Our email newsletters support environmental education in Central Coast schools by providing succinct information about environmental happenings, resources, events, grants etc. Your contributions are welcome. If you are receiving this newsletter as a paper copy please consider providing us with your email so that we can send it directly (usually 2 per term).

LATEST NEWS

Bookings for Rumbalara EEC Excursion Programs - 2014
Booking forms (EoI) and program details are available on our website and have also been mailed to schools. In order to schedule your requested dates please return the form before week 3, term 1, 2014. The EoI can also be used to request other environmental support services such as Professional Learning, syllabus programming and School Environmental Management. All excursions are non registered courses and participating teachers are eligible for accreditation.

GRANTS

Climate Clever Energy Savers program
This well funded program that provides students (stages 2-5) with an opportunity to find and deliver energy saving solutions for their school has been extended into 2014. Schools and teachers that have already benefited from this program in previous years are eligible to apply. Teachers will receive professional learning support and student learning resources and become part of a local learning community. Closing Date: 21 Feb 2014
Details and EoI can be found in the final schoolbiz for 2013 or go to: www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/env_ed/programs/savers/index.htm
For more information contact: Mark Caddey, Sustainability Advisor on 02 9266 8517 or mark.caddey@det.nsw.edu.au.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

Gosford Council’s School Environment Awards
The Greenhouse Program celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2013 and had 31 schools take part in environmentally themed class projects and activities.

Congratulations to the winners:

Environmental School of the Year:
Large – Point Clare Public School
Medium – Chertsey Public School
Small – Somersby Public School

Mayoral Award for Best Production in Performing Arts – Gosford Public School
First Timers Award – Central Coast Grammar School
Most Improved School – Woodport Public School and North Gosford Learning Centre

Wyong Council’s Primary School Environment Awards
This year’s theme, Water Water Everywhere aimed to embraces the variety of ecosystems and habitats within the Shire and asked schools to celebrate their local environment and our use of water both at home and in the environment. The program has been running for 26 years.

Congratulations to the winners:

Overall Winner Small School - Mannering Park Public School, Runner Up - Wyong Creek Public School
Overall Winner Large School - Brooke Ave Public School, Runner Up - The Entrance Public School

In the Eco-tour category
1st Berkeley Vale Public School
2nd Budgewoi Public School
3rd Mannering Park Public School

In the Performance and Oral Presentation Category
1st Wyong Grove Public School
2nd Mannering Park Public School
Equal 3rd - Lake Munmorah Public School, Brooke Avenue Public School, Budgewoi Public School.

In the Waste As Art Category
1st Place- Brooke Ave Public School
2nd Place- The Entrance Public School
3rd Place- Tuggerah Public School

Special Achievement Awards
Jilliby Public School - for Water Conservation in buildings and outdoor vegetable gardens
Warnervale Public School - for Integrating learning into the Outdoors and the School Environment Club
Woongarrah Public School - for Public Speaking on Water topics

Central Coast recipients of 2013 Food Gardens in Schools grants:

Gorokan Public School - To contain run-off and to irrigate our vegetable garden
Gorokan Public School has a large vegetable garden which needs to be upgraded and made environmentally friendly. The soil has clay substrata which allows a lot of run off into the storm water system when it rains or when the garden is watered. The water from the garden and hence
the nutrient in the water runs into the nearby Tuggerah Lake. Proper drainage and an efficient watering system will ensure that the lake is not being degraded by our vegetable garden. Our grant will be used to install raised garden beds which will be easily maintained and from which there will be less runoff.

**North Gosford Learning Centre - Raised garden beds**
The grant will be used to build six raised garden beds and create an edible garden that allows us to promote healthy and sustainable living. Students have the opportunity to be involved in the planning, construction and completion of the raised beds. In addition, students from disadvantaged backgrounds will develop knowledge, values and behaviour that supports healthy sustainable living. It will also benefit the environment through regeneration of bushland and removal of noxious weeds that surround the planned learnscape.

**School Holiday shutdown**
As the end of the year approaches, school can take action to reduce energy use in the holidays. Don’t forget to investigate appliances, cooling and other electric systems that can be shut off over the summer holiday break eg hot water heaters and refrigerators.

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

**Central Coast schools Sustainability Leaders forum,**  
**Wed, 5 March at Rumbalara EEC.**
This annual meeting of school environmental education coordinators provides the latest information on local initiatives, resources and support so that you can more effectively implement EE at your school. Share achievements, network with likeminded people, meet Agency and community EE providers and get practical ideas on teaching outside the classroom. The course is free and lunch will be provided. Register on MyPL@DEC **Event ID 71766.**

**Draft EFS Framework**
Stakeholder consultation is now open on the Draft Education and Engagement for Sustainability Vision, Agenda and Advisory process for NSW. Your input will help ensure a good outcome and your participation will help show that this framework is needed. The draft can be found at [www.aaeensw.org.au/content/draftframework](http://www.aaeensw.org.au/content/draftframework).

**Use of social media for Sustainable Schools NSW - Survey extended.**
Your opinions on the use of social media as part of the communication products provided by Sustainable Schools NSW are sought. Please take the survey by clicking on: [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SustainableSchoolsNSW](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SustainableSchoolsNSW)

**EVENTS and ACTIONS**

**Earth Hour 2014 – Saturday, 29 March, 2014**
Earth Hour 2014 has three main opportunities for your school to be involved:
- **New resources** - a revised toolkit for schools to include a new range of activities and curriculum aligned materials available for teachers.
- **Collect and share climate stories from your school and community**
• **Host a screening of the Earth Hour documentary special at your school** - the centrepiece of Earth hour 2014 will be hundreds of decentralised screenings at Earth Hour of a documentary that tells the story of climate change through the story of what’s happening to one of Australia’s most loved places - the Great Barrier Reef. For more details on resources and support available go to [http://earthhour.org.au/](http://earthhour.org.au/)

**Give the gift of light this Christmas**  
If you are thinking of an ethical gift this Christmas - one that isn't just about adding to more stuff - why not give the gift of solar-powered lighting to a family in East Timor. East Timor is one of the poorest nations in the world. In much of the country there is no electricity, with people in rural villages relying on candles and polluting kerosene lamps for lighting and firewood for cooking.

Since 2003, the Alternative Technology Association (ATA) has been working with Timorese communities in remote villages to provide clean, renewable lighting and electricity. We have helped to install solar lighting and power to more than 1000 homes, community centres, orphanages, schools and hospitals. We could not do this work in East Timor without support from people like you. More information – visit: [http://www.ata.org.au/news/sustainable-gifts-for-the-festive-season](http://www.ata.org.au/news/sustainable-gifts-for-the-festive-season)

**RESOURCES**

**Register as a Central Coast Waterwatch School in 2014**  
Waterwatch is a national water quality monitoring and catchment education program involving schools, community groups and landholders. In 2014, Central Coast Waterwatch will be offering a special package for schools to register to be a part of our Central Coast Waterwatch family.

**Sign up as a Waterwatch School for 2014 and receive the following package:**
- 1 training session with teacher + students
- Assistance with 2 bug surveys during the year
- Support during Quality Assurance testing
- P-day participation (for primary schools) & support
- Attendance at 1 school event (eg. environment day or local area study) – subject to availability
- Assistance in obtaining a Waterwatch Kit (in Wyong LGA, there are a number of kits available for loan)
- Access to the online database
- CD with Teacher manuals & resources
- 1 support visit each term

**Schools pay only $300 (+GST) to receive this support package for teachers and students.** (*limited support will also be available to schools that do not sign up for this package). **Register by visiting** [www.cen.org.au](http://www.cen.org.au)

**Central Coast Environmental Education Network – Facebook page**  
A new Facebook page has been set up for environmental educators on the Central Coast – both formal education and informal education (eg. community initiatives). The Facebook page is in its early stages – but please Like the Facebook page to become part of this network. The CCEEN Facebook page is a space where anybody interested in environmental education on the Central Coast can share ideas, resources, events and information.
Sea creatures star in locally made movies
Marine creatures living beneath the waters of Port Stephens are the stars of a series of short YouTube style videos produced by the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA). This great new resource, called Ocean Survivors: protecting our rare and threatened marine species, available as a free DVD or via YouTube, provides an insight into some rare footage of local marine life, focusing on threatened species of Soft Coral, Black Cod, Turtles and White Sharks. These short four minute videos will help students and teachers explore topics such as the beautiful Soft Coral found beneath the water in Port Stephens, why the shy and elusive Black Cod has almost disappeared, how we can protect Sea Turtles from injury or death, and why the Port Stephens area is so important for the protected Great White shark. Each of the stories looks at the impacts humans can have on our local marine life, with marine debris being a particular focus. It is alarming to see just how much damage marine debris has on our precious marine environment.

This resource is available as a DVD by contacting the Wyong office of the CMA on (02)4352 5104 or the 4 stories can be downloaded via YouTube:

- Soft Coral – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSq-ju8jWJU
- Black Cod – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OR95c1uC4_o
- Turtles – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlGbZPyQxsE
- White Sharks - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Yt9YMsjBjo

Love Slowmation? , Love or Brush-turkeys?
Ann Goeth, from ProEcology consulting has produced a great slowmation video of how brush-turkeys hatch. (YouTube)
https://webmail.det.nsw.edu.au/owa/redir.aspx?C=c959ccc0bf2846c988a1599a1813449d&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.youtube.com%2fwatch%3fv%3dB93rFV6l1jQ%26feature%3dyoutu.be
Could this be a way for students to document their biodiversity investigations in school?

Sustainable Schools – New resources

- **Nature education video series** - A series of interviews and presentations exploring a range of perspectives from students’ learning, futures thinking, learning technologies and resources. Visit our Biodiversity and nature teaching resources page.
- **Phasmids** - a new iBook from Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre, explores the incredible features, adaptations and life cycles of Australian stick and leaf insects. Designed for the NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum Science and Technology K-6 and English K-6.
- **Energy auditing** - a set of tools for students to use when auditing energy within the school, plus teacher resources to help scaffold the learning experiences.
- **Keeping reptiles in schools** - this resource aims to increase awareness about the requirements for keeping native animals in schools. There is also a more general website for Animals in Schools.

Research on Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden National Program
A new evaluation on school kitchen gardens in NSW which provides some valuable insights into what works and how schools have approached creating their own gardens. Great holiday reading! Visit: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainableschools/manage/research.htm

**Cross curricular texts on Sustainability for Primary schools**  
Great resource  
http://www.pinterest.com/vivianharris45/cross-curricular-texts-on-sustainability-for-prima/

**NATUREWATCH**

**Striped Marsh Frog** *Limnodynastes peronii*  
A common brown frog with a dorsal stripe and about 7cm long. Males have a distinctive call – a single “plonk” repeated at intervals of 3-5 seconds. Females lay eggs in a foam mass that looks like bubbles on the water surface.

**Rough-barked Apple** *Angophora floribunda.*  
Flowering profusely on the Central Coast at the moment, this common rough-barked ‘gumtree’ is living up to its species name. Angophora’s have leaves arranged oppositely which distinguishes them from the other ‘gum trees’ (Eucalyptus and Corymbia) that have alternately arranged leaves.

**Terrestrial Orchids**  
Orchids are the largest family of plants and are easily recognised by their highly evolved flowers. Terrestrial orchids are easily overlooked on the forest floor - until they send up there beautiful flower spikes. At this time of year look out for the pink spotted **Hyacinth Orchid** *Dipodium punctatum* which lacks leaves and instead gains its nutrients from decaying leaf litter. Also flowering now are the wasp pollinated **Tongue Orchids** *Cryptostylus sp.* The male Ichneumon wasps try to copulate with the flowers and inadvertently carry the pollen sacs from flower to flower.

**GREEN DATES**

2 Feb - **World Wetlands Day** - 'Wetlands take care of water'  
www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-activities-wwds/main/ramsar/1-63-78_4000_0__

28 Feb - **Schools Clean Up Day** - 1800 CUA DAY  
www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au

2 Mar - **Clean Up Australia Day** - 1800 CUA DAY  
www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au

4-10 Mar - **National Seaweek** - www.mesa.edu.au/seaweek.asp

22 Mar - **World Water Day** - ‘Water and Food Security’  
www.worldwaterday.org


29 Mar - **Earth Hour 2012** - switch off 8.30pm  
www.earthhour.org
*TO UNSUBSCRIBE TO THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE CLICK REPLY, TYPE ‘UNSUBSCRIBE’ IN THE SUBJECT LINE AND SEND BACK TO RUMBALARA EEC- THANK YOU