

Outdoor classroom success...



Tenison Woods College has embarked on its second year of a special program for boys which allows them to break out from the classroom and get "hands-on" in the outdoors.

The Outdoor Classroom was trialled successfully at the school last year, with another group of middle school boys signing on for the unique outdoor learning experience in 2008. The alternative learning program has already proven a great success, allowing students who were finding themselves restless and bored in the day-to-day classroom environment to develop new

skills in the great outdoors. With a strong environmental focus, the program keeps the group of Year 7-8 students busy all year round with a series of conservation projects taking them from the region's forests, to its beaches.

The Outdoor Classroom® is a partnership between Tenison Woods College, Anglican Community Care and the Department of Environment and Heritage. It aims to not only teach students important environmental values, but also build skills in teamwork, independence, self confidence and self esteem.

Outdoor Classroom team leader Ian Tucker said the program also required the boys to work on issues of trust and communication. "Our focus is on self esteem and allowing them to see that they can be successful in something, while also allowing them to develop an understanding about the environment," Mr Tucker said.

The Outdoor Classroom takes place one day a week for the full school year, whatever the weather. Previous projects have included repairing fencing at the peak of Mount Schank, cutting back overhanging trees, and erosion control on local beaches and sand dunes. The class is currently working on the early stages of the Cape Banks Camping Ground redevelopment, including replacing post and rail fencing, repairing vandalism, and fencing restricted trails to keep motorbikes and quad bikes from tearing up vegetation. Other projects planned for the rest of the year include a beach clean-up and litter survey, trapping and tagging shorebirds with the Friends of Shorebirds group, and fencing work at the Caroline Sinkhole.

Educational support worker Gill Clayfield said the program had already led to positive changes in its participants. "We are an alternative program for students who are more suited to a hands-on learning experience and many of the teachers have commented that they have noticed a behavioural and attitude change in the classroom," Mrs Clayfield said.

Darcie Ranger, one of the students participating in this year's Outdoor Classroom, said he enjoyed the opportunity to work outside and be part of a team.

Above: Outdoor Classroom participants Brock Henley (left) and Darcie Ranger dig new posts into the ground as part of a project to restore bollards at the Cape Banks Lighthouse, near Carpenter Rocks.

"It's good to be outside and not sit inside all the time," Darcie said. Fellow student Brock Henley said the class was a lot of fun, but also educational. "I really like digging holes and drilling holes, and watching trees falling down," Brock said. "You get to go out and do work, but it's also helping you. It helps with your maths, because you're always measuring stuff."

Anglican Community Care program coordinator John Wylie said the organisation was extremely pleased the pilot program in 2007 was successful and that they were able to secure funding to run it again this year.

"To witness the confidence and sense of achievement in the boys represents to us a project that has a positive impact on their lives and gives them opportunities that otherwise may not be available to them," Mr Wylie said.

The students are provided with their safety equipment, protective clothing and uniforms, while the Department for Environment and Heritage organises the projects, and provides tools and expert support.

At the end of the year, each student must take part in a PowerPoint presentation and speech about the project, which will form part of their English assessment.

Joseph Schoenfish (left), Jonte Resmussen (front) and Curtis Clark work together to install new bollards at the Cape Banks Lighthouse, as part of an Outdoor Classroom project.



Outstanding school fees...

There remain many fees outstanding for this term. We ask that families ensure that their account is paid in full by Friday, May 11 (last day of term).

If you are experiencing financial difficulty and this may not be possible, we ask that you contact me personally to make suitable or alternative arrangements. Any discussions are kept on a strictly confidential basis. We remind families that where either the account is not paid in full or arrangements have not been made (including payments by installments) a \$30 administration fee will apply.

The school office will be open during the school holidays (9am until 4pm) if you have any queries or plan to make any payments.

Chris Taylor
Business Manager
Phone 8724 4603 (direct line)

CANTEEN ROSTER (08 8724 4607)

Monday	14/4 Cheryl O'Neil, Josie Lawrence
Tuesday	15/4 Ella Hein
Wednesday	16/4 Pat Finnis
Thursday	17/4 Dina Macera, Jan Telford
Friday	18/4 Bernadette Passauer, Jane Jenkins,