

KREATIVE KOALAS CASE STUDY

LOCHINVAR PUBLIC SCHOOL - NATURE NINJAS



Students from Lochinvar Public School, near Maitland, turned into Nature Ninjas during their Kreative Koalas experience. The Ninjas revolutionised waste recycling at their school, connected with their Aboriginal heritage and reached out to support children less fortunate than themselves; all while studying United Nations Sustainability Development Goal 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Under the guidance of teacher Alison Wood students from Years 3 to 6 took an in depth look at waste and developed practices around the four Rs: respect, reduce, reuse and recycle. "On our recent year 3/4 excursion to Sydney it was lovely to see students pick up rubbish without being asked while we were at Taronga Zoo, then they even made an effort to put it in the correct bin," Alison says. "Many students found bread tags, lids and ring pulls on the ground which they took to a teacher to take back to our Recycling Zone... every little bit counts! A Nature Ninja also asked the zoo staff if we could take the lids from breakfast back to school. It was lovely to see our recycling efforts don't just happen on school grounds."

The lids, in particular, have formed a major part of Lochinvar's Kreative Koala project. During their journey the students discovered Lids4Kids, an organisation that makes prosthetic limbs for kids from recycled bottle tops. This inspired them to set the school up as a community collection point for lids, and to use lids on their artistic koala named Kuluwayn.

Kulawayn (the local Wonnarua word for koala) is the merging of two concepts – Lids4Kids and the school's appreciation of Aboriginal culture. Painted in yellow, red and black Kulawayn features clusters of lids that represent symbols significant to the school: the Aboriginal flag, Lochinvar Creek that flows beside their back fence, meeting places (their classrooms), gardens, tracks and a new yarning circle.



SEE AND HEAR THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TALK ABOUT THEIR KREATIVE KOALAS JOURNEY [HERE](#)



Kuluwayn also provides students with inspiration for the future. "Staff and students have really enjoyed the Kreative Koala journey this year as it has given us the kick start we needed to make necessary changes to improve our environment for the future," Alison says. Those improvements will include nude food/zero waste days at the school and, in respect for their Aboriginal community, the Nature Ninjas are planning a yarning circle to complement their existing gardens and envisage it as a space for all people to use. The Ninjas are also working with Lower Hunter Landcare to run a community project centred on Lochinvar Creek, which aims to clear the area of introduced plants and weeds in order to replant with natives.

"The whole process has been incredibly rewarding, eye opening and life changing," Alison says. "We feel that it has completely changed the culture of the school. The conversations and research at the beginning of the year really led our environmental team to make changes. We were concerned that the changes might not last very long, but letting the students lead the change has been the key to its success."

Special thanks to:

Fiona Rowan from [Maitland City Council](#) and Marc Harper from [Enviromentors](#).



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