

JERVOIS PRIMARY SCHOOL – EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY LEARNING JOURNEY – 2006

At the start of 2006 we were into the second year as a state sustainable trial school. A key staff member had gone on leave so rather than seeing this as a negative we saw this as an opportunity to re-structure our leadership team to ensure that education for sustainability would continue to be the main focus for all school and community learning. Every teacher took on a leadership role under the key areas of water, energy, waste and biodiversity. My role was to monitor and direct our learning journey using the rubrics Understanding sustainability, curriculum learning and pedagogy and ethos and culture.

The basis for the 2006 year was a school community whose hearts and minds had been changing gradually for more than a year or two. We were clear about our definition of sustainable education and had been through a lengthy process of establishing a common understanding. Using the understanding sustainability rubric the start of the year saw us committed to ongoing learning and application of sustainable principles across the site – these included growing organic herbs and plants, community re-use and recycling, waste management – the use of the bokashi bucket system and community tree planting. By the end of the year we saw ourselves as models of education for sustainability with district schools and community groups using our school as examples of good practice but also with our students and teachers delivering their learning to the wider community.

An area for further development using this rubric includes inquiry practice development.

The Student Representative Council (SRC) were heavily engaged in water and litter audits using action plans to carefully work through a process and had posed inquiry questions but as a whole school we felt that further improvement using inquiry was required.

2006 saw a continued focus on curriculum, learning and pedagogy. Through our curriculum mapping and sustainable education management plan we ensured that all learning was innovative and inclusive of our beliefs about sustainable education. The learning environment was our school, local community and district, and through our site learning plan focus of improving student engagement, our students were involved in hands on, exploratory and motivating learning about our environment. Students engaged in water watch, solar cell exploration, cutting edge planting practices and paper making. Committing to critical and creative inquiry will need to be an area that we need to address in this area in the future.

Probably the highlight of our learning journey this year was the development of our sustainable beliefs board incorporating our school values. Every member of our learning community was given the opportunity of writing their beliefs on 10 broad topics to do with education for sustainability. We held a student run community forum collating our most preferred belief statements and ones which truly represented our school. The outcome was a beliefs board which will be proudly displayed on our administration building at the entry to our school. Our sustainable education beliefs are now linked to our school values and these beliefs will now underpin everything

we do here at Jervois Primary School to further sustainable education outcomes here at this site.

In 2007 we will continue our journey as we focus more on inquiry and continue to ask the hard questions ensuring at all times that what we believe and what we practice are in essence - one!!!

Joan Fabbian – Principal Jervois Primary School