
Bill Lucas was Deputy Head teacher of a large London secondary school before becoming founding Director of Learning through Landscapes, now the world's leading school grounds development organisation. Author of several books and videos, Bill has recently completed for the U.K. government *School Grounds: A Guide to Good Practice*. A regular contributor to the *Times Educational Supplement* and *Landscape Design*, Bill is on the program committee of World Wild Life U.K. and the advisory council of the Evergreen Foundation, and received a Guardian/Jerwood award for individual excellence in 1994. His visit to Australia was sponsored by the British Council in Australia as part of its 'Partnerships for Excellence' initiative.

Logan City Council's Environmental Education Program

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Local governments have traditionally focused on the 3Rs—Roads, Rates and Rubbish. Logan City Council's management and elected members have, however, identified that the environment is an issue that local government cannot afford to ignore. A rapidly growing area with approximately 55 000 households and a population approaching 170 000, Logan City is located between Brisbane City and Gold Coast City.

The Environmental Education Program is one of Council's many environmental initiatives. It aims to facilitate greater awareness and knowledge of the local environment, and to promote action within the local community with due regard to regional and global contexts.

Environmental education initiatives

Council's environmental officers have developed a variety of programs to promote environmental awareness and positive environmental action.

Logan Schools Environmental Educators Network

The network is a joint initiative of the Council's environment officers and the Logan East school support

centre's regional co-ordinator for the key learning area of Society and the Environment.

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It was designed to provide educators with a forum for the development of environmental education in Logan City. The aims of the network are to assist:

- environmental educators to form links with each other, and with other local contacts.
- all those interested in environmental education to share ideas and experiences.

Network meetings are held once a school term; guest speakers have come from environmental education centres, state government departments, the Council and other organisations such as the Gould League and Greening Australia. Schools with well-established environmental education programs are encouraged to inform others about their activities through the network.

Logan Youth Bushcare Project

'their first opportunity to plant a tree!'

High school students are invited to attend the Logan Youth Bushcare Project, held over 3–4 days at least once a year, usually during October to coincide with Logan Youth Week and Arbor Day. Those attending learn about weed removal, site planning and tree planting; it has provided many of Logan's student with their first opportunity to plant a tree!

World Environment Day activities

In 1996 over 1200 entries were received for the Council World Environment Day poster competition. Winning entries have been used to create the following year's environment calendar distributed to schools and the community.

For the Council's 1996 World Environment Day celebrations approximately 1200 year 4 students participated for 2½ days in activities such as dip netting, recycling olympics, the catchment game, the resource game, nature walks, mural painting, animal management activities and Koala Centre tours.

Waterwatch

Local students and teachers who participate in the Queensland Waterwatch Program will be invited to attend a forum for exchanging results and action plans, and ideas about water monitoring activities and ways of caring for Logan's waterways.

Community Environment Management Grants Program

The program, one assisting community involvement in the management of Logan City's environments, aims to:

- protect, rehabilitate or enhance natural habitats.
- protect and maintain cultural/historical resources.
- enhance the built amenity of the city.
- increase community awareness of environmental issues.
- build upon the existing knowledge of Logan City's environments.

The program has funded many successful projects including rainforest revegetation, streetscaping, environmental research and educational landscaping within schools.

Waste Watch Program

The Waste Watch Program aims to build awareness and to promote behavioural change in the adult community. Participants are encouraged to share their waste minimisation ideas and practices in a group and to provide ideas for improvements/alterations to the overall program, an approach which is intended to engender a sense of community ownership of the program and its activities. The Program can be undertaken at three levels giving both participants and councils a range of choices. Each level requires a higher degree of commitment from both the participants and the local authority.

Waste Awareness Week

Waste Awareness Week celebrates community waste reduction action. Activities have included shopping centre displays, breakfast at the landfill site, local radio interviews, a puppet show and CD-ROM packages for schools.

Presentations and information

The Environmental Resource Service provides access to environmental education resources intended specifically for the use of schools and community groups but which are not usually acquired by Council Libraries. The collection is held and managed by the Logan City Council Corporate Library.

The environment officers provide schools and community groups with advice and information including display material, project or general information and contact details for people or organisations able to help with an environmental inquiry. We also advise school about landscaping, setting up environmental education programs, environmental audits, organising environment days and on the integration of environmental issues into all areas of school curricula.

The Environmental Education Program models good practice by producing publications, displays and promotional goods which are environmentally sensitive and

which avoid duplication of materials already produced by other organisations. This includes the production of newsletters—for primary school student, on planning issues and environmental services and on recycling in conjunction with Rotary—as well as brochures, posters, and recycling guides.

Challenges

‘Council has...provided an effective and popular integrated environmental education program’

The lack of pre- and post-visit activities for school groups visiting Council facilities needs to be addressed and it would be of benefit to connect school and community groups in environmental activities. Council has established a working group to investigate the feasibility and desirability of establishing a Logan community environmental education centre. Council officers are networking beyond Council in order to continue researching options for improving the existing environmental education programs.

Environmental issues are spread across many of Logan City Council's several departments each which has its own agendas and budgetary requirements. Council has, however, managed to provide an effective and popular integrated environmental education program despite the difficulties inherent in dealing with cross-departmental issues.

Conclusion

As a result of the Council's programs many schools have established compost bins, worm farms, butterfly and rainforest gardens, frog ponds and school environmental education programs. Displays, calendars, community activities, training programs, direct contact with Council officers and various publications have assisted many individuals in Logan to develop a greater awareness and appreciation of Logan City's environment.

Despite the wide range of environmental education initiatives already established Council and its officers look forward to improving and expanding the Environmental Education Program. ☺

After graduating from Griffith University in 1994 with a B.Sc. in Australian Environmental Studies Helen Wallace worked for Brisbane River Management Group and is now with Logan City Council as Assistant Environment Officer (Education).
