

KREATIVE KOALAS 2020

St Brigid's Primary School

OUR PROJECT IDEA:

SDG 15: Life on the Land

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

SDG 12: Responsible Production
& Consumption

SDG 14: Life Under the Water

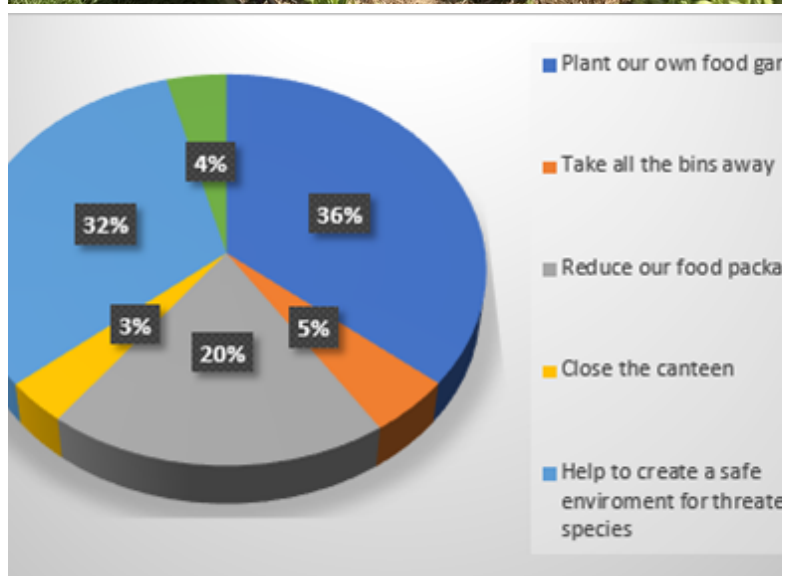
In 2020, with the appointment at St Brigid's of an Aboriginal Education Teacher, our school started looking at ways we could combine a "Caring for Country" focus alongside the "Stewards of Creation" intention we already applied as a Catholic school.

Signing up to participate in the Kreative Koalas program allowed us to formalise our ideas and develop a plan for action.

Initially, Year 6 undertook a brain storming session to identify general concerns and issues within our school community. From this we identified that the majority of the issues aligned with the SDG 15: Life on the Land. Using this mind map, Year 6 developed presentations to deliver to the whole student body highlighting their concerns in preparation for a school survey to decide which issues we would tackle.

The results of our whole school survey formed the basis of our plan for action. Our staff and students felt strongly about:

1. Growing our own vegetables and using this produce in our school canteen
2. Creating a safe environment for locally identified threatened species
3. Reducing waste at school



TAKE A PEEK AT WHAT'S INSIDE:

Just look at what we achieved

WHAT HAPPENED:

Result: A whole school approach!

Using the three identified issues we set our goals.

1. **To educate our school community** on the benefits, both environmental and health-wise, of growing our own produce.
2. **To increase an awareness** both within our school, and the wider community, of locally identified threatened species.
3. **To educate** students and families about responsible food packaging.

To address these goals we identified the following action steps.

Goal 1:

- Brainstorm a list of potential vegetables to plant.
- Research selected vegetables to gauge suitability for our climate and site.
- Invite the owner of Blue Boat Farm Gate to come in to school and offer advice and suggestions.
- Prepare the already established garden beds.
- Buy and plant seedlings.
- Develop a watering roster.
- Invite class groups into the gardens to participate in guided information sessions.
- Contribute to the school newsletter to educate and inform families of our progress.
- Use the harvested vegetables to make saleable foods in the canteen.

Goal 2:

- Invite Jane Lloyd-Jones from Hunter Local Land Services to talk with students about threatened species and predators.
- Brainstorm a list of 12 locally identified threatened species.
- Research and present information on 12 identified species to whole school.
- Survey school to choose a threatened species to become school mascot.
- Prepare a newsletter article to inform families of research.
- Contact Port Stephens Examiner with view to include an "insert" into paper distribution to educate local community about identified species.

Goal 3:

- Conduct an audit of school lunch boxes.
- Prepare a presentation for the school on the environmental cost of food packaging.
- Organise for whole school "nude-food" days.
- Include students from other grades in harvesting from garden to promote nude foods.

ACTION



HOW WE DEFINE SUCCESS:

What will it look like?

Goal 1:

- Gardens will produce vegetables to harvest.
- Students and staff will be more informed about the process and benefits of growing your own food.
- Conversations will occur between students in the classroom and gardens regarding food production.

Goal 2:

- Students will have participated in an information session on threatened species.
- Our school will have a mascot which we support.
- Our families will be more aware of the threats to our nominated threatened species.
- Community awareness will be raised through Port Stephens Examiner including an Infographic Insert into the Raymond Terrace distribution.

Goal 3:

- Graphs will show the current state of our waste production.
- Conversations between students will occur on the playground regarding "Nude Foods" and "Packaged Foods".
- Nude Food days will be a regular occurrence at school.
- We will see a reduction in packaged foods at school.

CUE THE confetti



WHAT WAS EXCELLENT, UNFORTUNATE OR SURPRISING

There was so much that was excellent and surprising, and only a little bit that was unfortunate!

Excellent and Surprising:

- Our vegetables grew!
- What had begun as an initiative of our Year 6 students, quickly became a passion for the whole school.
- The support we had from outside professionals.
- The support of our families and students in purchasing our food products.
- How much everyone enjoyed the food we prepared.
- Lots of us had never cooked before!! And lots of us had never washed up before!!
- We were able to provide quality food to our school canteen to use, hence reducing costs as well.
- Seedlings need a lot of water.
- Being advocates for the koala and writing to politicians.
- The emotions / strong feelings that were brought up by being advocates for the koala and writing to politicians.

Unfortunate:

- Some of our plants went to seed and didn't grow. We learnt a lot about plants that need to grow in multiples (corn) and plants that like their space (beetroot).
- The dire situation of the Hunter River Turtle. We feel passionately about changing this.
- We ran out of time to adequately address our lunch box waste. This will now be our main goal for 2021.
- We need to do more to save our local threatened species from introduced species and other factors.
- Our letters of support for the koalas didn't change the outcome of the quarry decision. This was a hard lesson for us all.





ARTWORK ANALYSIS

Name of your School:

St Brigid's Primary School

Name of your Koala:

Hunter Bila Guraa

(Hunter River Turtle in Gathang, the language of the Worimi people)

Central SDG you have chosen:

SDG 15: Life on the Land

If you have included other complementary SDGs, please list them here:

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

SDG 12: Responsible Production & Consumption

SDG 14: Life Under the Water

What years and KLA classes were involved?

Years 3, 4, 5, 6 Primarily

Year 2 incidentally

Concept: *To visually represent the concept of Caring for Country / Stewards of Creation*

Theme: *We wanted to be able to show people the plight of threatened species. We hoped that by identifying the issues faced by so many of our local native species, that people would be inspired to act.*

Stylistic influences: *There was so much we wanted to portray on our koala, we divided him into sections.*



His head: the colours of the Aboriginal flag.

Through our research we learnt that you are not able to replicate the Aboriginal flag, so we have used the colours in such a way that we present the idea without replication. The yellow lines coming away from his nose were intended to show him as a warrior, as we have become **biodiversity warriors** through this journey.

His tummy: We wanted to show the vegetable gardens where our **journey began**, with the planting of seedlings and the care and harvesting of our fresh, nude food. It seemed appropriate that this be painted on his tummy where everything else flourishes from here.

His sides: depict the good and bad of life for threatened species. We have included many threats and predation for koalas, as we worked so hard to try and save our **local habitats**, however we also included turtles, as this is where we turned our focus.

His front legs: represent the **two rivers** that our town sits on; the Hunter and Williams Rivers.

His back: we have painted into a large Hunter River Turtle. Now recognised as our **school mascot**, we wanted to always remind ourselves and others, of how hard we need to work to save these ancient reptiles, only found in one river system, our own Hunter River.

His river: Our koala is displayed on a river showing both the healthy, green, tree-lined embankment turtles need, and the drought stricken, burnt side which makes them so vulnerable to predators.

What makes your Koala unique?

Our koala is unique as he is the only koala who wanted to become a turtle. We researched lots of designs to ensure we did something original. With his large turtle back and a Gathang name to identify him, we think our turtle is one of a kind.

