

# Permaculture Partners Newsletter



Term 1 2016

## Summer in our Permaculture Gardens

The aim of this newsletter is that each term the schools will give an update on progress with Environmental Initiatives at their school that focus around their Permaculture gardens.



### Warrawong High School

It has been a dynamic start to 2016 with the preparation for the Autumn/Winter planting and soil building. The Permaculture engagement classes, IEC and the Sports Studies class have been cranking out the 'no dig' gardens and building a huge 3m<sup>2</sup> compost heap from the remains of last year's bumper crops.

There is a new and focused push with a Permaculture theme across the curriculum areas. We look forward to the new construction projects including a 6m tyre and turpentine seating circle, hand cast Ferro cement interpretive mosaics for the compass garden and the design and planting of a coffee food forest. The "fear of falling food" is a wonderful addition to learning in the Permaculture garden so stay tuned for more tales from the compost heap.



### Warrawong Public School

It has been a busy start to the year at WPS. The students were so excited to get back into the garden and we are trying a new format with a select garden crew of Stage 2 students. The Support Unit are now attending as two groups and the awesome 'arvo mob' are still powering through the afternoon session. Of course there are also lots of lovely helpers who dedicate their lunch time to helping too.

The weather has been hot hot hot, and the garden suffered over that dry February, but now the beds have been cleared, rebuilt



and replanted with our Autumn crops. Fruit trees were bountiful with some perfect pomegranates, wonderful wax jambus, juicy jaboticaba, fabulous figs and even some wild wampis. Our fruit fly nets did their job perfectly and we had such delicious fruit, free from pests and poisons! We are in dynamic times and more than ever, it is important to keep teaching the next generation ways to help our planet – and that is what our outdoor classroom is all about.



### Port Kembla Public School

There is a new sound in the air at Port Kembla Public School – that would be the singing of the new Garden Ambassadors working away in their lush Living Classroom. It may only be April, but the vegetable beds have been built, autumn vegetables and herbs planted, paths mulched, fruit and nut trees fed and native plants watered and mulched. The regular visits from the Year 1 and 2 students in the break times have had a huge impact on the impressive Permaculture Garden.



Come in before lunch and you will see a team of Ambassadors in action whipping up one of their tasty "toastie" creations on the electric BBQ. It is an amazing group of school leaders who are superb at mentoring younger students and visitors who drop in for the day. The children are looking forward to a winter of school grown vegetable soups and flat breads on the BBQ



### Lake Heights Public School

The students of the Lake Heights Public School's garden group had quite a bit of work to do in order for them to bring their vegetable garden back to normal after the summer holiday break. Lots of digging and weeding was needed before any planting was done. An abundance of baby eggplants was harvested and cooked into a delicious baba ganoush dip. The students decided to plant some vegetables they hadn't planted previously or hadn't actually eaten. They included brussel sprouts, Asian lettuce, sweet potato and purple carrots as well as the winter favourites such as broccoli, snow peas, beetroot and onions. We look forward to harvesting these vegetables and creating some delectable recipes in the school's kitchen.



### Cringila Public School

It has been raining macadamia nuts at Cringila PS and its only April. It's one of the joys of an established food forest when the mangoes are dropping, bananas are swaying in the wind and the South American fruit trees have yielded kilos of sweet and sour morsels.



It's always a hive of creative activity and noise at Cringila PS with busy wheelbarrows trafficking mounds of mulch around the paths, a careful crew of planters dropping in the autumn/winter vegetables, composters turning, conversationalists

watering, the creatives illustrating, the skilled pruners chopping and dropping and the kind leader types preparing the season fruit for sharing. It's going to be another colourful year at Cringila PS in the Living Classroom.



### Five Islands Secondary College

It has been a very busy start to the term in permaculture at our College. We have been extremely pleased to see a huge number of students enjoying the wonderful locally sourced timber seating circle during recess and lunch, enjoying the fantastic aesthetic of the space. The plants have survived the summer heat and should come on even more beautifully in the cooler, wetter months to enhance this space even further. Inspired by the success of our 2015 project, we have commenced the build of a larger permaculture space which will be a feature of the College frontage.

The new site is now well under way with Aaron Sorenson leading his team to shape the design and earthworks over several days. The new site is going to incorporate and renew existing resources within the College including a greenhouse and nursery space and features beautifully shaped raised beds and swales for the 4 Seasons Veggie Garden, Citrus Grove, Mediterranean Food Forest, Bush Tucker garden and new composting hugs. The incorporation of further beautiful seating for students is again a large consideration of the design, providing an outdoor learning space and also a space to relax and enjoy the garden as it grows around them over the coming years. TAFE and FISC Horticulture students assisted with the relocation of existing plants from the site, and also planting a large stand of Lomandra - over 200 plants!

It is very exciting times and the energy around the project is certainly up. Speaking of up, we were very fortunate to have a drone (at the College as a part of STEM activities) take some awesome aerial video of the project from the air. These images highlight the curvature of the design and are quite spectacular. They will be a lovely reminder of the beginnings of a project that we hope to sustain well into the future!



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