

Permaculture Partners

The Living Classroom



living classfoom



The Partners















Foreword to Warrawong Community of Schools Permaculture Partners Project

Late in 2010 I was invited to become Patron of the Warrawong Community of Schools' Permaculture Partners project. I accepted immediately.

The Warrawong Community of Schools, Warrawong High School and its five feeder primary schools, Kemblawarra, Cringila, Warrawong, Lake Heights and Port Kembla have formed a partnership known as Permaculture Partners.

The aims of the Permaculture Partners are many and varied, but the underlying core objectives are to actively encourage students of the participating schools to become involved in planting, growing, nurturing and utilising produce from gardens they establish within their school grounds and to learn through hands-on experience a range of life skills that will stay with them forever.

The Permaculture Partners have worked collaboratively to foster and develop a permaculture garden and are moving towards an outdoor kitchen in each school whilst continuing to build the capacity of teachers and students in all participating schools to sustain the program for the long term. Sustainability is both a core educational theme and a fundamental objective of the project.

Permaculture Partners have successfully assisted to facilitate the transition from primary school to high school of many students over the past five years and provided potential pathways as a "K to 12 Program" that is locally based and links to the Department of Education curriculum.

From my perspective as the elected representative for the electorate that includes Warrawong I have witnessed first hand the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by the students and participating teachers. This is a project that reaches and encourages everyone both in the school and beyond to engage with the school community. I welcome the connections being created through this program to parents and local community groups as well as business and industry.

Given the great start to the program, it is hard to imagine Permaculture Partners will do anything other than build upon its well-recognised success. I am delighted to support and commend the Warrawong Community of Schools' Permaculture Partners project.

Stephen Jones MP Member for Throsby







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The roots of the Permaculture Partners lie in the Growing Greater Gardens Program developed and implemented collaboratively with BlueScope Steel in 2003 with Cringila Public School being the first school to benefit in the Warrawong Community of Schools. Since then each of the other schools, Kemblawarra Public School, Warrawong Public School, Warrawong High School, Port Kembla Public School and Lake Heights Public School, have established permaculture gardens.

In 2007 the Warrawong Community of Schools (the Warrawong CoS) established the Permaculture Partners in response to the variety of environmental education initiatives that were occurring simultaneously across the six schools in the Community of Schools in collaboration with a number of local community groups and BlueScope Steel.

The core idea is to develop a permaculture garden in each school and to involve as many students as possible in gaining a greater understanding of planting, growing, harvesting and cooking their produce as well as associating units of work linked to the syllabus and work in the garden.

As a group the Permaculture Partners will:

- Demonstrate the importance of outdoor "living classrooms" for student learning as a focus and catalyst for hands on learning, environmental education, the development of life long skills and a potential Kindergarten to Year 12 learning pathway.
- Provide vocational and educational opportunities that lead to lifelong learning.
- Continue to build community, business and school partnerships that can support the long term sustainability of the program across all the schools in the CoS.
- Benefit from economies of scale in the use of resources, intellectual property, staff and educational ideas.
- Seek funding as a co-operative organisation to support school based environmental initiatives.

The Permaculture Partners are committed to the long term success of the project. To realise this vision the project has received considerable financial and in kind support from a number of local businesses and community groups since its inception.

Our aim is to continue the great steps forward we have already made and to build upon our successes and continue to offer a viable, unique and beneficial educational opportunity to students in our schools many who come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.



Initially the former Federal MP Jennie George was our patron and her successor Stephen Jones has offered his support as the Patron of the project and has already been an active advocate for the concept recognizing the long-term benefits to the students, the schools and the community as a whole.

The bottom line is this, the permaculture gardens are established in each school however they need to be maintained. The programs that involve the students cannot be fully funded through school funding alone and we seek approximately \$15 000 per primary school and twice that for the high school per year. This allows each school to match that funding, employ the teachers and support staff, maintain the garden to the height of its capacity both in plants, materials and equipment and to offer students the most current up to date opportunities educationally.

We invite you to partner in this already successful environmental education program that nurtures the growth of healthy, happy children and caring communities.

III. Philosophy and Mission

Through the Permaculture Partners *Living Classroom* (for explanation see IX Definitions) we will:

"Utilise permaculture gardening and practices in a designed outdoor Living Classroom to realise the full potential of student learning and support teachers in the delivery of environmental education and other curriculum from the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) syllabus documents."

Students are the primary focus of the Permaculture Partners Program. The rationale is to provide opportunities for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 to be involved in meaningful hands on experiences that link to curriculum expectations and provide lifelong learning skills. The by-product being that students and communities take ownership of their gardens, enjoy being involved, want to come to school and develop networks of friendships based on mutual assistance and respect.



IV. Program Outcomes

In each of the partner schools over the next five years the Permaculture Partners *Living Classroom* will establish and maintain:

- A Permaculture garden including biodiversity gardens, organic food gardens, integrated waste management, rainwater and animal systems; plant nursery; seated spaces and visual art installations.
- The use of DEC curriculum and syllabus to address subject areas based outcomes through targeted, explicit and strategic utilisation of a range of different units of work.
- Trained teachers in all participating schools to be able to implement the *Living Classroom* or a school based program relative to growing vegetables, integrate the curriculum through the subject areas and facilitate positive learning outcomes for all students.
- A collaborative partnership between schools where resources, information and experiences can be shared through DEC shared websites, email or blog Ed.
- Develop a resources data base which can be accessed at the Warrawong High School website
- An outdoor kitchen garden café.
- The capacity of the school community to sustain the program.
- Our actions will link to environmental management and decision making to demonstrate:
- 1. Care of the earth
- 2. Care of the people
- 3. Equity and social justice (Fair share)
- Permaculture ethics, principles and practices in a designed outdoor 'Living Classroom'
- to: inspire students to go to school.
 - realise the full potential of student learning and growth.
 - support teachers in the delivery of environmental education and other curriculum subjects.
 - develop excellence in education for sustainability.
- Our programs aim to engage students in "hands on" practical activities which facilitate positive and active behaviour toward a sustainable future.
- An environmental vision that will develop and support best practice in environmental education by creating opportunities within the curriculum to achieve sustainable management of school resources and grounds that link to the 'hands on' aspect of the school's Permaculture garden.



These key action areas within our schools:

- Resource Management: Improve resource management to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and resource consumption per person.
- School Community: Nurture existing and new school community links to support environmental education and sustainable management.
- Whole School Planning: Environmental planning is both student centred and representative cross section of the school community.
- Management of School Grounds: Creation of sustainable school grounds as a resource for teaching and learning.
- Curriculum: Integration of environmental education across the curriculum will exemplify the NSW Quality Teaching Model, linked to The *Living Classroom*.
- Celebration: Create a calendar of environmental dates, actions and special projects to be celebrated and/or subscribed to across the school.

V. Objectives

Over the next five years the Permaculture Partner schools will:

- Construct "living classroom" learning environments where organic food is grown, cared for, harvested, cooked and consumed by students.
- For those schools implementing it, include the living classroom program in the annual school budgets and management plans.
- Provide training and support for teachers in the delivery of the *Living Classroom*.
- Build the capacity of students to have a greater understanding of healthy lifestyles nutrition and environmental education.
- Develop vocational and educational pathways and a culture of life long learning from Kindergarten through to Year 12 through the living classroom program.
- Create a network of external partnerships that involve community groups, cultural groups, businesses and the schools in the delivery of the program.
- Have established "living classrooms" that are owned by the students and communities in which they are located and celebrated for their ability to provide hands on learning experiences for students from Kindergarten to Year 12.



VI. Project Scope:

Permaculture Partners involves:

- Schools in the Warrawong Community of schools. These are Cringila Public School, Kemblawarra Public School, Lake Heights Public School, Port Kembla Public School, Warrawong Public School and Warrawong High School.
- Over 1500 students enrolled at those schools Kindergarten to Year 12 as its primary focus.
- Over 200 teachers and staff in all the schools developing an awareness or organising and running lessons in the garden.
- Lessons that are integrated and developed in a sequential pattern.
- Utilising a teaching kit that is developed within the program specifically for the idiosyncratic utilisation of schools.
- Preparing, planting, growing, harvesting and cooking produce from the schools garden that is shared for free amongst students and community within each school.
- Training community members to work and assist in the gardens therefore providing opportunities for individuals outside the age of school students to learn and then potentially mentor others.
- Complimenting the School Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) and the environmental education activities of each school.
- Encouraging biodiversity and an aesthetic aspect to all schools.
- Attempting to form partnerships with local corporations, businesses, community and cultural organisations (see section XIII Contact details Supporting Community Organisations and Individuals) local, state and federal agencies;
- Working with all local cultural groups including Coomaditchy Aboriginal community and the Cringila Community Co-operative which have a large percentage of students in the target schools.

VII. Current Situation

BACKGROUND

Over the past five years schools have developed their permaculture gardens and come on to the program in a sequential manner. As follows:

• 2006

- 2004 Cringila Public School
- 2007 Warrawong Public School
- 2011 Port Kembla Public School
- 2010 Warrawong High School
- Lake Heights Public School • 2011

Kemblawarra Public School



Each school has developed its own strategic garden plan. Current school priorities are as follows:

CRINGILA PUBLIC SCHOOL

- harvesting, cooking and consuming of organic food.
- 2. Build the capacity of students to have a greater understanding of healthy lifestyles, nutrition, wellbeing and environmental education through related programs.
- 3. Develop vocational and educational pathways and a culture of lifelong learning from Community of Schools.
- Warrawong community to work collaboratively for mutual benefit.

KEMBLAWARRA PUBLIC SCHOOL

- 1. Improve garden production and create more shaded quiet areas with seating.
- 2. Plant more fruit trees and vegetables.
- 3. Plant specific native trees e.g. Lilipili, lemon-scented tea trees, banksias etc.
- planting, maintenance and harvesting of edible produce.

WARRAWONG PUBLIC SCHOOL

- from Early Stage 1 to Stage 3, through subject areas, with a focus on the Living Classroom.
- events.
- aluminium within the school.



1. Utilise the "Living Classroom" learning environment both the garden and attached kitchen to teach students to participate and take ownership of the growing, caring for,

Kindergarten through to Year 12 through linking with schools in our Warrawong

4. Keep developing and supporting the established network of external partnerships that involve community groups, cultural groups, businesses and the schools in the Cringila /

4. Children learn social interaction and how to work in a team while gaining knowledge of

1. Integrate environmental education teaching and learning experiences across the school

2. Establish an environmental ethos within the school and wider school community through the Permaculture Partner's Garden Ambassador and Arvo Mob programs, the creation of a school Green Team, and participation in community, national and global environmental

3. Increase and streamline the recycling of fruit and vegetable scraps, paper, plastics and



WARRAWONG HIGH SCHOOL

- 1. Curriculum: To improve student learning through the use of our permaculture gardens living classroom to engage students and enhance curriculum outcomes across Stage 4/5/6 in the Science, TAS and Visual Arts plus specific curriculum outcomes for students from both our Intensive English Centre and Special Education programs; list to be expanded over the next few years to incorporate other curriculum outcomes.
- 2. Life Skills: To use our permaculture gardens living classroom to integrate a range of broader life skills goals into the curriculum. This involves perspectives and specific programs to enhance student learning outcomes in environmental education, healthy life choices, engagement with school, work skills and school to work transition.
- 3. School Environment: To transform the school environment in terms of visual amenity, outdoor facilities and local land use values through a focus on permaculture and land care principles.
- 4. Community Participation: To further engage with our established network of external permaculture partnerships including with parents, community and cultural groups, local business and the Warrawong community of schools.

PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL

- 1. Establish a design to drive and inform construction of the permaculture garden including a kitchen area with an articulated time line and list of strategic actions.
- 2. Liaise with students, staff, parents and community in regard to the design and expectations related to the garden.
- 3. Establish organisation patterns of how the garden will be utilised by school community.
- 4. Utilising the past experience of other schools link the garden to units of work, a place for celebration and as a learning centre for environmental education.

LAKE HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

- 1. Establish a design to drive and inform construction of the permaculture vegetable garden including an articulated time line and list of strategic actions.
- 2. Liaise with students, staff, parents and community in regard to the design and expectations related to the garden.
- 3. Establish organisation patterns of how the garden will be utilised by school community.
- 4. Utilising the past experience of other schools link the garden to units of work, a place for celebration and as a learning centre for environmental education.



EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

In simplistic terms each school implements Environmental Education outcomes relative to idiosyncratic need and as such each school will have similar but distinctly different and localised approaches to the learning that occurs. The schools in the Warrawong CoS are differentiated by student population numbers and also socio ethnic cultural mix.

Four of the schools (Warrawong High School, Cringila Public School, Warrawong Public School and Port Kembla Public School) implement the *Living Classroom* program or aspects of it as developed locally by Aaron Sorenson and Dan Deighton. This involves a sequential program of activities based on a season calendar generally targeted at a defined group in the school, Garden Ambassadors (*see page 30 for explanation*) in the primary schools, specific targeted year groups in the high school. The students move through a well-defined series of lessons and skill development sessions relative to their age, for a full day once a fortnight in primary and over a set number of periods per week in the high school.

Whilst two schools (Kemblawarra Public School and Lake Heights Public School) implement their own school based program that they have developed along the same principles but with a more targeted, specific and explicit localised agenda for their school.

In all the schools the students care for, maintain and perform all the tasks necessary to plant, grow, harvest, cook and celebrate their produce under teacher supervision but with the aim of developing skills and knowledge.



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

In collaboration with teachers at each of the CoS schools over the last five years a classroom application program has been developed for the *Living Classroom* program which articulates links to a variety of subject areas in the NSW Syllabus with elements essential to the Living *Classroom* program. Aspects of this have been uploaded onto DEC shared websites so they can be accessed by teachers and students so dialogue can be initiated and encouraged through email or blog Ed.

All resources can be accessed at the Warrawong High School website: www.warrawong-h.schools.nsw.edu.au

Each school also has an individual Action Plan annually which describes action areas and the outcomes that each school would like to achieve for that calendar year relative to their overall School Environment Management Plan (SEMP).

The permaculture garden works as a unique learning resource so activities are not confined to one select group each year. Students across the school get to access the garden on many different occasions and for a variety of purposes. At break times, for specific class activities and as a place for targeted hands on learning. Schools generally have an overview of their garden usage included in their SEMP.





FUNDING

To date the schools sustain the program themselves through seeking outside grants, sponsorship, donations or in kind support. This allows the schools to employ a trained Permaculture teacher or school based personnel who in turn train the teachers and students at the school.

With continued funding the gardens at these schools and all the partner schools can function and provide the potential for learning that has existed up until now.

The following organisations continue to actively support the program



PORT KEMBLA

COMMUNICATION AND RECOGNITION

The Warrawong CoS formed the Permaculture Partners Steering Committee from the outset which involves a Principal or delegate from each school and representatives from several of the organisations who support the program. They meet each term and discuss:

- short and long term goals. This involves;
 - organising that goods and services are up to date and in order;
 - determining a time line for each gardens' needs;
 - maintaining training and development of staff;
 - attract and seeking outside support from community organisations or businesses;
 - further;





- promoting and encouraging local newsworthy stories in the media both local and



- managing any money allocating it fairly and in accordance with each school's needs;
- distributing resources to each school;
- attempting to innovate and design methods of encouraging community involvement;
- future directions, preparation, recording, documentation and management of the project;
- opportunities for working collaboratively;
- possible co-operative grant submissions;
- opportunities to enhance the environmental education learning activities at each school;
- methods of recognising and celebrating the success of the project and methods of maintaining the long term sustainability of current activities.

The Warrawong CoS also produce a newsletter each term which is distributed to many businesses, community organisations and schools across the state which gives an update of progress and activities at each school.

Each school has a website with information and links to environmental initiatives, the school SEMP and broader environmental initiatives across the NSW Department of Education.

Schools in the CoS have attained regular media coverage over the past five years for stories related to their permaculture gardens. Stories have been covered by newspapers, magazines, a variety of television news stories, radio and the internet. On average from year to year it is usual for at least 20 stories covering the gardens across all schools. Several of the schools and staff members have also been awarded for the quality of their teaching practice in the area of Environmental Education both locally and statewide with significant recognition of the Permaculture Partners as a whole by several national bodies.

PHILANTHROPIC IDEOLOGY

The Permaculture Partners have an altruistic view to the teaching and learning that occurs at the schools. As well as supporting each other we also welcome schools from around the Illawarra South East Region as well as community based organisations and industry to learn from us and with us. Often we welcome visitors to our school gardens and in turn hope they benefit from the experience and take back ideas to start something similar in their community. We also offer support through the sharing of resources, our intellectual knowledge and advice often resulting in lasting friendships and strengthened community relationships.



VIII. Garden Designs

Following are the designs of the gardens at each of the partner schools.

It is important to note that these gardens are not imposed on schools but come through a collaboration of ideas from all stakeholders in the school domain and is synthesized into a design that best suits the needs of a particular school.



Cringila Public School



Warrawong Public School



Port Kembla Public School





Kemblawarra Public School



Warrawong High School



Lake Heights Public School







Kemblawarra Public School Permaculture Garden







Warrawong Public School Permaculture Garden





(Established 2007)



Warrawong High School Permaculture Garden







(Established 2010)

25

West facing Mediterranean Garden

Harvests water from Covered Sports Complex



Port Kembla Public School Permaculture Garden





Lake Heights Public School Permaculture Garden

RETAINING WALL





(Established 2011)



Before



29

IX. Definitions

THE LIVING CLASSROOM

The "*Living Classroom*" is a classroom in the garden. It is a living environment based on Permaculture Design systems that balance food production, biodiversity and sustainable natural resource management. It is an interactive environment that integrates natural resources into the garden including harvesting and reusing rainwater and processing schools organic wastes into compost to build soil fertility and sustain garden productivity. It is an effective learning environment that nurtures the individual students learning abilities and capacity to meet their curriculum requirements. It is a social environment where children and the school community can get together to share and learn new skills and enjoy life.



GARDEN AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

This is a 10 week program that introduces students to the living classroom program and facilitates the establishment of the gardens, systems and roles and responsibilities.

At its optimum 14 students from Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) are trained as the Garden Ambassadors who take responsibility for and promote the living classroom as a new culture within the school community. (This number may vary between primary schools and may alternatively include, Stage 3 students - Years 5 and 6).

It is a great introduction for the school and spreads the environmental message very quickly. It also empowers students with skills and knowledge which they in turn can utilize as mentors of other students.



X. Financial Plan

ONGOING COMMITMENT (Yearly)

Five Primary Schools;

- 1 trained permaculture teacher 1 day per fo
 (\$350 x 20 = \$7000) per school
- Matched funding through permaculture part
- Ongoing material budget for materials, tools, (\$250 x 4 Terms)

One High School;

- 1 trained permaculture teacher 2 days per v (\$700 x 40 = \$28 000)
- Matched funding through permaculture part
- 1 trained permaculturalist to work with teach 1 day/wk. (\$350 x 40 = \$14 000)
- Matched funding through permaculture part

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING (one off cost,

Trained facilitator to develop capacity of staff (4

Relief for teacher professional training (4 days for six staff from each school) (\$1 500

OUTDOOR KITCHEN

(one off cost each school – already established

(Cob oven, gas grill, sinks, preparation benche roofed, floor, water tank, pedal powered blende

It is important to note that issues relative to the constr will be site specific and will also depend significantly o requirements.

		TOTAL
ortnight over school year	\$ 3 500	
tners	\$ 3 500	\$ 35 000
, plants etc.	\$ 1 000	\$ 5 000
week over a school year	\$24 500	\$ 28 000
tners	\$ 3 500	
hers and classes	\$10 500	\$ 14 000
tners	\$ 3 500	
		\$ 82 000
t) 4 days)	\$ 2 000	
) x 4) x 6 = \$36 000	\$36 000	\$ 38 000
l in two schools)		
es, kitchen utensils (kit), er) @ four schools	\$ 20 000	\$ 80 000
ruction of an outdoor kitchen on OHS and DEC prerequisite		\$ 80 000
	*••••••	••••••



XI. Schools - Contact Details

CRINGILA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Sheffield Street, Cringila NSW 2502 Phone: 4274 1768 Fax: 4276 2841

Principal: Lorna Kaer (Relieving) lorna.Kaer@det.nsw.edu.au

Contact: Deb Dixon deborah.dixon@det.nsw.edu.au

Website: cringila.p-school@det.nsw.edu.au

KEMBLAWARRA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Shellharbour Road, Port Kembla NSW 2505 Phone: 4274 2024 Fax: 4276 2971

Principal:	Eleanor Thompson
	eleanor.thompson@det.nsw.edu.au
Contact:	Debra Smith debra.smith18@det.nsw.edu.au
Website:	kemblawarr-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

LAKE HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

302 Northcliffe Drive, Lake Heights NSW 2502 Phone: 4274 2024 Fax: 4276 2971

Principal: Peter Heddles peter.heddles@det.nsw.edu.au

Contact: Jacqui Stehr Jacqueline.oneill@det.nsw.edu.au Website: lakeheight-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Gloucester Boulevard, Port Kembla NSW 2505 Phone: 4274 1041 Fax: 4276 2840

Principal: Kevin Tucker kevin.tucker@det.nsw.edu.au

Contact: Anne-Maree Wright anne-maree.wright@det.nsw.edu.au

Website: ptkembla-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

WARRAWONG HIGH SCHOOL

127 Cowper Street, Warrawong NSW 2502 Phone: 4274 0707 Fax: 4276 2836

Principal: Stephen Goodley stephen.goodley@det.nsw.edu.au Contact: Barbara Weir

barbara.weir@det.nsw.edu.au

Website: warrawong-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au

WARRAWONG PUBLIC SCHOOL

Cowper Street, Warrawong NSW 2502 Phone: 4274 1399 Fax: 4276 2789

Principal: Karen Hodge karen.hodge@det.nsw.edu.au

Contact: Emily Marmont emily.marmont@det.nsw.edu.au

Website: warrawong-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

XII. Business Partners

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

Over the past five years these businesses, community organisations and individuals have provided support in some form. Their contact details can be gained by contacting any of the Principals in the Warrawong CoS.

- ABB
- Allfab Constructions Pty Ltd
- Australian Steel Mill Services
- BIS Industrial
- BlueScope Steel
- BOC Gas and Gear
- Bunnings Warrawong
- Care Design
- CBA (Commonwealth Bank)
- Cleary Bros Group of Companies
- Coates Hire Pty Ltd
- Coles Warrawong
- Community Gardening Sydney
- Coomaditchy Aboriginal Co-operative
- Conservation Volunteers
- Cringila Co-operative
- Dapto Community Farm
- Dean Industries
- (formerly Waldean Industries)
- Edmen Pty Ltd
- Environmental Trust
- Federal Member (Throsby)
- Fluor Global
- Freedom Warrawong
- GM Fabrication
- Green Corps
- Habitat Ponds
- Harsco (formerly Mutliserv)
- Hatch Associates Pty Ltd
- Healthy Cities Illawarra
- Heggies Pty Ltd Environmental Scientists & Engineers
- Illawarra Lake Authority
- Illawarra Environmental Education Centre
 Worth Recycling Pty Ltd



- Jennie George
- K & R Fabrication Pty Ltd
- Landcare
- One Steel Metaland
- Orica (Incitec Pivot)
- Peter Nolan
- Political Support Local, State and Federal local members
- Port Kembla Port Corporation
- Port Kembla Community Project
- School Education Director Wollongong
- Serco Group
- Soilco
- South East Sydney Illawarra Health
- Southern Catchment Authority
- Spotless Services
- Sustainability NSW
- Sydney Water
- Swire Industries
- The Living Classroom
- North Gong Garden
- Thiess Environmental Services
- Tolco Pty Ltd
- Trade Secret Warrawong
- Transfield Services
- Transpacific Cleanaway
- University of Wollongong
- Veolia
- Westfield Warrawong
- Wisdom Advertising & Design
- Wollongong City Council
- Wollongong Botanic Gardens

- Woolworths Warrawong







living classroom

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