

Sept-Oct 2009

# YOUTH SUMMIT

In September, Winmalee Primary School hosted a summit for students from seventeen schools across the Blue Mountains. The aim of the summit was to encourage environmental citizenship and leadership by providing an opportunity for young people to voice their concerns and ideas associated with environmental issues.



The day commenced at the bottom playground for a very touching 'Sense of Place' session around a campfire being welcomed by elders from the Dhurag and Gundungarra people. Speakers and workshop facilitators came from the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, Sydney Youth Parliament, National Parks and Wildlife, Reconnecting to Country Project, Blue Mountains City Council and the World Heritage Institute. Wyn Jones, a well known local biologist visited the school, on the Golden Gumtree Postal Run. He spoke to the children about his mission in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Blue Mountains National Park. The children also learnt how traditional Aboriginal people lived in areas like Winmalee.

Richard

# GOLDEN GUMTREES

The Blue Mountains National Park celebrated its 50th birthday on September 25th. Mr Robertson MLC and Minister for Environment and Climate Change said that. The Blue Mountains National Park is "undeniably one of the most beautiful places in Australia and one that holds special memories for a great many people. Our recent visitor tracking survey has confirmed that the Blue Mountains National Park is the most visited park in NSW with more than 3.5 million people enjoying the great outdoors in the last year".

The Blue Mountains National Park is often thought of as the birth place of modern conservation thanks to the efforts of Miles Dunphy and friends, earlier visitors to the area, who worked tirelessly to save the Blue Gum High Forest in the 1930's. Andy Macqueen told students a great story of Miles Dunphy and friends coming across a farmer in the Grose Valley in 1932 in the act of cutting down a tree. Dunphy and friends protested, "You can't do that". The farmer replied, quite correctly that he was on his land and had the legal right to do so. Even so, they managed to talk him out of doing further damage and proceeded to raise enough money, at the height of the Depression to make it worth his while to leave the rest of the trees where they were. This led to a movement which lobbied the NSW Government over the next 27 years to establish the Blue Mountains National Park. This finally happened in September, 1959. It is now home to the densest (over 150 kms) network of walking tracks on public land in Australia, many built over several decades dating back to 1870.

To celebrate this birthday milestone Mr Robertson thanked the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Blue Mountains City Council and National Parks for planning a huge range of events which culminated in a huge celebration at Katoomba High. Year 7 attended a camp fire and listened to yarns by Wyn Jones and Andy McQueen. Janelle Randal-Court spoke about what motivates her to be an Aboriginal Discovery Ranger while also demonstrating how Aboriginals were able to use natural materials for their utensils.

There are over 107 species of Eucalypt found in this region - that is 13 per cent of the global total and one of the reasons it is World Heritage listed. This honour was bestowed nearly ten years ago so watch out for another birthday next year. Years 9 and 10 were honoured by a talk from Joan Domicelj, the initiator of World heritage listing ten



Bronwen (World heritage Institute) and Wyn (bush postie)

years ago and entertained by a conversation between Chris Darwin (Charles's ancestor) and Greg Borschmann from the ABC. Chris described a project he has just signed off on in Western Australia to conserve a plant named after his great-great grandfather. Alex Gold from the World heritage Institute spoke about the problems of controlling weeds in wilderness areas. David Hall and David Brazil form Con Soc

spoke about the Gardens of stone National Park to make the point that areas still need to be protected from development.

“These community events have been designed to highlight the true beauty of the park area and to encourage people to visit parts of the park they may not have visited before. I encourage everybody from the community to get involved and enjoy the full experience of this wondrous landscape.” said Mr Robertson.

You can find a special program about the event on ABC radio’s Bush Telegraph program available for downloading from their website.

Year 10 Katoomba High

# FOOTBEAT GARDENS

The Footbeat Festival’s ‘Gardening For Life’ program is still under way in schools in the Blue Mountains. This 10 week outreach project commenced last month in partnership with Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC). Primary and secondary students throughout the Mountains are being taught the concepts of food sustainability. The planting of seeds and seedlings has commenced and schools have been given the opportunity to set up a garden plot at their schools or develop an existing plot. Vegetable and herb boxes have been distributed and the task is to create their own individual gardening projects and look after them. The curriculum is based on ‘practical sustainability’ and aims to educate school children about the circle of life and how everything is interconnected.

Volunteers, all with backgrounds in Permaculture and teaching are facilitating the program and have been assigned to each school aiming to maximise the benefit of the project. Thanks Supapon and Sue!

Additional training for teachers and parents was also provided so the garden plots thrive beyond the program to ensure they remain sustainable. After the 10 weeks schools exhibited their own decorated vegetable boxes as a huge



Mandala display at the Footbeat ‘Environmental Expo’ at Wentworth Falls TAFE on Sunday October 25. Schools participating include Glenbrook, Warrimoo, Wentworth Falls, Katoomba and North Katoomba Primary Schools as well as Leura and Blue Mountains Home School Network. Katoomba High School, Steiner and Korowal Schools are also on



board. We also made candle holders from clay, with help from Janet, to take part in the parade at the Festival.

The seedlings were provided by the Blue Mountains Community Gardens and the Footbeat organisers have donated \$200 to each school. BMCC also generously donated recycling crates, resources and even money. “Our aim is to show the kids how they are a part of the greater connectedness of all systems of life,” Coordinator Nigel Glassey said. Year 7 Katoomba High

## QUOLL CORNER



The Blue Mountains is often described as a labyrinth (or maze) of river canyons. I saw this mosaic labyrinth at the Katoomba community garden when I went to the Festival of Joy. I found a Greek myth you may be interested in reading.



The Minotaur was half man and half bull. It lived in the Labyrinth built by King Minos. After the death of his son by his enemies, Minos sent one of their children every ninth year to be eaten by the Minotaur. When the third sacrifice came, Theseus volunteered to go to slay the monster. Ariadne, Minos’ daughter, fell in love with Theseus and helped him get out of the maze by giving him a ball of thread, to retrace his path. He killed the Minotaur with a magic sword Ariadne had given him and saved the others.

Alastair

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