



Warrumbungle National Park

Environmental Education Centre



Education

Wicking Gardens - The future for securing a sustainable school garden & outdoor classroom



WNPEEC Staff will work with your students and staff to create your school's wicking garden. The gardens address many curricular outcomes for Science, Geography, Technology and Art. The creation of the gardens with your students and staff will produce a real sense of ownership and will create an additional outdoor classroom space in your school.

These gardens are constructed using environmentally sustainable methods and are built off site using only local Coonabarabran businesses and natural resources that support other local rural businesses.

The wicking gardens come to your students in kit form and during the incursion your students and staff actively participate with our WNPEEC teachers and staff to construct the gardens. This creates a sense of ownership and strengthens the custodian pedagogy model for the new garden beds for the future.

This program involves clear pre-discussions with organising staff and allows students to be part of an inquiry based decision of the addition of their new outdoor classroom right from the beginning involving the "What, Why, where, how, how good....."

WNPEEC will provide ongoing support in the planning stages, installation and beyond to maintain the sustainability of the school garden program with the idea to assist it moving into a school kitchen garden program. Teacher PL and additional incursions are always available to increase the 'green thumbs and good tucker in our tums'!

Why wicking beds?

Wicking beds water plants from below rather than above. They're basically containers with water reservoirs at the base and AKA "self-watering gardens". Moisture is drawn up through the soil via a process called capillary action or wicking. This allows moisture to be more evenly distributed through the soil, creating better growing conditions for the plants. This means less water being wasted and over the school summer holidays your gardens will have a much greater chance of survival and be in full abundance of vegetables and plants when the new school year commences. Furthermore, nutrients leached through the soil are collected in the reservoir and reused.



Cost \$750 per bed/\$2100 per triple - This is the cost price of all materials (except soil), vegetables, worms, cover, irrigation parts & labour preparing beds ready for your school installation.

During the installation process at your school the WNPEEC will provide a DoE teacher and GA. This will be journaled separately.

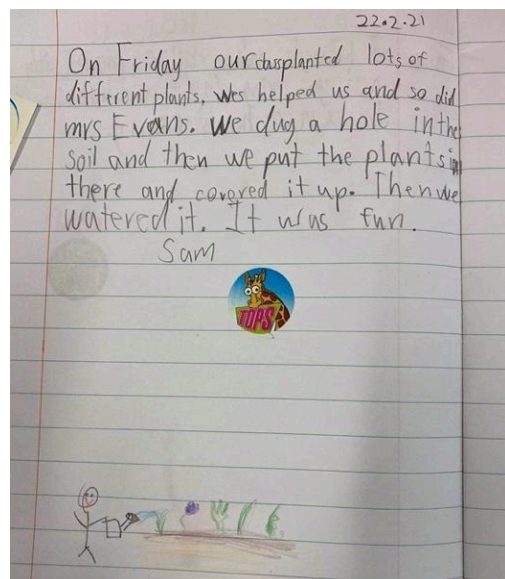
School Testimonials

“Engaging in the 'wicking bed' project based learning, allowed our students to experience how using sustainable practices can produce healthy vegetable crops. Several parents and staff commented that they would love to build these at home and will call on the student's knowledge in how to go about the process. Students have been amazed by the results and take pride in their involvement in building and caring for the 'wicking beds.' I would highly recommend calling on the WNPEEC to help reinvigorate your school vegetable garden and help motivate your students to take an active role in learning about sustainability.”

Karen Smith, Principal, Tooraweenah Public School

Stage 2 students at Coonabarabran Public School have absolutely loved working with Wes and his team from the Warrumbungle Environmental Education Centre to establish a kitchen garden at the school. Students have enjoyed learning about gardening, planting, and growing tasty, fresh and seasonal produce. The process has involved lots of hands-on work, leaving students with a sense of achievement when they see those beautiful big sunflowers pop up and when they get to taste a freshly picked, juicy and ripe strawberry. The project is ongoing with hopes and dreams to install a small kitchen in the future where students can use produce to cook delicious and healthy food.

Ashley Kasalo, Stage 2 Classroom Teacher, Coonabarabran PS



Warren Central School was keen to establish garden beds to provide students with the many rich opportunities that come with contextual based learning. We knew that we were going to need a lot of support to make our idea a reality, so we called on the Warrumbungles National Park Environmental Education Centre team. Over the two days that Wes and his team visited, our students were incredibly engaged as they shovelled, sanded, planted, painted and watered. Students were incredibly engaged and were telling us that they had had 'the best day of school ever!' Each day since WNPEEC's visit, our students have been eagerly caring for the gardens and are regularly coming up with wonderful ideas for the future of our gardens. This is definitely due to the way in which Wes and his team engaged our students and promoted their ownership and responsibility during the construction days. Wes and his team made the process of establishing our gardens so easy - we just had to turn up! We were delighted that we had made the decision to ask WNPEEC to help us and would highly recommend them to any school who are interested in instilling responsibility, connection and ownership through a project like ours.

Emily McPhee, Assistant Principal, Warren Central School

Building the wicking beds was super exciting. It's not every day we get an opportunity like this and I loved how all of 5/6 got together and used teamwork to get it done. We learnt so many new things like different types of soil and what wicking is. We really liked doing the art with Ange and seeing our artworks on the garden beds makes it very bright and personalised. We are very grateful for Wes, Ange and Pete coming here to help and guide us with this amazing experience.

Hayley Hall, Year 6, Warren Central School

For any further questions please get in touch!

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