This will be my last newsletter as I am retiring after 20 years at Wetlands and Awabakal EECs. Other staff will continue to keep you up to date with environmental issues and happenings at both of the EEC sites. Keep up all of the great environmental initiatives that are happening in schools, it is fabulous.

I am finishing with a photo of my favourite ‘Wandering Whistling Ducks’.

The beautiful new bridge at Awabakal EEC suffered damage during the April storms. Fortunately, that was our only set back and the repairs are being attended to, so excursions have not been impacted upon. We also welcome Trish Guthrie back from maternity leave this term.

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

**Wet & Wild.** The research challenge for senior primary students starts on **Week 2 Term 3**, so you will need to be quick to register for this session, but another will be running in Term 4. 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. This is a great program which integrates technology, research and environmental education.

**Envirothon.** Registrations for Envirothon are out now and a copy is on the website. This is a 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. Envirothon will run on **Wednesday 14 October**.

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

- **National Tree Day.** The date is **24 July 2015**, get your students out there planting trees, shrubs or grasses to increase the biodiversity of your school grounds.
- **NAIDOC Week.** This occurs during the July school holidays, **7 – 14 July**, and schools often celebrate either before or after the holidays. Awabakal EEC provides a great program.
- **National Science Week.** **15 – 23 August.** Wetlands EEC has a great science based, energy discovery program for Stage 3.
- **Keep Australia Beautiful Week.** **24 – 30 August.**
- **World Water Week.** **23 – 28 August.**
- **National Biodiversity Month.** **September.**
- **National Wattle Day.** **1 September.** Did you know that in Australia, there is a wattle in flower somewhere during every month of the year?
- **National Threatened Species Day.** **7 September.** Hunter Wetlands Centre has special breeding programs for Freckled Duck and Green and Golden Bell Frogs.

**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.

**Planet Savers 2015.** Wetlands and Awabakal EECs celebrated World Environment Day on **Thursday 4 June**. Over 200 students participated in a range of hands on activities. They included: Waste presented by NCC; Culture presented by NPWS; Green Lunchbox and Badge Making presented by students from Callaghan College, Waratah; Planting presented by HWCA; Water & Energy activities presented by WEEC & AEEC. Photos are on our website.
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 Wetlands
Stage 5 Science – Living Communities

**At Awabakal environmental Education Centre – Wednesday and Thursday (Maybe Tuesday by negotiation)**
Stage 4 Science – Living Environment
Stage 5 Science – Sustainable Environments

**Stage 4 Science.** Wetlands EEC staff has written a Stage 4 Science unit of work based on water management and covering a variety of aspects from the Water Cycle, Water Use and Water Treatment. This was prepared for Hunter Water Corporation and the opening of the Kooragang Recycle Plant, which is offering supporting excursions.

A copy will be available either from Hunter Water Corporation or Wetlands EEC.
Hunter Water Corporation contact is: Arianne Martin. Email her at arianne.martin@hunterwater.com.au

WEB NEWS

Our website has undergone a transformation and a change of location. We hope you enjoy it.

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

As our old website is still floating around ensure that you have the correct one, especially if you use Google to find us.

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 pictures
- Wet & Wild – information and practice sessions
- Green Access Poster 2015 (electronic copy)
- Our Annual School Report for 2014
- Our School Plan 2015 - 2017
- Terms 1, 2 & 3 EcoNews
- ClimateCam resources
- Overviews of new and existing excursion programs

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS INITIATIVES

**New Excursion Venue.** The new excursion venue at Steel River has been trialled by Stage 4 Science students. Hunter Water Corporation has constructed a new Water Recycling Plant to provide recycled water to industries on Kooragang 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.

Bookings for a 2 hour excursion can now be made through Arianne Martin at Hunter Water Corporation. Her contact details are:

Arianne Martin
Education & Communications Officer
T 02 4979 9890 | F 02 4979 9468 | M 0421 008 882
Email: arianne.martin@hunterwater.com.au
CLIMATECAM FOR SCHOOLS

Teacher and Student Workshop. A workshop for ClimateCam schools will be held Thursday August 6th and will provide information on sustainable lighting for schools. A series of workshops will assist in planning for Star applications. Schools considering joining the program can also attend to find out what it is all about. A registration form is available on our website. Star applications are due in September and we are looking forward to receiving them from all the participating schools.

GRANTS & COMPETITIONS

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 and information on upcoming events on their website. Geography Teachers Association - http://www.gtansw.org.au/

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 date of 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.

We will keep you up to date with Conference and Registration details as they occur.
Planet Savers was held on Thursday 4 June, the day before World Environment Day, this year. Over 200 students participated in a range of hands on activities based on important environmental issues. The activities were introduced by NPWS, NCC & WEEC staff and some great student leaders from Callaghan College, Waratah Campus.

Here are a few images from the day.

Learning about Energy  Water Quality Testing  Environmental Messages on Badges

Increasing biodiversity  Water Quality Testing  Awabakal Culture

Water quality Testing  Healthy Lunchbox  Recycle Relay

That’s all for now.

The Hunter Environmental Education Team at Wetlands & Awabakal Environmental Education Centres
Peter Jones, Carolyn Gillard (signing off), Rhonda Atkins, Jo Gardiner, Trish Guthrie & Bronwyn Strange.