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| Report No:   | REP12-02-01     |
| File No:   | E390            |
| Date:  | 3 February 2012 |
| <b><i>Information Only -no decision required</i></b> |                 |

## REPORT SUMMARY

**Report to:** Environment & Planning Committee  
**Meeting Date:** Thursday, 16 February 2012  
**Report Author:** Rob Francis, Environmental Education Officer  
**Subject:** **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION REPORT**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers a number of general matters concerning the activities of the Environmental Education team as well as an overview of current status.

### RECOMMENDATION/S

That the report be received.

### DRAFT RESOLUTION

**THAT the Environment & Planning Committee receives the Environmental Education Report REP12-02-01**

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## **1. THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TEAM AND SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION**

- 1.1 In September 2011 World Wildlife Fund asked Colmar Brunton to assess public opinion about whether sustainability should be taught in schools.

The survey was conducted with 500 interviews with New Zealanders aged 18 and over. The survey asked people to think now about schools and education, from early childhood through to tertiary level. Some schools currently teach about the importance of caring for the environment and ways to look after it, while some schools do not.

The question asked was: "Do you agree or disagree that all schools should teach the importance of caring for the natural environment and living in a way that preserves it for the future?"

### **Over nine in ten (94%) agree that all schools should teach about sustainability**

- 1.2 Right now we are hearing calls from business leaders, communities and governments around the world for "green growth" and a "green economy." Leaders can see new opportunities for employment, health and liveability - and the damage that we will do to our economies if we keep harming our environment. Sustainability education is a response to this call and needs to be integral to our education system.

## **2. TASMAN NELSON ENVIRONMENT AWARDS**

- 2.1 The Environment Awards are a joint initiative of Nelson City Council (NCC) and Tasman District Council (TDC) recognising and celebrating people and organisations in our region who have demonstrated the use of good environmental practice, enhancement and sustainability.
- 2.2 As advised, we are now undertaking a Review of the event. This will involve a mix of research, questions, focus groups and feedback with stakeholders.

- 2.3 Now that Council has decided that the Awards will be run every two years we have an opportunity to consider all options going forward.

### **3. ECOFEST**

- 3.1 In 2012 the focus will continue to be on increasing hands-on and interactive activities and positive role modelling, to engage visitors in new behaviours which support strong resilient and connected communities, with a theme of “Transport”.
- 3.2 Ecofest also has a comprehensive out-reach programme to reach more isolated parts of the community for pre-event challenges and activities including a “mini-Ecofest” in Golden Bay.
- 3.3 We want to set up a range of creative and engaging walking/riding/transport events this year, covering everything from environmental use of transport to recreation.

### **4. ENVIROSCHOOLS**

- 4.1 The Enviroschools Programme offers a framework to:
- Link environmental education projects together.
  - Have an environmental vision for the school.
  - Support the schools in planning and activating projects.
  - Assist the integration of environmental projects into the organisation and operation of the school.
- 4.2 Monday, 5 December saw the tenth anniversary of the Enviroschools Programme going nationwide. Since this time it has grown to over 820 schools that have facilitator support. The Enviroschools kaupapa of *empowered students* and *sustainable communities* has spread much wider and is now influencing the way most effective environmental education programmes work. There are now 20 (and growing) early childhood, primary and secondary Enviroschools in Tasman.
- 4.3 Three end-of-year celebrations were held after reflection workshops to recognise achievement levels of enviroschools.
- Greenwood Kindergarten has reached Silver level and received a sign and certificate from Councillor Eileen Wilkins at a lunch time celebration with parents. Eileen was also joined by two students to cut the ribbon to the plastic bottle growing house designed and built by students and staff over six months. The Silver level requires demonstration of maintained sustainability practices involving students in decision-making and increasing outreach of environmental care and involvement in their community.

- Richmond Montessori Preschool was recognised with a Bronze certificate in a morning tea celebration with Rob Francis officiating, as it was a Council meeting day. A past student and parents recognised that Richmond Montessori has maintained environmental care practices for many years. Students are well informed to follow these practices.
  - Pinegrove Kindergarten were very excited to receive their Bronze Certificate and held a morning tea celebration with local adults who have helped them with some of the environmental activities that children have worked on. Tim King presented them all with their certificate and the guests were each given a gift of a labelled bottle of worm juice and a paper brick produced by the students. They chose the day the rains came down and appreciated Tim's presence.
- 4.4 The combined Regional EnviroSchools bus tour for student and teachers from nearly all of the Nelson and Tasman enviroschools was held on Wednesday November 30. A busload of students and teachers came from Golden Bay and joined the Nelson-Richmond-Upper Moutere and Motueka schools' bus. The morning was spent being involved in a stream study and restoration at Ngatimoti School and the afternoon in Tasman School to support a range of actions occurring at the school. Much appreciation goes to Mother Earth, which funded the event and also supplied fruit bar snacks. Feedback has been very positive about the benefits from visiting and helping other enviroschools.
- 4.5 All of the facilitators and regional coordinators from Tasman, Nelson and Marlborough met in Nelson to reflect and share processes that work. From this we decided to plan a joint event to help teachers grow their environmental practices, to be held in Lake Rotoiti in Term 3, 2012.
- 4.6 Tasman District Council hosted Deli Connell, the Programme Coordinator from the National EnviroSchools Team, for the day on Tuesday, 15 November. She is researching edible gardening efforts in schools, funded by the Tindall Foundation. She visited Salisbury School, Greenwood Kindergarten, Parklands, Golden Bay Kindergarten, Motupipi and Central Takaka enviroschools and was impressed by the diversity of gardens and the informed passion of the students and teachers.

## **5. SCHOOLS**

- 5.1 There are other schools in the District with keen teachers doing environmental work but their schools are not ready for the EnviroSchools Programme. We continue to support these teachers with resources, advice and promotion of good practice.
- 5.2 The Top of the South environmental educators (TOTSEE) has developed a collaborative programme each term of 2012 to assist any teachers wanting to have hands on experiences in the environment, to build their confidence. Topics include Mountains to Sea, Energy and Waste, Gardening and

Sustainable camping and providers are sharing the delivery with events being held in both Nelson and Tasman.

- 5.3 A joint meeting of NCC and TDC environmental educators was held to reorganise the goals and template of the Ecobuzz newsletter sent to schools. Opportunity will be given to include the wider influence of Council's support for schools.
- 5.4 "Tamariki Wai" in Golden Bay- This project is designed around the idea that a classroom adopts a neighbouring waterway and develops a relationship with it over time. The three main ingredients are - Tikanga, monitoring and rehabilitation.
- 5.5 We now have funding from the Cobb Mitigation Fund to pay Anne Harvey for her work - working with each class around tikanga to do with the waterways. Manawhenua ki Mohua hold this money. We have WWF funding for kid sized spades and water monitoring equipment. Lastly the Fonterra Grassroots funding has been approved to buy plants (native eco-sourced seedlings) for the project. Keep Golden Bay Beautiful hold both these monies for the project. Council has contributed time to get the project running and to oversee the monitoring aspects.
- 5.6 Tasman District Council provided an Environmental Champion trophy to Murchison Area School made out of local kowhai and granite. The trophy was awarded to the Junior Horticultural/gardening club and a recipient will be chosen annually.

## **6. CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 6.1 The Met Service's weather ambassador Bob McDavitt is stepping down after 40 years with the organisation, but is issuing a final weather warning before he leaves. The veteran weather expert is warning New Zealand's high pressure systems are becoming more "extreme", a factor which he believes is increasing the nation's big weather events. While some may think more extreme highs means lots of sunny weather, Bob says the extreme highs are stalling New Zealand's weather system, causing following low pressure systems to linger and intensify over the country.
- 6.2 This was seen in December last year when an intense high stalled to the east of New Zealand, resulting in an ensuing low pressure system to become blocked over the country, causing severe flooding in the Nelson region, he says.
- 6.3 Rod Oram, in his presentation to the NZAEE conference "Steer Not Drift", commented that the earth is reacting faster and faster to the human impact of the last 250 years. His view is that if individuals in the community feel valued, informed, helped and encouraged to understand the realities of climate change, then they are more able to participate and be part of the (inevitable) change.

6. Our task then is to help build these informed communities and to “empower” them to respond and take action when necessary.

## **7. COMMUNITY VEGETABLE GARDENS**

- 7.1 We are organising a meeting of people involved with community gardens across Te Tau Ihu o Te Waka a Maui (top of the south) in early autumn to share ideas about how these initiatives can be more sustainable, and contribute to community resilience. Staff from Nelson City and Marlborough District Councils will assist in facilitating this. Funding for this has been received from the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board.
- 7.2 We have been approached by several groups, schools and organisations in Motueka about how Council can support their vegetable gardening initiatives. This discussion is ongoing.

## **8. GOOD WOOD**

- 8.1 At present there are 10 Good Wood firewood merchants in Tasman and Nelson. These are visited and monitored through the year, as well, an annual meeting was held in December to discuss issues and improvements.
- 8.2 The attendees (firewood merchants, TDC and NCC staff) recommended improvements and issues for 2012:
- Approach new prospective firewood merchants to join the GW scheme
  - Likely good pine supply in 2012
  - Roadside sellers continue to sell firewood with no conditions or standards required to meet
  - More promotions during summer
  - Try to get Rabbit Island firewood made available to the public, pre-Christmas only
  - Council staff to liaise directly with fireplace retailers and chimney sweeps
  - Council staff to liaise directly with Council building consents staff re fireplace/firewood issues - send Good Wood info out with Building Consents

## **9. THE NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

- 9.1 Attending the New Zealand Association of Environmental Educators biennial conference, held in Hamilton was a great way to be inspired to start the year. Over 250 environmental educators from all over NZ and the world attended. The keynote speakers included Les Robinson from Australia, and Joseph Cornell from USA. We have recently spent time reviewing the gains from the conference to share with staff.

## 9.2 Some Quotes:

- “Conventional wisdom is our greatest enemy”
- “Innovative results depend on innovative processes”
- “The sum of conversations is the culture of an organisation”
- “To increase the success rate we have to increase the failure rate”
- (with projects) “Less planning is better, get something out quickly, bump with reality, and learn as you go” - all from Les Robinson, behaviour change consultant
- “It is not so important to know, as it is to feel” (real behaviour change comes from our feelings, not from our head!)
- “we need to expand our identity to include everything around us”(we are part of the environment, and part of everything around us)
- (In environmental education) “a sense of joy should permeate the experience” - these three from Joseph Cornell, nature educator
- “Adults keep saying to us that “you are the future” (which is true but), it becomes tedious and lets the adults of the “hook” and not have to do anything, besides shifting the problems to us!” - a Youth delegate at the conference

## 10. TASMAN DISTRICT COUNCIL ENERGY ASSESSMENT

10.1 Using available data combined with site visits David Francis, the Sustainable Business Advisor, is continuing to assess energy usage and identify energy and cost savings for TDC assets. This information is being shared with Jim Frater, TDC Property Manager, as each report is completed.

## 11. FOCUS UNTIL NEXT ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

11.1 Workstream planning, Tasman Nelson Environment Awards Review, EnviroSchools, Ecofest, Community gardening, and the Environmental Education Strategy.

## 12. RECOMMENDATION

That the report REP12-02-01 be received.

## 14. DRAFT RESOLUTION

THAT the Environment & Planning Committee receives the Environmental Education Report REP12-02-01



Rob Francis  
**Environmental Education Officer**