

## **March and April in Environmental Education at The Patch:**

### **A Visit from Rangeview Primary School:**

Students from years 5 and 6 played host to over 80 year 3 students from Rangeview Primary School when they attended our school for an excursion on March 25<sup>th</sup>. The students were interested in gaining a knowledge of sustainable garden practices, getting up close with some interesting Australian wildlife, taking a tour of our garden "Learning Landscape" and learning to do some plant propagation for their own school garden.

Our 5/6 students were responsible for leading all the workshops, tours and activities. They explained, described, demonstrated, assisted and encouraged the young visitors to enable them to gain as much as possible from the day and the visitors were not disappointed. Some of our students taught 8 groups an activity and they were still enthusiastic! Our observing teachers, both visiting and resident, remarked on how capable the 5/6s were; their knowledge, understanding and ease with which they carried out their tasks were clearly exemplary.

It is wonderful to be able to give our students these opportunities to consolidate their knowledge, demonstrate their skills, interact with others, take leadership and show initiative. They treated our visitors with courtesy, patience and respect and were excellent ambassadors.

There were financial gains also, as each year 3 student paid \$5 to attend the excursion. This money has gone towards purchasing some items for the student designed 5/6 landscape that is soon to be built around the new 5/6 building. It was a great morning and we were very proud of our lovely students. Well done 5/6C and Year 6 EarthKeepers!



### **The Patch Students present at the Eastern Metro Sustainability Fair:**

Five grade 3/4 students presented a workshop called "Keeping Wildlife at School" for the Eastern Metro Sustainability Fair last week at Croydon Hills Primary School. The students, Anastasia Armitage, Ashley Britton, Braeden Lynch-Clay, James Morrison and Yasmin Page delivered two ten minute workshops to some of the 200 students from the Eastern Region who attended the fair. They demonstrated a sound knowledge of their subject matter and responsible handling of the Blue Tongue Lizards and Bearded Dragons they brought along to create an interactive and very educational workshop. Our students spoke clearly, knowledgeably, enthusiastically and with passion and were a credit to our school. They prepared their workshop thoroughly and included information on how wildlife allows for an interactive learning experience, the licensing requirements for schools, animal facts and behaviours and the requirements of keeping animals responsibly. Their listeners were very keen to explore the possibility of keeping wildlife in their own schools. Well done, an excellent effort.

*(our students interacting with some of the fair showcase stallholders to learn how they can help our school)*



### New Gardens for 1/2 and 5/6 Learning Areas:

For some time now, students in years 1/2 and 5/6 have been designing and discussing a suitable landscape for around their new buildings. Whilst the 1/2 process has been largely based around drawings, simple research and discussions, the 5/6 design has taken over two terms and is now officially being drawn up by a team of draughtsmen from year 6. All students have undertaken site surveys such as soil tests, soil pH, site measurements, aspect and drainage, which they have recorded and analysed. They produced preliminary individual drawings using research, texts and discussions to inspire them and then formed small groups to produce more collaborative designs which were then modelled using loose materials such as gravel, sand, clay, flowers, bark, etc to create a 3-D depiction of their ideas. All models were keyed out and photographed and then examined to identify the main elements that kept recurring throughout the designs.

Not surprisingly, the top garden elements included edible plants, outdoor seating and shade, water, themed gardens, flower gardens, a giant chessboard, sculpture and active areas, living sculptures, animals, a world garden, construction opportunities and murals. Already our students have begun designing the artwork, researching the edible plants, sourcing materials and communicating to the community. At this stage, we are still trying to obtain chicken wire, outdoor tables and chairs, old market umbrellas, outdoor paint and animal cages. If you can help with any of these please see me or the students of 5/6.

Meanwhile, the 1/2 garden is beginning to take shape with two beautiful tepees created by the students with the help of Ted's (1B) mum Simone. The children learnt how to tie knots, weave the willow through the bamboo, use secateurs safely and work as a team. Soon there will be willow domes to accompany the tepees, edible plants above the retaining walls, fruit trees between the gravel carpark and classroom fence (and sweeping around the slope), colourful pots of plants on the decks, an outdoor animal enclosure for greater exercise for class pets, and lots and lots of artwork. If you would like to join in the fun, feel free to come along and have some fun.



Vision 2020 Creating Sustainable Communities:

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 10 students from years 5/6 attended Swinburne University Wantirna Campus to participate in a Youth Symposium called Vision 2020 – Creating Sustainable Communities. The day aimed to bring together dynamic mentors and world visionaries in sustainability to engage young people to take positive action to help create an equitable and sustainable future.

Our students – Willow Cleary, Miles Farrell, Emma Horne, Jhenardt Mischon, Archer Radford, Maddie Ross, Darcy Ryan, Hannah Schmidli and Grace Staindyl-Dymond – participated in a number of interactive workshops and listened to international guest speakers sharing their knowledge and expertise to provide students with a deeper understanding of the issues facing our next generation. Now that our students have become inspired and aware, they are intending to initiate some actions that the whole school can participate in. Stay tuned for an idea for World Environment Day on June 5!

*(some of our students attending the Endangered Species workshop)*

