



Media Release

Monday, 19 June 2010

Preschool gardeners lead the way in sustainable living

Ainslie School, Reid Preschool is creating a generation of green thumbs through their new 'kinderARTgarden', made possible through a grant from Teachers Credit Union.

Designed to teach students about the importance of sustainability from an early age, the 'kinderARTgarden' incorporates vegetable and sensory gardens, a fruit grove and sculptures created by local artists.

The school is celebrating the achievements of its sustainability program, which began after the Credit Union awarded the grant in late 2009.

Teacher Gina Nugent, who oversees the program implementation, said "We aimed to create an innovative and hands-on environment for preschool aged children to explore and develop knowledge, attitudes, values and skills about caring for the environment.

"Since the program began, students have become expert recyclers, now composting all organic waste. We also cook the produce, reinforcing their understanding of the food's origin, seasonal change, healthy eating and the importance of a healthy lifestyle."

Students have planted vegetables and herbs, use 'chook buckets' to collect organic waste and even work as 'Green Rangers' and 'Earth Monitors' at school to reduce power and water waste.

"The staff and students have benefited enormously from the program, forging close and meaningful links with the community that will continue in subsequent years," Ms Nugent said.

The project provides an active platform for students to meet ACT curriculum requirements, while also teaching students the skills necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Kevin King, manager of Teachers Credit Union in the ACT, said the Teachers Environment Fund was formed to assist public schools and TAFEs in their long-term sustainability.

"Through the Teachers Environment Fund, the Credit Union is helping teachers bring to life their sustainability projects. We want to support projects which not only help sustainability, but also provide teachers with a practical teaching example that embeds sustainability into students' thinking.

"The Teachers Environment Fund grants can be used for any suitable environmental project such as water and energy saving, composting and recycling, tree planting and biodiversity - even creating a children's garden," Mr. King said.

Ainslie School, Reid Preschool is one of ten educational facilities to receive a Teachers Environment Fund grant in the late 2009 round.

Since 2008, the Teachers Environment Fund has distributed over \$110,000 to 34 schools and TAFEs across NSW, ACT, NT and WA.

About Teachers Credit Union

Teachers Credit Union is one of the largest credit unions in Australia. With more than 155,000 members nationally and assets of \$3 billion, Teachers Credit Union has the highest member retention rate of any Australian credit union.

The Teachers Environment Fund is a Teachers Credit Union initiative to assist public schools and TAFEs in their long-term sustainability. Applications for the next round of funding open in August.

For further enquiries on how to become a member or to apply for a grant, please visit the website on www.teacherscreditunion.com.au

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