

A photograph of a school building with a wooden exterior and a blue door, surrounded by trees and a grassy area.

# **Fish Creek and District Primary School**

**VSGA Award Submission 2017**

**Most Engaging Student Garden for  
Learning**

# About our School

Our school is located in the township of Fish Creek in South Gippsland. We have 91 students enrolled in four classes and encourage across age activities and learning providing mentoring for younger students and fostering responsibility for older students.

We are committed to providing a positive learning environment that caters for each child's social and emotional wellbeing.



# Ground Facilities

Our school has a science/art room, gymnasium, oval, basketball/netball courts, play equipment, music/drama room, sandpits and recreational areas.

A buddy bench provides a place where kids can sit and are then invited to play by others.

Outdoor play/building is encouraged with the construction of huts and use of tyres, wood, tubes, and other recycled materials.



# Special Features

The garden area now includes a garden shed, herbs, fruit trees, berries, citrus, edible natives. It also has a fire pit, picnic table, chicken enclosure, compost bays and bins, worm farms, and student garden art including totems.

Most of this has been developed over the last two years.



# Special Features

We are also developing our Learning Stone area.

The site provides a living local resource to assist and provide a better cultural understanding and a great place to start for teachers in their delivery of indigenous content

And we have our four rotating vegetable garden beds.



# New Developments

This year we have purchased a fully automatic irrigation system which will be installed by the start of term 4.

We also have allocated funds for a native garden with a focus on edible plants. Plans are complete, sleepers have been ordered, and plants are being sourced from local indigenous nurseries. Mulch is being delivered by our local council.

Our native garden will be completed by the end of term 4.

# New Developments

Next year we have plans for water harvesting.

A major initiative is involve all four classes in the garden curriculum and to implement a whole school sustainability program (recycling, energy saving, water and environment conservation)

We are looking to formalise our cooking and healthy eating program with a major upgrade of cooking facilities.

# Use of the Garden Area

Until recently the garden area was very under utilised space. In the last two years a small group of volunteers (including a registered teacher) has worked extremely hard to provide students with a gardening/cooking experience tied into curriculum and sustainability values.

The garden area is now utilised as an outdoor classroom facilitating sustainability learning outcomes for the schools students.

Learning activities include gardening, seed propagation, pruning, composting, worm farming, chicken husbandry and egg production, seedling sales, garden art and garden science

# Use of the Garden Area

The area provides a focus for outdoor learning, healthy lifestyle and eating enriching students health and wellbeing.



We also use the gardens produce and facilities to cater at whole school and community events. This year following a whole community bike ride, the fire pit was used to roast potatoes from the garden accompanied with salads also made with garden produce.



# Use of the Garden Area

Along with members of the Fish Creek Community Garden the grade 3/4 students built two insect hotels. One for each of the school and community garden. They also had a guided tour of the community garden plot tasting different herbs and garden produce.



# Student involvement

## *Gardening*

The grade 3/4 have a dedicated garden program on a Thursday morning supervised by a small group of dedicated volunteers including a registered teacher. Activities include, seed propagation, watering, weeding, pruning building and maintenance, fertilising, soil maintenance, harvesting.



## *Cooking/Tasting*

Cooking is integrated into the garden program and has included damper, crepes, muffins, soups, lettuce wraps. Tastings include relishes, root vegetable chips, dips, fresh produce.

# Student involvement

## *Chicken Husbandry and Egg Production*

The prep/1 class hatched 9 eggs in an incubator in term 1 whilst parent volunteers undertook the construction of the chicken enclosure.



# Student involvement

## *Chicken Husbandry and Egg Production*

Each school grade has one term in which rotating chicken captains are responsible for feeding (food scraps, pallets, grain and green vegetation) and watering our 9 hens and collecting their eggs.

The eggs are cleaned, dated, packed (into decorated cartons) and refrigerated for sale at Monday morning assembly. Students are responsible for the egg sales and documentation. Money from egg sales is directed back into the garden program.



# Student involvement

## *Chicken Husbandry and Egg Production*

Students have undertaken maths to determine the economics of egg production



### Eggnomics

- 9 hens lay on average 7 eggs per day over a year (not a leap year)
- Eggs sell for \$4 per dozen
- Layer pallets cost \$25 per bag. A bag lasts 20 days
- After costs have been recovered for pallets, how much money is left for the garden program from the sale of eggs
- Use whole numbers
- No calculators
- How much money is left if a bag of Layer pallets lasts 30 days

# Student involvement

## *Composting*

This year a whole school composting system has been implemented. All students given a composting lesson by grade 6 “Coastal Ambassadors” and laminated sheets were placed in each class. New class composting buckets and new lunch area bins were purchased.

 <b>Compost</b>	 <b>Chickens</b>	 <b>Worms</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leafy Greens</li><li>• Fruits</li><li>• Vegetables</li><li>• Eggshells</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leafy Greens</li><li>• Fruits</li><li>• Vegetables</li><li>• Bread/Cakes</li><li>• Cheese/Yogurt</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leafy Greens</li><li>• Fruits</li><li>• Vegetables</li><li>• Eggshells</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Citrus ✗</li><li>• Onions ✗</li><li>• Meat ✗</li><li>• Bread/Cakes ✗</li><li>• Walnuts ✗</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Citrus peel ✗</li><li>• Avocado ✗</li><li>• Chocolate ✗</li><li>• Eggshells ✗</li><li>• Meat ✗</li><li>• Green Tomatoes ✗</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Citrus ✗</li><li>• Onions ✗</li><li>• Meat ✗</li><li>• Bread/Cakes ✗</li><li>• Salts ✗</li></ul>

# Student involvement

## *Composting*

Twice weekly chicken captains collect all the schools food scraps and separate them into “Chickens”, “Worms”, “Compost” and “Bin” based on a list in the garden shed.

This is a whole school program facilitating recycling and sustainability values.



# Student involvement

## *Spring Garden Day*

In term 4 we will holding our spring garden day for students, parents and the community. Students will be facilitating the day including selling seedlings, garden produce, garden craft and healthy food and juice.

We will also plant our edible native garden.

The funds raised are going towards our end of year excursion for the Grade 3/4 s to the Cranbourne Botanical Gardens.

# Student involvement

## *Garden Science*

Students across all levels of the school have participated in Garden Science. These lessons have included

Soil and pH

Making clouds

Crop rotation

Mini-beasts and insect hotels

Egg production and hygiene

Composting science



# Parental, Teacher and Community Involvement

The parents and friends group use the area as a meeting place, having billy tea around the fire pit.



We have conducted family days in which parents and kids plant trees together



# **Parental, Teacher and Community Involvement**

Our partnership with the community garden members benefits the students and links the school with the community.

Fish Creek has a very strong sense of community which values highly concepts of sustainability , healthy living and natural principles. Our school is reflecting this.

## **Thank You**