

Mornington Peninsula Schools



Environment Week

Annual Report 2016



**Connecting our children to their environment and
creating a sustainable future**

Thank you to the following organisations for their generous support and sponsorship of Environment Week 2016



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Mr Fothergills**

**Tumbleweed
Worm Affair P/L**

President's Report

It is difficult to categorise such a unique event as the Mornington Peninsula Schools Environment Week (MPSEW). With its beginnings, over thirty years ago, as an idea to involve local children in activities with an environmental flavour, the event has evolved into something that has gone beyond the school gate and into the community at large.

This year the MPSEW program was, once again, held at 'The Briars' historical park from Tuesday 15th to Friday 18th March.

The Mornington Peninsula School's Environment Week (MPSEW) continues to be a great success in providing opportunities for the children of the Mornington Peninsula to access an outstanding range of experiences related to the environment and local aboriginal culture.

Each year, the event involves around 2,500 children from local schools and pre-schools (not including the many teachers and parents in attendance); many community groups – Fish Care, Frogs of Victoria, CFA and Friends of the Hooded Plover, to name but a few; students from local secondary colleges; local business; corporate sponsors and of course the significant support of the Briars Team and the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Whilst the focus of the event continues to be directed towards our young people in schools, the MPSEW should now be considered an important community event that involves a broad range of participants throughout our Mornington Peninsula Community.

Our vision of, *'Connecting our children to their environment and creating a sustainable future'* is at the core of our beliefs. It is through programs such as MPSEW and the fabulous work in local schools that we are contributing to the environmental awareness of our children – the decision-makers of the future. Our role continues to be one of supporting schools in their endeavours to help children develop a greater understanding of the environment and local culture: the importance of bio-diversity and its intrinsic influence on our health and wellbeing, as well as the cultural links associated with our local environment. In this, we are at one with the Mornington Peninsula Shire and the Briars, who have promoted the environmental cause for many years. This has, no doubt, contributed to the enhanced environmental and cultural awareness in our community.

Our challenge remains in continuing a program that reflects our vision and ensuring its continued relevance to schools and the community.

The E Week program offered a broad range of activities that included Indigenous Connection to Country, Woodlands Habitat, Wetlands Health and Traditional Harvest, Hands in the Dirt and Sustainable Living. The programs continue to be fine-tuned with on-going improvement each year. Congratulations to the Briars team and presenters for providing a program of such high quality. The Briars program is integral to E Week and could not be implemented without the opportunities offered through the Briars unique natural environment.

Feedback comments from the schools/pre-schools attending were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the program.

Collectively, these programs give children a greater understanding of their local environment and ways to live a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle – precisely the purpose of our event.

The Expo Paddock program offered many opportunities for children to 'connect' with a range of mainly hands-on activities. Thanks to the many organisations that made this aspect of the program such a great success, including the students from various secondary colleges.

Our sponsors are to be congratulated for their support. Some have a long involvement with 'Environment Week' and their continued support is greatly appreciated. A full list of sponsors is tabled in this annual report. I thank all supporters of the program for their contributions in the form of direct funding, personnel and materials.

We thank our school groups for their on-going support of the program and their commitment to environmental awareness.

Thanks to all who contributed to making the week such a great success. In particular, I would like to recognise the outstanding contribution made by the members of the committee: Jennifer Selby, Paul Tuchtan, Helen Smith, Maree Schumann and Kate Bastone. Our gratitude is also extended to Sue Brabender and 'The Briars' team for their amazing preparation for the staging of the event. Thanks also to Simon Thorning for his assistance throughout the planning stages. Thanks also to committee member and treasurer, David Keystone who ensured we obtain on-going sponsorship and remain financially healthy. Congratulations and thanks to Heather Tytler for her amazing contribution as executive officer. Heather's tireless endeavours ensure the program is well-organised and faultlessly implemented.

The MPSEW is now an established community event involving our local schools and many community organisations and businesses.

It has been a great privilege to be involved in an event such as this – an event that has been going for over 30 years. I wish the committee, and all involved, continued success in the future.

Silvio Vitale

President

Treasurer's Report

This is my fifth year of performing the duties of honorary Treasurer for Mornington Peninsula Schools' Environment Week Committee. I appreciate the support given by committee members.

I am pleased to report that Mornington Peninsula Schools' Environment Week Committee was in a sound financial position for the financial year 2015-2016. Our sponsors, namely, Bittern Market, Esso, Bluescope Steel, The Grand Hotel, Mornington Peninsula Shire, local Bendigo Bank branches, Birdlife Mornington Peninsula and Hillview Quarry collectively contributed substantial funding that guaranteed the delivery of high quality environment and sustainability educational programs.

The committee agreed on maintaining the entry fee of \$ 10 per student per day and \$ 7 per half day for Schools Environment Week program. Numbers of participating students and schools significantly improved when compared with attendances in 2014-2015 financial year.

Total income met total expenditure with ease. Approximately 50% of expenditure is incurred by costs associated with facilities. Program presenters' fees, payment of Executive Officer and all other expenditure met budget expectations.

Numerous paid presenters and volunteer presenters showcased many rich and varied environmental activities for students. The services support provided by the Briar's staff during Environment Week and the weeks leading up to Environment Week was outstanding and greatly appreciated.

The next financial year 2016-2017 commences with a healthy credit. It is in the best interests of sustaining Mornington Peninsula Schools Environment Week that the committee is both vigilant, active and committed to securing sufficient funds to support its initiatives and endeavours.

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank Byron Groves who audited the accounts on an honorary basis as part of his Mount Martha Rotary Club community commitments.

David Keystone
(Honorary Treasurer)
18 July 2016

Expo Paddock Report

The Expo Paddock was again a popular program with over 2,500 students participating in the many varied activities available over the four days. As there was a public holiday on the Monday Environment Week ran from Tuesday 15th – Friday 18th March. This year we linked all activities to the Australian Science curriculum. There was a choice of 18 activities for the students to participate in which were based around different themes:

Waste Not Want Not; Investigating sustainability issues, concepts and ideas.

Fishcare Mornington Peninsula which promoted responsible and sustainable attitudes and practices by recreational fishers to fish resources and the aquatic environment.

Natural Event Composting Poo which looked at the process used in their composting toilets

Replas Recycling Plastic was a new addition to our event. This year they only had a static display but we hope to develop this in the future as their recycling of plastic bags into products is a great initiative.

Eco Living Display Centre staff members were a welcome addition to the paddock, talking about the programs run at the house and looking at sustainability and recycling.

Westernport Bluescope Steel gave children an insight into the water cycle and saving water. This was the last year that Bluescope will be able to stage this activity but we hope that we can streamline this water activity to enable continuing involvement. I would like to thank them for their many years of involvement and their commitment to E Week through sponsorship, committee membership, setting up their fabulous display and many Bluescope staff involved over the week.

Scorpio Technology and Model Solar Victoria who joined forces to demonstrate solar power. This was a new activity that we had for 2 days of the program and proved very engaging and informative.

Green Thumb Life cycles growth & change, agriculture & food

Bunnings Sustainability and Composting activities were excellent with Bunnings staff engaging children in potting up vegetable seedlings, worm farming and composting. This year Jenny Mann led a team from four different Bunnings stores. Her enthusiasm and support are always appreciated.

Sustainable Gardening was run by the Mornington Community Garden this year and focused on different ways of propagating flowers, plants and vegetables to live more sustainably.

Woolworths had a number of staff from their different stores talking about their sustainability programs such as the Odd Bunch, recycling and sourcing food locally. Children were also able to sample produce.

Wildlife Wonders Living things and their environment

Andrew Wegener Wildlife continued to be a favourite activity with children learning about our wildlife through observing and handling live and preserved specimens.

Rain Hayne and Shine farm had a variety of pet and farm animals for the children to handle.

Seaweed Sally provided high quality, educational marine experiences with the live animal 'touch tank' and preserved marine specimens.

Friends of the Hooded Plover gave students a background on these birds, their habitat and why their numbers have been declining.

Frogs of the Peninsula was a new marquee of activities run by Norm McKinlay from Friends of Chinamans Creek. Students learnt how to identify different species and looked at how frogs are indicators of habitat health.

Habitat Heroes; Communities caring for the environment

Mt Martha CFA ran a bush campfire activity to learn about fire safety and how to keep the bush safe. They have been stalwart supporters of E Week and their fire truck is always a big drawcard.

Animalia/Tootgarook Swamp provided greater insight into our local environment and animal rescue on the Peninsula.

SPIFFA had a new exciting activity looking at habitat and providing wildlife friendly backyards.

The Landcare Puppet Show run by Jacqui Salter highlighted how to care for our native bushland animals by protecting them from predators and providing habitat

Schools Initiatives Marquee hosted a number of schools that looked at different environmental issues. **Osborne PS** students and parents were again present for one day, championing the kitchen garden and planting seed with the children. Thanks to the team from **Balnarring PS** who provided activities about Plants of the Peninsula. **Boneo PS** presented their original movie about Climate Change and **Somerville SC** engaged the children in food web activities. Thanks to teachers, parents for all their hard work and to the students who proved to be excellent presenters, able to get their environmental message across to other students.

Each year we have some groups and organisations unable to continue their commitment but we are also fortunate to have new groups step into the void. I would like to thank everybody for giving their time to impart their expertise to the children. It is a big commitment for groups and organisations to be able to provide staff for the four days so we appreciate their involvement very much.

Heather Tytler
(Executive Officer)

Briars Report

Briars programs this year consisted of five successful programs with some changes from 2015. Most were very well attended and all were appreciated by both teachers and students. The Briars provides an ideal setting for the programs with activities in the Visitors Centre, Wetlands, Woodlands, Homestead and Gardens, Barn and Eco Living Centre. These programs are available for Years 1-6 except for the Sustainable Living program which is available for Years 3-6:

Indigenous Connection to Country

Aboriginal Artefacts, Tools & Equipment Koori Kitchen - Gene Blow & Djarren Wilson show students aboriginal artefacts, tools and equipment and examine aboriginal culture. Beryl Wilson and Colleen Davenport prepared some bush tucker.

Aboriginal Culture, Art and Performance: - Students learn about aboriginal culture through weaving lead by Nola and Carla Lauch. Children made a fibre bracelet to take home.

Hands in the Dirt

Soils Alive - Helen Smith and students from Western Port SC lead this program which examined and identified soil dwellers, including those that help composting.

Gardens of Food - Maree Schurmann and her volunteers encouraged children to grow their own food at home and examined the Homestead Gardens and a range of seeds.

Woodlands Habitat

Flora Walk - Gidja Walker lead a walk through the woodlands with themes including: rocks and geology, habitat and biodiversity, parasitic plants and how plants get around.

Nocturnal Animals - Fiona Stevens turned the Visitors Centre from day to night with children learning about the various nocturnal animals that inhabit the Briars Woodlands and how to identify their traces.

Wetlands Health & Traditional Harvest

Birds of the Wetlands - Birdlife Australia did a great job in the Chechingurk Hide with children identifying wetlands birds, their characteristics and behaviours. They shared a session with BERG volunteers who did Waterwatch activities, assisting children to learn about macro invertebrates and the indicators of waterway health

Traditional Harvest - Lionel Lauch was part of the Wetlands program this year as Indigenous Studies are in demand at E Week and we wanted to meet the needs of the schools. He looked at the plants of the wetlands and how they are used for food and utensils

Sustainable Living

Energy Savers Students explored the Eco House to find out how to reduce energy consumption in the home and the importance of recycling.

ReNEWable Energy: Monash Prime Science led students through a series of activities involving different types of renewable energy. This was a new and successful activity which was very hands on.

This year Sue Brabender was the new coordinator for the E Week Briars team. The role involves dealing with Briars preparation, facilities, coordinating presenters and the various roles undertaken by the Briars staff. Sue was ably supported by the Briars Rangers, Frank Hnatjuk and Simon Thorning. We had less involvement from tertiary students this year so relied on many volunteers to be the support person for each program. I would like to thank Sue and all the Briars team for hosting the week and their great support. I would also like to thank all the volunteers who stepped in to assist with the Briars programs to ensure the smooth running of the event.

Heather Tytler
(Executive Officer)

2014-2015 Committee

Thanks the MPSEW Committee for all their hard work. Thanks especially to our president and treasurer who are stepping down from their roles after 6 years. Silvio has provided excellent leadership, helping steer the committee through the development of its vision, and guiding principles and development of new programs. He has also ensured that we have a strong connection to schools across the Mornington Peninsula. David has been an excellent treasurer, ensuring the growth in sponsorship and keeping the budget under control. He has also played an active role in the Hands in the Dirt program and provided expert advice on linking programs to the curriculum.

Silvio Vitale: President

Heather Tytler: Executive Officer/Secretary

Sue Brabender: Briars Rep

Simon Thorning: Natural Systems team Leader

Maree Schurmann

Kate Bastone

Paul Tuchtan: Vice President

David Keystone: Treasurer

Garrique Pergl: Shire Liaison

Helen Smith

Jenny Selby

Participating Schools

Primary Schools

Balcombe Grammar

Balnarring PS

Boneo PS

Crib Point PS

Derinya PS

Dromana PS

Eastbourne PS

Hastings PS

Kunyang PS

Langwarrin Park PS

Mornington PS

Mornington Park PS

Mt Eliza PS

Osborne PS

Our Lady of Fatima

Penbank Woodleigh

Peninsula SDS

Rosebud PS

Rye PS

Somerville PS

Somerville Rise PS

St Jude's Langwarrin

The Peninsula School

Tootgarook PS

Pre Schools

Cricklewood

Mt Eliza

Sorrento

Toorak College

Catering

Thanks to Mt Martha Rotary for catering again this year. They did a magnificent job and were very well organised. A special thanks to Colin Stokes for organising the team and Jenny Selby for organising the food. Thanks to Jenny Selby, Heather Gerraty and Lorraine Lamb for making all the delicious salads and burgers. We would also like to thank Woolworths for the salad ingredients and Bell's Gourmet Meats for providing the meat at reduced cost.

Shire Assistance

Briars Rangers

MPS Aboriginal Support & Development Team

Nicci Tsernjavski Climate Change Officer

Jacqui Salter Landcare Officer

Shire Nursery

Simon Thorning Natural Systems Team

Adam Magennis Cultural Heritage Advisor

Eco Living Display Centre staff

Frank Hnatjuk Briars Facilities

Mornington Peninsula Shire Events Team

Volunteer s

Animalia
Balcombe Estuary Reserve Group
Balcombe Grammar Band - Aqua Aquarius
Birdlife Australia
Fishcare Mornington Peninsula & Westernport
Friends of Chinaman's Creek
Friends of the Hooded Plover
Friends of Tootgarook Swamp
Mothers Little Helpers
Model Solar Victoria
Bunnings Mornington, Hastings, Rosebud & Wonthaggi
Janet Groves – Photography & Buses
Les Brain – presenter assistance & facilities
Carole Lanting - Buses

Mount Martha CFA
Mornington Community Garden
Mount Eliza Lions Traffic Management
Mount Martha Rotary
Mount Martha CFA
Replas
Save Tootgarook Swamp
Scorpio Technology
Southern Peninsula Indigenous Flora and Fauna Assoc
Royal Australian Navy Jazz Band
Woolworths Hastings, Mornington, Mornington East, Rosebud
Westernport Bluescope Steel
Pam McKenzie – Photography & Buses

School Assistance

Presenters

Balnarring Primary School
Boneo Primary School
Somerville Secondary College

Osborne Primary School
Western Port Secondary College

Presenter Assistance

Balcombe Grammar
Western Port Secondary College
Chisholm Institute Rosebud

Mount Eliza Secondary College
Somerville Secondary College