

# GeckoEd - Environmental Education

By Lois Levy

Gecko's Educators have had a very busy time of late with lots of school bookings and the feedback has been excellent.

We have focussed on catchment and coastal studies as a requirement of the Catchment to Coast Federal grant we received and have now developed some excellent packages for future delivery to more schools. We also developed a great package on sustainable design which we will build on in future.

While we link our sessions to curricula, we take an interpretative approach to environmental education as our aim is not just to impart facts, but to inspire a love of nature and active involvement in its care. This approach requires a high level of creativity from our Educators.

A recent feedback sheet commented "*the educators were very enthusiastic and knowledgeable and ... the students really enjoyed the presentations and field trips.*"

The activities rated the highest score of 5/5 for relevance of activities to gaining knowledge of the environment and alignment with the educational outcomes and essential learnings sought by the teacher.

The challenge for GeckoEd's viability will come when the grant runs out in September and we can no longer subsidise our programs. However, we are working on that.

We are also in the process of developing a community education package of 48 sessions over a year for the trainees under the latest Jobs Plan grant that Gecko was successful in obtaining for Schusters Park. This is a wonderful opportunity to develop some engaging programs suitable for community members as well as schools.

We are very sad to lose one of our Educators this week as Skye Patch moves to Sydney. Skye has been involved with Gecko since one of the early Youth Earth Symposia as a student and came back to us when she graduated from teacher training last year. In the intervening years she had pursued an acting career in Hollywood, but missed Australia so fortunately for us she returned. Her combined teaching and acting skills on top of her foundation of a strong environmental ethos will make her very hard to replace.