

# **Mornington Peninsula Schools**



## **Environment Week**

## **Annual Report 2014**



**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 2014**



The Gippsland Basin Joint Venture



**Oasis Horticulture  
Tumbleweed  
Worm Affair P/L**

**Mornington Garden Supplies  
Mr Fothergills**

# President's Report

The Mornington Peninsula School's Environment Week (MPSEW) in 2014 was, once again, an outstanding success. It is a great privilege to be involved in an event such as this – an event that has been going for over 30 years.

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. Without a doubt, the enhanced environmental and cultural awareness in our community is partly due to the important role schools have played, over many years, in preparing our children for a responsible adult life that includes consideration and care for the environment.

Our challenge remains in continuing a program that is responsive to the needs of schools on the Mornington Peninsula and maintain a link with schools through representation on the committee.

The MPSEW program was held at the Briars Historical Park from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> to Friday 28<sup>nd</sup> March and involved over 2500 students from various schools around the Mornington Peninsula who participated in the broad range of activities offered by our Indigenous, Woodlands, Wetlands, Hands in the Dirt and Green Living Programs. The programs continue to be fine-tuned with on-going improvements each year. Congratulations to the Briars team and presenters for providing a program of such high quality and, in particular, Jarrod Ruch for coordinating the various elements of the program.

Feedback comments from the schools/pre-schools attending were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with the program. Of course we will consider all suggestions for improvements, as we believe that this has enabled us to make changes to improve the program each year.

A consideration for 2015, would be re-establishing our connection with the Mornington Shire's 'free trees' program, as well as considering the possibility of a 'family open day' to encourage further involvement from the wider community and raise our profile.

The sum of these programs gives 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 Balcombe Grammar, Rosebud, Mt Eliza and Westernport Secondary Colleges. Thanks also the students from FS Learning and Briars staff, volunteers and trainees who helped out in a number of ways.

Our sponsors are to be congratulated for their support of this event. 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, Jarrod Ruch, Paul Tuchtan, Garrique Pergl and Samantha Ackland. Thanks also to committee member and treasurer, David Keystone who has actively sought further sponsorship support and ensured we 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. We look forward to another successful MPSEW in 2015.

Silvio Vitale  
President



## Treasurer's Report 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014

This is my third year of performing the duties of honorary Treasurer for Mornington peninsula Schools' Environment Week Committee. I appreciate the support given by committee members, in particular, Heather Tytler (Executive Officer), Silvio Vitale (President) and Jarrod Ruch (Briars Ranger).

I am pleased to report that Mornington Peninsula Schools' Environment Week Committee was in a sound financial position for the financial year 2013-2014. Esso, Bluescope Steel, The Grand Hotel, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Bendigo Bank, Birdlife Mornington Peninsula, Bittern Market and Hillview Quarry collectively contributed substantial funding that guaranteed the delivery of high quality environment and sustainability educational programs. Direct funding increased by \$ 2500. Other major funding sponsorship included Woolworths and Coulsons Tent Hire through 'in kind' donations for which the committee was most grateful. The committee dispensed with the affiliation fee of \$ 100 per school and students were charged at a rate of \$ 9 for their participation in a full day program and \$ 6 for a half day.

Expenditure for this financial year exceeded income by \$ 4000+. Expenditure on facilities and presenters rose significantly by \$ 4600 (effectively 12% increase). In light of these costs, and the need to meet future program needs and budgets the committee is recommended to review an increase in charges to students and to seek additional funding.

Numerous paid presenters and volunteer presenters showcased many rich and varied environmental activities for students. Performers entertained audiences for the lunchtime break. The services support provided by the Briar's staff during Environment Week and the weeks prior was outstanding and greatly appreciated.

The next financial year 2014-2015 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 Rotary Club community commitments.

David Keystone  
(Treasurer)

## Expo Paddock Report

There were eighteen varied activities and displays in the Expo Paddock this year which were in keeping with our mission statement and guidelines. Many of our popular activities returned and some new ones were added. Approximately 2500 students came through the paddock during the week.

**Andrew Wegener Wildlife** continued to be a popular activity with a variety of live and preserved native animals for children to handle. **Rain Hayne and Shine** farm was also popular providing hands on experience with farm animals. This year we also had **Dolphin Research** teaching the children about the marine environment.

**Bunnings Sustainability** activity was excellent with Bunnings staff engaging children in potting up vegetable seedlings, and learning about worm farming and composting. In the **Sustainable Gardening** marquee Samantha Blair again did a fabulous job with the focus on different ways of growing vegetables and herbs to live sustainably. The **Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne** engaged the children with their seed bomb activity and built awareness of the great variety of Australian native plants on display at their gardens.

**Westernport Bluescope Steel** gave children an insight into the water cycle and saving water as did the **South East Water** quiz. Unfortunately South East Water staff members were only available for 2 days. **Mt Martha CFA** and **Fishcare** provided a better understanding of these organizations, how they help the environment and what each individual can do to make a difference. Both organizations have been great supporters of E Week. I would especially like to thank Jeff and Jenni Green from Mornington Peninsula and Westernport Fishcare who are scaling back on their involvement.

**Woolworths** a long time supporter of E Week, educates children about the variety of fruit and the benefits of healthy eating. I'd especially like to thank Bruce Rayment for his great support of this activity over the past 30 years.

Volunteers from **Friends of the Hooded Plover**, **Friends of Chinaman's Creek** and **Animalia** provided greater insight into our local environment and awareness of local fauna.

**Natural Events** composting toilets had Frances on hand to explain how the system works. This worked much better than previous years with the marquee beside the toilets.

The **Schools Initiatives** marquee proved popular although we had difficulty filling time slots. Students from Derinya PS, Osborne PS, St Macartan's Balnarring PS and Western Port SC demonstrated the environmental initiatives at their schools. 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. Unfortunately we had difficulty with the **Human Powered Vehicle activity** this year as we could only get Mornington PS showcasing their vehicles. Their ongoing support is appreciated.

New activities we welcomed this year were **Southern Peninsula Indigenous Flora and Fauna (SPIFFA)**, **Landcare** and **Future Sparks** power generator trailer. It was great to have them onboard and we look forward to their continued involvement.

The Expo Paddock is reliant on the assistance of volunteers. I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and support of the event. Each day we have 40 secondary students assisting presenters. Thanks to Western Port SC, Rosebud SC Planet Pals and Mt Eliza SC Real Time Learning. I would especially like to thank Balcombe Grammar who stepped in at the eleventh hour to assist us.

Mayor Antonella Celi officially opened the week at lunchtime on the Monday. Lunchtime entertainment was then provided by **Roundhouse**. **Mornington PS choir** were excellent on the Tuesday. Wednesday **Drew Bowden** provided entertainment and Frankston **Police Band 3199** performed over the lunch break on Thursday. Unfortunately their performance was marred by rain. All performers did a fabulous job and were well received by the children. The presenters and volunteers were well fed each day by Mt Martha Rotary with Woolworths providing most of the food. Thanks to Carol Rayment for her delicious salads.

Evaluation by teachers indicated that they had an enjoyable day and were satisfied with all activities. Friday morning wasn't well attended so we are looking at changing to just the four whole days. This may also ease the pressure on the many organizations that have to find staff and volunteers for their activities. This year we had an unprecedented number of groups pull out due to financial and staffing constraints. We will look at ways to overcome this for 2015.

Thanks to the Mornington Peninsula Shire and all the other organizations, presenters and volunteers who helped to make the week a success. Without the financial and in kind support from the many businesses, community groups, schools and volunteers we would not be able to stage this event.

Heather Tytler  
(Executive Officer)

# Briars Report

This year's Briars program again had changes and this year the changes were aimed at giving students a longer time period on each program session. Similar to last year, there were four aspects to the program; Woodlands Flora and Fauna; Wetlands; Indigenous; Hands in the Dirt and Green Living.

## Woodlands Flora and Fauna

- Gidja Walker, well known local botanist led the *Woodland Flora along the Woodland Walk*
- Fiona and Natalie, casual Briars rangers, led the *Woodland Fauna within the Wildlife Sanctuary* focusing on indigenous animals living in the Sanctuary

## Wetlands

- Birdlife Australia took the *Birds of the Wetlands* session in the second bird hide and talked about wetland birds and helping students to observe and identify species
- BERG took the *Water watch* session on the edge of the wetlands leading the students through identification of invertebrates in the wetlands waters and talking about the importance of keeping our waterways healthy

## Indigenous

This program was very popular in the past and this year we decided to reduce the program content from three aspects to just two, giving students more time to really absorb the interesting material being taught.

- Glenys and Jarmyn led the *Indigenous Culture Past, Present and Future – Reconciliation* section which was held in the theatre and included bush food tasting
- Uncle Lionel led *Traditional Harvest- food and fibre* which was also held in the Wildlife Sanctuary. Lionel showed students through the range of foods, plants, fibre and uses of local produce and how they are harvested.

**Green Living – Our Sustainable Future** was held up at the Eco Display Centre and ideas and solutions were presented for our transition to a cleaner, low energy future. Alternative energy, recycling, water saving, and housing initiatives. Nicci Tsernjavski and CERES led the programs.

- *Eco Living Display house* – Led by Nicci Tsernjavski, students were shown around the Eco-house and given inspiring ideas around retrofitting houses to save greenhouse CO2 gasses.
- *Alternative Energy* – Led by CERES staff, students were shown technologies such as wind and solar energy and how they can assist with the transition culture towards elimination of use of fossil fuels.

**Hands in the Dirt** – The concept of Hands in the Dirt is to give primary aged students a chance to get their hands dirty, plant local indigenous plants and gain an understanding of habitat restoration, see what lives in healthy organic soils, and to help students gain a better understanding of how food was grown in the past on a small scale, organically and primarily in the home garden, small plot.

Whilst all three aspects of this program were very popular, there were some issues with moving kids from one area to another in a short time period.

- *Gardens of Food* – a wide range of community members helped with this program teaching kids in the Homestead Gardens about seeds and seed saving, and giving kids a chance at planting seeds and seedlings in the kitchen garden
- *Soils Alive* – David Keystone again led this aspect in the Barn looking at compost under microscopes discovering how many creatures live in organic soils
- *Revegetation* – Led by Laura and Tara from the Nursery, students were given the chance to head out into the paddocks and wide open space to plant local provenance indigenous seedlings and making a connection between native plants and how this encourages local birds and animals.

This year TAFE and Franklyn Scholar students studying Conservation and Land Management were an enormous help in organizing groups of kids to move through from one Briars program to another. The Cert 4 and Diploma students assisted Briars staff to keep younger students organised and on time, and relieved teachers from the task of having to take the kids across the property to each program. Students were met

at the buses and at the end of the days were taken back to their buses. Movement of traffic will need some better organisation next year to further improve safety and congestion.

Overall, the Briars programs were a success and were enjoyed by both students and teachers. A big thanks to Heather for organising timetables and programming administration.

Jarrold Ruch (Briars Senior Ranger)

## **Facilities Report**

The Briars team did an exceptional job preparing the sites for Environment Week. Coulsons again provided all the marquees at reduced cost. Their assistance and prompt response to any problems is always appreciated.

Weather was again fickle with some windy and some rainy days. The Shire marquee was a great asset during inclement weather and all presenters pulled together to assist us to provide shelter. It is imperative to have a couple of marquees available for school bags etc when it is raining. The Bendigo Bank marquees were a great help too.

Thanks to the Shire for the Soundshell which was well used by lunchtime performers. I would recommend that it be turned around to face the Expo Paddock next year so that performances can be heard from the Expo Paddock even if it is raining. Hiring sound equipment for the first three days was a good decision as all performers and speech makers could be heard clearly.

We were fortunate to have the Shire Caravan this year as the community caravan needs repair. Having a caravan makes it easy for schools to have a central point to go to if there are problems and provides shelter for organisers. Next year we need to investigate having relevant Shire pamphlets to distribute from there.

This year we didn't have a coffee caravan as we used the Angus and Rose cafe. There were some difficulties expressed from all sides with this which need to be addressed. The cafe is too far from the Expo Paddock for presenters and volunteers and many parents and teachers didn't use the cafe either. The cafe had problems with regular users finding parking as there was no designated parking area for them.

Rubbish bins were again provided free of charge by Nepean Waste, were well utilised and the grounds were generally litter free at the end of each day. Children still have difficulty putting rubbish in the correct bins and the rubbish free lunch call was not adhered to very well. This year we also provided bins for food scraps. These scraps were then added to the Briars compost. Thanks to Jarrold and his trainees who helped move the bins around and sort the rubbish.

Thanks again to South East Water who provided the Hydration Station free of charge. This is always well utilised.

Natural Event again provided the composting toilets. They worked well this year as they were better supervised and there was no smell.

Finally, I would like to thank Jarrold Ruch for all his efforts and the Briars team for making sure that this event runs smoothly and that all participants have a great day.

Heather Tytler

## 2013-2014 Committee

President: Silvio Vitale  
Executive Officer/Secretary: Heather Tytler  
Briars Rep: Jarrod Ruch  
Paul Tuchtan

Vice President: Jenny Selby  
Treasurer: David Keystone  
Shire Rep: Garrique Pergl  
Samantha Ackland

## Participating Schools

### Primary Schools

Balcombe Grammar	Derinya PS
Balnarring PS	Dromana PS
Baxter PS	Karingal Heights PS
Bittern PS	Kunyang
Boneo PS	Mornington PS
Crib Point PS	Mt Eliza PS
	Mt Martha PS

Osborne PS	Somerville PS
Our Lady of Fatima	Somerville Rise PS
Penbank School	St Augustine's Frankston
Red Hill CS	The Peninsula School
Rosebud PS	Tootgarook PS
Somers PS	Woodleigh Junior

### Pre Schools

Cricklewood	Mt Eliza	Sorrento
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### Special Development Schools

Mornington SDS	Peninsula SDS
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## Catering Staff:

Thanks to Mt Martha Rotary for catering this year. They did a magnificent job and were very well organised. A special thanks to John Trevillian and Wally for organising the team. Thanks also to Carol Rayment for assisting with the salads.

## Volunteer Organisations

Animalia  
Balcombe Estuary Reserve Group  
Balcombe Grammar  
Balnarring Primary School  
Birdlife Australia  
Briars Volunteers  
Derinya Primary School  
Eco House volunteers  
Fishcare Mornington Peninsula & Westernport  
Franklyn Scholar  
Frankston Police Band 3199  
Friends of Chinaman's Creek  
Friends of the Hooded Plover  
Mornington Community Garden

MPS Aboriginal Support & Development Team  
Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network  
Mornington Peninsula Shire Nursery Volunteers  
Mornington Primary School  
Mornington SC Concert Band  
Mount Eliza Secondary College  
Mount Martha CFA  
Mt Martha Rotary  
Osborne Primary School  
Rosebud SC Planet Pals  
Royal Botanical Gardens Cranbourne  
St Macartens Primary School  
SPIFFA  
Western Port Secondary College