

# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Thornlie

- Waterwise Program • Air Watch Program • Sustainable Schools Initiative Pilot School participant • International Connections • Water Bottles • Walk Safely to School Day
- Sensory Garden • Environmental Coordinator

## Background

Waste Wise activities combine with initiatives from Air Watch and Waterwise at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School – making this double-stream Thornlie school, east of Perth, a deserving participant in the Sustainable Schools Initiative.

Environmental activities and events at the school are led by the Year 7 Environment Committee and supported by the Environmental Coordinator. Each year level coordinates an environmental activity such as the worm farm, composting, recycling of aluminium cans, plastics and paper and all classes contribute to each of these programs.

Clear policies reinforce the school's environmental commitments and procedures and Sacred Heart provides regular reports on its environmental activities to the broader community.

## Water Bottles

In November 2005, Sacred Heart launched an exciting Water Bottle initiative with the help of a \$1600 grant to purchase a school drink bottle for every student.

The idea by Ms Rispoli and the Environment Committee saw them successfully apply for a Healthy Schools Community Initiative Grant through the Department of Health and Ageing.

The navy blue bottles feature the school's logo and the student's name. Students keep their bottles on their desks and are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. Newsletter promotion encourages daily refilling by students and their parents. This simple program reduces the potential waste from disposable drink bottles, minimises wastage at the drinking fountains and fosters healthy kidneys in well-hydrated students.



STUDENTS FEEDING A HEALTHY WORM FARM SET UP IN A REUSED FRIDGE.

## Sensory Garden

Sacred Heart's Sensory Garden has been a work of heart by the students since inception. Students researched the plants, drew up plans, cleared the area, planted it and helped to create a path featuring handprinted tiles, and a wall for seating.

The Sensory Garden boasts a variety of plants including herbs, fennel, lavender, an orange tree, grass trees, a pine tree and kangaroo paw. Where possible, native plants are included and one was earmarked for Christmas decoration!

*Worm Whiz* and mulch is used by students to keep their Sensory Garden healthy. The atmosphere, fresh smells and textures of the garden are enjoyed by all students, especially the special education students.

## International Connections

Ms Rispoli and a Sacred Heart student saw first hand the benefit of student-centred learning for environmental sustainability. Together with national and international representatives the two attended the Murray Darling Basin Commission International River Health Conference in Mildura, Victoria in 2005.

*"Persevere! Make exercises well planned and simple. Take time to develop practices – two-year plans for example." Antonietta Rispoli, Environmental Coordinator.*

## Walk Safely to School Day

With their backpacks loaded and feet ready for action, Sacred Heart students participated in the *Walk Safely to School Day*, in April 2006. Parents helped by supervising the children as student fitness and road safety awareness were promoted. The environmental benefits of walking to school were highlighted during this successful and fun day.

## Plans for the Future

Sacred Heart was awarded a government Community Water Grant of \$37,814. A water efficiency audit will be conducted, followed by installation of flow control valves, leak repairs, cistern adjustments and a no-flush urinal trial.

