

ESSSN Minutes – Term 4, 1 December 2011

Bellevue Hill Public School

1. Welcome

The Chair, Melissa Sellen – Environmental Education Officer from Woollahra Council, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked people for coming. She thanked Bellevue Hill Public School for hosting the meeting and reminded people that a free child minding service was also available during the meeting. Mel introduced the school principal.

2. A quick word from the Principal – Sue Bennett

Sue thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and for visiting the school. She talked about how back in 2004 the school had a fete which was totally 'green' and since then teachers, parents and the whole school community have achieved a great deal.

Sue announced at the meeting that she had just been informed that the school had won a Teachers Federation Peace and Sustainability Award for their 2011 school musical 'A Swinging Summer Time' with an environmental theme.

3. Student presentations

A group of enthusiastic and well-spoken students, all part of the schools Green Gang, took turns to present to the meeting. The projects and initiatives that were mentioned included:

- Installation of a smart meter and rain water tanks
- Use of recycling service
- Use of worm farms / compost bins
- Involved in 'Watch our Watts' program
- Created a munch and crunch garden, a sensory garden, a bush tucker garden and a native habitat corridor
- Council grants
- Student rep council – sold fruit cups to raise money for more environmental projects and raised \$180
- Waste free Wednesdays
- Won the Woollahra Council competition for native gardens
- Gardening – the students have a roster which includes waterers and soil checkers (they also have light checkers)
- The Green Gang – put notices on the student notice board, write articles for the newsletter, work out who wins awards

Future goals and directions include,

- Want to install whirly gigs and seals on windows
- Want to use water tanks more
- Will use the master plan as a guide for further sustainable development

4. School sharing & networking

Mel thanked the students and complimented the school on their achievements. She then invited members of the network to share some of their successes or challenges from the past year.

Penny from Paddington

- Focused on waste and recycling
- Started worm farming

- Initiated nude food Tuesdays and also did their first video conference

Kylie from Bronte PS

- Our garden is starting to thrive
- The worm farm is up and running and connected to a classroom
- Found that managing the composting was difficult so responsibility for this has been handed over to individual classrooms

Vivienne from Bronte PS

- The school community learnt a difficult but important lesson when a parent designed a fabulous sculpture for the playground which was not permitted to be built by the DET

Pearl from Kesser Torah College

- This year we built a herb garden, a native garden and we have two worm farms
- Waste is still a problem

Rudi from Vaocluse PS

- Have just built a massive chicken shed
- Getting to work on the new kitchen after being successful with their SAKG program application
- All welcome to come and visit the school

5. Council updates

Waverley Council – Erin Gibson, Environment Officer – Community Education

- Our Summerama program is finalised (Summer Activities Program runs during January (with one event in February) – the program and activities can be found on the website (What’s on section or workshops & events page under Environment tab) http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/environment/Events_and_workshops
- Sustainability workshops set until March 2012 – see link above
- The Bondi stormwater harvesting project is going well
- Next round of small grants closes in February 2012 – http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/community/grants_and_donations/small_grants
- New staff member – JP Williamson – has started in our office to manage the 3-Council Compost Revolution program (he is the new Lauren) – he can be contacted on 9369 8112 / jpw@waverley.nsw.gov.au
- This is my last meeting ☹ - Jodie Savage will be taking over my role – 9369 8045 / jodies@waverley.nsw.gov.au

Woollahra Council – Melissa Sellen – Environmental Education Officer

1. Woollahra Environmental Schools Sculpture Prize Update:

- Exhibition was fantastic. Thanks to schools for their support
- All 2011 entries can be viewed online
- Teaching resource *Precious Resources Environmental Sculpture Resource Kit* available free online
- 2012 theme is ‘plants and animals’
- For all information visit www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/environment/essp

2. Summer Activities 2012:

- There are lots of great, free activities happening this summer in Woollahra and around Sydney! Check out www.summerama.com.au for all the details!

3. 40% Discount for Woollahra Schools at Marine Discovery Centre in 2012

- All Woollahra schools are eligible for a 40% discount on all visits to the Marine Discovery Centre, Bondi in 2012. Plan your excursion now to take advantage of this subsidy from Woollahra Council!

4. Community Environmental Grants Program 2012/13

- Applications open in March next year (closing June 30 2012). Start thinking about what environmental project you could seek funding for.

5. Talks and Schools Support

- Council's Sustainable Business Officer, Rob Brewster is available to help your school measure energy and water consumption. Contact him on 0409 333 145.
- Contact Melissa Sellen on 9391 7095 for any other environmental education schools support including classroom talks, help organising guest speakers, and special events.

Randwick Council – Dominika Grossy – Bushcare Officer

- Council is very active on National Tree Day and can help schools with projects
- The new community centre is a great teaching and learning resource
- Bushcare Booster program – training workshop for people who are interested in bushcare
- Summerama program is set

6. Resources

See Appendix 1 for a list of resources, opportunities, programs, grants & important dates.

More useful information can be found on the ESSSN webpage –

www.reduceyourfootprint.com.au/projects/esssn or the Sustainable Schools NSW website

7. Costa....our wonderful guest speaker!

Costa began by summarising the ESSSN meetings of 2011 ...

- Term 1 – meeting at Clovelly PS saw a presentation from the Australian Youth Climate Coalition – a fabulous group who are keen, driving, motivating
- Term 2 – meeting at Kincoppal Rose Bay, we focussed on waste and recycling and heard from Peter Carroll from SCRAP. Costa said 'when you think about composting, think about how you are helping to improve the skin of the earth'.
- Term 3 – we got inspired by Les Robinson at Coogee PS and were reminded how we need to 'get to the spirit of it'
- Today – we have had a wonderful presentation from the students here and congratulations to the Principal and the school for '**building responsibility**'

Some quotes from Costa's talk....

'...with all these things that we've learnt and heard, take the principles and give them an edge – like the Golden Lunchbox example'

'Think about perspective, get a hold of it and get creative'

'The better story tells you are, the better it is for everyone'

'The more we talk the less we duplicate mistakes and the more we can all learn from each other'

'All we gotta do is put the seed down'

'Use this network'

'You don't have to re-invent the wheel'

'Make sure you recognise and support the people who are supporting you – recognise and appreciate what people do. Little thankyou's go a long way'

'This is one of the best organisations that I have known at the school level'

'Don't get protective – we don't have time. Just get the ideas out there'

'Lead – take the information back and lead your schools'

'Take a different perspective'

Costa then showed us some pictures and talked about the messages they represented....

- You don't have to have big budgets to buy new things to get projects done – get creative – ie. you don't have to have the fancy corrugated iron garden beds to have a veggie garden
- Use art where you can – we saw a picture of a beautiful mural
- Put the logical / obvious messages out there – like... 'Think, Food, Water, Eggs, Lock Door'
- Recognise your champions
- 'Funk it up'
- 'Do something different' – 'dedication to gardening award', 'sustainability captain'
- 'Play with things, get involvement, creativity!'

'Thanks everyone, use the Summer to get creative and look into things a bit more. Don't forget to shift seats to get a different perspective'.

Big thanks Costa!!

8. Meeting close and thanks – 5pm

We all stayed a little longer to chat, eat some more food and write down some ideas & comments on the big sheets of flip chart paper – please see the collated information in Appendix 2.

It was such a lovely afternoon! Thanks again to all those who could make it. At the end of the meeting most people joined a short tour of the school grounds to see the gardens and other sustainability projects.

***See you in 2012,
Thanks for all that you have done this year!***

Next Meeting:

Thursday 23 February 2012

3:45pm – 5:15pm

Location TBA

Appendix 1

Useful Resources & Information - ESSSN Term 4 Meeting, 2011

Resources, opportunities & programs

- **Organic school gardens website**

A great range of lesson plans + adopt a farmer program, grants programs (see over the page), recipes and more. Visit www.organicschools.com.au

- **Our Cool School Pilot Program**

In 2012 Our Cool School is offering schools this unique opportunity to be involved with Cool Australia's National Flagship Program. The Flagship School program requires the participating school to use the learning activities on sustainability in the classroom. The whole school can choose to embed the program for a single term or the entire year. Teachers can sign up on a class-by-class basis. Teachers are free to pick and choose activities that suit them.

Schools who successfully register will be officially recognized as a Cool Australia flagship school, have free access to all of our online teacher resources and learning activities, have access to our online support via email and 1300 853 810 phone support, be invited to join in our annual Enviroweek campaign as part of the Cool Australia community, be invited to contribute to the ongoing teachers' conversation on Facebook

For more information contact Lynn Freebairn on lynn@coolaustralia.org or Szilvia Csanyi on szilvia@coolaustralia.org or on 1300 853 810.

- **GreenSpeak – student leadership program**

Greenspeak is a special student leadership program that encourages students to share their schools sustainability stories with other students around the state and is coordinated by Field of Mars EEC. Greenspeak is student led and involves students developing short informal presentations for other students about an aspect of their schools sustainability programs. Greenspeak is focused on discussion. A maximum of two schools can participate in each session. Once registered your students will need to prepare and develop questions relating to the chosen sustainability topic or may like to share their stories related to the topic.

For more information contact Field of Mars EEC on 02 9816 1298.

- **Wild Mob – for high school students**

Wild Mob is a not-for-profit, non-political organisation providing volunteers the opportunity to learn and work on meaningful environmental projects in remote and iconic Australian destinations. Their conservation projects offer the perfect opportunity for [school groups](#), university students, families, individuals and [other groups](#) to participate in hands-on conservation work and environmental education. In addition, participants have plenty of free time to go snorkelling with our marine biologist, hiking with a botanist or simply relax and enjoy the unique surroundings of [each project](#).

For more information contact Wild Mob on 07 3369 9665

- **AuSSI (Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative) – many links to lots of fabulous resources**
www.environment.gov.au/education/aussi/educational-resources.html
- **Carbon Kids – a program for schools committed to tackling climate change**
 Examples of units of work include – Plants and our Climate, Biodiversity, A Changing Climate, Investigating Microclimates...and more!

<http://www.csiro.au/en/Portals/Education/Teachers/Classroom-activities/CarbonKids/CarbonKids-Resource.aspx#aCKEdRes>

Grants & funding

- **Organic school gardens program** – now open for 2012 – calling for grant applications, deadline has been extended until 31 Dec, 2011.
 - \$2000 available for Starter School Program
 - \$1000 available for Leader School Program
 Visit - www.organicschools.com.au

Important dates – 2012

- January 'Sydney Summerama' – a range of great activities to get people out and about and appreciating our beautiful coastal environment. Activities being run by Waverley, Woollahra & Randwick Councils (and all other member councils of the Sydney Coastal Councils Group) – visit, www.summerama.com.au or council websites
- 16 February ESSSN Term 1 meeting – location TBA
- 2 March Schools Clean Up Day
- 4 March Clean Up Australia Day
- 21 March National Ride to School Day
- 5 May Chemical Clean Out Day – Clovelly Beach car park
- 27 May E-waste collection day (Woollahra & Waverley residents only)

Ask a question, write a blog, search for events, find out more about the 3-Council projects or visit our ESSSN web page....

www.reduceyourfootprint.com.au/projects/esssn/

Appendix 2

ESSSN Term 4 – Knowledge Sharing Feedback

A success from 2011...

- Visioning workshop
- New plants and worms
- Resource recovery system
- New scarecrow
- Working bees
- New bins (recycling, general waste, paper and compost)
- Worm farm operation in unison with compost bins

Ideas for finding funding...

- Keep a photo and written record of changes (before and after) and achievements and use it to gain further grants and support (it's a great student project!)
- Search it!
- Look at the Sydney Coastal Councils Group funding guide on their website
- Champions within the school community
- Get feedback on what makes for a successful grant application

School veggie gardens...

- You could have people donate a veggie and then start a "plant-off"

A great project idea is...

- Plant art
- Creative play with natural materials

Ideas for getting people involved...

- Newsletter and assembly promotions
- Be patient – get one person on board at a time
- You could have a working bee
- Have mini workshops associated with working bees
- Start small

Council support I would like...

- Woollahra Council collect recyclables from schools
- Help with the health of our school trees (Woollahra)
- A tour of the sustainability hub and gardens (maybe during one of these meetings?) (Randwick)
- Get City of Sydney Council on board
- Assistance with grant writing