

SNAPSHOT: The Second Year of REEN, 2008

The second year of the Ryde Environmental Education Network (REEN) has continued to build on the strong foundations built during 2007. The following report contains a brief description of programs implemented throughout the year. REEN is jointly coordinated by Council's Sustainability Programs Coordinator and Waste Education Officer.

Quarterly REEN meetings and newsletters

High turn outs (10-25) of school representatives to each quarterly network meeting occurred during 2008. There was also a good response to programs offered and numerous examples of positive feedback offered from schools regarding the network and newsletters. Quarterly meetings were held in four different schools in Ryde with member teachers highlighting their own environmental initiatives. The professional development of Environmental Educators will continue in 2009, with a development afternoon planned in partnership with DET's Field of Mars Education Centre.

Catchment Chronicles (KABNSW Waste Watchers)

This program examines the effects that humans have on our waterways and how littering, dumping and other inappropriate activities affect our catchments. Solutions and alternative behaviours are assessed using the catchment model. In 2008, 11 primary schools and over 1935 students participated in the interactive and fun Catchment Chronicles and/or Water Welfare program sponsored by the City of Ryde. The program will be offered by Council again in 2009.



Students from Putney Public School enjoyed the Water Welfare Program

Clean Up Australia Day

Once again, schools across Ryde enthusiastically got involved in this year's Schools Clean Up Australia Day. A photo competition was held with a prize given to the school with the best photo from their Clean Up Australia Day activities.

The Wonderful World of Worms

Throughout the year students at 8 local schools were introduced to the 'Wonderful World of Worms' and were shown by the Waste Education Officer how they can set up their own Worm Farm at school and at the home. St. Michael's Catholic School, North Ryde Public School and St. Charles Primary School are just some examples of the numerous schools that have now set up compost bins and a worm farm and



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students collect their food scraps from lunch to feed the worms and to build up the compost. Worm farms have also been donated to numerous local schools and preschools with the number expected to increase again in 2009.

Environmental Library Storytime

In June, children aged 2-5 enjoyed environmental story time across the 5 libraries in the Ryde locality. The stories focused on waste education and proved to be a huge success with over 90 children attending. Story time involves book reading, singing, watching a DVD and craft activity.

Taronga Zoo Primary School Excursions

Gladesville, Ryde, Ermington Public and North Ryde Public Schools' jumped at the opportunity to visit Taronga Zoo. Hosted by the City of Ryde and Taronga Zoo, the schools spent a day at the zoo in August focusing on climate change and what we can do to look after our environment in a more sustainable way. REEN would like to thank the Natural Resource Advisory Council for the additional funding that they provided to undertake this successful initiative.

Streamwatch

Streamwatch continued in 2008 with six groups across Ryde participating. Schools involved in the program include Ermington Public School, Epping Boys High and Marsden High. The program provides fantastic hands on education for students whilst assisting in City of Ryde data collection to assess the health of local catchment areas. At the end of 2007, students from Ermington and Marsden participated in a joint Streamwatch monitoring day which was filmed for the Ryde Sustainability DVD (see article below).

'Sustainability in Ryde - Teaching today's children for tomorrow's future'

In March 2008, City of Ryde launched our educational DVD. EcoREEL productions produced the DVD with students from Ermington Public School and Marsden High school participating. The DVD is broken up into 3 sections: Energy, Water and Waste and discusses important issues, local to Ryde, including catchment health and biodiversity. Local school children and community members star in the production. DVD's were distributed to all schools in the Ryde LGA, along with participants and interested community members. Copies are available for loan from all City of Ryde libraries.



As part of the DVD project, "Sustainability Superheroes" were developed for the Energy, Waste and Water chapters.

School Sustainability Fair Days

City of Ryde attended and supported St. Anthony's Sustainability Day with the school children learning about the ins and outs of recycling. City Of Ryde also attended other local school events including Ryde TAFE's Environmental Expo.

Rubbish Free Lunch Challenge

For 2008, City of Ryde had a record number of participants with St. Michael's Catholic School and MET School taking out the top prizes and receiving an educational excursion to WSN Environmental's Chullora Material Recycling Facility.

Catchment Connections - Educational Mural in Eastwood

On 22nd September, City of Ryde together with our project partners in the Catchment Connections Urban Sustainability Project officially launched the project by opening an educational mural alongside the stormwater canal in Eastwood. Ryde Environmental Education Network is a crucial partner in the project allowing facilitation of local school community involvement in the three-year project. The mural was designed and painted by students from four local schools.



Students painting one of the mural panels during workshops at four local schools.

Grant Winners Officially Open Eco-Garden

In October 2007, Ermington Public School was awarded a \$5000 grant through the WSN Environmental Solutions Grass Roots sponsorship program. The grant program is open to City of Ryde groups as our Waste and Recycling contractors. Ermington Public School used the funds to add an environmental mural to their Outdoor Learning Centre and Eco-Garden. The Eco-Garden was officially opened by Mayor Vic Tagg on 6th November, 2008. REEN provided support during the application process including the donation and set-up of the demonstration worm farms used in the garden.



City Of Ryde Mayor Vic Tagg with members of Ermington Public Student Council at the Launch.



The Eco-Garden showing the fish pond and Environmental Mural in the background.

Ryde Public School Garden Relocation

Building works at Ryde Public School that started in January 2008, meant that the school's popular Eco-garden, established in 2002, needed to be relocated. City of Ryde Council has sponsored the school's Eco-garden by providing a load of top soil to kick start the garden in its new location. Teacher, Lyndall Westover was instrumental in establishing the original Eco-garden in 2002, with the help of local gardening enthusiast Jimmy Shaw and City of Ryde Council. "The children are very excited They love it, and I believe very important values are taught in the schools garden program such as waste minimisation through composting and worm farming, and learning how our food is grown", - Lyndall Westover.



Students from Ryde Public School working on the original Eco-Garden.



Students tend to the vegetables they planted.

Murray Darling Association Youth Forums

In October 2008, in conjunction with REEN, the association ran two senior secondary student workshops in Sydney as part of *The Living Murray* project. The project aims to raise understanding of the Murray-Darling basins social, environmental and economic importance to all Australians. Epping Boys High School and MET School in Meadowbank enjoyed the half day of activities. REEN looks forward to working closely with the Murray Darling Association in the future, especially with the Central Darling Shire Council partnership in 2009.

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