

## BUILDING A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

### ***Bannister Creek Primary School***

*Western Australian Curriculum Links*

*Cross –Curriculum Priorities: Sustainability, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Histories & Cultures.*

*General Capabilities: Literacy, Numeracy, Critical and Creative thinking, ICT, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding, Personal & Social Capability.*

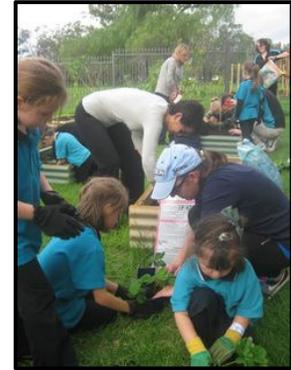
*Learning areas: Science, History, Humanities and Social Science, Maths, English, The Arts, Technologies, Health and Physical Education.*

### CELEBRATION OF SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY

*Sustainability is behind everything at Bannister Creek Primary School and has created a vibrant community hub engaging both students and parents in education supported collaboratively by the teaching and learning staff.*

Sustainability coordinator and Science teacher, Alicia Lilly explains, “Environmental education is a collaboration between teachers, students and parents at our school. We implement programs because it is important and because we want to, not because we have to.”

Enviroweek was the perfect time to celebrate the school’s many achievements and recognise the ongoing efforts made by the community.



### NATIONAL SCHOOLS’ TREE DAY – GREEN THUMBS

Bannister Creek saw a great opportunity to integrate Planet Ark’s Schools’ Tree Day with Enviroweek. Students planted indigenous trees, donated by South East Regional Centre of Urban Landcare (SERCUL), in the school grounds. School’s Tree Day was celebrated by:

- Viewing instructional clips online in preparation for planting the trees
- Members of SERCUL demonstrated how to plant the donated seedlings
- Students planting indigenous and water wise shrubs with help from community volunteers
- Planting vegetable seedlings in the school’s sustainable garden.

“After Tree Day, Enviroweek presented the opportunity to revisit the trees and shrubs, check their growth and make sure they had optimum conditions heading into the warmer months. The students felt a sense of ownership because they had planted the trees. They continue to care for them and know which ones they planted,” explained Alicia.

### WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Bannister Creek has a Waste Wise policy and minimisation plan, with emphasis on teaching students to reduce, reuse and recycle. The aim of the policy is to reduce landfill, which they do by:

- One of four learning blocks in the school participates in ‘Wrap-Free Wednesday’ and ‘Healthy Food Thursday’
- If food is wrapped, students take rubbish home
- The school has a community battery collection point Plastic bags, paper, cardboard and other recyclable materials used at the school are recycled. Families are encouraged to do the same through newsletters
- Materials, that would otherwise be landfill, are used in projects in a number of curriculum areas.

Alicia aims to have wrapper-free-food on more than one day and implement this initiative throughout the whole campus. The overall goal is to become a waste-free school.

## WILD CHILD RUNNING

Enjoying the fresh air and natural surrounds are an important part of life at Bannister Creek Primary School. During

Students took the action outside by doing the following:

- Club 100 – each morning students were invited for a run and a certificate was given for every 25 laps. The goal was to reach 100 laps by the end of the term.
- Jump Rope For Heart was held, including demonstrations from a talented team of skippers
- Tai Chi and other fitness sessions were held outdoors.



Students rose to the challenge with many 'joining' Club 100. Skipping became a popular outdoor activity and Tai Chi helped students strengthen their connectedness with nature.

## CHANGING HABITS RESULTS IN ENERGY SAVINGS

Staff and students adhere to a switch off policy at the school. Some classrooms have sensors installed, while others have timers to switch off the lights. Some other ways that students are encouraged to use less energy include:

- Students are reminded to wear appropriate clothing for the weather
- Lights are not used in the classroom if not needed
- Windows are opened or blinds closed before using the air conditioner or heater.

The next step is to have monitors making announcements every day, reminding students what the weather is going to be like so that they can dress accordingly for the next day. The goal is to raise awareness and make minimisation-of-energy-use second nature.

## EDUCATION EMBRACES COMMUNITY

Bannister Creek knows community is an important aspect of education, which in turn leads to behaviour change. With families from a range of cultures, the school has a unique opportunity to trade a rich base of knowledge and skills. Strong parent relationships are fostered in the following ways:

- Cooking and healthy meals demonstrations through the English as an Additional Language (EAL) unit and the school Chaplain
- Parents taking cooking classes with students
- Parent volunteers make up an important part of the gardening club

Thanks to their involvement with Waterwise Schools, the school grounds include a chicken coop, aquaponics tanks and edible gardens. They also have fruit trees, worm farms, mulch corner, rainwater tank, and even a pizza oven and BBQ on cart for cooking school grown produce! Everything is maintained by the Students Garden Club (who meet after school once a week), the Canteen Manager and Science Captains, supported by every class (rostered for a day). Their roles include:

- Garden maintenance, including mulching, weeding, caring for the worm farm, chickens and the sustainable garden (some raised garden beds watered via an aquaponics system)
- Harvesting fresh eggs, vegetables and food to use in cooking
- Planting new seasonal produce in the vegetable gardens
- Selling herbs and vegetables to the school community through the canteen



- SCHOOL IS A COMMUNITY HUB

Alicia has found that sustainability projects have resulted in greater parent involvement in their children's education. Parents like to visit the garden and help out wherever they can. The school is a community hub, rather than just a place for children.

Plans are in place to connect with the local indigenous culture through the planting of a bush tucker garden and the creation of Aboriginal totems throughout the grounds. The school intends to work with Lynwood Senior High School on these projects.

It is the everyday actions of individuals that make a difference at Bannister Creek Primary School. We look forward to seeing the progress of these and other initiatives in the future.

BY: SUSAN TATE, ENVIROWEEK WEBSITE