New excursion programs & resources now available!

In response to the need expressed by P-7 teachers in 2012 for excursion programs that explicitly support the Australian Curriculum and/or mirror C2C units, we are continuing to develop our program offerings.

The cross curricular priority Sustainability is obviously our main focus. All of our excursion programs have sustainability concepts embedded in them. We have also audited C2C Version 1.1 units for opportunities to teach and learn about sustainability. The available matrix can be appended to your school curriculum plan.

The implementation of our residential excursion programs has been extended, after partial trial in 2012. We are moving towards a four-chapter model:
1. A pre-visit tailored specifically to your chosen program
2. The custom-designed residential excursion
3. A post-visit to follow up on learnings in the excursion
4. An ongoing relationship with the school, perhaps in support of a particular year-level cohort or project

Science is one of our ‘focus’ subject areas, so as well as offering our traditional Science-based excursion programs, we now offer residential Science excursion programs to support the Australian Curriculum:
- Year 7 Water (based on C2C Units 1&2 V2.0)
- Year 4 Erosion (based on C2C Unit 1 V2.0 Here Today, Gone Tomorrow)
- Year 6 Life on Earth (based on C2C Unit 4)

We are currently developing Science excursions to support:
- P-Year 9 Exploration of Rainforest (based on Wet Tropics Rainforest Explorer resources)
- Year 5 Adaptations
- Year 6 Composting
- Year 9 Biochar

In English, we will soon have available a multi-level (Years 5,6,7, Unit 2 V2.0) excursion program called The Fair Realm, that is based on writing a persuasive text.

In History, we already have a multi-level (Years 4,5,6) excursion program available based on the history of Paluma and the former City of Thuringowa. This program was successfully trialled in 2012.

School Environmental Management Planning

We’ve had a few enquiries about support available in 2013 for school environmental management planning. In the SPRR Framework 2012-2015, under School Plan, the need to include environmental management is noted:
School improvement strategies embed…
environmental management (water, waste, energy and biodiversity) strategies...

The Queensland Sustainable Schools website is available as a ‘quick link’ in ISIP in One School. This site allows you to develop and print an environmental management plan. I am an administrator for this site.

Every primary school in the North Queensland Region is already registered to this site. If you are in a school in another sector, in a primary school that needs access permissions updated or have lost your password, please ask your Principal to email me with your name, role within the school and email address. We can also offer limited on-site assistance in developing your SEMP. Contact us if you need help.
Linda Venn lvenn1@eq.edu.au
Reef Guardians Schools Networking Meetings

We hope to have Paluma EEC represented at all Reef Guardian Schools events in 2013, starting with the valuable networking meetings:

♦ Tyto Conference Centre (Ingham) 20 February 3:30-5:00pm
♦ East Ayr SS 21 February 4-6pm
♦ Bowen SS 28 February 4-6pm
♦ Reef HQ Townsville 14 March 3:30-6:00pm
♦ Cannonvale SS 19 March Times TBC
♦ Charters Towers Central SS 21 March 3:00-5:30pm

Australian Sustainability Education Alliance—Date Claimer

As members of the Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE), Paluma Environmental Education Centre is also a member of AESA. AESA has been asked to
To review and map the delivery of Education for Sustainability relevant to the implementation of Sustainability as a cross curriculum priority

Sampling of progress in embedding Sustainability in the curriculum across Australia will take place during a webinar on Saturday 16 March. Paluma Environmental Education Centre has offered to act as local hub for this event (hopefully at Heatley Secondary College—still to be confirmed). The webinar will feed regional information into the national project (funded by the federal Education Minister, Peter Garrett) to determine the success, or otherwise, of the implementation of the Australian Curriculum cross-curricula priority – Sustainability. The webinar will also strengthen local partnerships with other agencies sharing an EEFS objective.

All teachers, environmental educators and principals interested in Environmental Education for Sustainability (EEFS) are invited to save this date to participate in the webinar which aims to:
♦ Engage with EEFS professionals and practitioners in our regional setting
♦ Share North Queensland regional EEFS efforts with others across the state
♦ Participate in a call to action; advocacy for EEFS coordination and communication at regional, state and national levels.
♦ Engage with Graham Tupper (ACF) manager of the AESA research project
RSVP by 1 March via email to aaeegld@gmail.com and Cc lvenn1@eq.edu.au Put “AESA Webinar” (in subject line)

Earth Smarties in 2013

The Earth Smart Science initiative ended last year, but we still hope to deliver the following special initiatives to our NQ Region schools:
♦ One Earth Smarties student environmental leaders residential excursion in Term 3, targeting students from NQ West schools. In memory of Andree Griffin, an avid amateur ornithologist who supported educational activities at Paluma EEC since its establishment, the Centre will sponsor accommodation, on-site catering and program fees. Schools will need to cover student and supervisor transport costs. The dates for this four-day residential excursion are yet to be confirmed, but are likely to be in the week beginning 15 July.
♦ Science investigations in composting (targeting Year 6) and biochar (targeting Year 9), working first with interested Ingham schools and our partners in Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited and Terrain - NRM in the Wet Tropics. Participating students will present their findings to the community during Science Week during 10-18 August.
♦ Engaging secondary school students in real-life environmental issues through the Kids Teaching Kids model. Kids Teaching Kids Week is from 9-13 September, followed by the national conference in Melbourne from 13-15 October.
♦ Involving primary school students in Future Leaders Eco-Challenges in Term 3, working with our partners in Reef Guardians Schools Program.
Worksheets for endangered bird now available

Students from Thuringowa State High School will learn how to protect the habitat of one of the north’s most endangered birds as part of their studies this year.

The School is one of the first to incorporate specially developed Black-throated Finch worksheets into its curriculum. The worksheets are designed for each year level encouraging students to make model habitats, take a field trip and put themselves in the shoes of land managers trying to protect habitat and run a viable business. They are designed to align with the National Curriculum.

The Black-throated Finch Trust has also released guidelines that show landholders how to look after bird habitat.

It’s estimated just a few hundred Black-throated Finches are left in the Townsville region. Australia’s Black-throated Finch population has contracted making the Townsville coastal plain one of its last strongholds. Research suggests numbers are declining.

The worksheets and guidelines have been developed by the Black-throated Finch Trust. The Trust’s Tony Grice says, “The key to this birds’ survival is making sure it has somewhere to live and breed. If we don’t make an effort do this it is at risk of becoming extinct.”

“Our hope is that more schools will use the worksheets we’ve provided and that landholders will take the time to get a copy of the guidelines to learn how easy it is to accommodate the bird on their property. It’s the first time this sort of information about the bird has been made so accessible.”

Thuringowa High School’s Shelley De Ruyter says, “The Black-throated Finch resources provide a fantastic opportunity for students to meet and work with local experts linking the community to the science curriculum. Authentic experiences such as these help our students realise the importance of all landholder actions in managing environments so that they are suitably maintaining our local wildlife.”

In December a small group of interested students from Thuringowa State High School participated in an early morning field trip to a known habitat area of the bird in Oak Valley. It was followed up by a visit to the school from some of the region’s experts in Black-throated Finches including PhD student Juliana Rechetelo who explained the science behind saving one of the region’s rarest birds.

Year 10 student Katherine Casey says, “Even though it was really hard waking up at 4.30 am it was worth it because my visit to the home of the Black-throated Finch has helped me recognise that everyone plays an important role in ensuring a healthy habitat for native species like this bird. Hopefully one day I’ll get to see a Black-throated Finch.”

The school worksheets, landholder guidelines and one page fact sheet are available from the Black-throated Finch website blackthroatedfinch.com

A Facebook site has also been set up dedicated to the ecological and biological information about the bird facebook.com/blackthroatedfinch?

For more information contact: Kathy Cogo 07 4771 3714 | 0466 015 183
Tony Grice 07 4753 8543 | 4753 8543

Birdlife Townsville presentations to schools

Birdlife Townsville is distributing class sets of the book Rainforest Birds of the Southern Wet Tropics. This is an excellent resource for students coming to Paluma on excursion, as bird watching is a popular learning experience in every program. Further copies of Rainforest Birds may be obtained from Birdlife Townsville . www.birdlifetownsville.org.au

Volunteers from Birdlife Townsville are also available to present to students on rainforest birds. They need to know the year level, and to be provided with a few different days and times for the lesson. Their coordinator, Elna Kerswell, will contact the presenters to see who is available at those times and then confirm with the school the day and timeslot. Contact Elna at elnakers@gmail.com .

If your class is booked into Paluma EEC for an excursion, you might be contacted by Birdlife Townsville to ascertain your interest. Observation of birds fits into many of the biological sciences units, as the matrix available on our website demonstrates.

https://palumaeec.eq.edu.au/Supportandresources/Formsanddocuments/Pages/Documents.aspx
Book Reviews

As we weather yet another Wet Season, here are two book reviews for you to consider as additions to your library. The first details some of the wildlife that might invite itself into your space while active over Summer. The second will give you inspiration in replacing the vegetation lost during severe weather vents over the last few years. As we have suffered, so has the local wildlife.

TAKE CARE! Poisonous Australian Animals (3rd enlarged edition)
Dr Struan Sutherland and Susie Kennewell
80 pages

Australia – home to deadly and poisonous animals like the Death Adder, Taipan, Box Jellyfish, Red-back Spider and the Platypus…?

Whether they bite, sting, secrete or stab, 34 of Australia’s most poisonous animals are covered in this book, each explained in one or two pages of text and pictures. The text contains information about the appearance, habitat and habits of the animals, whilst large and detailed colour photographs assist with identification. A distribution map is also included to show where each creature can be found.

A section of the book is dedicated to first aid techniques, and at the conclusion of each animal’s explanation there is information as to which form of first aid should be applied in the instance that someone runs afoul of the creature’s poisonous talents.

This informative and humorous book is a great starting point to gather basic information about Australia’s poisonous wildlife, and should appeal to students in the middle to upper primary school range. It is also a handy resource to have around to prompt correct first aid in the instance of a sting or bite.

Birdscaping Australian Gardens: A Guide to Native Plants and the Garden Birds they attract
George Adams 364 pages

This book is a great guide to help anyone establish a garden that is natural, native to your local area, attracts native animals and is sustainable. The colourful pictures provide an insight into what your garden could look like, what certain plants can look like in the garden and also there are many fantastic pictures of birds and butterflies that you can attract to your garden.

The layout enables you to travel from setting up this garden, maintaining the garden, why certain aspects are required too pictures and description of what might visit the garden and many other interesting topics. The book describes the symbiotic relationships plants and animals share and provides information about plants names, flower colour, light requirements, animals it attracts, flowering period, what zone the plant grows in and the height of plants. There is also information about the major Australian bird families including information regarding the bird’s habitat, seasonal movement, feeding habits and breeding behaviour and nesting.

There are many messages intertwined in the book about how and why it is important to mimic the natural environment of animals so that you can attract them to your garden. Most importantly it explains that by using local native plants you will achieve more success as the plants will require less attention because they are adapted to the local environment. Also as our towns and cities are growing, many animals are displaced and this book explains that by providing native animals with a place to shelter and grow the natural environment will be improved and patches of remnant vegetation will remain connected by our input to the ecosystem.

This book has many applications, the combination of beautiful pictures, descriptions and summary tables ensures that everyone can interact with the book on different levels.

Next newsletter—”How To” keep chooks in your school grounds