



Wimmera

Wimmera kids conference

A kids view of the environment



'I learnt that we should use watering systems at night to save water.' *Jessica, Year 4 Jeparit Primary School.*

'It was fun doing our play but scary. I learnt a lot about salt and how it moves.' *Joel, Year 6 Jeparit Primary School.*

'The kids enjoyed the whole event and learnt something... The interaction between participants and presenters was great to see. I can't think of enough superlatives to describe the day. Thankyou.' *Di Hendy, a teacher from Kaniva Primary School.*

Some keen kids catching a caddisfly larvae or two at the Kids Conference.

Can kids teach kids about important environmental messages? Absolutely! And there was plenty of it at this year's Wimmera Kids Conference in western Victoria.

In November, more than 350 grade five and six students from 14 Wimmera schools converged on Dimboola for the inaugural Wimmera CMA's Kids Conference, titled 'A Kids View of the Environment'.

School performances covered themes such as: 'Trees: Our Future', 'My Backyard is a River', 'Bush Block Survivor', and 'Salty Tales for a Sleepy Night'. Other school performances included songs, dances, plays and short films on a range of local environmental features.

Wimmera Community Waterwatch played an important role in the preparation of a number of local schools' presentations. Jeparit Primary School prepared and presented a play on salinity in the Wimmera after undertaking a range of Waterwatch activities with Local Coordinator Jeanie Clark. The students presented information on the geological history of the Wimmera, the unusual pattern of salinity along the Wimmera River and concluded with a message of actions.

Jeanie reflects, 'It was exciting for us to watch the presentation take shape and to have it so well received at the Kids Conference. We were asked to perform it again in a local adult forum, which also gave the parents a chance to see it.'

The afternoon was capped off by a range of workshops run by the Wimmera CMA, Wimmera Community Waterwatch, Parks Victoria, Greening Australia, Department of Primary Industries, Landcare and Grampians Regional Waste Management staff.

Students swarmed around the new Waterwatch trailer to learn more about the amazing world of water bugs. Waterwatch Coordinators Brad Hollis and Harvey Champness were on hand to encourage

students to get mud under their fingernails and slime under their microscopes and learn more about macro-invertebrates. Jeanie Clark also led students on an exploration trail of River Red Gums. Other student activities included tree planting, bird watching, indigenous dot-painting, waste recycling and plant and animal identification.

The students that came to the Kids Conference were from a variety of landscapes around the Wimmera region. Despite this diversity, students shared personal experiences and important messages, and recognised the importance of caring for shared and valuable water. All pledged to continue to do their bit for the environment, so the Wimmera's future looks good.



Jeparit Primary School students share their salinity know-how with other like minded students.

Photos courtesy of Wimmera Catchment Management Authority.