

CERESly Sustainable Newsletter

April 2006

Program Report

Inside

Sustainability Hub

Featured website

Assisting Sustainable

Schools in the Philippines

Starting From Scratch –

Gisborne Montessori

Innovation & Excellence in

Sustainable Schools

Grants

Tech Talk

CERES Incursions

CERES Onsite Education Pro-
grammes

Sustainable Schools is a program jointly delivered by CERES and Gould League in Victoria.

The *CERESly Sustainable* is produced by CERES and is distributed to all CERES Sustainable Schools. It is available online at http://sustainability.ceres.org.au/files/sei_newsletters2006.htm

Would you like to contribute to the next edition of *CERESly Sustainable*? If so, please contact Cara Horner on the contact details below.

Contact Us:

CERES Sustainable Schools,
Sustainability Projects Team.

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Environment Park,

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Ph. 9380-1556
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Welcome back to Term 2!

This term is already heavily booked as we start a whole range of local government funded schools in their core module. Councils include shire of Mornington Peninsula, City of Frankston, Cardinia, Casey, Nillumbik, Banyule, and Manningham; very soon we will also begin working with the City of Yarra. We also have a close working relationship with the Shire of Yarra Ranges and a range of exciting projects with the City of Hume. If you would like to complete a module or know a school who would like to start with the SSI Victoria program, please contact your local council for support. Many of the SSI schools that undertake sustainability and environment are well supported by local council – give your local environment or greenhouse officer a call.

We have heard back from a number of schools who were successful in the Community Water Grants Round 1 and it seems at least 25 CERES Sustainable Schools were successful in the funding round. In fact, it was fantastic to see the great majority of schools successful in their applications were Sustainable Schools (hey the program works!) Any feedback regarding your application, both positive and negative, is a great source of information for the next round so please let us know about your experiences. Well done to all those schools who applied and were successful!



Gisborne Montessori School (one successful SSI Community Water Grant applicant) will add to their pre-existing water conservation infrastructure with their hard earned funding!

Also congratulations to all schools who participated in the Australian Sustainable Living Challenge with the University of New South Wales. An extra big congrats to Billanook College, Kilvington Girls Grammar and Gisborne Montessori School for being named as finalists – go SSI Victoria!

Lets make this term the term to get all of those loose ends tied up, particularly accreditations!

Please do not hesitate to call Michelle or Cara for help.

Have a great Term 2.

Glenn Davidson,

Delivery Manager.

On behalf of the rest of the CERES Sustainable Schools Team
(Eric, Cara, Michelle, Lorna, Paul, Anna, and Anthony)

Enviro Events

2006 is:

[International
Year of Deserts &
Desertification](#)

April

[National Youth
Week](#)

1st -9th

[National
Youth Tobacco
Free Day](#)

5th

[World Health
Day](#)

7th

[Earth Day](#)

22nd

[Heart Week](#)

30th April to
6th May

Information on
these and
other
upcoming
environmental
events can be
found at

[http://www.
deh.gov.au/
events/
index.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/events/index.html)

Sustainability Hub Update

the Sustainability Hub

The Sustainability Hub website <http://sustainability.ceres.org.au> continues to grow and evolve and this month we have expanded our links section.

Apart from the regular updates to the [links](#) section with websites relevant to students and staff of Sustainable Schools (in fact anyone with an interest in sustainability), this month we have also added a new links sub section, [Sustainable Schools Programs in Other Countries](#), due to popular demand from Hub users!

CERES Sustainable Schools has located the websites of fifteen of the most well known sustainability in schools programmes, with links to these programmes being available at http://sustainability.ceres.org.au/files/sei_links_intlssi.htm. This new section will put you in touch with some of the other fantastic programs that are running all over the world and aiming for similar outcomes to SSi Victoria. Most of the international umbrella organisation websites link through to country specific programmes, so you can link through to these and learn more about what schools in a country are doing in within their own specific cultural, economic, political and environmental confines. As the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSi) network continues to grow and mature, we will also put links through to other Australian State AuSSi websites as they become available.

Many of the websites listed under [Sustainable Schools Programs in Other Countries](#) have sections that provide users with reports and publications on their programme. Some very interesting articles are to be found on the EU based SEED (School Development through Environmental Education) Project website, <http://seed.schule.at/>. You may like to click on the links below to get access to the following documents:

1. Guidelines to enhance the quality of Education for Sustainable Development
http://seed.schule.at/uploads/QC_eng_2web.pdf
2. Austrian Pupil Perspectives on Education for Sustainable Development
<http://seed.schule.at/uploads/Heinrich-pupil-perspectives-on-ESD.1119280226439344.pdf>
3. A Comparative Study on ECO-school Development Processes in 13 Countries.
<http://seed.schule.at/uploads/ComparativeStudy1.pdf>

If you are aware of any international SSi type programs which the Hub hasn't linked to (and don't fall under the umbrella organisation website links provided), or if you have any other queries about the Hub, please don't hesitate to contact [Cara Horner](#) on 9380-1556.

Featured Website of the Month:

Australia's biodiversity

[Australia's Biodiversity](#) website <http://www.austmus.gov.au/biodiversity/index.htm> is part of the Australian Museum Online website. The site provides concise information on biodiversity, which would be ideal for use by secondary and upper primary school students. Information on the website includes a description of biodiversity (including an explanation of the various levels of biodiversity), what is happening to biodiversity rates in Australia and how individuals can help preserve biodiversity. There are also relevant fact sheets and videos on the website, which can be downloaded free of charge, as well as links to other applicable websites.

Assisting Sustainable Schools in the Philippines

CERES is trying to organise contacts between Australian and Filipino schools. The hope is that Australian schools may be able to assist in a small way with materials and ideas. In return Filipino schools could assist Australian schools by writing back with student ideas such as 'What do we know of Australia? What are our (Filipino) hopes for the future? What are we doing to improve our communities? How could young Filipinos and Australians come up with a plan for a better world? Our daily rhythms -what do we do each day? Our natural environments and how they are changing? etc. Hopefully schools can work together through correspondence to explore these issues linked to sustainability and as a result enrich each others understandings.

The following are some examples of the issues that Australian students are facing and are keen to discuss with students from the Philippines:-

- **ENERGY & WATER** – Transport, air pollution, renewable/non-renewable energy, global warming.
- **WATER** – Quality and quantity of supply, conservation approaches, water cycle operations, river/ocean health.
- **SOLID WASTE** – Resource wastage, litter, avoidance, reuse & recycling or resources.
- **SCHOOLS GROUNDS & ECOLOGY** – Grounds improvement, gardens, nature areas, trails, connections to local parks, reserves, etc.
- **OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES** – Health, safe housing, food production and access, etc.



Eric doing what he does best, in a Pasig City primary school.

Help for Filipino Schools

Many Manila primary schools have 3,500 students. Pasig Secondary has 40,000 students! These schools have enormous material needs. Australian schools also have limited resources but sometimes find themselves with superseded computers, radios, educational materials etc. CERES can organise pick-up and delivery of a large box (\$100) with guaranteed door to door delivery of goods for Filipino schools. Imagine sharing 2 computers amongst 3,500 students in classes of 50 students? Are we lucky or what! Can your school raise some funds or provide some materials and so contribute to international sustainability and global equity? Please contact Eric Bottomley at 9380-1556 or eric@ceres.org.au if you can support this project.



A typical Manila school has 3,500 students!

Keep reading future issues of CERESly Sustainable for Filipino contacts and opportunities.

Starting From Scratch:- Gisborne Montessori School.

Now we know that some of the schools in SSi have started their environment and sustainability program from scratch, but have you thought what it may be like starting your whole school from scratch – enter the wonderful achievement of Gisborne Montessori School.

When the school community were designing their new buildings (the old building was a very run down and very cold and old Victorian mansion), all aspects of ESD were taken into account, including the choice of school location and land selection. Lyn & Maurice (parents at the school) were key construction volunteers but many other parents and staff also contributed– staff and students are now enjoying the beauty and warmth of appropriate energy design. For more information on the actual building program, follow this link to the [Sustainability Hub](#). Of course the next best thing to good building design is good curriculum design incorporating SSi principles. SSi has been written in as a major underpinning of the curriculum at Gisborne Montessori and also guides how the school operates. In fact Gisborne Montessori was one of the benefactors of the Community Water Grants. Isn't it amazing what you can achieve with a good plan!



Energy efficient Timbercrete blocks were used in construction.

Professional Learning Events

Harvesting the Curriculum 20 April

RBG, Melbourne

Aims to provide good examples of how to integrate gardens across all VELS domains. Phone Landlearn on 5430-4716, email: landlearn.program@dpi.vic.gov.au

Primary Science Teachers Conference 16-17 July

STAV is seeking presenters for the conference.

Contact STAV on (03) 9385-3999 by 28 April.

Learning for Sustainability Conference 2-4 August Melbourne

The Learning for Sustainability Conference 2006 is designed for those working in the environmental, community, industry or government sectors with an interest in behaviour change and education

Phone (02) 6582-7133
<http://www.impactenviro.com.au/sustainability2006/>

Ongoing Grants Schemes

Walking School Bus *No closing Date Stated*

VicHealth's Walking School Bus Program is a partnership between local government councils/shires and community agencies who work with local primary schools to establish Walking School Buses in their municipalities. The program aims to create change in the school travel patterns of Victorian primary school children. Funding of up to \$25,000 in the first year and up to \$30,000 in the second year of the program is available to councils (who are not currently funded) for the development and implementation of Walking School Buses in at least four primary schools
Details: Phone (03) 9667-1332

<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Content.aspx?topicID=67>

Innovation & Excellence in Sustainable Schools

Some clusters around Victoria have focused their Innovation and Excellence efforts around Sustainable Schools. The results have been so impressive where schools have worked together, exchanged experiences and received good leadership and time release.

The Princess Hill Cluster

Specific initiatives of Cluster schools will include projects/activities that address sustainability improvement focus areas of School Operations, Curriculum and Whole School Engagement (and Links to the Local Community) in each of the four *Sustainable Schools* Module areas and explore a range of pedagogical tools and practices, including a focus on the PoLT that are embedded in the *Sustainable Schools* framework.

Some examples from the Princes Hill Cluster schools of authentic, "hands on", experiential, school community and problem-based projects/activities include: "Walking School Bus" program, managed by parent volunteers; composting bins introduced in every classroom; oval replanted and indigenous grasses and plants planted; implementation of biodiversity curriculum unit/program; implementation of energy and water audit recommendations; expansion of Professional Learning Team due to high level of staff interest; continuation/expansion/further development of 2005 initiatives... and so much more.

The Dromana Cluster

Excellent progress has been made through the modules by the 7 schools of the Dromana Cluster and now they have even organised a regional conference to inspire participants further and exchange experiences:

"Sustainable Schools - Sowing the Seeds of Change"

April 13th, 2006

9am at Somers Camp

For more information, contact Marnee Fraser on 5987-2805 email fraserm@dsc.vic.edu.au

Grants Closing Soon

Arbor Week Funding **7 April 2006**

In 2006 the NRCL is hoping to hold at least one Arbor Week event in each education region across Victoria, nine altogether. To be the lucky school chosen to host your regional launch during the week starting Monday, 15 May, start preparing a draft proposal NOW! If your proposal is one of those selected, the NRCL will match the value of donations and sponsorships which you obtain, WITH CASH, up to \$3,000!

Details: Linda West (03) 5962-9033 <http://www.nrcl.org.au/arborweek/default.html>

Envirofund **28 April 2006**

The Australian Government Envirofund is the local action component of the Australian Government's \$3 billion Natural Heritage Trust. It helps communities undertake local projects aimed at conserving biodiversity and promoting sustainable resource use. Community groups and individuals can apply for grants of up to \$50,000 (GST inclusive) to carry out on-ground and other actions to target local problems.

Details: <http://www.nht.gov.au/envirofund/>

Healthy School Communities Grant **No closing date supplied**

Australian primary and secondary schools have an opportunity to be involved in a new grants program to promote healthy eating. The \$15 million Healthy School Communities program invites a non-government organisation linked to the school (such as Parents and Citizens/Friends Association, school auxiliaries or canteen groups) to apply for a grant of up to \$1,500 (GST exclusive). Nutrition Australia can auspice your grant application through their [Healthy Eating Schools Program](#) and is able to offer the program in 2006 to 30 new primary schools located in the Melbourne metropolitan area who have not previously applied for the grant.

Grant Details: http://www.healthyactive.gov.au/healthy_school/index.htm

Melbourne Water Young Watercare Grant **18 May 2006**

Your school is eligible for a Melbourne Water grant if it is located in the greater Melbourne area. Grants are for up to \$2,000 (including GST) and occur once per year.

Details: http://www.landcareonline.com/funding_opportunity_details.asp?fo_id=6

Subscribe to Easy Grants Newsletter http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/grant_main.jsp

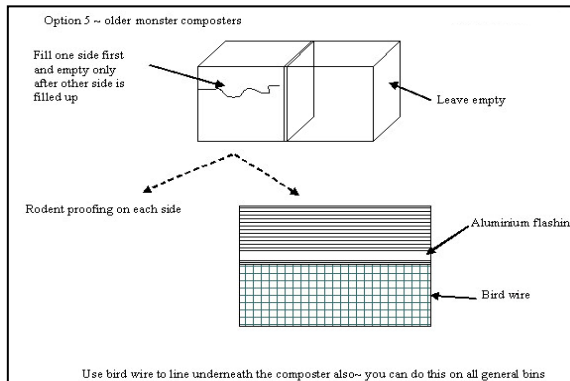
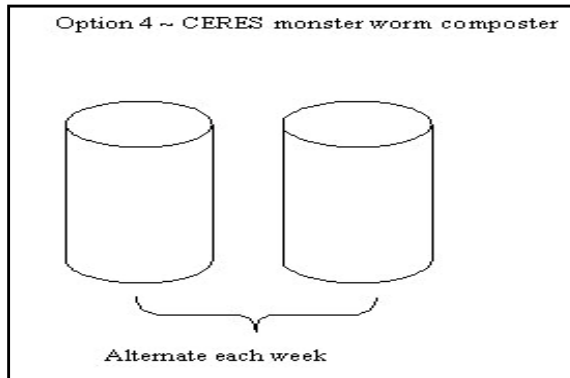
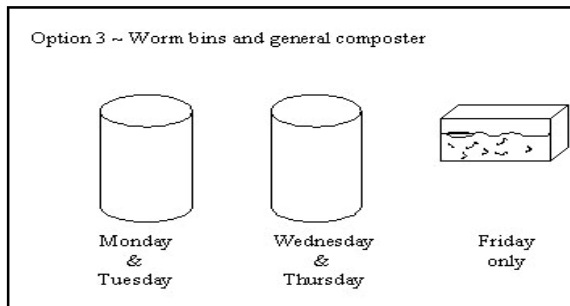
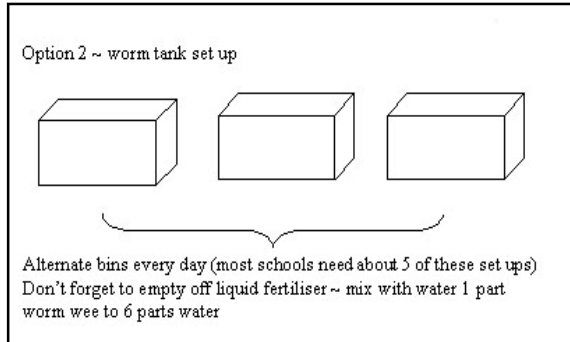
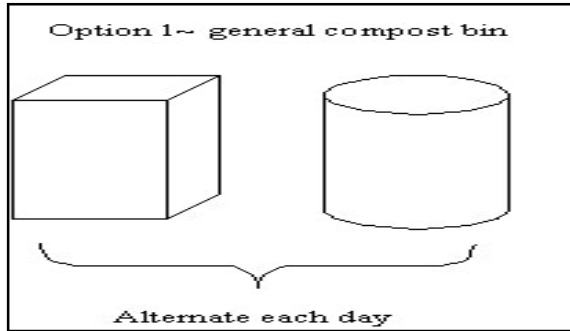
Ongoing Grants Schemes

Mitre 10, BI-LO and Australia Post Junior Landcare
 18 May,
 3 August,
 19 October

Any school or organisation that would like to involve their students in landcare projects, in conjunction with local landcare groups, can apply for grants of up to \$550 (including GST) to assist them with the cost of their projects. In addition to on-ground rehabilitation or restoration works, projects may also include conservation of natural resources, environmental monitoring programs, waste minimisation, using school grounds as learning centres or undertaking an environmental field trip.

Details: Phone (03) 9662-9977
http://www.landcareonline.com/funding_opportunity_details.asp?fo_id=6

Tech Talk: About That Compost...



Now we know that every school, every class and every teacher has had a bad experience with school compost systems. We also know that it is often very hard to convince the non-believers of a good thing when compost systems go bad. So here are a few easy school compost tips.

First of all, most school composters lack sources of nitrogen (green stuff) and carbon (best source is shredded paper). So make sure you are feeding the system with a good dose of nitrogen and carbon every week. This may mean a staff member, or responsible student (as you all have student action teams, don't you?) bringing in some kitchen scraps once a week. Add to this a few handfuls of shredded newspaper every Friday and all will be well.

Composting is an aerobic bacterial cycle. When your compost becomes slimy or smelly you can be sure that the system has gone anaerobic (mainly caused by too much sour compost – this is the sloppy mess that has been left in a classroom for a week before being added). It is best to throw out sour compost – *you should only add compost to your composter on the day the waste is produced. (Success tip No. 1).* In fact there should be no compost scraps in classroom containers by 2.30pm anywhere in the state every day! Best bet is to use a *small container with no lid (Success tip No. 2). Forbidden compost additives include bread, cheese & meat.* Yes that's right – no bread in school composters! **(Success tip No.3)** Give bread to your chooks.

This is the same for general and worm compost systems- remember that it is a bacterial process – worms just speed up the journey. So now you've got the inputs right – leave the rest to nature. We suggest you use a worm and general composter together, adding only to the worms once a week. If you have a monster worm farm (like our CERES made version – available to schools with free delivery) make sure you have at least two farms adding to each on alternate weeks. Two bins would suit approximately 200 students. If you have an older style monster composter, fill up one side completely and then let it sit until the adjacent side is full and empty straight into the garden. You can do a nice job of rodent proofing these bins with bird wire and flashing (see Option 5 diagram).

Your compost should always be moist – never dry or soggy. The shredded paper in your composter is a good indicator of moisture levels. You may need to add water from time to time or simply add lots more fruit and veggies. Of course your students who are checking the composter every week using the CERES worm and compost VQ (visual quality) checklist (available from Michelle) will be *observing and recording your compost progress (Success tip No. 4).* If all else fails, pick up the phone and call 9380-1556 for some friendly help & advice!

**Ongoing
Grants
Schemes**

**Australia
Post
Community
Development
31 March
and
29 September**

Community groups, including local landcare groups across Australia, can now apply for yearly grants of up to \$3,300 (including GST) to help improve their local community and environment. Details: http://www.landcareonline.com/funding_opportunity_details.asp?fo_id=9

**Norman
Wettenhall
Foundation
30 June
29 September
29 December**

Aims to support and encourage research, education and recording of all aspects of the natural living environment. Details: Phone (03) 9650-3188 http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/grant_details.do?fundingId=1646492149

Exploring the Incursion Experiences

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, CERES has developed a range of incursions to help teachers incorporate sustainability into their curriculum and school environment. With each newsletter we will explore one of our new exciting incursion experiences for both primary and secondary levels. These new experiences aim to give students and teachers a deep understanding about concepts of sustainability in their school ground and greater community.

One of our new exciting incursions is the **Student Led Sustainability Audits** which involves students conducting basic energy, water and waste/litter audits. This program is an opportunity for students and schools to identify resource saving opportunities and understand the effects resource use has on the environment. The **Water Auditing Incursion** in schools is available to students from primary to secondary levels to monitor, through a series of fun activities, how their school uses water. The students explore the school's water conservation techniques and investigate how they can save water for their school. Australia is the driest inhabited continent in the world and water conservation is an important issue for students to explore. This program will engage students in realising the importance of sustainable uses of water for general consumption, in the school yard and gardens, methods of water storage and keeping their stormwater clean. This program is also a springboard for exciting projects to implement sustainable practices in the school ground and spreading awareness through communication with their local community.

All our new incursions also fit into the VELS framework. The water auditing program involves Personal Learning (how each learner uses water and how they can make a difference); Civics and Citizenship (exploring projects to help conserve water for their school and community); Humanities (the history of water use); Communication (exploring methods of how they can communicate to others so they conserve water/reporting results back to the class – efficient communication); Mathematics and Science (calculating water use, reading meters and exploring alternative methods of water storage technology); and Thinking (student enquiry and problem solving). The current variability of climate, low rainfall and drought have led to water restrictions which will all be important issues for our upcoming new sustainable leaders, our current students. Let's get the students involved in saving water!

Please go the Sustainability Hub website for more details on the incursions available: http://sustainability.ceres.org.au/files/sei_advisory_incursions.htm. If you have an enquiry or would like to make a booking please contact Lorna Pettifer by phone 9380-1556 or via email lorna@ceres.org.au for more information on costs and program times.

CERES Onsite Education Programmes

This month we are focusing on the importance of biodiversity and examining the fragility and uniqueness of ecosystems. Come and immerse yourself in our unique Ecology Program!

This program, along with all of our onsite education programs incorporate the principles of VELS. The Ecology Program takes a whole system approach to understanding ecosystems as is the interwoven approach of learning that is basis of VELS.

In the Ecology Program students will:

- Investigate the interconnectedness of land, water and animals and the impact of poison entering the food chain.
- Explore the Merri Creek habitat and complete a habitat survey, considering the role of habitat corridors in sustaining biodiversity.
- Identify the basic requirements of plant life and plant a seed to take home.
- Net for, identify and discover the interrelationships of aquatic animals.
- Discover Aboriginal and contemporary uses for indigenous plants.

Call Sandra or Suzannah in the CERES Onsite Education Team on 9387-4472 or email education@ceres.org.au for further information or to make a booking.