

An Extraordinary Education Event for Students and Teachers from Across New South Wales



**New South Wales Youth River Health Conference
Inverell, New South Wales
November 19th and 20th 2007**

Final Report

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www.onelifeoneworldourfuture.com

The program was developed from the award winning River Health Conference format, which was the 2007 winner for the Prime Minister's Environmentalist of the Year Award (Banksia Awards); 2004 and 2006 winner of outstanding achievement for the environment the United Nations Association of Australia World Environment Day

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The 2007 New South Wales Youth River Health Conference was the culmination of a process. This process involved students working with expert mentors prior to the event, and resulted in curriculum materials that will be in New South Wales Schools for many years after the event. Most importantly, the process was about promoting kids teaching kids as the highest form of learning and aiming for a cultural change in the way we view, use and perceive our natural environment and the resources and industries it supports.

The 2007 New South Wales Youth River Health Conference was less about a Conference and more about a lasting commitment to our youth and the sustainable use of our environment - this is no 'flash in the pan' concept, it is the future of learning and the future of our coasts, oceans and catchments wherever they may be.

ONE LIFE. ONE WORLD. OUR FUTURE.

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"In a completely rational society, the best of us would aspire to be teachers and the rest would have to settle for something less, because passing civilization along from one generation to the next ought to be the highest responsibility anyone could have."

Lee Iacocca
CEO Chrysler Corporation
ASCD Keynote, San Francisco, 1990.

**"Learning must be taken out of the classroom.
How can a student learn about the natural environment by being removed from it?"**
2006 Wood A and Wood R, *Going to Water* In Press

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1. Executive Summary

Over 200 primary and secondary students from across New South Wales converged on Inverell, in North East New South Wales on 19th and 20th November for the 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference.

The students came together to showcase the presentations they had spent up to 6 months preparing on issues that concern them about New South Wales' coasts, rivers, creeks and waterways. They also took part in a day of on the ground activities to put into practice their knowledge of natural resource management with Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA managing this day. Volunteers from around Inverell assisted as group leaders for the environmental project day, and many of our steering committee assisted as Workshop chairs for the student presentations on the Monday.

The kids also had an opportunity to quiz an expert panel on the topic "How Can Schools encourage their community to be more environmentally sustainable?" with speakers Kirk Coningham -Communications Director, Murray Darling Basin Commission, Hon. Rick Colless - Council Whip, NSW Legislative Assembly, Liz Blair - Environmental Education Officer, Border Rivers Gwydir CMA and Kelvin Brown - Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Border Rivers Gwydir CMA -This expert panel was facilitated by Arron Wood the conference MC and allowed students the opportunity to asks questions as wide ranging as how to get sponsorship to run their school's own river health conferences, the effects of climate change, politics and the environment and also local Northern NSW Aboriginal environmental practices.

The 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference is about a lasting commitment to our youth and the sustainable use of the environment and the industries it supports. Adults took a back seat at the event as the Year 5 to 11 kids taught each other about an area of interest or issue relevant to New South Wales environment, and learn from each other about the most effective ways of dealing with these problems. This Conference and the lead up months of preparation provided students with skills in natural resource management, public speaking and the ability to communicate ideas in many different forms.

Students worked with mentors in the months leading up to the event to develop their 40 minute presentations in a range of formats such as singing, acting, quizzes, art, PowerPoint, films and venue audits!

The kids chose a variety of poignant issues to highlight at the event including:

- Biodiversity
- Endangered Animals in Northern NSW
- The importance of the Gwydir Catchment
- Water Supply - consumption and wastage in the household
- River Health (Macintyre River)
- Water Auditing in the Conference venue!
- Bats in Tamworth
- Platypus sightings in Inverell
- Copeton Dam

The 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference was proudly supported by The Australian Government. Additional financial support came from: The Border Rivers-Gwydir Catchment Management Authority, Murray Darling Basin Commission, The Inverell Shire Council and The Cotton Research and Development Corporation. The environmental project day was run by the Border Rivers Gwydir Catchment Management Authority - through in kind support. Assistance with the Environmental Project Day was provided by Mitre 10 Inverell, as well as volunteers from Inglewood Landcare and Waterwatch NSW. In Kind catering sponsorship was provided by the conference venue - the Inverell RSM Club. 15 Volunteers from the Inverell region provided fantastic support throughout the conference. All event sponsors were involved in some capacity in the lead up to the conference event and supporting the participants in their preparation.

90% of participants responding to the evaluation loved the NSW Youth River Health Conference and 88% of them loved the Kids Teaching Kids concept as a way of learning! As well as this 74% found the hands-on Environmental Project Day component of the conference informative and a fun way to learn about the environment. The entertainment proved an enjoyable element for inclusion throughout the conference and an opportunity for many students to showcase their performing abilities. A number of teachers suggested the conference be run every year, with almost all looking to participate in future conferences!

2. Introduction

The 2007 New South Wales Youth River Health Conference was the culmination of a process. This process involved students working with expert mentors many months prior to the event, and resulted in children who were motivated, had high self esteem and respect for others. Using the Kids Teaching Kids model, the 2007 New South Wales Youth River Health Conference provided students with skills in natural resource management, and perhaps more importantly it assists in building students who are optimistic, have a sense of future, are capable public speakers and can communicate ideas in many different forms. Most importantly, the process is about promoting kids teaching kids as the highest form of learning and aiming for a cultural change in the way we view, use and perceive our New South Wales environment.

The 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference expanded on the award winning International River Health Conferences and International Youth Coastal Conference (see www.onelifeoneworldourfuture.com). Ultimately, this conference and the professional development for New South Wales teachers and students was about protecting and enhancing our precious oceans, coasts, rivers, catchments, communities and industries through education and involvement. Firestarter worked collaboratively with the steering committee on all aspects of the program, and in consultation with other key stakeholders in the local community.

The 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference was proudly supported by The Australian Government. Additional financial support came from: The Border Rivers-Gwydir Catchment Management Authority, Murray-Darling Basin Commission, The Inverell Shire Council, The Cotton Research and Development Corporation, The Northern Inland Regional Waste, Landcare Australia and Prime Television. Additional support through in-kind support of conference catering came from the Inverell RSM Club and for the environmental project day or as members of the steering committee came from Border Rivers Gwydir CMA, NSW Department of Education, and 15 volunteers.

3. Program Objectives

It is possible to dream that the Conference will spawn a hundred mini-conferences within schools and their communities. What better way for schools to provide environmental leadership than to allow kids to teach kids within their schools, to teach their parents and to teach others within their community, using the Conference model. We hope the message about the health of the natural resources has spread as a result of the program.

- To expand on the success of the 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007 International River Health Conference's and the 2006 International Youth Coastal Conference in building a culture of environmental awareness, achievement and action in relation to the world's river, marine and coastal environment and industries
- To reinforce the importance of rivers, marine and coastal health and raise awareness among middle and secondary students of the biodiversity issues associated with the rivers, coastal and marine environments they live near and the livelihoods that depend on it being clean and sustainable
- To provide an opportunity for students to interact with their peers; to provide students with a conference experience and to improve their communication skills
- To create an awareness and understanding of traditional cultures
- To provide relevant organisations and industries with an opportunity to promote their activities and commitment to the community. To use the agenda to promote the importance of ecosystem based marine management to the wider community
- To provide young people with the opportunity to decide how they will be heard for now and the future
- To help shape the future of environmental education relating to rivers, marine and coastal issues

Program themes and messages

- 'Healthy' rivers and coastal and marine environments and biodiversity are vital for the future health of communities and ecosystems
- Kids teaching kids works and is the highest form of learning
- Young people are agents for environmental change

- Fisheries and marine management organisations must be community based, pro-active and supportive of environmental education as part of an overall strategic approach.
- This Program is unique. It provides an exciting learning environment for students, teachers and their broader communities.
- Schools are very often the only entry point for the wider community to become involved in decisions regarding the management of our natural resources
- We can change our environment for the better - be positive in the messages we convey
- Optimism is important so that kids feel good about what they can achieve
- Kids will be leaders of the future.
- Each school / students select and research marine or rivers or coastal issues that are important in their region.

4. Methods

The NSW Youth River Health Conference was managed by Firestarter Pty Ltd in conjunction with a local Steering Committee with representatives from each of our sponsor organisations. The Environmental Project Day component was jointly managed with Firestarter and the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA.

The kids teaching kids concept was used in preparation of presentations for this event - as detailed in the Kids Teaching Kids Manual produced as part of the project. Further information about the Kids Teaching Kids methodology is found in Attachment 4. The full manual is available in electronic form from the Conference website <http://www.onelifeoneworldourfuture.com/>

One free professional development workshop for teachers was hosted in July 2007 to assist teachers in preparations for utilising the kids teaching kids event. Every presenting school registered for the conference was also visited by Firestarter's Education Officer Richard Wood. Of particular importance in these visits was to ensure teachers and students felt supported in undertaking research and performances of a nature many had not undertaken before.

Evaluation from our 16 previous Kids teaching Kids events was also used to assist with programming decisions. Students were incorporated in almost all presenting aspects of the conference, ranging from presenting gifts to keynote speakers to asking "Environmental Experts" questions kids devised relevant to their school community.

To extend the opportunity to attend to as many schools and students across New South Wales groups of between 3-15 students with 1-2 teachers from each school were accepted.

Media outreach for this project involved local coverage in the lead up to the event, extensive coverage during the event and a number of articles post event. Media coverage was particularly focused on informing the whole community (Inverell) of the conference and its significance - as well as media coverage there was a community breakfast run by major sponsor Border Rivers Gwydir CMA a week before the conference to inform the local community, and particularly the local farmers of the NSW Youth River Health Conference being held in Inverell. The table below details the three mediums used for media coverage and specific dates prior, during and post conference where there was media coverage.

Points to note:

- 1) Media coverage spanned beyond the local Inverell region to Guyra, Armidale and Tamworth to reach across the Northern NSW region and particularly towns that had students participating at the NSW Youth River Health Conference.
- 2) Articles went beyond the environmental focus of the conference and emphasised the lead up process as well as the anticipated long term outcomes for participants (note article after conference). Articles also explained the significance of celebrity attendance in providing students with hope and a sense of future.
- 3) Other media coverage including radio interviews with student participants were also arranged prior to the conference by participating schools

Date	TV	Radio	Newspaper
04 Sept			Inverell Times Celebrities Announced
24 Oct			Inverell Times Local Schools present workshops

			to council
02 Nov			Inverell Times Local community breakfast promotion announced
12 Nov			Guyra Argus River Health Conference
13 Nov			Inverell Times River Health High on Agenda Northern Daily Leader (Tamworth) River Health
14 Nov		2NZ Inverell – Breakfast Host John Shaw regularly announced Conference	
15 Nov	Prime TV – (Armidale) Announcement in (News)	2NZ Inverell Interview w/ Arron Wood	Guyra Argus 2 articles – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids taking charge of Environment • Local Students to present at River Health Conference
16 Nov	Southern Cross (TEN) – Announcement	2NZ Inverell – Interview w/ Liz Blair (Border Rivers Gwydir and Member of Expert Panel)	Inverell Times 2 articles – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front page: Information about local student workshops to be presented • Page 3: Various articles about celebrities, environmental project day and local community members involved
19 Nov		ABC (Tamworth) Interview w/ Hon. Rick Colless Interview w/ Arron Wood Interview w/ students from Tamworth and Glenn Innes Public Schools 2NZ Inverell Interview w/ Arron Wood Interview w/ Brett Kimmorley	
20 Nov	Prime TV – (Armidale) Interview w/ Liz Blair, Interview w/ Arron Wood and Interview w/ delegates after fish release Aired during 6pm news	2NZ Inverell Interview with Peter “Spida” Everitt	Inverell Times Raising Environmental Awareness
23 Nov			Inverell Times 2007 Young Environmentalists learn important lesson
6 Dec			Tamworth Northern Daily Leader Students Work Together to Improve Environment

5. Results

Below we list identifiable results achieved by the project as per objectives.

- To expand on the success of the 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007 International River Health Conference's and the 2006 International Youth Coastal Conference in building a culture of environmental awareness, achievement and action in relation to the world's river, marine and coastal environment and industries

Inverell provided a fantastic location to run the 2007 NSW conference with so many community members and organisations becoming involved in the conference preparation and program. The level of student engagement was made apparent in the conference reflection session where the majority of student responses reflected on their enjoyment, the importance of carrying on what they'd learnt at the

conference and their recognition of being our future leaders. By learning about their local environment delegates understood the relevance to Australia's future as a whole.

- ❑ To reinforce the importance of rivers, marine and coastal health and raise awareness among middle and secondary students of the biodiversity issues associated with the rivers, coastal and marine environments they live near and the livelihoods that depend on it being clean and sustainable

The NSW Youth River Health Conference had exactly 50% of school registered being Primary and 50% being secondary which ensured students across a broad age range were involved in the conference process. The topics covered in the Kids Teaching Kids workshops allowed delegates to be exposed to a variety of local biodiversity issues relevant to them locally. Day one's focus of Kids Teaching Kids workshops provided a learning by teaching opportunity in relation to local environmental issues, the involvement of mentors from the region ensured local environmental relevance in the learning process. Day Two's focus at the Environmental Project Day provided a hands on approach within the delegates local community - around a river that affects the whole surrounding region of Inverell. It also demonstrated to delegates the variety of activities that encompass environmental management and importantly that environmental management can be fun!

- ❑ To provide an opportunity for students to interact with their peers; to provide students with a conference experience and to improve their communication skills

This is the first time Inverell has had such a conference in their region - hence an opportunity for many schools and students that they have not had before, regardless the variety of presentation styles and the ability of all presenting students to generate interaction within their audience was admirable. Participating students at the conference were made up of 50% registered as high school students and 50% as primary school age. Deliberately students from the same school were divided into different audience groups for Monday's workshops with a view to students then being able to inform their schools of all the different topics presented at the NSW Youth River Health Conference. As such not only did students who presented at the conference develop and improve their communication skills, but students in the audience have an opportunity to improve their communication skills. Further interaction between peers was apparent through the many friendships forged at the conference.

- ❑ To create an awareness and understanding of Traditional Cultures

A focus on Traditional Cultures was apparent throughout the NSW Youth River Health Conference to emphasise the importance of local Aboriginal people to the Northern NSW region. A representation on the Conference Steering Committee of the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA's Aboriginal Liaison Officer enabled local Aboriginal community members to be kept informed about the conference and have input and involvement in the conference's development throughout the planning process. The NSW Youth River Health Conference was opened by local Elder Aunt Elizabeth Conners offering a Welcome to Country on behalf of the Gamilarooy People. This was followed by a story telling of the Gamilarooy people and their use of water by Aunt Sue Blacklock. Students also embraced traditional Aboriginal customs through the use of Aboriginal musical instruments during performances including in the Australian National Anthem - sung by Tingha Public School. The expert panel included Kelvin Brown - of the CMA's Aboriginal Advisory Committee. This offered a focused discussion of Aboriginal tradition and land practices relevant to environmental sustainability today. The Environmental Project Day included an Aboriginal painting activity providing students a hands on understanding of local Aboriginal customs. Many thanks to Liz Taylor for her work in assisting the conference to incorporate Aboriginal Cultural Heritage as one of the key themes.

- ❑ To provide relevant organisations and industries with an opportunity to promote their activities and commitment to the community.

Extensive local community and industry involvement was apparent from the planning stages right through to participation at the final 2 day event. The steering committee was made up of representatives from each of the NSW Youth River Health Conference's sponsors as well as a member of the NSW Department of Education. All conference sponsors were of industry relevance. Almost all sponsors had at least one representative present and participate at the conference - as workshop chairs on the Monday through to Activity Leaders or Group Leaders at the Environmental Project Day on Tuesday. NSW industry groups such as WaterWatch were also involved in activities on the Tuesday.

The sponsor partnership running of Tuesday's Environmental Project Day meant that not only was there relevant organisation involvement but also that local community wasn't disrupted or adversely affected by the running of the conference.

- To provide young people with the opportunity to decide how they will be heard for now and the future

Students raved about their time at the conference and how much they had learnt. As a number of students expressed in the conference reflection session - it is important to continue on with the work begun at the NSW Youth River Health Conference as "We are the Future"

- To help shape the future of environmental education relating to rivers, marine and coastal issues

With so many teachers and students alike commenting on their desire to attend future conferences and a number of non-presenting schools expressing their plans to work on presenting at a future conference it is apparent that the River Health Conference and Kids Teaching Kids concept is further becoming a relevant and important part of schools education programs.

- To build support of all schools for the kids teaching kids concept

Through the support provided to schools in the lead up to the conference, through school visits, environmental expert mentoring, and educational advice on workshop presentation generally, students are prepared and confident by the time of presenting at the conference. From the conference presentations teachers saw the high level of engagement and enthusiasm from their students as they interacted with other students and as such recognise the value of implementing this approach within their teaching style.

6. Project Evaluation by Delegates

All delegates (students and teachers) were asked to evaluate the conference. We received responses from 68 out of 220 delegates.

Student Evaluations	
Questions	Result (average score out of 10)
Considering all things, what did you think of the conference and the way it was run?	9
What did you think about the environmental project part of the conference?	7.46
What did you think about the entertainment for the conference (eg- Celebrity Guests, Bands)?	9.46
What did you think about the concept of kids teaching kids about the environment?	8.88
What did you think of the MC for the conference?	9.4
What was your favourite workshop and why?	<p><i>Water Audit (Alstonville High School) - by capturing the audience and getting across an important message in a fun way - Tamworth P.S</i></p> <p><i>Water Chasers (Glenn Innes High School) because it was really funny and I learnt a lot - Gum Flat Public School</i></p> <p><i>Biodiversity: A feral impact (Guyra Central School) - because it was well explained and I loved how they got the audience involved and it made me understand how important it was - Tamworth Public School</i></p>
What will you do now as a result of visiting this conference, towards helping the environment?	<p><i>'I will people not to litter and tell them how they can help the environment' Tamworth Public School</i></p> <p><i>'I will think about the animals and how we are destroying their habitats if we litter' Harry, Gum Flat Public School</i></p> <p><i>'Since the conference my family and I have decided to start a worm farm and have planted native trees in our garden. I will also recycle everything possible.' Tamworth Public School</i></p>
What did you think of the Conference Panel of Experts Discussion Session?	8.1

Additional Teacher Evaluation Questions	
Questions	Result (average score)
Was the conference good value for money?	9.2
What do you think about the conference bags and other materials that were given to you?	9
In your opinion, what were the meals and other food like for the conference?	Spot on for adults and children - the fruit was great! Tamworth Public Fantastic very sufficient and healthy! - Guyra Central
How well do you think the reflection session was run?	8.75
How often would you like to see an event like this run?	Many teachers responded every year, however 60% responded every second year.

Additional Comments

Two schools in particular (Bundarra Central School and Guyra Central School) have advised Firestarter since the conference of their intention to carry on the environmental work their students and schools have begun through participating in the NSW Youth River Health Conference by establishing a "core district group made up of presenting schools from 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference who continue making district presentations and talk the Gwydir and Murray Darling". - Steve Auld - Bundarra Central School

'Thankyou for giving Tamworth Public School the opportunity to perform... we have taken the Bats on the road to local schools and the Namoi Catchment CMA have sort permission for the children's work to appear on their website as well as assisting the students to build bat boxes for the region.' Rosemary Clifton, Teacher, Tamworth Public School

'I met a lot of new friends that were older then me. I learnt about the platypus from them and how to save the platypus' Harry, Gum Flat Public School

'I would love to run a similar event in the New England region because it really works - it really is the best way to get the message across to our youth...' Rebecca Smith, Teacher, Guyra Central School

'Kids Teaching Kids is a great idea - I am glad I was part of this conference' Callum King, Tamworth Public School

7. Outputs

The outputs from this project are:

- 230 students and teachers have been directly involved in the kids teaching kids approach to learning about the environment
- Eight schools prepared nine 40 minute presentations over 2-8 months, and all had the opportunity to interact with expert industry mentors on the topics they chose.
- Media Coverage about the program, promoting the health of New South Wales environment and the importance of supporting schools and students in making our communities more sustainable
- Hands-on activities along Inverell's Macintyre River enabled teachers and students to be involved in physical environmental management which can be utilised again within schools curriculum
- a conference website containing wide range of information for students and teachers
- networks formed between students and teachers at the event
- networks formed within school communities - as schools are presenting their workshops post the conference they are forging new links as well as promoting natural resource management education, and encouraging their students to increase their communication skills and capabilities as public speakers
- All schools have the opportunity to implement similar programs in their own school using material produced as a result of the Conference

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- This event was a great success - Students came away having enjoyed their time, feeling empowered, understanding the importance of environmental issues and realising that they are future leaders.
- This conference was particularly empowering for students from a number of schools located in low socio economic regions where there is often a struggle to provide students with such opportunities
- Inverell was a supportive community to enable exposure of environmental issues to regional NSW
- The kids teaching kids workshops proved a great success - the workshops covered a broad range of topics and generated an enjoyable and participatory environment for all delegates.
- There is a strong sense amongst students and teachers of continuing the process learnt in the months prior to the NSW Youth River Health Conference - for generating environmental awareness within communities through the Kids Teaching Kids process - evidenced by more than one school committing to creating a "district" environmental presenting group. This long term commitment is also evidenced through a number of individuals now focusing on continuing to create community awareness and support in relation to issues they researched for their workshop at the NSW Youth River Health Conference
- The majority of schools involved in the NSW Youth River Health Conference had not previously participated in a Firestarter conference but the resounding response at conference close was that all teachers intended to participate in future Firestarter events
- It is recommended that further support be offered to schools looking to establish environmental groups within their community / schools through instructions outlined in Firestarter's Kids Teaching Kids book

Attachment 1 Financial Summary

Component	
Income	Expenditure
Coordinating Program Sponsor - NHT	\$35,000
Naming Rights - Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA	\$20,000
Gold Sponsor - MDBC	\$5,000 plus \$5,500 specifically for merchandise
Bronze Sponsor - Northern Inland Regional Waste	\$5,000
Bronze Sponsor - Cotton Research and Development Corporation	\$5,000
Bronze Sponsor - Inverell Shire Council	\$5,000
Support Sponsor RSM Club	In Kind Sponsorship of \$2,000
Registrations for Regional Forum (\$35 for 200 people)	\$7,000
Total (as cash)	\$82,000.00
Conference Expenses - example	
Camera operator, big screen & data show Sound Equipment, Staging and lighting	\$1,650
Steering Committee Gifts	\$285.77
Conference Guide (Program)	\$3,316.50
Merchandise	\$5,237 paid by MDBC
Dinner, Morning Tea, lunch, afternoon tea (230people @ \$65 per head) - includes venue hire of \$550 Lions Club Sausage Sizzle \$3 p/head (\$750)	\$15,202.60
Conference Speaker - including travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter "Spida" Everitt 	\$1,528.86
Tours/Environmental Projects - fish release 250 @ 80c = \$200	0
Conference Official Dinner Speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brett Kimmorley 	\$ 1,192.48
Band for Dinner	\$750.00
Postage	
Steering Committee Debrief	0
Radio OB	0
Name tags	\$125.83
Steering Committee Meetings	\$1055.66
Aboriginal Dance troupe	0
Accommodation and travel for professional staff	\$5,602.87
Production of Conference Advert	\$380
Presentation Workshop Manager	\$4,000
Presentation Workshop Manager Travel	\$3592.37
Air Conference Advert	\$3209.80 \$4910.40
Project Management	\$20,000
Website maintenance	\$500
Administration	\$10,000
Conference Reception	\$1200
Media Liaison	\$2,514.86
Project Support	\$1,000
Total	\$82,000

Note: All monies were expended in full for the 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference. Accounting for the budget was conducted using MYOB and will be certified by ATM Consultants at end of financial year.

As per Australian Government guidelines all funding was held in a separate account and allocated a MYOB job number.

Note: An additional \$10,000 outside this budget was spent by The Border Rivers Gwydir Catchment Management Authority in hosting the environmental project day activities. This drives the direct financial contribution, not including in-kind volunteer hours, in-kind advertising and staff hour's committee from sponsor organisations to \$92,000.

Attachment 2 Kids Teaching Kids Background

Why kids teaching kids?

The 'Kids Teaching Kids' concept has been apparent in schools, in one form or another, for many years. Students run assemblies, litter and peer support behaviour programs and now three-way reporting where the student takes charge of the traditional parent/teacher interview - are all about transferring learning responsibility back to the student

'Kids Teaching Kids' works because it improves the education experience and outcomes for students by allowing them to feel in control of the learning process; when learning proceeds at the individual's own pace and through presentation of their own learning to others, a self belief and new found confidence develops for the students. It provides a more holistic, democratic and inclusive approach to education.

If we provide responsibility for learning back to the learner and teach them the skills to manage that approach, we start to have the emergence of different students. They are in control, they begin to relate to one another within the education process and they are able to be involved and make responsible decisions about their own learning.

The Kids Teaching Kids concept needs a shift in power within the classroom, or ideally, in the school in general in order to be effective. If students are to experience more control over their learning, then responsibility for that learning must also follow.

The question of 'who's in control here' is a daunting one for the educator. Clearly, the teacher remains in power, but power in the classroom is a different matter and the outcomes and depth of learning far outweigh the disquiet teachers may initially feel from the required power sharing with their students.

Providing the skills and confidence to a student to allow him or her to take control and responsibility for learning should produce a child who possesses the necessary strength to face the complexities and pitfalls of modern life.

The NSW Youth River Health Conference is based on the highly successful International River Health Conference model (www.onelifeoneworldourfuture.com). Held biannually in Mildura, Victoria, Australia since 1999, these conferences have highlighted how important it is to provide the next generation with a sense of place and a realisation that proper management of their place will ultimately have an impact on their planet.

Using the Kids Teaching Kids learning model, these river health conferences have developed thousands of resilient children. Children, who are motivated, have high self esteem and respect for others. Using the same peer learning method, the 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference will provide students with skills in natural resource management, but more importantly it will build students who are optimistic, have a sense of future, are capable public speakers and can communicate ideas in many different forms.

Why?

Children comprise twenty per cent of the population, but are one hundred percent of our future. In our thrust to be analytical, impartial and scientifically rigorous we may have lost the passion for educating future generations to ensure the protection of the natural environment. The NSW Youth River Health Conference provides hands on, student-centred learning **to bring about a cultural change in the way we perceive our rivers, catchments and the industries they support.**

The Conference seeks to promote the virtues of well-rounded and balanced individuals, working as a team to face a common goal - the raising awareness about the health of our river environments. Students that have access to this type of learning will be more able to promote a sense of community as they become leaders and decision-makers themselves.

Any issue, problem or situation ultimately has a human focus. Natural resource management is less about the science of managing the environment and more about managing people that have the potential to bring about change in their environment. Education is an essential tool to achieve responsible management of natural resources. If education is carried out effectively all decision-makers through every level and field of employment will have the information needed to make environmentally conscious decisions.

What?

The key educational strategy used is pedagogy of 'Kids Teaching Kids'. The NSW Youth River Health Conference will use Rivers as a theme around which students design presentations and workshops which they present to other young people at the Conference. The involvement of celebrities and public figures is also a key feature of the Conference. The celebrities reinforce the key Conference theme, that young people can make a positive contribution to environmental change.

Research has found that Kids Teaching Kids pedagogy works well in terms of engaging students in river health issues. At the International River Health Conferences, for a significant number of students, the experience of participating in Kids Teaching Kids activities appeared to generate a sense of connection with local place and involvement with real local issues. Many students also seemed to express a sense of environmental responsibility and a developing sense of environmental and democratic agency. In other words, some students gained a sense of possibility for change, or a growing confidence in their capacity to actively participate in social and democratic processes involving environmental issues. In addition, through the actual experience of being Conference participants, students learn to be active, effective citizens and advocates for a sustainable future.

Arron and Richard Wood - Firestarter Pty Ltd

Attachment 3 Selection of Photos



Tamworth Public School



Guyra Central School



Inverell Public School

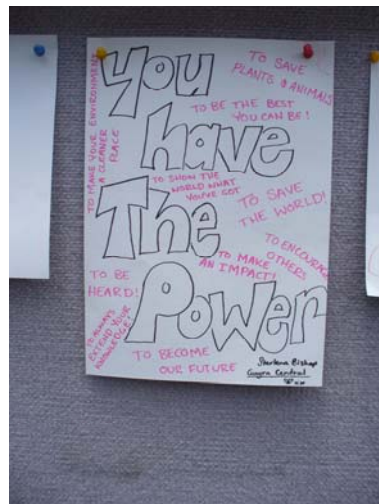


Glenn Innes Secondary School



Orchard Brothers from MacIntyre High Walgett Community College with Spida Everitt





Attachment 4 Conference Brochure

AN EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS
FROM ACROSS NEW SOUTH WALES



2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference
Inverell • New South Wales • Australia • **November 19 – 20, 2007**
INCLUDES CONFERENCE PROGRAM



ONE LIFE, ONE WORLD, OUR FUTURE

www.onelifeoneworldourfuture.com

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We would like to thank:

All the teachers and mentors and students who have worked really hard to put this conference together. A big thankyou to Kelly McCulloch, Liz Blair, Liz Taylor, Howard Grant; Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA, Elizabeth Conners and Sue Blacklock, Les Tanner and Barbara Eshman; Inverell Shire Council, Tammy Wood; Inglewood Landcare, Kathleen Davies; Regent Honeyeater Coordinator, Beryl Newman; Waterwatch NSW, Luc Farago; Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA. Also to Kellee Anderson and the Inverell RSM Club. Thanks also to all our volunteers - Simon Campbell, Wendy Miller, Lia Christensen, Fiona Adams, Sandy Eager, Tristan Blair, Amy Higgins, Kate Higgins, Vicky Higgins, Paul Hobson and Peter Coleman.

Cover Image: Cascade, Macintyre Gorge. Photographer: Ian Hanson.

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A Word from the Convener



Over the next 2 days you are part of a very special experience. Interest in the sound management of our natural resources and the desire to ensure sustainable production is something we can all share with the other participants. I want you to enjoy this experience through seeing the Conference as our own mini world. In our mini world we can take one small step in tackling some very big issues such as acceptance, tolerance and care for other human beings.

Show respect for your fellow participants, involve others in your discussions and get as much as you can from the fantastic workshops, performances and speakers. If you are a presenting school please don't be disheartened if your workshop doesn't go exactly as planned. Remember you have an understanding audience and you have done a lot of work to get this far - your teachers and fellow students are already suitably proud of your efforts. We'd much rather see your enthusiasm and passion for your subject than a straight, well delivered series of facts.

Make the most of your opportunities to get to know fellow participants from across New South Wales. Use the breakfasts, dinner and other breaks to form valuable networks, which you will be able to rely on long after the Conference. There is something pretty exciting about having the opportunity to form a friendship with another school that may be hundreds of kilometers away or just around the corner for that matter!

I have a huge admiration for the students and teachers that make the effort to get to an event like the 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference. With first hand knowledge of the work loads that schools face I want to thank you for your involvement.

Your understanding of our natural environment will see that we don't repeat the mistakes of the past. Your objective nature will ensure you don't take sides in an argument. Moving forward for our environment is not about taking sides, being green or knocking our agricultural industry. It is about recognising that we all value the environment, that changes have to be made and that we are very often dealing with people's livelihoods.

This Conference is about first capturing the passion for our environment (the heart), then allowing the head to follow through development of the student workshops (the head) and finally taking this understanding through to on ground action in the environmental project (the hand).

The changes we need to make won't happen overnight and these changes are the responsibility of every Australian, whether you live in the country or in the city - we all have a role to play.

So, enjoy yourself, make new friends and remember that we can all do something for the environment - no matter how insignificant we think it maybe.

Arnon Wood
Conference Convener



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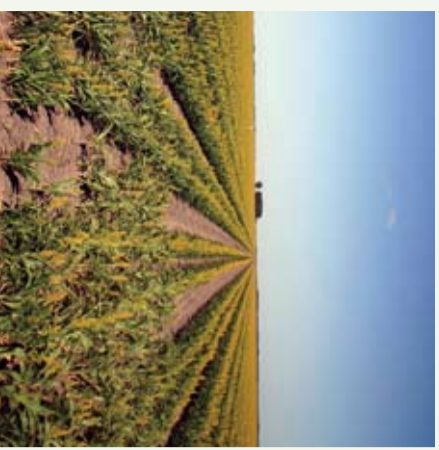
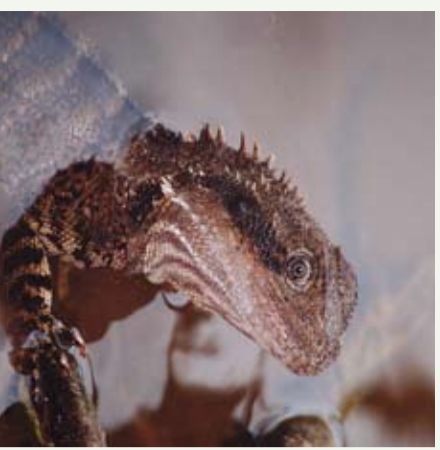
Why

Children comprise twenty percent of the population, but are one hundred percent of our future. In our thirst to be analytical, impartial and scientifically rigorous it is easy to lose the passion for educating future generations to ensure the protection of the natural environment. The 2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference provides hands on, student-centered learning to bring about a cultural change in the way we perceive our natural environment. The support from NSW and our sponsors has been fantastic!

The Conference will provide students with skills in environmental education, but more importantly it will build students who are optimistic, have a sense of future, are capable public speakers and can communicate ideas in many different forms.

The Conference will aim to develop the resilient child. A child, who is motivated, has high self esteem and respect for others. In this way the Conference seeks to promote the virtues of well-rounded and balanced individuals, working as a team to face a common goal - to improve the health of our environment. Students that have access to this type of learning will be more able to promote a sense of community as they become leaders and decision-makers themselves.

It is time for environmental education to become an integral component, or the basis of, community education.



Providing the next generation with a sense of place and a realisation that proper management of their place will ultimately have an impact on their planet is the key to successful environmental education and involvement. Rivers are the lifeblood of many communities, sustaining a good quality of life on many of the world's driest continents. Water is increasingly in the spotlight. Environmental protection is no longer the domain of 'greens', but must become ingrained in our society if we are to survive.

Lack of, or poor community education, has brought about the downfall of many scientifically rigorous projects and initiatives. Any issue, problem or situation ultimately has a human focus. Natural resource management is less about the science of managing the environment and more about managing people that have the potential to bring about change in their environment. Education is an essential tool to achieve responsible management of natural resources. If education is carried out effectively all decision-makers through every level and field of employment will have the information needed to make environmentally conscious decisions.

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Why

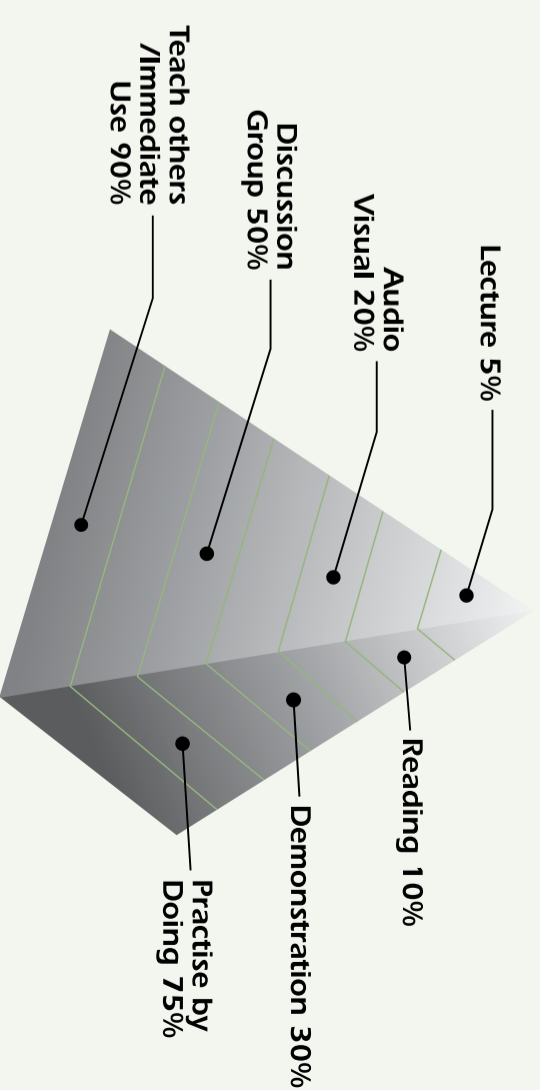
When students teach other students something powerful takes place in both the presenters and their audience. We talk of empowerment but it is more about students seeing a purpose for their learning and a responsibility to present their findings to others to the best of their ability. So many things are beyond our control in these troubled times, through the kids teaching kids approach, students have the ability to take control and demonstrate to others that there still is an opportunity to make a difference in the world.

In doing so they research an environmental issue thoroughly, from all sides of the argument, using industry or enlightened individuals as mentors.

The learning theory underpinning this Conference is based on what is called the 'constructivist' approach. This simply means that the learner actively 'constructs' his/her own learning from his/her own experiences. Constructivists believe that students need to have some interest in the content; they need to have some input in deciding what they will learn.

If we were to consider the average retention rate, we would create more opportunity for students to teach others what they have learnt.

The Learning Pyramid average retention rate -





Peter Everitt
Ruckman Sydney Swans



Brett Kimmorley
Haliback Cronulla
Sutherland Sharks



Hon Rick Colless (MLC)
Member of NSW
Legislative Council



Cr Barry Johnson
Inverell Mayor and
CMA Board Member



Aaron Wood
Conference Convener

Monday November 19

9.00am	Welcome Breakfast at Inverell RSM Club
9.40am	Aunt Elizabeth Connors to offer Welcome to Country
9.45am	Aboriginal Story Telling with Aunt Sue Blacklock
9.50am	Main Stage Presentation - National Anthem Presented by Tingha School
10.00am	Inverell Public School Choir Performing - Wonderful World and You're the Voice
10.10am	Brett Kimmorley - Official Launch
10.20am	Morning Tea
10.45am	Expert Panel Discussion
11.30am	Lunch
12.25pm	All Session 1 and 2 presenting groups to be ready in assigned workshop areas: Remaining audience members assigned leader to move to workshop session 1
12.30pm	Workshop Session 1 - 4 concurrent Session
1.10pm	Audience move to next workshop session
1.15pm	Workshops session 2 - 4 concurrent sessions
2.00pm	Afternoon Tea
2.25pm	All session 3 and 4 presenting groups to be ready in assigned workshop areas: Remaining audience members assigned leader to move to workshop session 3
2.30pm	Workshops Session 3 - 5 concurrent Sessions
3.10pm	Audience move to next workshop session
3.15pm	Workshop session 4-5 concurrent Sessions
3.55pm	Audiences to move back to Auditorium
4.00pm	House Keeping and Day 1 Close
6.30pm	Gala Conference Dinner - Tamworth Public School Performance Peter "Spider" Everitt - The Orchard Brothers One Acre Universe
8.45pm	Dinner Close - (Sharp)

Tuesday November 20

9.00am	Breakfast - Main Auditorium Inverell RSM Club
9.45am	Walk to Environmental Project Site
10.00am	Entire Group Introduction to Environmental Project Site and Official Launch by Inverell Mayor Cr Barry Johnson
10.15am	Fish release into McIntyre River
10.30am	Morning Tea - Participants to move into assigned groups
10.45am	Each Group completes first 40 minute environmental activity - What weed is that? Lunch murderers. Spot a bird and bang a nail. Paint your message Rubbish vandals. There's a bug in there!, Bandana dreaming. Get out your green thumbs
11.30am	Rotate to next environmental activity
11.40am	2nd Environmental Activity commences
12.25pm	Lunch
1.00pm	Hands on Environmental Activities
1.40pm	Groups to assemble back at Campbell Park
1.45pm	Announce Write a Reader Winners
1.55pm	Reflection Session and Official Conference Close
2.30pm	Finish

Sponsors

Border Rivers-Gwydir Catchment Management Authority (Platinum naming rights sponsor)

Border Rivers - Gwydir Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is an independent Statutory Authority established in 2004 by the NSW Government to ensure the protection and sustainable development of land, vegetation and water resources within the catchment. It answers directly to the Minister for Natural Resources. The Border Rivers - Gwydir CMA sees the development of strong partnerships in natural resource management as critical to its success, and is working closely with stakeholders, the community, Landcare, Traditional Owners, all levels of Government and Industry to prioritise and target natural resource investment in throughout the catchment. The Border Rivers - Gwydir CMA has been established to build on work previously undertaken by the Catchment Management Boards and Regional Vegetation Committees. Through involvement with the Border Rivers - Gwydir CMA our community is encouraged to have a significant say in how natural resources are managed, ensuring the protection and sustainable management of natural resources within the Catchment.

The Australian Government (Gold major sponsor)

The Natural Heritage Trust (the Trust) is the largest environmental rescue plan ever undertaken in Australia. It was set up by the Australian Government in 1997 to help conserve our environment and manage our natural resources. Since then, thousands of community groups and organisations have received funding for environmental and natural resource management projects. These projects range from caring for at-risk animals and plants to monitoring water quality in our rivers. Other projects support farmers with work to keep the land healthy, so both their business and the environment benefit.
<http://www.nrm.gov.au>

The Murray-Darling Basin Commission (Gold major sponsor)

The Commission is the executive arm of the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council and is responsible for:

- Managing the River Murray and the Menindee Lakes system of the lower Darling River, and
- Advising the Ministerial Council on matters related to the use of the water, land and other environmental resources of the Murray-Darling Basin.

The Commission is an autonomous organisation equally responsible to the governments represented on the Ministerial Council (Qld, NSW, Vic, ACT, SA and the Australian Government) as well as to the Council itself. It is neither a government department nor a statutory body of any individual government. Visit <http://www.mdbc.gov.au/>



Sponsors (continued)

Inverell Shire Council (Silver major sponsor)

Inverell is scenically situated on the Macintyre River in the New England Tablelands - just 489km South West of Brisbane and 675km North West of Sydney. Travellers can arrive in Inverell by Aeropelican or via one of the many coach services travelling to Inverell, including CountryLink, McCafferty's and the Black & White Bus Service. With a town population of 11,000 and 17,500 within the Shire Inverell boasts a thriving commercial and service centre as diverse as its agriculture and mining industries. Copeton and Pindari Dams are drawcards for all who love fishing and water sports. If you have never visited the district, we are sure you will be very pleasantly surprised at the attractions and services the area has to offer.

Northern Inland Regional Waste (Silver major sponsor)

Northern Inland Regional Waste (NIRW) is a voluntary local government networking group to specifically address waste management issues on a regional level. The group's membership consists of thirteen (13) Local Government Councils in the North West and New England regions of New South Wales, Australia. NIRW was formed in July 1998 and meets quarterly to discuss waste management issues and to organise regional initiatives. The member Councils are Armidale Dumaresq Council, Glen Innes Severn Council, Gunnedah Shire Council, Guyra Shire Council, Gwydir Shire Council, Inverell Shire Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Moree Plains Shire Council, Narrabri Shire Council, Tamworth Regional Council, Tenterfield Shire Council, Uralla Shire Council and Walcha Council.

Cotton Research and Development Corporation (Silver major sponsor)

The Cotton Research and Development Corporation is a partnership between the Australian Government and the Australian cotton industry. Our vision is a globally competitive and responsible cotton industry. We provide leadership and investment in research, innovation, knowledge creation and transfer. The Corporation is based in Narrabri, NSW and is unique among the Rural R&D Corporations for having its headquarters away from a capital city. Narrabri is in the heart of one of Australia's major cotton production areas and is close to the industry's key research facility, the Australian Cotton Research Institute. The Cotton Research Institute is the headquarters for the Cotton CRC and the CRDC is a core investor in the Cotton CRC. The Corporation's corporate outcome is a more sustainable, profitable and competitive cotton industry, providing increased environmental, economic and social benefits to regional communities and the nation.

Inverell RSM Club (Bronze major sponsor)

The Inverell Returned Servicemen's Memorial Club Ltd, today is a far cry from the rendezvous originally established in 1919 for ex "diggers" to meet in the comradeship engendered during World War 1. The Club now boasts first class facilities and is an enjoyable and comfortable place for visitors, members and guests to come and relax and enjoy themselves. Every year the Inverell RSM Club makes quite substantial donations towards the community by way of donations, sponsorships and provides meeting rooms for various organisations at no cost. The Club employs in advance of 60 people as well as providing jobs outside the Club for many other members of the community through contracts with local business for supply of goods and services.

School Presentations

Guyra Central School Biodiversity: A Feral Impact

An interactive play that will educate you and me about how important our ecosystem is and to enlighten us all to what is happening to the food web in the New England. The audience will be encouraged to become part of the food web and to come up with solutions to avert the impending disaster. Music, dancing and brilliant acting will provide an experience designed to educate and exhilarate!

Inverell Public School Protesting Animals

Breakfast TV will never be the same once you see this news program. Who ever thought that animals could talk. Come along and see just why these self appointed representatives are holding the "hunter" hostage. Find out why they are finally speaking out about the injustices they face.

Inverell Public School Ban Da Bag

Find out why Herr Ban Da Bag has come all the way from Germany. Also why the catchment is so important. Sit back and enjoy a comedy that will have you thinking about what you are doing to help our rivers.

Glen Innes High School The Water Chasers

"The average person in the developing world uses 10 litres of water a day for their drinking, washing and cooking. This is the same as a flush of a western toilet". Chaser's War on water style workshop presents a series of dramatic skits, adaptation of Shakespeare scenes, theatre sports, singing and an interpretive dance movement piece. It outlines the situation in which Glenn Innes is in and the methods that we as a community use to combat water wastage and rapid over consumption of water. GHS Yr10 drama is proud to present a drama presentation that educates the younger generation.

Macintyre High To swim or not to swim?

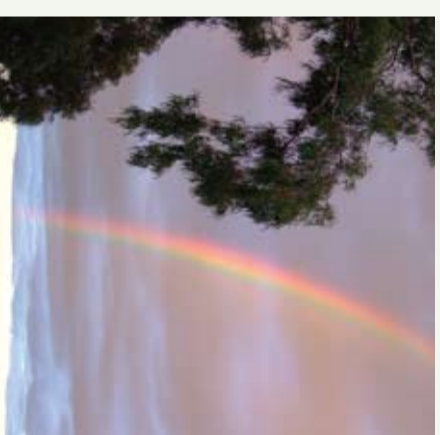
Is this an option in the Macintyre River? We've been busy checking out the health of the river and what the locals are doing to it as it passes through town. Is it clean? Are the fish feeling fine? Are we doing enough? Come along and find out what we've discovered.

Astonville High School "Audit it"

If we are going to conserve water we need to know more about its use. Who ever said that audits couldn't be engaging to the general community? This will be Astonvilles fun and creative workshop learning about and applying the use of all important water audits.

Tamworth Public School Move Over Batman Tamworth Public School Has Gone Batty!

The Students will allow you to see the world through the eyes of a bat, as they entertain, educate and enthral you, with a wide range of multimedia activities. The workshop opens with music and dramatic performance, with a special visit from Batman and Dracula and is followed up with a visual photo-story and "Hands-On-Activities", such as an interactive electronic game, assembling bat boxes, a conservation Bat Game, Pin the label on the bat skeleton, and origami finger puzzles. The workshop will be supported with a display from the Australian Museum and children's art and craft.





School Presentations (continued)

Inverell High School Play/Dye

Inverell is fortunate enough to have playdypuses living in the Macintyre River within hundreds of metres of the Central Business District. Unfortunately the number of sightings in this area has fallen in the past 10 years.

Our intrepid research team attempts to get to the bottom of this decline in numbers. Is it part of a natural cycle or is it a result of human activity? What can we do to make playdypus feel at home in built up areas such as Inverell.

Bundarra Central School Copeton the Key

Bundarra Central students watch the Gwydir River from their school windows every day. The Gwydir is a case study of the challenges and possibilities of the Murray Darling. What would happen if the mighty Copeton Dam were allowed to fill? Can Copeton help manage environmental allocations and what socio-economic advantages may there be of a full Copeton Dam for the northern New England?



Inspiring the Next Young Environmental Leader Richard and Aaron Wood, with help from editor Berith Ostrom a book titled "Inspiring the Next Young Environmental Leader - Kids Teaching Kids - Addressing Our Environmental Crisis". The book is a mix of how to implement the Kids Teaching Kids methodology in your own school or community and an insight into the unique father/son relationship shared by Aaron and Richard, but also goes much further than the environmental sector to show how business, industry and the wider public can build communities using the environment as a tool.

At 152 pages this full colour book touches on past conference programs, inspiring students and teachers who have been involved in the river health conference initiative and even details how to run your own environmental event, complete with example budgets, media management and how to avoid event planning pitfalls. Filled with case studies and interesting anecdotes this is a book not to be missed. The book includes a half hour DVD depicting Kids Teaching Kids in action. The book will retail for \$34.95, but discount pre-orders are now available for book price \$25.00 \$12.00 postage for a single copy. There will be a limited print run so please get in early if you intend to purchase a copy.

The book proceeds will support Firestarter to continue running Kids Teaching Kids programs across Australia. **To pre-order your copy please email info@fire-starter.com.au detailing your contact details and how many copies you'd like to order.** There are further discounts available for bulk orders of 10 or more books so send us an email and we'll provide you with a quote. This project is proudly supported by Spike Design, Finsbury Printing and Pilot Be Green.

Environmental Project Day Campbell Park, Macintyre River

Environmental project day

Your research and passion for our unique environment in New South Wales is what we call the head and heart aspect of the conference program, the Environmental Project Day is how we bring in your hands! It is important that we take your words and thoughts on environmental issues through to on ground action.

It may sound simple, but young people make up 100% of the future - and so the views and ideas of the younger generation towards the management of our environment and resources are really important. The activities planned at each site will engage delegates as "stakeholders" in environmental management - so bring an open mind, enthusiasm and ideas on how young people can engage in strategies to protect and manage our environmental resources.

What to bring and wear

Delegates MUST wear long sleeves, long pants and covered shoes to take part in the environmental project day. You will not be able to take part in the activities planned if you are not wearing appropriate clothing. Please make sure you have a raincoat, sunscreen, warm clothes and a hat! Pack for all weather situations!

Activity	Lead by
What weed is that?	Les Tanner (Inverell Shire Council)
Lunch Munchers	Tammy Small (Inglewood Landcare)
Spot a bird and bang a nail	Kathleen Davies (Regent Honeyeater Coordinator)
Paint your message	Annie Heldtz
Rubbish Vandals	Kate Newlan (Northern Inland Regional Waste)
There's a bug in there!	Beryl Newman (Waterwatch NSW)
Bandana Dreaming	Liz Taylor (Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA)
Get out your green thumbs	Luc Farago (Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA) and GWMAC Landcare