



Lake Tuggeranong College sustainability in the community

Background

Lake Tuggeranong College is located beside Lake Tuggeranong, ACT and has 800 students.

The college has a Registered Unit (R Unit) called 'Sustainability in the Community' which contributes towards the student's ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

Getting Started

The R Unit was certified by the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS). As part of the process, students were consulted about the projects they wanted to implement and showed a strong passion for volunteering to help their community whilst learning about the environment. To enable the students to volunteer the college partnered with Waterwatch, Southern ACT Catchment Group, Wanniasa Hills Primary School, Frogwatch and the Tuggeranong Community Council.

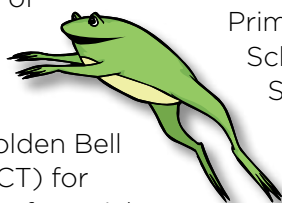
Projects

Getting rid of unwanted waste

The students conducted a number of clean ups of Lake Tuggeranong. Items recovered from the lake included many shopping trolleys and the equivalent of three full, one-metre long bags of rubbish. Wanniasa High School assisted in one of the clean ups.

Caring for frogs—Frogwatch

Frogwatch provided free Green and Golden Bell Frogs (now extinct in the wild in the ACT) for students to look after. Students looked after crickets, which they fed to the frogs. The students built a frog-friendly environment and pond at the school. The Parents and Citizens Association provided a grant to buy plants and a solar pump for the installation.



Water testing and monitoring of Lake Tuggeranong

Waterwatch staff showed the students how to conduct water testing and monitoring of Lake Tuggeranong. The data was used by government bodies to make decisions about the local environment.

Students continue to collect samples from three sites every month and conduct chemical testing in the school laboratory.

Mentoring students at local primary schools

The students assisted younger students at Wanniasa Hills Primary School, Hughes Primary School and Red Hill Primary School to write proposals for the ACT SEE-Change Parliament of Youth and gave cooking demonstrations using produce from Wanniasa Hills Primary Schools' kitchen garden. Other mentoring activities included water conservation, making compost and maintaining a vegetable garden and greenhouse.





Urban graffiti or drain stencilling

The students stencilled a number of drains near the college to inform the public that what goes down street drains ends up in the lake.

The college was the venue for ACT Government Ministers to launch a new water campaign, H2OK, which aims to raise the public's awareness of what goes down the stormwater drain ends up in ACT lakes and waterways.

Local excursions

Working with local rangers and wildlife officers the students monitored platypus and frog activity and collected data for censuses. They visited captive breeding programs to learn about threatened species conservation, visited Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve to observe platypus behaviour and went on a cruise of Lake Burley Griffin to observe human impact on the lake.

Results and benefits

The R unit has proved invaluable in many ways, the students:

- learned more about the environment through their volunteer work
- established valuable networks with the community and external agencies
- appreciated giving to the community through their involvement in projects
- increased their understanding of the environment, "Being part of the sustainability team is great as you get to learn lots and have fun while helping the environment."
- developed their leadership skills through mentoring younger students from local schools, being interviewed on radio and talking to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge during their 2014 visit to Canberra about the college's sustainability program.
- The College was recognised for its efforts by winning the 2017 ACT Junior Landcare Award.

Tips and hints

- Promote your activities and share what the students are learning. The 'Sustainability in the Community' unit promoted its activities in newsletters and daily notices. Previous students who undertook the unit advertised it and brought friends along to enrol.
- To ensure activities are relevant to students, ask community groups to share their expertise. The college learned that when you open the door to one community organisation, others will follow.
- If funding is an issue, ask students and the community for support. Students used their own transport to get to venues and the Parents and Citizens Association provided grants.