

Cowandilla Interview Part 2

Cassie: Can you tell us a bit more about the students' entry in the competition?

Mark: Yeah, sure. Some of the things they thought that they wanted to be able to do in the school as their part of the community, was improving passive solar designs in the buildings, particularly with any new buildings that are going in as well as improving what we've got at the moment. They wanted to be able to plant more gardens throughout the school, on all sorts of spaces like walls to shade buildings and on rooftops if they can. They also talked about using renewable energy sources like the wind turbine that we talked about before and the solar panels that are going in.

Included in that, they had seen solar lights that the council uses, so solar street lights. They said that we should have more of those around for the outdoor lighting. Then as part of the competition Kyocera and Pecan lighting saw that and Pecan lighting came and gave us one which was fantastic.

Cassie: That's good

Julie: In addition they saw that the Keswick creek which is on one of the boundaries of the school should be returned to its natural state. At the moment it's like a concrete drain and they would like to see it meandering and filtering water and I guess, in the process, returning water to the aqua farm.

Cassie: OK. So what else can we expect from Cowandilla in the area of sustainability and ecology?

Julie: Cowandilla has teamed up with a couple of local primary schools and the local high school, to start on a project this year where we are actually going to work even further to reduce our ecological foot print. We are going to be working in a process called eco-mapping which is auditing our site. So the children will audit our site for water use, energy waste and biodiversity. Once they find out problem areas or areas we can improve in they'll make an action plan and slowly, month by month and year by year, putting those plans into action. It's about moving slowly in the right direction and raising the awareness because what we believe is that there are some hard decisions to be made in the future to make sure that the global community works together to improve the greenhouse gas effect on the planet. We know that the more information the children and the more passionate that they are about it, the more they are liable to influence decision makers, in Australia and around the world, to make the right decisions, to make sure that this world remains viable for us as human beings.

Mark: We spoke at the Solar Cities Congress with a group of people from Herbert Giardet's foundation they've got a project together called Kids Call which is encouraging kids from around the world to write to their local politicians as well as politicians around the world. They are also going to be filming some little video clips, with kids speaking straight to politicians that they are going to edit together and show at the next G8 summit. That would be fantastic.

Cassie: That's great.