



Out and about with the Anglican Creation Care Network

By Lachlan Graham

The Creation Care Network (ACCN) was invited to attend the Investigator College Eco-Centre at Currency Creek for its annual Sustainable Futures Career Day in August.

More than 100 senior school students from Anglican colleges across the Greater Adelaide area were present to take part in hands-on environmental activities such as wetland plantings, birdwatching, fish trapping and nature journalling, as well as hearing from a range of environmental experts â?? including indigenous rangers, ecologists and geo-information system scientists. It was a delight to see the facilities available to the Investigator College students, and the dedication of their teachers.

A very special experience for any scientist is when their work or worldview is validated by an independent source. And this is just what the students witnessed in one of the last sessions of the day when paleo-scientist, Dr Ray Carpenter showed a slide of a Pleistocene fossil record from the River Murray estuary.

During this period, or epoch, dating from 2.6 million years ago to about 12,000 years ago, mega fauna roamed the Earth, including giant wombats and kangaroos here in Australia. It was a period when ice ages impacted Earth causing our southern coastline to extend much further seawards than today so that Kangaroo Island was part of the mainland.



Students checking the fish traps in Lake Alexandrina

When Cedric Vardue, an indigenous ranger who had conducted an earlier session on indigenous paintings and storylines, saw the fossil record he jumped up and held the attention of the young students as he told of local dreamtime stories from over 20,000 years ago when his ancestors encountered and hunted mega-marsupial fauna that roamed the area.

Dr Carpenter's scientific presentation validated the dreamtime stories and the stories supported the science. Cedric went on to share further kinship and country connections from his mother's lineage, including knowledge of 'deep-time' oral traditions. It was a very special moment.

The Eco-center sits on 10 hectares of waterfront land on Lake Alexandrina. Purchased in 2010 the once degraded site is being rehabilitated with ongoing revegetation and other conservation projects restoring valuable habitat for indigenous wildlife. The students' current projects include partnering with Landscapes SA to re-introduce the southern bell frog to the region and exploring innovative ways to deter foxes from raiding vulnerable turtle nests.

Apart from the natural outdoor education facilities the Centre has a Sustainable Living Eco-centre and an unique environmental Trades Skill Centre enabling students to undertake on-site certificate courses in horticulture, conservation and ecosystem management.

Right from their very early years, students have the opportunity to develop a passion for the environment and a deeper knowledge of country. Senior students are encouraged to participate in taking a leading role and managing the programs. Their studies and hands on experiences prepare them not only to be future farmers, ecologists, natural resource managers but to be ambassadors for sustainability and to pass their knowledge and passion on to the wider community.

ACCN thanks Head Teacher Ms Nat Gilbert, for the opportunity to experience the Sustainability Futures Day. It gave our members an excellent insight into how younger generations are picking up the challenge of caring for creation. We wish Investigator College continuing success in this valuable program and ACCN looks forward to continuing our common connection and interest. For those wishing to join our network simply contact the ACCN Convenor, Lachlan Graham, email: lachlangraham@bigpond.com, mobile: 0417 860 121.

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