

Thursday 23 October 2014

ENVIRO CHALLENGE SHOWS SCHOOLS ARE ECO SAVVY

Local schools who took part in an environment challenge have been recognised at this week's Youth Eco Summit (YES), a global, UN-recognised education event that showcases environmental achievements by primary and secondary schools.

Ryde Secondary College and **Denistone East Public School** took out the top prizes in the 2014 REEN Schools Challenge, a City of Ryde Council education initiative that encouraged primary and secondary schools to implement and document a wide range of environmental actions.

The winners were announced and presented with trophies at the YES Youth Eco Summit, opened by NSW Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Rob Stokes MP.

The winning schools will also each receive \$2,000 towards a new bike rack or landscaping contract and a \$500 gift voucher. Runners up will receive healthy eating fruit baskets.

HIGH SCHOOL CATEGORY

WINNER: RYDE SECONDARY COLLEGE

Judges' comment: The quality of the submission, the inventiveness of actions and the commitment of students, teachers and parents is outstanding. Initiatives included:

- a cottage garden utilised by biology and hospitality students to grow and harvest produce and study ecosystems
- hanging gardens from recycled materials
- a recycling program (mobile phones, e-waste, furniture)
- sustainability action team
- Indigenous native garden
- thriving worm-farm.

Runner up: Holy Cross College

Their well-documented achievements included a switch-off campaign, mobile recycling and an extensive waste audit and litter campaign with associated school projects and posters.

Highly Commended: Epping Boys High

An inspiring submission with achievements such as their classroom recycling program, food garden, Clean Up Australia day efforts, new composting system and a green team.

PRIMARY SCHOOL CATEGORY

WINNER: DENISTONE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Judges' comment: Congratulations to students, teachers and P&C committee for a fantastic effort. They were successful in engaging a large part of the school community, with initiatives such as:

- anti-litter and switch-off campaigns
- walk to school

- vegetable garden
- waste free lunch days
- green team
- composting and food waste recycling projects
- classroom recycling and reuse
- swap day.

RUNNER UP: MEADOWBANK PUBLIC

Initiatives included a walk to school day and breakfast event with over 140 students taking part, as well as extensive garden beds and innovative vegie sale, regular newsletter articles and a well organised working bee and litter free lunch day.

2014 REEN SCHOOLS CHALLENGE

Schools were awarded points on a range of environmental actions based around recycling, litter reduction and sustainability practices and included vegetable and native gardens, a chook run, composting and worm farming, food waste recycling, walk to school days, litter free lunch and healthy breakfasts, as well as information newsletters and working bees that involved students, teachers and parents.

ABOUT REEN

Ryde Environmental Education Network REEN is a City of Ryde Council initiative that involves over 30 high schools, primary schools and other educational organisations.

REEN engages teacher and student groups to participate in a range of initiatives including information workshops and other practical resources and activities for sustainability education.

Photo Opportunity: Mayor presenting prize to Denistone East PC/Ryde Secondary. Date to be confirmed.
Media contact: Lee Kirkland City of Ryde Media Officer 9952 8083 0434306444 lkirkland@ryde.nsw.gov.au