

Learning Beyond the Classroom

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This Newsletter has been brought to you by staff from:

- Amaroo EEC
- Bilai EEC
- Stanley River EEC
- Barambah EEC
- Columboola EEC
- Sunday Creek EEC

Lead Teachers on Country Forum a multi-stakeholder Indigenous & Environmental Education Event Monday 8th & Tuesday 9th October 2012



Over the first days back after the September break, a dedicated group met for an intensive two days among the native forest and abundant wildlife of Barambah Environmental Education Centre (BEEC). This event resulted from a plan to host and run an innovative forum involving staff from schools which have demonstrated commitment to environmental and Indigenous excellence.

The Lead Teachers on Country Forum (LTOCF) was a new partnership between 5 stakeholders: ISSU-CSQ, Murri Rangers, BMRG, Earth Smart Science and Barambah Environmental Education Centre (BEEC), Aboriginal custodians and natural resource managers.

BEEC was particularly honoured to host keynote presenter Dr (Uncle) Ernie Grant, whose name is familiar to many educators from the *Framework* and his work with ISSU. The forum was designed to bring together key stakeholders to explore ways to use the outdoors, movement and arts-based delivery methods, in catering for Indigenous learners.

Walking on Country

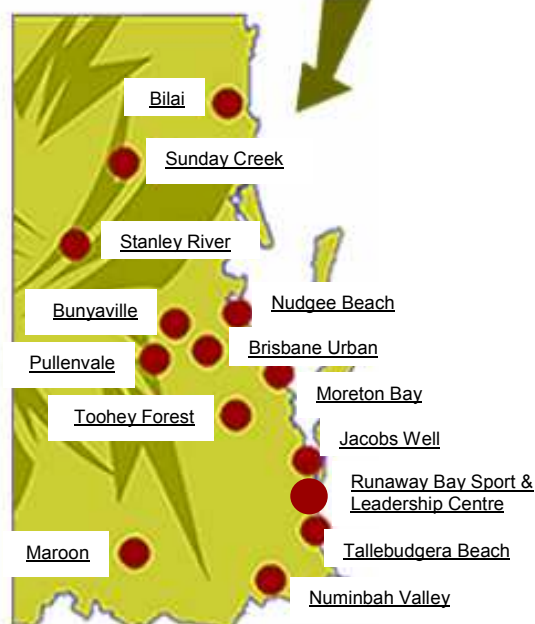
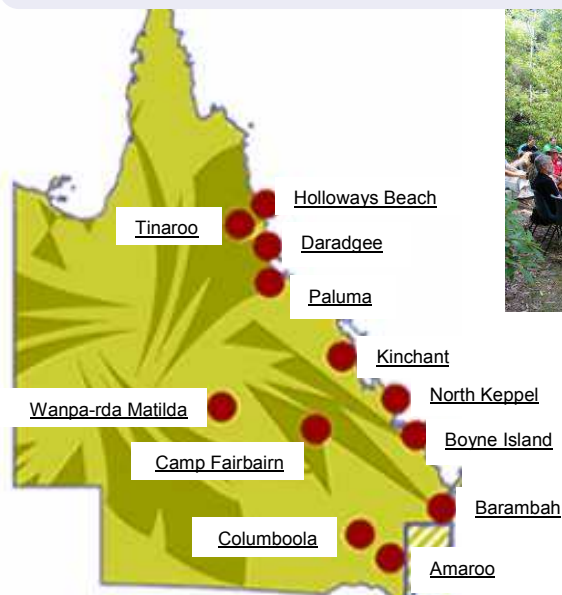
A great role model for Aboriginal young people embarking on careers outdoors in "Caring for Country" are the Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers, who accompanied participants on walks amid the araucaria vine forest where they showed toe-holds in ancient bunya trees, where in former times, young men climbed to procure the soft, sweet unripe nuts with the aid of ropes made from beaten and plaited bark.

Burnett Mary Regional group (BMRG), the natural resource management partner, has provided training and employment for 5 Aboriginal people from the Burnett region under the Murri ranger program initiated by Elders from traditional Bunya Mountains custodian groups. Uncle Mal Collinge, of the Junkunda Willi Willi, described how the success of the Elders collaboration with BMRG in forming and training the Rangers group was honoured with a National Award at the recent Landcare Awards in Sydney.



Above: Murri Ranger Maurice Mickelo shows Ros Cridland from BEEC the toe-notches in an old Bunya tree in the araucaria vine forest near the Barambah EEC.

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Dr. (Uncle) Ernie's Framework (UEF)

Participants reported that they gained much confidence and direction in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture as a cross-curricular priority from Uncle Ernie's presentation about his Cultural framework, and getting to ask him questions personally. In UEF, topics are investigated from multiple viewpoints: firstly of Land, Language and Culture, and then of Place, People and Relationships. A subsequent session on the following day allowed participants to try out the framework by applying it through topics of their choice.

Participants in the North Coast group, who read "Catching Blueys" with Auntie Lurlene Henderson, enjoyed

hearing Lurlene's own experiences with catching blueys. "Uncle Ernie's Framework" (UEF) offers a way for teachers to ensure, not just that their programs present positive content on Indigenous issues, but that the underlying framework of assumptions in any unit is consistent with Indigenous culture and values.

Zela Bissett, Barambah's Earth Smart Science facilitator, describes the BEEC's intentions in hosting the LTOCF as, "to host an intensive cross-fertilisation of ideas about place and pedagogy." Zela reports, "At the forum people were asking me how did we persuade Uncle Ernie who is now 77, to participate?"

Uncle Ernie was accompanied by Richard Blanchette, who works with the family in the *Ingan* eco-tourism project in their home rainforest near Tully in North Queensland.

Uncle Ernie is a hard act to follow, but Dr Ron Tooth's far-reaching presentation covering the recognition of the 5th *Pedagogy* and its significance as a holistic way of apprehending the natural world around us was cited as a high point for many participants.

The Fifth Pedagogy has now been recognised by Education Queensland and an ARC research project is being conducted, interviewing participants after environmental education camps to more fully understand how the "rawness and fun" of first-hand experiences of nature impact on young learners. The significance of attachment to "place" was also explored.

Mark Cridland's session "Understanding Your Learner" equally offered participants the chance to gain insights into themselves. Mark drew on the work on temperament theory to explain how learners differ in their needs, and that the active, sensory, impulsive "kangaroo" learners often find themselves challenged by the long periods of listening, keeping still and theoretical tasks demanded by the current educational regime.

Special Moments

Among the special moments of the Forum was when Uncle Bert Button, local Wakka Wakka custodian, shared the amazing artefacts left in his care by his father, the late Uncle Joe Button. The carved wooden objects are message sticks sent by the Wakka Wakka to invite other groups to the Bunya Festivals, which represented a gathering similar in importance to a parliament combined with the Olympics and a mass betrothal. The inscriptions which Uncle Bert told us were made with a



Left: Breakout groups applying Uncle Ernie's Framework

sharpened Kangaroo leg bone, show sinous lines showing the route to follow and the destination, Mount Mowbullum, or "Bald Head".

A rousing dance performance by the boys of the Murgon State School Wakka Wakka dance troupe got the event off to a great start. The evening was enlivened by a wonderful campfire and true stories and tall tales from Uncle Ernie and Uncle Mal and others, after a hearty meal. Some tuneful music including some improvisations on the day's events by the talented crew from Pullenvale EEC made the night very memorable. All the Elders were extremely generous and patient with their time and sat over many a cup of tea with participants.

Some exciting multi-media resources shared by ISSU-CSQ on the second day caused much hilarity as some of the stars were present among the group; including Deadly Science's Phil Breslin!

Joe Sambono gave a great session about Indigenous perspectives in the Science curriculum while Jess Holland, who is working with the history curriculum team for C2C, was present for the whole time, and did a great job of videoing the presentations so that those who could not make can still have the benefit of these unique sessions. These will be turned into "on-line" resources.

Other highlights included a Panel Discussion with Elders and Dr.s Ron Tooth & Uncle Ernie Grant and Director of Schools – ISSU-CSQ about problems and solutions for participants on their return to their schools.

This brief account cannot do justice to the many conversations, exchanges and wonderful moments of the forum. Through culturally appropriate teaching methods including place-based pedagogy, the experiential and sensory Fifth pedagogy, and insight into self and others provided by the Aus Identities work, the LTOCF offered a range of effective tools aimed at empowering educators to provide best-practice curriculum and delivery, and independently progress their EATSIPS and Sustainability (SEMP) plans. Renee Crilly, EATSIPS Principal Project Manager also facilitated with Uncle Ernie a question and answer session using the framework.

The combination of the natural Beauty of the setting and the visit to the bunya forest with the Murri rangers, the stimulating and very complementary messages of all the presenters added up to a very special gathering from which participants took away much to fondly remember and reflect upon.



ISSU - CSQ
Indigenous Schooling
Support Unit
Central Southern
Queensland



Article contributed by:
Sue Gibson & Zela Bissett,
Principal & ESS Teacher,
Barambah EEC



Bunya to Bay 2012



On the 15th of September Stanley River Environmental Education Centre farewelled 23 River Ambassadors from the 4th Bunya to Bay. The theme of the 2012 Bunya to Bay being **‘What is the Future of our Waterways?’**

Students participating in the program originated from:

- Toogoolawah SHS
- Murgon SHS
- Kilcoy SHS
- Albany Creek SHS
- Mountain Creek SHS
- Milpera SHS
- Chancellor State College
- Moreton Bay Boys College
- Maleny SHS
- Wondai SHS
- Home Hill SHS, and
- Aspley SHS



Over the past 8 years the Bunya to Bay program has seen keen Year 9 and 10 students study water catchment issues and travel through South-East Queensland’s largest catchment, hiking, biking, canoeing and camping, before reaching their final destination of Fort Lytton at the mouth of the Brisbane River.

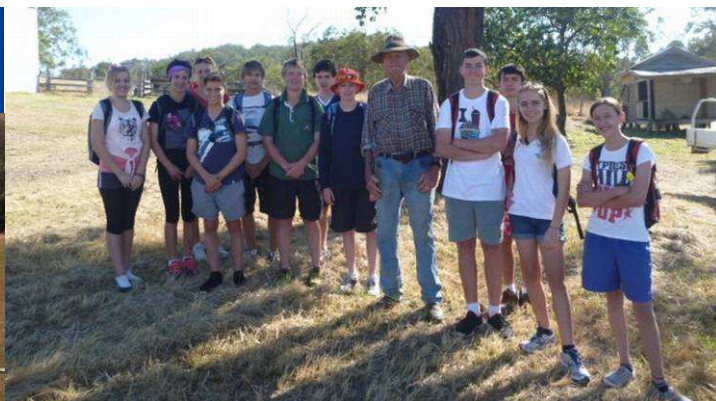


However in 2012 the program greatly benefited from input from Seqwater, a sponsor of Bunya to Bay, who provided hands on activities delivered by water experts along the

entire journey. Using a combination of abiotic and biotic tests the River Ambassadors collected information to be loaded to the World Water Monitoring website whilst working in conjunction with experts on topics such as erosion, macro invertebrates, water testing, flooding, water quality, water treatment, human impact, fish capture and identification, Somerset and Wivenhoe Dam and Land care revegetation.

Students also benefited from the use of Education Queensland’s Mobile Communications Unit (designed to provide transportable wireless connectivity, whether by Satellite or 3G, to schools or centres in need) and the expertise of Ben Nicholls. The trailer was equipped with 20 laptops and able to establish an internet connection in remote locations. For the first time students were able to work on their projects and research during the entire journey with assistance from an ICT expert.

Stanley River Environmental Education Centre would like to thank Barambah EEC, Sunday Creek EEC, Jacobs Well EEC,



Maroon OEC and Nudgee Beach EEC who provided support staff and equipment to assist with the journey.

Special thanks go to Columboola EEC for the use of their vehicle and USO, Nick Small, who accompanied the group for the majority of the journey and also Michael Fiechtner from Seqwater for his enthusiasm, support and coordination of student activities.

The biggest praise however goes to the team from Stanley River EEC, Steve Roach, Kate Cowley, Rodney Kunde, Vicki Northcott and Lisa Gray. The logistics and organisation both prior and during the event were enormous.

Article contributed by:
Theresa Thomson,
Acting Principal,
Stanley River EEC



Staffing Changes for 2013

Congratulations go to the following Principals who have been selected to fill Principal vacancies at O&EECs in 2013:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|
| • Mark Cridland | Moreton Bay EEC | |
| • Sandra Hearnden | Stanley River EEC | |
| • Sue Gibson | Barambah EEC | (Acting) |
| • Lawrence Hennelly | Columboola EEC | (Acting) |

Congratulations and well wishes also go to Eileen Mitchell who will be retiring from the Moreton Bay EEC in 2013 after 46 years of service as a teacher and Principal.

Twilight Science Incursion



Students and parents enjoy Outdoor "Star Gazing" sessions with Bilai Environmental Education Centre.

In line with the Department's Science priority, Bilai Environmental Education Centre staff last term trialled a new Twilight Program to support local schools to implement the Australian Curriculum: Earth and Space Sciences in Year 1.

The program was designed in consultation with early childhood teachers after it was recognised that limited opportunities exist for young students to access equipment to explore the night sky.

The program provided two distinct learning pathways:

- 'Expo style' activity stations for students to explore the moon, stars and constellations that included a planetarium, story telling and design corner; and,
- Outdoor 'Star Gazing' sessions using viewfinders, binoculars and telescopes.

An added benefit of the night sessions was the ability of some parents to participate in their child's learning. For some it was the first time they had met their child's teacher. I also find it satisfying to hear a parent say "I learnt something new".

With the success of the 2012 trial the "Our Night Sky" twilight incursion has been offered in Bilai's 2013 booking process.

Article contributed by:
Tina Kuskopf,
Teacher, Bilai EEC



Dirranbandi School Camp

Columboola is endeavouring to develop long term educational partnerships with schools. Dirranbandi is one such school, it is a National Partnership Low SES school. To this end we recently travelled to Dirranbandi where we camped for the week at the Dirranbandi Pony Club on the beautiful Balonne River. We ran three separate but overlapping programs during the week for the year 4-5s, 6 and 7s. The Dirranbandi Pony Club was a perfect location with toilets and a well equipped canteen that enabled the school to easily self-cater. We utilised the Ex PCAP bus now leased by St George SS to ferry the students to the local pool for showers.

A program was designed with input from Mayrah Dreise the Principal and jointly

run by the Columboola and Dirranbandi Staff. We ran team building activities, canoeing skills, a GPS challenge, damper cooking and astronomy with ipads and telescopes. They also experienced laser skirmish, a yowie hunt and a guest speaker talking about leadership. The most keenly anticipated activity was not even on the program. "Carp busting". The students were very eager to get in some environmental pest fish eradication. I just tried a bit of carp kissing before heading off to the local landfill to deposit our catch, 30kg in total. The weekend following our camp in Dirranbandi there was a Carp Buster Weekend fishing competition.

The students certainly benefited from the local camp experience and the overall cost savings. The Columboola-Dirranbandi round trip is 776 km. The dual cab is certainly a lot cheaper than a coach and has a much smaller carbon footprint.

Article contributed by:
Lawrence Hennelly,
Principal, Columboola EEC



Above: Julie Orton assists Dirranbandi Students with their GPS Challenge.

Below: Principal Lawrence Hennelly—"Carp Kissing"



From Toowoomba to Tbilisi: Journey of a Lifetime for an Environmental Educator

Cam Mackenzie was appointed principal at the Amaroo Environmental Education Centre, which is just north of Toowoomba, on the 9th July 2012. On the 19th July, Cam received an invitation to attend the Tbilisi + 35 Conference in Tbilisi, the capital of the country Georgia. This was the fulfilment of one of Cam's life goals; to visit Tbilisi, known as the birthplace of environmental education.

In 1977, the Tbilisi Declaration¹ was released after the Tbilisi Intergovernmental Conference for Environmental Education. Australia was officially represented and one of the delegates was Peter Fensham, the first president of the Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE). Unfortunately there was no official government representative at the Tbilisi + 35 International Conference on Environmental Education for Sustainable Development² held in Tbilisi on the 6-7 September 2012; however Cam Mackenzie³ was able to attend as an AAEE representative.

Cam has been an environmental educator for over 30 years; in fact he first became aware of environmental education the year after the Tbilisi Declaration was

released whilst a university student. Cam was a member of the Tbilisi + 35 conference international expert panel whose task was to draft a Communiqué to be presented to the delegates on the last day of the conference. This was a challenging yet thoroughly rewarding task. Many late nights were spent in the days leading up to the conference as well as during the event.

The significant outcome from this intergovernmental conference on environmental education for sustainable development was the creation of the **Tbilisi Communiqué⁴: Educate Today for a Sustainable Future**. This document builds on the original Tbilisi Declaration as well as other significant international environmental education and sustainable development documents.

What does this mean for environmental education?

It certainly means the 98 countries and over 300 delegates who attended this intergovernmental conference consider environmental education for sustainable development very important in the formal, informal and non-formal education sectors and from early childhood to high education.

Below: Cam Mackenzie participating in the Tbilisi + 35 Conference in Georgia in September 2012.



It also demonstrates a commitment from those attending, that environmental education needs to be part of the Environment and Education Ministries and portfolios.

It also indicates that after 35 years of delivering quality environmental education programs and services across the world, there is still a huge task ahead if we are to 'educate today for a sustainable future!'

Article contributed by:
Cam Mackenzie,
Principal, Amaroo EEC

- 1 Tbilisi Declaration : UNESCO website <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0003/000327/032763eo.pdf>
- 2 Tbilisi + 35 Conference website <http://www.tbilisiplus35.ge/>
- 3 Cam Mackenzie is also the 2011 Environmental Educator of the Year through the Australian Association for Environmental Education (www.aaee.org.au)
- 4 Tbilisi Communiqué http://www.tbilisiplus35.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=148&Itemid=121&lang=en#.UJDZt6DdF2k

Strong Turn-out for School Sustainability Symposium

lead. However after hosting the North Burnett region's first sustainable schools symposium, he's amazed at the interest it generated. With eight schools coming on board to participate, local Indigenous custodians and visiting elders and performers from Murgon, and Bunya Mountains Murri rangers turning up to assist students to plant a bush tucker garden, Mr Nichols comments that it got "bigger than Ben Hur's birthday"! However he attributes the smooth running of the day to his dedicated staff including Head of Curriculum Leah Trott and teacher Michelle Geary who worked with Earth Smart Science's Zela Bissett to plan the day.

Kids Teaching Kids, a Melbourne based organisation funded by Australia Post, came on board as a sponsor, providing funding and supplying each child with a sunsmart T-shirt and hat, which transformed the gathering into a sea of red. Kids Teaching Kids' philosophy is that students are interested in what other students have to show them. Each class got to experience a wide range of presentations, both as presenters and audience members. Gayndah's Year 7 group developed an entertaining act about controlling cat's claw creeper, while Mundubberra Year 7 presented a demonstration of bottle biology.

With lashings of delicious bush tucker presented by EATSIPS's Renee Crilly, students and adults got to try new taste sensations including lemon myrtle biscuits, bunya pesto and even wild

When Gayndah SS signed up for the Earth smart Science Program early in 2012 Principal Ken Nichols had little idea where it would

hibiscus ice cream! Hervey Bay expert John Parsons encouraged students to find win-win solutions to their Flying fox dilemma while Louise Newman from Burnett Catchment care helped students understand how to help endangered wildlife including the white-throated snapping turtle, (*Elseya albigula*). Students enjoyed hands-on workshops run by local BIEDO (Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation) staff Prue and Tameka , and the school now has two vegetable garden beds made from recycled citrus crates as a lasting teaching resources.

Earth Smart Science facilitator Zela Bissett is impressed with the whole-school approach shown by Gayndah State School in embracing the event. "It is really exciting to see so many people responding to the concept of equipping students to deal with environmental challenges in a positive way," says Zela. "The students have been wonderful hosts and generated some excellent ideas for future projects."



Article contributed by:
Zela Bissett,
Earth Smart
Science
Teacher,
Barambah
EEC

Left: The outdoor
Drumbeat circle
was popular with
participants.

Maximising Adolescent Learning Both at School & Home

We have all heard the expression 'Give someone a fish and you give them a meal. Teach them how to fish and you feed them for life'. As parents we want to give our children the best of everything we possibly can; but in fact one of the best things any parent can give their child is a good education. Armed with this gift, the world can be their oyster and many opportunities can be maximised if they so choose.

When we consider the term 'Education', most of us think about formal study, yet a large portion of a child's education comes from their life experiences, as well as their parents' guidance and interaction. So the two main influences in a child's education are the teacher at school and the parents, while the challenge is getting them engaged in learning.

Every day I talk to teachers and parents and regularly hear many say 'I don't understand my children. They are on a different planet. I can't communicate with them'. Well, believe it or not, our parents and teachers probably had similar issues but to a lesser degree. The world is changing rapidly and with technology moving in quantum leaps, the educational domain is a new world but not necessarily worse off. Both children and adolescents are very different these days when it comes to their learning style and teaching preference. Maybe we need to consider a different view.

Teaching is the practice of transferring knowledge and skills; however, effective learning will only occur if the student is fully engaged in the experience. The formally structured system of teaching that Baby Boomers and Generation X experienced is no longer an effective method, as students now have more access than ever to knowledge through many different media while most have amazing ability to multi-task with their learning.

'Individualised learning' is now the key to maximising a student's learning by tailoring the teaching to suit the individual needs. This approach comes with its own challenges; as in order to be effective we need to identify what are the student's individual learning preferences so the teaching approach by both the parent and school teacher can be modified to fully engage the learner.

For many years, the Tallebudgera Beach School teachers have been effectively identifying and further developing the learning potential of each of the 14,000 school students which attend our camp programs each year. This result has been achieved through individualised learning based on 'differentiation'. We are now keen to share our secret to success by way of our online training products.

If you would like to find out more about adolescent learning preferences, as well as your own teaching preferences, please have a look at the 'Differentiated Learning' program demos available from our website (at right) and you will quickly see how valuable and effective this knowledge can be for both you and your school.

Please see ad at right for more details on our great range of differentiated learning programs for teachers.

Article contributed by: **Ian Gordon**,
RTO Manager,
Tallebudgera Beach School





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