Welcome, teachers and students back to Term 2. We cannot believe that it has come around so quickly. Term 1 was extremely busy with Year 11 Biology students and now we are starting to have Primary visiting as well. BHP has been covered in Azolla, a small native fern, that arrives every couple of years. The birds are make interesting tracks as they swim through it.

It has been a hot summer and the water in Little Swamp and Redhead Lagoon is very low. Some Autumn and winter rain would be lovely to freshen up the water. This is also a very important teaching point when investigating the Awabakal aboriginal use of the Reserve. What would they do during dry times?

Awabakal Bookings can be made by phoning 49448233. Awabakal EEC is available for school bookings on Wednesday and Thursday each week. There will also be some opportunity for Tuesday to be available for small groups only, depending on staffing availability. Contact details remain as above and due to part time staffing, phone calls may be returned at a later date.
EVENTS

**Planet Savers 2015.** Celebrate World Environment Day on **Wednesday 3 or Thursday 4 June.** Planet Savers is a 2 hour event for senior primary students who participate in a range of hands on activities presented by a wide range of providers. Presenters for 2015 include Newcastle CC; National Parks and Wildlife Service; Hunter Wetlands Centre; Wetlands & Awabakal EEC staff; and secondary students form Callaghan College, Waratah Campus. A registration form is on our website.

**Sustainability Network Day for Teachers.** **Wednesday 22 April** (Week 1, Term 2) has been put aside for the annual Sustainability Network Day for Teachers. This will include up to date information on what is happening with environmental education within DEC; the opportunity to meet other environmental providers; great news stories from our own local schools; hands on workshops highlighting activities for students; and the opportunity for all teachers to share experiences.

**Wet & Wild.** An early reminder to keep an eye out for Wet & Wild registration. The research challenge for senior primary students starts on **Week 2 Term 3,** but schools can register any time during Term 2. The program runs for 3 weeks and students download 24 clues for 4 wetland organisms on Monday and send them back to us sorted into the correct organism on Friday. Points are scored for the correct organism and the 6 correct matching clues. A great program which integrates technology, research and environmental education.

**Envirothion.** This is an early call for the real life environmental challenge for teams of Year 11 students. The location is a secret; the challenge will be revealed on the day; hands on fieldwork activities support the investigation; local community members are available for students to interview. And it is all concluded with a presentation to a panel of judges. Envirothion will run on **Wednesday 14 October,** look for information and registration in SchoolBiz mid-term.

Further information and the Registration Form are available on the webpage in ‘Additional Programs’.

**Special Days.** Get your students motivated and involved by participating in special days. During Term 2, they include:

**National Tree Day.** This is not until the 24 July 2015, however this term is the time to look out your contacts to arrange the plants you need for National Tree Day.

**Earth Day. 22 April 2015.** Schools around the world will be celebrating this special day.

**International Composting Week, 4 – 10 May.** Composting is a great way for schools to manage organic waste from school lunches and canteens. It is also a good support for school with veggie gardens.

**International Migratory Bird Day.** **9 May.** The Hunter Estuary is a very important location for migratory wading birds, they visit in their thousands during summer to feed and prepare for the long flight to the northern hemisphere. Unfortunately, this date has been identified for the northern hemisphere.

**World Environment Day.** **5 June.** We celebrate this day with Planet Savers, our senior primary school event. Come and join us. There are more details under the Events section.

**NAIDOC Week.** This occurs during the July school holidays and schools often celebrate either before or after the holidays. Awabakal EEC provides a great program.

**United Nations Decade for Biodiversity, 2010 – 2020.** During 2015, we will be halfway through this decade, so don’t forget Biodiversity in your school planning over the next couple of years.
2015 has been proclaimed as the **International Year of Light and Light Technologies** to focus on science and the applications of light to seek to raise global awareness of how optics and photonics can have a positive impact on energy, education, agriculture and health. This topic could link well with an excursion on energy sustainability. Wetlands EEC has lots of appropriate equipment and activities. Contact us to plan your excursion.

**EXCURSION PROGRAMS**

EEC staff are reviewing programs and developing new programs to support the new Australian Curriculum in NSW. New programs being introduced include:

**At Wetlands Environmental Education Centre**
- Stage 4 Science - Living World, Living Wetlands
- Stage 5 Science – Living World, Living Communities
- Stage 5 Geography – Issues in Australian Environments, Urban Growth and Decline

**At Awabakal environmental Education Centre – Wednesday and Thursday (Maybe Tuesday by negotiation)**
- Stage 4 Science – Living World, Living Environment
- Stage 5 Science – Living World, Sustainable Environment
- Stage 5 Geography – Issues in Australian Environments, Coastal Management

**WEB NEWS**

Our website will be undergoing a transformation with a change of location during this term. Our present one should be still available until that process is complete.

The new web address will be: [www.wetlands-e.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.wetlands-e.schools.nsw.edu.au)

Please let us know if there are things you would like to be included.

**In the meantime, check out this website for other great information including:**
- Planet Savers Registration Form
- Wet & Wild – information and practice sessions
- Green Access Poster 2015 (electronic copy)
- Our Annual School Report for 2014
- Our School Plan 2015 - 2017
- Term 1 & Term 2 EcoNews
- ClimateCam resources
- Overviews of new and existing excursion programs
SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS INITIATIVES

New Excursion Venue. Several local high schools will be trialling the new excursion venue at Steel River during Term 2. Hunter Water Corporation has constructed a new Water Recycling Plant to provide recycled water to industries on Kooraingang Island. The Plant includes a Visitors’ Centre and WEEC have developed an education and excursion program for Stage 4 students. The excursion is adaptable for any Stage that is studying a unit on water, water management or sustainable use of water. Keep an eye out for its opening and we can provide details for booking an excursion when they become available.

CLIMATECAM FOR SCHOOLS

Student Workshop. A workshop for ClimateCam schools was held in Week 9, Term 1. Students had the opportunity to share experiences from their schools and participate in hands on audits; investigate ways to improve the school environmental footprint; and what is needed to earn Stars for their school. Congratulations to Fassifern PS, they received their plaque for joining the ClimateCam program. Star applications are due in September and we are looking forward to receiving them from all the participating schools.

GRANTS & COMPETITIONS

Eco Schools Grants. Grants from the Department of Environment and Heritage are available to schools to involve their students and community in developing and implementing environmental management projects. Grants will open in March 2015 and close on 15 May, more information is available at: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/schools.htm

There are other grants available on this website, so check them out as they may be just right for your school: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/grantsintro.htm

RESOURCES

Lab Coats. Our Wetlands EEC primary students feel very special wearing our new Lab Coats as they are discovering pond animals in the Wet Lab.

Green Access Poster. The 2015 edition of the Green Access Poster is available now. If you haven’t seen it in your school, contact your local Government environmental officer (contact details will be on last year’s GAP) or WEEC for a copy. Information is also available via the website: www.greenaccessposter.com.au

Geography Teachers Association. This association is a great support for NSW Geography teachers. Keep an eye out for the local Conferences near you in 2015. There is lots of support material on their website. Geography Teachers Association - http://www.gtansw.org.au/ 2015 Conferences: yet to be announced.
Australian Association of Environmental Education (AAEE) is a useful networking group which participates in the wider EE decision making processes. The NSW Chapter was initiated by teachers and now includes a wide range of environmental providers. National and State biennial conferences are held in alternate years.

The NSW AAEE Conference has been changed to 29 & 30 October, 2015 at Kurri Kurri TAFE in the Hunter. This is a wonderful opportunity to hear Associate Professor Niki Harré from the University of Auckland. Professor Harré has taught social and community psychology for twelve years and is author of Psychology for a Better World. Her recent research projects have focused on sustainable communities and schools, and positive youth development.

The EOI for presenters is now open and submissions will be notified during May.

We will keep you up to date with Conference and Registration details as they occur.

That’s all for now.

The Hunter Environmental Education Team at Wetlands & Awabakal Environmental Education Centres
Peter Jones, Carolyn Gillard, Rhonda Atkins, Jo Gardiner & Bronwyn Strange.