

From the Chair

QECNS held it's first Network Meeting on Thursday 5th August at C&K Mt Gravatt Kindergarten. With a diverse group of about 30 members and other early childhood educators interested in early childhood education for sustainability it was a terrific afternoon. Melindi Robertson, the Director of C&K Mt Gravatt shared her insights, naturally the magnificent outdoor space generated discussion related to a wide range of aspects within the space – from trusting children to the processes of creating a successful worm farm. We are planning a Sustainable Centre Visit to fall within each school term, so if you could not make it to our last meeting more of these opportunities are on the way. My thanks go to Melindi for generously offering your centre for a meeting and allowing us to view your work. I encourage others to do the same.

Our next major event is our professional development day, *Creating Cultures of Sustainability* at C&K Redlands Kindergarten on Saturday 18th September. The Director, Margaret Sear, was recently presented with a leadership award for her work in creating a sustainable environment. Speakers will include Dr Lyndal O'Gorman from QUT presenting on *The Arts and Education for Sustainability*. Margaret Sear and Suallyn Mitchelmore will

start the day with the workshop - *An Early Childhood Education for Sustainability Program in Action*. Fleur Carter from Live Better Greener, has been involved in ecological auditing centres, including C&K Redlands and is presenting *Creating Sustainable Early Childhood Environments through Ecological Auditing*. A practical workshop by Indigiscapes will support your work with young children and Joanne Sørensen's presentation *Sharing Experiences of the Forest Kindergartens* will give you an international perspective on early childhood education for sustainability.

As we are committed to all avenues of networking you can follow QECNS on Twitter. We are following groups that share our focus on sustainable development in the areas of natural, political, economic and social sustainability and are developing a following ourselves. We have also set up a QECNS Facebook Group to use as a platform to facilitate discussion and connecting with other educators. If you wish to either follow us on Twitter or join our Facebook Group simply search 'QECNS' in the search box of each these social networking sites.



Until next time...Lyn Bower

A Postcard From...C&K Mt Gravatt



At our recent network meeting Melindi Robertson reflected on the children's play in the natural outdoor playspace at C&K Mt Gravatt. Here is an excerpt from her reflection:

"The kindy is 53 years old and the previous Director, Miss Mary Luddy, was here for 40 years. This was a bare sloping area with a few trees, but it was her vision that slowly built the playground up to what it is today. She firmly believed that all children should be in a natural environment -full of adventure and challenge- and all children had a right to play in a place that offered this with lots of trees, bushes, flowers (a multitude that flower at different times of the year) and hidey holes. And she succeeded.

I have been here for 18 months and after working with three groups of children here I can honestly say their outside play is: Calmer, it is a very peaceful place and there is a great deal of room. It is more imaginative, creative and seems to be of a longer duration. Lastly, play in this natural playspace is safer. It might seem that some things maybe too high and too challenging, but there are definitely less bumps and bruises here. Mostly this is because the children are better at monitoring their own safety limits. I have learnt to trust the children, they are very responsible at setting their own safety levels."

Melindi Robertson, Director C&K Mt Gravatt

If you have a contribution for 'A Postcard From...' please forward your vignette to qecns@earlychildhood.org.au.

The idea behind 'A Postcard From...' is to share initiatives and reflections that are examples of the active engagement of early childhood communities in sustainability.

Just think of it as writing a postcard!



Book Review...*Eat Your Garden* by Leonie Shanahan

Eat Your Garden: Organic Gardening for Home & Schools is a truly beautiful book that through comprehensive practical information underpinned by the vision, 'To develop edible gardens within school communities that will encourage healthy eating habits' (p11) is guaranteed to inspire you and ensure a productive organic garden for you and the children within your setting.

Leonie Shanahan brings to the authorship of this little gem a background in Permaculture and Organic gardening coupled with her own very successful initiative, the Edible School Gardens program. The book is extremely user friendly and covers a wide range of topics such as companion gardening, no dig gardens, compost, bush food, garden design, planting, seed saving, worm farms and a fantastic calendar which outlines the jobs that need to be attended to in the garden and a planting guide. Leonie's extensive experience in working with schools to develop a community garden project has informed each of these topics (along with many more), the information and suggestions in *Eat Your Garden* reflect the wide range of possibilities for establishing and expanding an organic garden in a child focussed setting.

There are two things about this book that make it stand out for educators, particularly educators in Queensland. The first is an appreciation of working with children in the garden, their capacity to take responsibility for a community garden and therefore to have a genuine role in cultivating, harvesting and importantly eating the produce from the garden. The second is information that is context specific to the sub-tropics & mountain/ highland areas of Queensland.

To preview sections of Leonie Shanahan's book, *Eat Your Garden* or to learn more about Leonie's initiatives, programs and vision for edible gardens within school communities visit the informative Edible School Gardens website:

<http://www.edibleschoolgardens.com.au/>

Accompanying this newsletter
is an order form for
Eat Your Garden:
Organic Gardening for Home & Schools.

Think about...Compacting

Compacting is a movement that has found interest throughout the world. The inception of the movement in San Francisco came about as a result of a late night discussion by a group of friends at a party. In response to growing pattern of consumerism they believed that recycling was not enough and wanted to do more, they agreed to go six months (which later extended to a year) without buying anything new.

Thus The Compact was born!

- 1) To go beyond recycling in trying to counteract the negative global environmental and socioeconomic impacts of U.S. consumer culture, to resist global corporatisation, and to support local businesses, farms, etc.
- 2) To reduce clutter and waste in our homes
- 3) To simplify our lives

So how does compacting work? In brief, the rules of The Compact are to buy nothing new except food, essential medicine, consumables such as shampoo, and utilitarian socks and underwear. Additionally, Compacters pass on what they no longer need, and in general, try to reduce their environmental footprint. They barter, trade, buy used or go without. An article in a local newspaper sparked a wave of interest and now about 8,000 people visit their blog and Compacting groups are dotted throughout the US and across the world.

Indeed, in August 2009 a compacting challenge was lead by the ECA Victoria Environmental Sustainability Special Interest Group. In all twelve ECA members joined the challenge which included work teams, partners and children, one kindergarten and two children's centres—all taking the pledge not to purchase new items for three months. To keep motivation up over the three months those participating in the challenge were sent articles to read and a link to the video *The Story of Stuff*.

Perhaps taking a Compacting Challenge is something that you could consider within the community of your service or with your colleagues. John Perry, one of the original compactors stated, "We didn't do this to save the world. We did this to improve the quality of our own lives. "

For more information on The Compact or to visit the blog go to:

<http://sfcompact.blogspot.com/>



At your doorstep...Brisbane City Council *CityCycle* Scheme

CityCycle is an active and sustainable public transport scheme currently being introduced by Brisbane City Council. It is based on similar bike hire schemes in cities such as Brussels and Seville, the aim being to support local links and reduce the use of cars in congested cities, thereby creating a greener and cleaner city.

When completed up to 2000 bikes will be available to pick up and drop off via a swipe card at 150 bike parking stations. Bike stations will mostly be located in the inner city area and key inner city destinations linking to bus, train and ferry connections, and linking with existing bikeways. The first CityCycle stations have been completed in Brisbane City, Fortitude Valley, New Farm, Newstead, Kangaroo Point, South Brisbane and West End. These stations will be operational from this October. Further CityCycle stations will roll out into 2011 and will be located in Milton, Toowong and St Lucia.

The CityCycle bike hire scheme can be accessed through either an annual or quarterly subscription, as well as the option of a daily charge for casual users.

Once subscribed you will not have any additional charges for trips that are less than 30 minutes long. Stations are located in close proximity to each other and every bike station has a minimum of 10 bike racks.

If you are interested in learning more about the CityCycle scheme, over the month of September Brisbane City Council has organised free 'CityCycle Roving Trials'. This is an opportunity to get an up close look at this sustainable public transport system, bikes will be available to take out for a spin and Council 'bike buddies' will be on hand to answer any questions. Alternatively you can visit the CityCycle website that includes information on subscribing to the scheme and a map of the locations of CityCycle stations.

www.citycycle.com.au

We would like to celebrate initiatives that local communities and organisations are implementing across Queensland that support sustainability through the notion of 'think global act local', such as a community gardens, a walking school bus or preservation & regeneration programs. Please forward your community initiative to gecsn@earlychildhood.org.au.

QECSN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY....



The Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN)
Proudly Presents

CREATING CULTURES OF SUSTAINABILITY

The Power of early childhood education and young children to make a difference

Saturday 18 September 2010

Venue: C&K Redland Community Kindergarten,
96 Queen Street, Cleveland

THE PROGRAM

An Early Childhood Education for Sustainability Program in Action: Margaret Sear
& Suallyn Mitchelmore

The Arts and Education for Sustainability: Dr Lyndal O'Gorman, QUT

Creating Sustainable Early Childhood Environments through Ecological Audits:
Fleur Carter, Live Better Greener

Indigenous Planting to attract Wildlife: Presented by Redland Indigiscapes

Sharing Experiences of the Forest Kindergartens in Denmark: Joanne Sørensen

QECSN Members \$50.00 Non Members \$60.00 (inc. morning tea & lunch)

For further information and a registration form please email

[**gecsn@earlychildhood.org.au**](mailto:gecsn@earlychildhood.org.au).