

# Little Green Steps

## Western Australia

Time of *Bunuru* and *Djeran* in the Noongar calendar

### A little Update

What's next for 2015? Have a look at the resources page of this newsletter and learn about what is new and upcoming for LGS WA. At this point Little Green Steps WA is looking for further funding as the Lotterywest and City of Cockburn funding has coming to an end, though the generosity of Cockburn continues as we continue to gain some in-kind support from the city.

2015 has shown a lot of excitement so far. We ran a couple of workshops through the City of Canning including the new 'Cultural and Social Diversity' workshop in conjunction with the One World Centre. The new waste resource kit we are creating is looking great and is well on its way to be available for purchase later in 2015.

On March 11th we held our celebration and first networking event at Kings Park Education Centre. The evening was a great success with around 60 people in attendance from universities, schools, early years

services, local governments and representatives providers. Thank you to the presenters Amy Krupa (AAEWA), Jenny Jay (Curtin University), Chris Beaton (City of Cockburn) and Howard Flinders (Department of Education) for their presentations and to those that attended.

What's next for 2015? At this point Little Green Steps WA is looking for further funding as the Lotterywest and City of Cockburn funding has coming to an end, though the generosity of Cockburn continues as we benefit from in-kind support from the city.

Do you know of a Local Government or business that would like to partner with LGS WA? Email the Program Manager on [lgs@aaeewa.org.au](mailto:lgs@aaeewa.org.au) to get more information.



Around 60 people attended 'Celebrating Sustainability in the Early Years' Networking event and listened to guest speakers like Amy Krupa from AAEWA

# Earth Hour



## Earth hour – just one day a year?

Earth Hour is something Australians should feel proud of. Created in Sydney in 2007, Earth Hour created a large following and the next year it became a global event. To promote the awareness of Climate Change this event reminds us to turn off our lights for one hour to show that a simple action can have a large impact.

Earth hour has already happened on March 28th so I guess we'll have to wait until next year right? Wrong! The idea behind earth hour is to create awareness of the impact we, as individuals, have on our planet in our daily lives, not just once a year as a tokenistic effort toward sustainability. Just as we try to instill a sense of agency in our children and try to build environmental responsibility in them, we need to be reminded as adults that the same applies to us.

### Activity: Daily Earth Hour!

Some centres already practice Earth Hour every day during nap time. If you are unable to do this every day then start off with once a week and get everyone involved, including staff. Perhaps this can be done while running outdoor activities? Or you could run a sensory activity through touch, or sounds, or smells. Turning off the lights will encourage children to be more in tune with these senses. But remember, get everyone involved which means the aim is to have all lights, computers and electronics will be off for that hour! Be sure to explain to the children that it is a reminder for everyone to use as little electricity as possible to help save our planet.

# Climate Change

## Climate Change is a challenge but what is it exactly?

When thinking of climate change, many of us have had an image of a lone polar bear standing on a small patch of ice surrounded by water imprinted in our minds. We know it's bad, and that it means 'the ice caps are melting' and if we "turn off your lights we can save the polar bears from climate change", but how? It seems like such a far stretch from this seemingly minor act like turning off a light could impact something as huge as the ice caps. This leaves many of us feeling disconnected about the repercussions of our energy use. So how do we genuinely teach and engage our colleagues, staff and children in reducing energy consumption when to us it can feel like such a severed connection. It's almost as if someone has told us  $1+1 = G$ . We may believe them whole heartedly, but it doesn't mean we understand, which means we are more likely to forget as it's harder to prioritise something we do not understand or feel connected to. So, why are we turning off these lights?

The planet as a whole is warming, which is where the term 'global warming' came from. The warming of our planet has raised alarm bells for scientists. The warming effect is occurring at a faster rate than would naturally occur making it harder for plants and animals to adapt, and this change has been linked to human activity. In Australia alone,

Places around WA are getting warmer and drier



the average temperature has risen  $0.9^{\circ}\text{C}$  since 1910. Though this may not sound like a lot for many of us, negative impacts from this increase in temperatures are already being seen and it is predicted they could continue to rise as much as  $5.1^{\circ}\text{C}$  by 2090.

## Global Warming or Climate Change?

Some of you may have noticed that many scientists are now saying 'Climate Change' rather than 'Global Warming', even though they seem to be referring to the same issue. So, what is the difference between the two terms? Global warming refers to the temperature changes as mentioned earlier, however Climate Change includes all aspects that affect a climate (temperature, precipitation, aridity, wind, etc). The changes concerning our planet are far more than temperature related, though that is one very serious aspect. Other changes in weather patterns and climate are also having dramatic effects on many ecosystems and their inhabitants. Since 1970 rainfall has increased in the northern parts of Australia and decreased in southern and eastern parts with those areas experiencing more intense fires as well. Sea levels have risen by approximately 20cm since 1900 and within Western Australia many of us have already personally experienced changes in climate. The current projections show continued reduction in the average rainfall of the south-west. The changes in climate will impact ecosystems world-wide, altering what can and cannot survive in those areas. As we know, many species in Australia are endemic and do not live anywhere else in the world, so these climate shifts can have significant impacts.



# Climate Change

## So how does climate change actually work?

The earth receives heat from the sun naturally and once this heat warms the Earth's surface it reflects back out to space. Over the years the activities of burning fossil fuels, deforestation, certain agriculture and fertilizer, additional greenhouse gases have been emitted and are being trapped in the atmosphere. These gases absorb this reflected heat that would ordinarily escape and this trapped heat is re-emitted back toward the earth. This process is similar to how a blanket works to keep you warm: trapping the heat emitted from your body, which is why some scientists refer to it as the 'carbon blanket' effect.

This is why we need to drastically reduce or even stop using energy that relies on burning fossil fuels for production of energy such as electricity. We could choose energy that is produced by a different source such as renewable energy, like wind farms.

For more information visit:

[www.climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au/en/about/](http://www.climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au/en/about/)

and

<http://climate.nasa.gov/causes/>

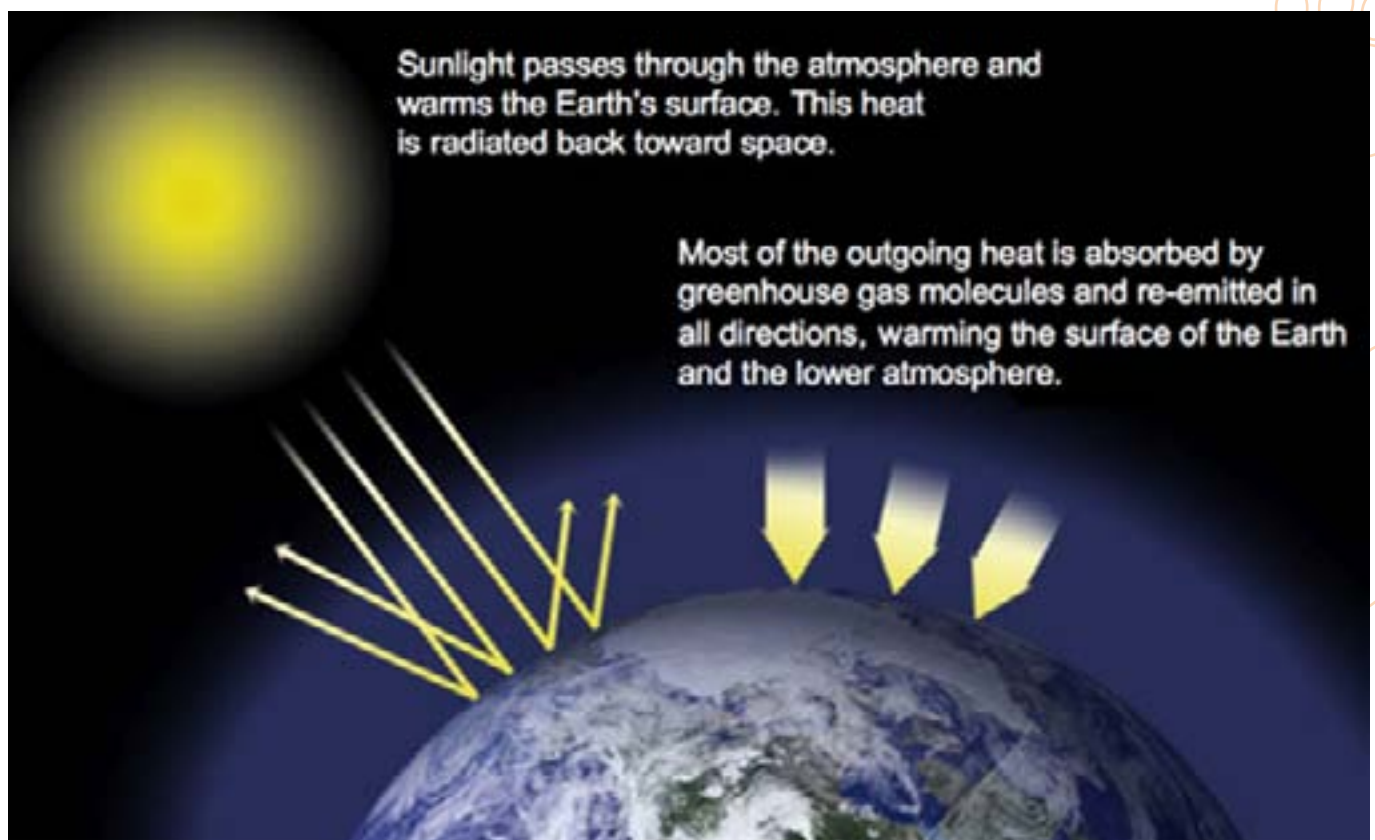


Image from <http://climate.nasa.gov/causes/>

# Climate Change

## What can you do in your early years services or school?

According to Western Power the peak energy hour for homes is between 4pm-8pm when most of us come home and turn on the air conditioner, watch TV and start cooking. It's also when many of us turn on the washing machine and driers at the end of the day to clean the sheets, towels etc. By avoiding the use of these machines at those times not only do you reduce your costs but you are also getting into the habit of reducing your energy consumption. Try using a timer that runs your machines at a later hour, or run your machines during the day as much as possible and of course, take advantage of warmer days by drying your laundry by the sunlight. This reduces your services contributions to the greenhouse gas emissions impacting climate change.

Making changes to lower your energy consumption doesn't have to cost you a fortune, here is a list of free things you can do to reduce your energy consumption as suggested by Western Power:

- At the start of summer, clean the filters in your air conditioner. This means your air conditioner won't have to work as hard when cooling your building.
- Before turning on the air conditioner, try using a fan, you could save up to \$200.
- Turn off your second fridge and save up to \$200 a year.
- Replacing your old incandescent lights with CLF's could save you up to \$165 a year.
- Replacing 10 downlights with 10 LED lights could save you up to \$150 a year.
- Adjusting your storage hot water system from 80 degrees to 60 degrees could you up to \$70 a year.
- During summer and warm weather, try not to use your clothes dryer and save up to \$95 a year.
- Washing your clothes in cold water could save up to \$40 a year.
- Reducing washing machine and dishwasher loads by one each week, and only washing full loads could save you up to \$50 a year.

### Low cost

- Put some shade cloth over your east and west facing windows. This will stop some of the sun before it hits your windows and heating up your house.
- Plant deciduous trees/bushes on the western and eastern sides of your house. These will block summer sun but let winter sun through.

### Higher cost

- Install roof insulation. This will prevent heat entering the house but also the cool air from your air conditioner escaping.

For more information or tips visit  
[www.westernpower.com.au/](http://www.westernpower.com.au/)

### Activity Suggestion

#### Get descriptive!

Autumn can bring changes to vegetation and falling leaves. Collect a range of leaves with the children and have them describe the colours, shape, size and smells etc. What a great opportunity to learn about different colours and textures with the babies and tots!

# Cooking with kids

## Ants on a Log

This is an 'oldie, but a goodie' and a super simple snack. Simply spread a thin layer of peanut (or almond) butter on some celery and place raisins, nuts or other chopped up fruits on top



This image has cream cheese instead of peanut butter. This is another option if one of your children is allergic to nuts.

Note: read ingredients carefully! Some peanut butter spreads contain a lot of sugar or palm oil from unsustainable sources.

## FRUITS IN SEASON IN WA

• Apple • fig • grape •  
kiwifruit • lime • passionfruit •  
persimmon •

## Healthy people, healthy planet: What's wrong with palm oil?

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the average annual rate of forest loss in Indonesia was 498,000 hectare (ha) from 2000-2010, which is the equivalent of over 55 rugby fields per hour. This can have a devastating effect on the plants, soil and animals that rely on this habitat for their homes. One of the most iconic animals that is feeling the devastating effects of this loss are the Orangutans of Indonesia, with approximately 50 of these animals killed due to deforestation every week. There are many products on our shelves that are either palm oil free or made from sustainable sources.



Photo taken by Kabir Bakie

Learn more about Palm Oil and download the new FREE Palm Oil identifying Barcode scanner app at [www.palmoilinvestigations.org/](http://www.palmoilinvestigations.org/)

## Activity: Reading labels for healthy eating

Reuse old containers and mark them with one of three colour: green, orange and red. Green means healthy, orange means it should be eaten a little less than the green, and red means this is a sometimes food (thing sweets, and junk food). Have the children "go shopping" and practice picking healthy meals and better options as part of a balanced diet.



# Sharing Stories

## The Green School

*Aline Arruda is an environment educator, she works as an educator in a childcare centre in South Perth and has begun her PhD research Education for Sustainability at Murdoch University this year. The 'Green School' is located in Bali and it has given Aline inspiration and ideas through their website. Last year Aline got the chance to visit the school and see it first-hand. Read about her fantastic experience visiting the Green School.*

There I was for the first time standing at the same amazing bamboo bridge I saw so many times on the internet. The tour on Wednesday is with John Hardy, the co-founder that with his wife Cynthia, made their dream of building the Greenest School on Earth come true. In their words:

"We are building Green School to create a new paradigm for learning. We want children to cultivate physical sensibilities that will enable them to adapt and be capable in the world. We want children to develop spiritual awareness and emotional intuition, and to encourage them to be in awe of life's possibilities."

And so they do.

"Green School is giving its students a natural, holistic and student-centered education in one of the most amazing environments on the planet" says in the website. That's the promised and from my point of view they achieve it. All the buildings in Green School (GS) are made of bamboo, there are no walls. The atmosphere is clean and you can almost smell freedom. Students cross by us all the time on the tour smiling, happy to be there. How many of us remembered loving school? Sustainability is everywhere. In the veggie garden looked after as shared responsibilities between students, in the compost bin made by a cow (the real manure), on the porch close to the river that has been built by students, on the solar panels, recycling facility or on the used clothes shop run by them, the students. Or on the aviary where the project is conservation, protect an almost extinct Indonesian bird, the myna bird. Also, students in GS learn about Indonesian culture, language.

I work with children, so I was attracted to the Kindy room. The area is beautiful, all open, a boat made with bamboo, lot of colours and drawings in the room, almost looking like a regular Kindy room. "Where is the sand pit?" I asked to the educator. "We have a mud pit". A mud pit? Oh yeah. How awesome is that. I felt like jumping in their mud pit.

Apart from Indonesian culture and language, the children have yoga class, meditation, Green Studies and regular visits to the library. Community is also very strong. I left the site feeling inspired, feeling renovated but more importantly, feeling that what Green School has can be implemented everywhere. Except for the bamboo buildings, no walls and location in Bali, everything else can be adapted and implemented, let's say.... In the centre I work in South Perth/WA. I left Green School aiming for just that and ready to start these changes.

To learn more about Green School visit [www.greenschool.org](http://www.greenschool.org)



Mud pit for the children to play in

## Call Out For Successful Stories

Have you got a great idea you would like to share with others? Had success implementing new and innovative ideas in your centre? We want to hear from you! We are calling out for short (250 word) articles to share with others on this network.

# Book Review



## Book Review from Your Local Librarian

To celebrate world health day on April 7th, this season's book review is all about healthy eating.

Jessica Donald, Acting Young People's Services Librarian at Cockburn Libraries has written these book reviews for you on books available today. More great reasons to visit your local library!

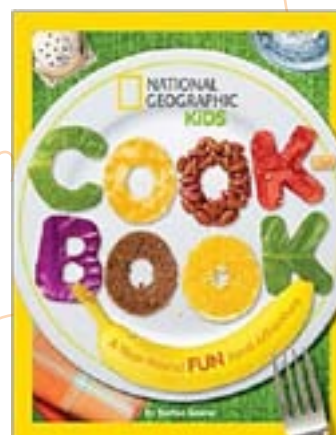
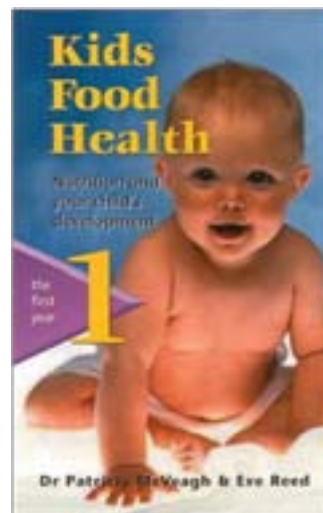
Healthy eating can be a hard thing to understand but your local Cockburn Library can help. We have extensive cooking and parenting books in our collections along with a range of eResources.

**Nutrition and Your Child's Development** by Patricia McVeagh and Eve Reed deals with nutrition, healthy eating behaviours and more, in this guide to kid's food health.

**At The Farmer's Market With Kids** by Leslie Jonath taps into the increasing popularity of these markets. There is one in Cooby every month. And for the junior cook we have books like **National Geographic Kids Cookbook** to get children involved in their own healthy lifestyles.

Find more at our website:

<http://library.cockburn.wa.gov.au>





# Resources

## Looking for Noongar cultural educational programs for the early years?



Bindi Bindi Dreaming delivers presentations focusing on sharing cultural knowledge about Noongar people, Noongar history and caring for country.

The current programs available are designed for primary school students, however there is a program in development for younger children and will be coming soon! In the meantime, Bindi Bindi dreaming is happy to adapt the current program to suit childcare centres and services if a request is made.

Learn more about Bindi Bindi Dreaming and the fabulous resources available to you by visiting

[www.bindibindidreaming.com.au](http://www.bindibindidreaming.com.au)

## Free Electricity Incursion

Western Power has a free electrical safety incursion, Shockproof for pre-primary to year 6. This incursion covers:

- how electricity works
- how they come into contact with electricity every day
- the dangers of electricity
- how to be energy efficient

Learn more about Western Powers education resources at [www.westernpower.com.au](http://www.westernpower.com.au)



## Dates to Remember:

April 7th is World Health day

April 11th-19th is Australian Heritage Week

April 18th is World Heritage Day

April 22nd is the 45th Anniversary of 'Earth Day'

May 22nd is International day for Biodiversity

May 27th- June 3rd is National Reconciliation Week

## 'Earth Day' Activity!

Challenge yourself and your team to see who can spend the most amount of time outside on Earth Day (April 22nd) . Could you do all of your activities outdoors? Make a tent or "go camping"? Prepare for all weather conditions and have some fun!

For older kids, the theme for this years 'Earth Day' is "It's our turn to lead . See if you can inspire some leaders in your group, ask them what activity they would like to do that shows they love nature and then get them to lead this activity with the rest of the group, giving them the confidence that they can influence their day. To find out more go to [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org)

# What's On?



## NEW from Little Green Steps

### New Little Green Steps WA Workshop!

On May 5th LGS WA and the Waste Wise team are joining forces and trialling a new 2.5 hour workshop and small tour of the The Southern Metropolitan Regional Council waste facility. This workshop will be free for the first 25 people and will also include a free waste resource kit that is being released later this year. For more details head to [www.littlegreenstepswa.org.au](http://www.littlegreenstepswa.org.au) and visit the events page.



### Little Green Steps Website is Now Mobile Friendly!

You read right, to keep up with the trend of more people using mobiles and tablets we have been working on the upgrades to our website so it will now work on your phone. Go on- check it out!

### New Sustainability Posters for the Early Years

Thanks to the Department of Education, we now have early years focused Social Handprint and Ecological Footprint posters. You can download them for free at our website : [www.littlegreenstepswa.org.au](http://www.littlegreenstepswa.org.au) >About Us > Sustainability.

### Evaluation of Little Green Steps WA available!

After a successful first year of our 'implementation phase' we have our evaluation available on our website. If you are interested in learning about what was achieved visit the website and download our evaluation- we are proud as punch of what we have achieved in 12 months!

**For an up to date list of 'what's on' visit our events page at our website.**

Have any questions, comments, requests for the next newsletter? Contact the Little Green Steps WA Program Manager:  
**Paula Kalinowski** at [lgs@aaeewa.org.au](mailto:lgs@aaeewa.org.au)

Little Green Steps WA is proudly supported by:

