your area
- Bush tucker: Great resource flagged by Ann Kurts at Kensington PS was *D'harawal: seasons and climatic cycles*, compiled by Frances Bodkin; illustrated by Lorraine Robertson (ISBN 9780980481013 pbk.)
- Getting help can be a challenge. Always be looking for people you can raise up in the school community into positions of leadership so you're not reliant on one person
- Building works and BER are/were a challenge!
- Keeping students off gardens can be tricky – try using paling/fences and they do learn over time if reinforced enough!
- Consider any drainage issues before you install the garden as can be a pain to fix afterwards!
- Challenging to keep people interested and engaged to ensure garden stays maintained. Try keeping working bees short (under 2 hours), always provide food/BBQ or a short workshop on a topic parents would be interested in so there's something in it for them, get the general assistant (GA) at the school on board to help keep an eye on what needs maintenance.

How projects were funded

- Eco Schools Grants
- Council Grants
- Randwick Nursery a great resource
- Australian Museum grant for Year of Biodiversity
- Donations from parents and local businesses
- Donations from Bunnings

Appendix 3: Useful Resources & Information - ESSSN Term 3 2012

NATIVE & BIODIVERSITY-RELATED RESOURCES & PROGRAMS

Free Lesson Plans

- Biodiversity for Kids (stage 2) – NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service - www.environment.nsw.gov.au/edresources/TeachersKitBiodiversity.htm
- BioWhat? (stage 3) - South Australian Urban Forest Biodiversity Program - www.backyards4wildlife.com.au/uploads/BioWhat.pdf
- Zoom Lens Project (stage 3) – Government of South Australia - www.milliontrees.com.au/index.php?page=zoom-lens-project
- Discovering Wetlands in Australia (stage 2 & 3) – Dept. of Sust., Env., Water, Population & Communities - www.environment.gov.au/water/publications/environmental/wetlands/classroom-kit.html
- Earth Alive (stage 3) – Planet Ark & Field of Mars - <http://treeday.planetark.org/documents/doc-753-earth-alive-2012.pdf>
- The 'Precious' series (stage 2 & 3) – Woollahra Council - www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/environment/essp
- Green Lane Diary (8-13 year olds) – Green Cross Australia - www.greenlanediary.com/
- Conserving Australia's Biological Diversity (stage 4) - Dept. of Sust., Env., Water, Pop & Communities www.environment.gov.au/education/publications/biodiversity/index.html

Other Free Resources

- National Parks & Wildlife Service www.environment.nsw.gov.au/edresources/EducationalResources.htm
- Lookalike Field Guide (native plants and weeds that look similar) – Hornsby Shire Council - future.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/test/environment/bushland-and-biodiversity/bushcare/native-and-weed-look-alikes
- Bush Tucker & Aboriginal Use of Native Plants: Links to many resources - http://science.uniserve.edu.au/school/curric/stage4_5/aborigines&plants.html
- Birds in Backyards – fact sheets and top tips - www.birdsinbackyards.net/
- BirdLife Webcam - www.birdlife.org.au/visit-us/discovery-centre/eagle-cam
- Backyard Buddies - fact sheets & links to other web pages - www.backyardbuddies.net.au/
- Resources for habitat gardens - www.habitatnetwork.org/
- Sustainable Gardening Australia Network - www.sgaonline.org.au/
- Edible Weed Information - www.survival.org.au/bushfood_weeds.php
- Randwick Nursery - www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/Looking_after_our_environment/Greening_our_city/Community_nursery/

Paid Education Providers

- Australian Museum - <http://australianmuseum.net.au/stage-level>
- Powerhouse Museum - www.powerhousemuseum.com/education/
- Observatory Hill EEC - www.observhill-e.schools.nsw.edu.au/Site/Home.html
- Marine Discovery Centre - www.marinediscovery.org.au/education.html
- Conservation Volunteers Australia - www.conservationvolunteers.com.au/get-involved/education
- Plus many more - use Google to find out more!

COUNCIL SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Woollahra Council Offers:

- School visits and talks about native plants, gardens and biodiversity
- Guided walks of local parks and natural areas (on request, subject to availability)
- Annual 'Win a Native Garden' competition in celebration of Schools Tree Day (opens in June each year)
- Bushland maintenance experience through involvement in Bushcare programs
- Resources and information at www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/environment/biodiversity_flora_and_fauna
- For more information contact Melissa Sellen on 9391 7095 or at melissa.sellen@woollahra.nsw.gov.au.

Randwick Council Offers:

Native Havens For Schools Project:

With a focus on increasing habitat protection and conservation on public and private land, the **Native Haven's project** is designed to provide advice and support for schools, and others, to work together to encourage the conservation of local plants and animals in school yards and other areas.

What Council provides:

- Council bushland field officer visit to help scope out the biodiversity project
- Council bushland field officer can visit the school to assess an appropriate spot for the native haven
- the Council bushland team can help with determining the number of plants needed
- Council nursery staff can offer advice on plant choice
- schools involved will be eligible to pick up suitable plants from Council's nursery
- Council's bushland team's tools can be borrowed for planting out day.

What schools need to provide:

- submit an outline of your schools biodiversity project to the Bushland team for
- school nominates class/s which will be involved in developing a native haven garden
- nominated class will be available to learn how to assess a suitable site with a Council staff member
- class/s learn how to manage the project - what resources they need, what actions need to be carried out
- class/s involved develop a timeline including materials needed, planting out and garden maintenance
- class/s organise tools, plants and preparation for planting day from Council' Bushland team and nursery
- school to organise delivery of mulch through a reputable tree maintenance contractor
- class/s plant out and maintain the garden

If your school has a biodiversity project starting and you would like to be considered to be involved in Council's **Native Haven Project**, contact Randwick City Council's Bushland Management Team on 9339 0683.

Waverley Council Offers:

- A selection of free native plants via Environmental Services
- Advice on plant species and habitat creation
- Backyard buddies booklets
- Native plant fact sheets
- Native plants of eastern suburbs brochure
- Resources & information found at www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/environment/biodiversity
- Gardening with native plants: www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/environment/native_vegetation
- Creating a wildlife habitat:
www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/Native_Plants/create_a_wildlife_habitat_garden

Bush regeneration sites in the Waverley area:

Students can learn about native plants, and help by doing weeding and planting at:

- Bronte Gully
- Tamarama Gully
- Hugh Bamford Reserve
- Easter Reserve
- Diamond Bay Reserve

To find out when to attend visit: www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/environment/trees_plants_and_bushcare/bushcare

UPCOMING ENVIRONMENTAL DATES 2012

| | | | |
|--------|---------------------------------|---------|-------------------------|
| 20 Aug | Keep Australia Beautiful Week | 17 Sept | NSW Bike Week |
| 1 Sept | National Biodiversity Month | 1 Oct | World Habitat Day |
| 7 Sept | National Threatened Species Day | 21 Oct | National Water Week |
| 9 Sept | Sustainable House Day | 12 Nov | National Recycling Week |

6 Dec Term 4 ESSN Meeting at Randwick Community Centre (430pm – 6pm)

Ask a question, write a blog, search for events, or visit our ESSN web page...

www.reduceyourfootprint.com.au/projects/essn/