



Earth Lesson Case Study 2011

Ballarat Steiner School is committed to being an environmentally sustainable School by reducing our ecological footprint through adopting sustainable practices in our everyday lives. We will achieve this by actively integrating sustainability into all areas of the curriculum and instilling a sense of custodianship and pride in improving the environment. We will lead our school community by demonstrating exemplary practices in waste management, water and energy usage, and develop the school grounds to promote biodiversity.



Ballarat Steiner School is currently working on the Core Module of the ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic. program . We now have an adult sustainability group and a student action team called “Steiner’s Elements” . We have an environmental focus across all year levels. Classes 1 to 6 engage in specific Earth Lessons that incorporate natural science and sustainability practices for one hour per week. There is also a broader environmental

awareness in our studies of civilisations in classroom main lessons throughout..

Love and reverence for our natural environment is modeled in Prep, kindergarten and playgroup, and our early childhood programs incorporate gardening and animal care practices.

Therefore our curriculum experiences endeavor to support our school's sustainability ethos at all times.



Annual Tree Planting Day August 2011

A day where the students and their families worked together on a revegetation project including various trees, shrubs and grasses along the school boundaries, including planting an Indigenous Food, Fibre and Medicine garden. We look forward to further opportunities to create more learnscapes within the school that foster care for the unique ecosystem that exists here - including fostering care for the earth. We look forward to enjoying the increased beauty that will result from this- - including bird and aquatic life. We also look forward to increased community participation through this program, and the healthy living pursuits that are also fostered



photo

Class 1/2 Butterfly Garden Learnscape



This learnscape demonstrates how creatures and plants support each other, and each have a role to play in their ecosystem.

It also encourages awareness of our own role in our ecosystem.



This garden has been a study of Class One/Two. Myriad aspects have been explored. Food chain, features of a butterfly garden such as rocks, birdbaths, hollows and areas to sit and observe.

The students have been actively involved in establishing and maintaining this learnscape, giving them a vested interest in continuing to support this ecosystem.

Class 3/4 Indigenous Garden Learnscape

This encourages awareness and respect for native plants.

It enhances understandings of the subtle differences in ecosystems, and the role of each plant for various lifestyle needs.

This garden encourages respect for native plants, and the potential medicinal and food benefits they can afford.



The children have been directly involved in establishing and maintaining this garden, giving a sense of ownership, and fostering a sense of empowerment. Parents have also been encouraged to assist in the maintaining of the garden, and mulching and planting in this area was part of our recent tree planting day.

Class 5/6 Kitchen Garden Learnscape

Our kitchen garden supports earth lessons as children learn about specimens in their natural state. Such as snow peas, which rejuvenate the soil, and herbs which play a role in natural pest control. We have plans to establish a seed propagation area so that we can begin gardening seasonally.



As we work in the garden we are learning by our efforts that we can reduce our carbon footprint by growing our own food.

his learnscape builds on our understandings of agriculture and awareness of where our food comes from.

It also fosters a sense of empowerment through the realisation that small do-able steps can make a difference, and encourages action when faced with a problem. e.g.,

- “What can we use to support the beans ?”
- “The berries’ root systems could be invasive. What could we do about it ?”

We intend to continue making the garden beds with our chook tractor, and to invite local community members to participate in an annual biodynamic compost making day.

Did you know...

...As well as incorporating our environmental sustainability policy into our curriculum, we have set targets for achieving water conservation, reduction in energy use, and improving waste management. Over the next three years we aim to ;

1. Increase the school community's involvement in the vegetable garden.
2. Reduce waste by 25%
3. Reduce water consumption by 20%
4. Reduce energy consumption by 25%.

We are making great links with various

members of our local community. Our school neighbours and families have donated time and plants.

Parents and friends join us on Earth Lesson days to help us weed, plant and mulch in the garden. They are even welcome to participate in lesson activities so that awareness raising conversations can be shared at home.



Local environmental interest groups also play a role in supporting our journey.

Landcare, Coles



Junior Landcare Grant, 15 Trees, Badger Voluntary Animal Care Group.

We have even conducted a school biodiversity audit and a transport audit. These have been useful in highlighting the future actions we can pursue to lighten our school community footprint.



“Steiner’s Elements”

Our student action team believes.....

We hope to have a “Waterwatch Saturday” to raise awareness about healthy aquatic communities as well as promote family leisure pursuits

of our school community.

We also hope to conduct “Peer Student Workshops” to share understandings about Waste, Energy, Biodiversity and Water.

We want to set up an interactive stall at the local market to promote environmental sustainability.

We also hope to support our local environmental interest groups...such as ” Badger” by working with interested parents and friends in making fabric lunch pouches to sell to assist us in raising funds to help Badger build on their services.