

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS NETWORK JOURNAL

St Mary's College

Tegan Watkins
Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort
Eile Guenego
Kelly Malloy



Sustainable
SCHOOLS NETWORK

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS NETWORK JOURNAL

Editor in Chief Katie Norman
Managing Editor Patricia Lee
Copy Chief Kate Rogers

Photography
Cover courtesy of Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort

Contributors
St Mary's College
Tegan Watkins
Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort
Eile Guenego
Kelly Malloy

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Email info@ssn.org.au
www.ssn.org.au
Like us on Facebook: [Sustainable Schools Network](#)
Instagram: [sustainableschoolsnetwork](#)
LinkedIn: [Sustainable Schools Network](#)
YouTube: [Sustainable Schools Network GCTH](#)

Sustainable Schools Network Journal is published by the Sustainable Schools Network Limited.
Copyright Sustainable Schools Network Limited, Australia 2020

JOYFUL DISCLAIMER

The SSN Journal is designed and created to share stories of how schools, teachers, organisations, students and parents educate for sustainability. This is not a 'how to' guide rather a collection of case studies aimed at inspiring action and inviting you to learn from others. Some people featured are just getting started, whilst others have been at this for a long time. We share these different perspectives to demonstrate the importance of the lived experience and the value of every point in the journey.

We invite your questions and contributions. Email us at info@ssn.org.au to share your story or to ask Dr. Ali a question.

SSN SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP AVAILABLE

Email info@ssn.org.au for more information

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to Indigenous Elders past, present and emerging.



Photo courtesy of Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort

CONTENTS

- 02 □ Dr Ali's EfS Musings
- 03 □ School Feature
- 06 □ Teacher Feature
- 08 □ Organisation Feature
- 11 □ Student Feature
- 13 □ Parent Feature

EVENTS

- 26 August - Discussion Paper Release
- 30 September - Online AAEE Conference
- 19-20 October
- Connecting Regional
- QLD:Sustainable Schools Summit Series

GET INVOLVED

- Check out the following pages on the SSN website to get involved in education for sustainability:
- [Get involved](#)
- [Opportunities](#)
- [Resources](#)

DR. ALI'S EfS MUSINGS

How do I get started with sustainability in my school?

INAUGURAL COLUMN

This first entry into Dr Ali's Education for Sustainability (EfS) musings is dedicated to all of the visionaries who are imagining new and unexpected ways of being in this world. It's dedicated to the teachers and students who stubbornly walk their talk and turn their vision into enduring expressions of bright ideas, bold initiatives and brave deeds. It is for all of us who believe that humans can cooperatively shape our future for the better.

For this journal, I was asked to explore the question - how do I begin this journey? If you are reading this journal, I would say you are already strolling down the EfS path but it might not feel very ... revolutionary. This might be because too often our personal beliefs and passions are not fostered in formal educational spaces. And when they are, we tend to squeeze them into small spaces, which still leaves us feeling uninvited and exposed. Well, that was how I felt. I knew I wanted to be involved in change, but I didn't know where or how to start. I eventually realised it was because I was trying to understand and solve environmental problems by myself, in isolation.

So, my advice is to seek out others who think the same way you do, who share your beliefs and passions. Whether it's another student or teacher at your school, or at another school, or the SSN, I encourage you to start to build or strengthen these connections.

More and more we are seeing that building networks with like minded people who can support and inspire us, is key to generating long term change. It might not seem revolutionary, but as nature shows us, persistent evolution is extremely powerful!

In practicing EfS, I found I needed to appreciate that the essence of any system: whether it's an individual and their wellbeing; a social system like our schools and communities; or the ecological system that supports us, is that all things are interconnected. At its core, EfS is about acknowledging and mapping these relationships within and between systems, and identifying change points. So how better to deepen our collective practice of EfS, then by being part of a supportive EfS system. Single cell organisms took over the world by joining together to form systems, so I think we should do the same!

Please send your questions to Dr Ali via info@ssn.org.au





ST MARY'S
COLLEGE

St Mary's is a Catholic College for girls from Kinder to Year 12 established by the Presentation Sisters and members of the International Presentation Association (IPA) in the city of Hobart in 1868. The College aspires for students to be compassionate, with a deep sense of social justice and an understanding of the importance of contributing to the community.

From the time of their foundation, St Mary's College has placed emphasis on social justice by working to address the "cry of the poor and the cry of the earth" through a variety of social justice initiatives. The College is a Presentation School, meaning that they are led globally by the Presentation Sisters – members of the IPA who embrace the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a human rights framework, addressing the issues of women and children, care of the Earth and Indigenous peoples.

"We celebrate success, community, service, effort, attitude, compassion and the environment." Ms Helen Spencer, Principal.

Some features of life at St Mary's College across Junior and Senior years are pastoral care, favourable teacher-student ratios, extensive use of technology as a tool for learning and teaching, leadership training, a focus on sustainability and the environment, as well as the breadth of academic, sporting and cultural opportunities available to their students.

When it comes to sustainability, in 2020, St Mary's College is focusing on their ecological and environmental responsibilities through their school theme "Our Common Home." The College actively supports composting of green waste, investigating various forms of clean energy in the domestic setting, encourages the use of public transport or walking and recommend shopping locally and the using of reusable bags.

Speaking with Ms Jennifer Crowden, Sustainability Officer from St Mary's College, we discovered the staff worked for some time on sustainability practices within the staffroom and in their own offices while also inviting their students to do so in their classrooms.

SCHOOL FEATURE

"Five years ago, the College Leadership Team decided to make the Sustainability Officer an official role and enable them to have a say in the decisions regarding the approach to the canteen, rubbish, compost, board markers and any buying of new equipment or refurbishing", said Ms Crowden. Today, every classroom has a recycling bin, and the students are encouraged to separate their waste.

The College has joined the global movement to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the IPA. As such, they recognise the social, economic and environmental challenges facing the world and the critical role that schools play in achieving a sustainable future through teaching and operations. *"Learning about the SDGs has been a wonderful experience for our students. They truly feel empowered to achieve our sustainability goals".*

Implementing sustainability practices in the College wasn't always easy. Ms Crowden explains, *"Any change is difficult in a school; however, I have found that making simple changes regarding sustainability has been welcomed with open arms by staff and students".* For example, the Footprint Project team need to make the steps clear and advertise and advocate the reasons behind it.

The Footprint Team is a group of about 15 students from Year 7 to 12 who are in charge of organising and supervising sustainability events and activities throughout the College. *"Whatever vision they have, we support and help promote as they are the future and they will be the ones making important sustainable decisions for many more years to come",* said Ms Crowden.

The Sustainability Fair is one of the most significant events for the College. On this day, the College invites sustainable organisations and businesses to showcase their products. The whole school focuses on sustainability. They involve guest speakers, workshops, sustainable food vans, local produce and local gifts to purchase. *"The College is a buzz of excitement when*

everyone gathers around together to all discuss, buy and enjoy local goodies! We also invite other schools to attend which helps add to the community focus", Ms Crowden shared.

The School canteen has excelled due to the hard-working staff and their community who always emphasise the environment. Phil Shanny, Canteen Manager, has planted vegetable gardens and uses the produce in the canteen menu. All food is served using reusable plates, mugs and cutlery. There is a compost bin for students and staff food waste that is used to give nutrients back to the school garden and some of the food waste is used to feed staff members' chickens.

The reusable markers are another great initiative that was started by Tanaz Jungalwalla, during her time as Sustainability Officer. Ms Crowden proudly notes, *"All teachers only have one set of reusable whiteboard markers. I have had mine for three years! I only refill them now and then".* The staff team are vital as they help promote and encourage students by education and leading by example. It is all the simple changes they have made over the last five years that have made the difference. That might be correctly disposing of the printer cartridges, buying sustainable tea, purchasing local milk and food, and using the recycling bins correctly.

St Mary's College is looking positively into the future. They have many plans, including the organisation of a 'Parents Forum' in September. This forum will involve parents coming to the School and participating in a few short workshops on beeswax wraps, living sustainably, how to put together a sustainable lunchbox and to listen to guest speakers. However, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the school is looking at the possibility of delivering this virtually via an online forum.

The College continues to refine its current sustainability practices and looks forward to inspiring their students to contribute to a sustainable future. To learn more check out St Mary's College website: www.smc.tas.edu.au



Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort

HOME OF THE MANTA RAY

SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF



COME AND EXPLORE THE WONDERS OF THE SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF

Lady Elliot Island is a coral cay located on the southern tip of Australia's iconic Great Barrier Reef, 80kms north-east of Bundaberg. The island is situated within a highly protected 'Green Zone' of the Marine National Park and is a sanctuary for over 1,200 species of marine life.

Lady Elliot Island is regarded as one of the best snorkelling and diving locations on the Great Barrier Reef and is renowned for its healthy coral and abundance of turtles, manta rays, reef sharks and entire cast of 'Finding Nemo'. Guests can snorkel straight from the beach and Lonely Planet has recently ranked Lady Elliot Island #2 in "The 7 best beaches for snorkelling around the world".

The island has a small unpretentious 44 room Eco Resort which strives to provide guests with a genuine ecotourism experience. Guests can enjoy a day-trip or stay for a few days to explore this incredible marine ecosystem.

Scenic flights depart daily from Bundaberg, Hervey Bay/Fraser Coast, Brisbane (Redcliffe) or Gold Coast.

Turtle Nesting Season: October—February

Turtle Hatching Season: February—April

Whale Migration Season: July—October



Introducing

Tegan Watkins

Tegan is a dedicated Prep school teacher at Currumbin State School. A wife and a mother of two young children, Tegan is passionate about education and the environment. Her family shared her deep love and gratitude for the natural world. She believes that it is through education, connection and compassion that we can help move towards living in harmony with nature. She is also an active volunteer helping schools and communities to foster hope and commitment to working together to become a more sustainable network.

Born on a little farm in NSW, Tegan's first memories are of her adventures outdoors with her mum Trish, a biologist – who to this day, is still engaged in sustainability and conservation projects. Tegan and her siblings went for bush walks often, camping near the river, canoeing and getting involved in outdoor activities with mum Trish.

Naturally, Tegan developed a love for exploration and discovery at a young age. With a nurturing and creative personality, she grew up participating in conservation projects, rescuing wildlife and learning to appreciate her time with nature. Her experiences and exposure to the wonders of nature shaped her life. Tegan recalls, *"I believe this was when I formed a strong connection with nature. The way my mum would speak about the natural world, it lit a spark, the way she educated me helped fuel that light inside me"*.

Years later, when Tegan became a primary school teacher, she realised she had an opportunity to have her own space to 'create beauty' where she could allow herself and her students to learn in a natural environment. Her involvement in teaching allowed her to share her love for nature with her students and she became the link between parents, kids and sustainability experts.

For Tegan, sustainability is a journey to awareness and balance. *"Sustainability means being aware of the complex world we live in and making choices in each moment that support the future and balance of people living in harmony with the earth"*.

Feeling committed to embedding sustainability not only at school but in her daily life with her family and kids, Tegan truly believes that *"children are naturally curious about the world; nature is such an incredible teacher. We try to spend time outdoors as much as we can, exploring our backyard, learning while we are finding caterpillars and worms"*.

Tegan tries to make the school experience as unique and beautiful as possible for the children. She educates kids about sustainability throughout activities that promote community involvement, exploration and that inspire conversations about the world. *"I always try to embed sustainability in what I do with the children. Last year, for example, we created a 'fairy trail' out of bark and sticks in our garden. We were celebrating diversity and the environment"*.

The 'Fairy Trail' is a beautiful and engaging project developed every year. The trail takes Tegan and her students on a journey through their garden with the magic of discovery and imagination; they learn about kindness, inclusion and sustainability.



"My true belief is that every sustainability story starts with love and a connection", says Tegan.

During the 'Fairy Trail' day, the children go outside and together explore the trail, visiting the fairies and contemplating their little houses. *"We have to approach everything with compassion; sustainability is so far down a lot of people's radars because we are so busy nowadays. I try to bring it to the kids, who naturally care about it. If I can get to them, hopefully, it will stay with them".*

When it comes to facing challenges, Tegan admits one of them has been not knowing where to start. Sometimes she has felt unempowered, thinking she is 'not doing enough' to help her students and community to connect with themselves, each other, their culture and nature. *"Now, I make my point to start with hope. Staying hopeful is the only way for me to continue moving forward".* She also teaches this to her students - *"I try to help them explore their interests and develop resilience. I support them to take risks and problem - solve; this is also where I come back to when faced with challenges".*

One of Tegan's most favourite projects is one that she faces every year when she connects with a whole new class of students and their families. Also, it is watching the children move on to the next level. It is a bittersweet moment, and she approaches this space with love and compassion.

"I love watching the children planting seeds and then watch them grow. In the same way, my favourite project is watching children leave after each year a little more open and aware than when they came; I have watched them grow".

For Tegan, seeing the children moving on knowing that she has helped them feel connected to each other and their planet is the biggest gift.

In the future, there are many projects on Tegan's list. She is looking to develop a bush tucker garden with the sustainability team in her school as well as fundraising for sustainability projects with other schools. There is a plan to add signs and labels in local Yugambeh language to help educate the children – Tegan strongly believes in the importance of creating a space for kids to learn more about Indigenous perspectives.

From a teacher's perspective, Tegan's advice is to build awareness and help to form a connection with life, not just nature, but with other people and the creative parts of life. *"Let's allow our kids to stay open and form connections, learn more, do the best with what you know, educate and adapt".*

Tegan has hope for the future. She sees herself continuing her work to build relationships and connect schools to inspire them in their focus on sustainability practices. We at the SSN thank you for what you do, Tegan!



Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort

Situated at the southern tip of the Great Barrier Reef, Lady Elliot Island (LEI) is located approximately 80km north-east of Bundaberg and nestled in between Fraser Island and Lady Musgrave Island. The Eco Resort is a world-leading, award-winning family run and operated eco-tourism business, an ecologically sustainable tourism operator dedicated to protecting and enhancing Lady Elliot Island, the Great Barrier Reef and surrounding communities while educating on ecotourism and sustainability.



The history behind Lady Elliot Island (LEI) Eco Resort is a beautiful, truly inspiring story. Talking to Peter Gash OAM, the Managing Director of the Resort provides a clear view into a business committed to protecting and improving the Island's environment.

It was 1863 when the first miners came to LEI intending to extract guano (seabird excrement) a valuable fertiliser and gunpowder ingredient. Roughly three feet of surface soil was removed from the Island during this period. Unfortunately, this process stripped the forest from the Island and restricted vegetation growth. Over a century later, in 1969 Don Adams – a keen aviator and explorer – began a revegetation program using shrubs and seedlings of native plants from the surrounding islands and brought them to LEI.

Don's conservation efforts, carried on by Peter and his family today, make Lady Elliot Island a stunningly beautiful wildlife sanctuary and an organisational model in best environmental practice.

The Resort has been honoured with numerous eco-tourism awards, including silver in the Ecotourism category at the 2019 Australian Tourism Awards, gold in the Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism category at the Queensland Tourism Awards, Premiers Award for Sustainability and the Wildlife Warrior's commitment to Conservation Award. LEI has also been presented with Advanced Eco Certification, Climate Action Leader and Green Travel Leader by Ecotourism Australia. and the Steve Irwin Award for Advanced Eco Certification by Ecotourism Australia.

The Eco certification recognises the Resort as one of the leading ecologically sustainable tourism operators on the Great Barrier Reef, *"providing guests with an opportunity to experience and learn about the Island's unique ecosystem with minimal impact"*.

Peter and his family see themselves as the custodians of the Island. He and his wife Julie first visited the Island in the 1980s and immediately fell in love with it. They worked tirelessly to find a way to become involved with its future.

In 1996, they finally managed to secure the air service contract which put them on the road to revitalising, protecting and promoting the Island. *"Back then, we decided that part of what we'd do was build a business and try to recover the Island. Starting with the business, we would get the resources to be able to take care of the Island. It was such a big project, but we took on the challenge to transform and preserve the Island as nature intended"*.

In 2005, they secured the island lease, since then it has been a thrilling journey, transforming the Resort and Island through the implementation of sustainability initiatives. Today the Resort produces its own electricity, desalinates its own water, treats all water and sewage and removes all waste while adhering to their sustainability objectives of minimal impact on the planet.

Peter and his family have been working on LEI for 24 years now, and they continue to be passionate about their lifelong conservation crusade. *"I feel incredibly lucky that my family and I get to do what we do. We are the custodians of an amazing little Island on the Great Barrier Reef, recovered from a mine site that we get to regenerate and share with people; we get to work and educate in sustainability on a beautiful island while we make our living as part of it"*.

The Eco Resort focuses on sustainability actions like reducing carbon emissions, water use and the waste produced. They are committed to protecting and improving the Island's biodiversity in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and private industry. They do their best to inspire their guests and the surrounding community to become eco-warriors and join them in their mission to protect the Great Barrier Reef for future generations. *"We call it 'the three E's'. If you want to manage the environment, we need to educate people, so they know what we do and why we do it. We need to be efficient in all we do; we can't afford to waste. And finally, we need to be economically sustainable"*, says Peter.

Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort is aware that education for sustainability is necessary to generate awareness and promote more sustainable patterns of living. Peter considers education a critically important subject, *"it is not just about going to school or university. Education is also practical education in the field. You can learn from a farmer that has the knowledge, skills, values and experience in the area even when he didn't learn that from a degree"*. He also refers to the crucial role that Australian Aboriginal culture – one of the longest running cultures on the planet – should have in education. *"It is such a vibrant robust culture where Indigenous parents taught their kids about sustainability and learned their lessons out in the field. They were and still are the sustainability experts"*.

Through his experience, Peter has been part of many exciting projects. However, one of his favourites is the successful revegetation program which brought back the forests from a denuded, degraded mining site that was abandoned for a hundred years and left in a devastated state, to a world-leading eco-tourism business. Together, Peter and his team have put in over ten thousand trees just in the last couple of years and still have eight thousand more in the nursery waiting to be planted. *"There are so many lessons in that"*, says Peter, *"We were able to recover the Island. On a bigger scale, the planet could be recovered in the same manner as LEI, if we have the will to do it"*.

Peter recognises that sustainability is an ongoing journey with incremental steps continuing to be taken as knowledge and technology improves. *"In the future, we realise we need to minimise our emissions. We want to support the use of renewable energy and be part of the efforts to minimise our footprint"*. Peter is involved with a company that is currently working on building electric aircraft engines, and in the future, he hopes to have the resources to be able to take even better care of the environment. One of his dreams is to eventually fly electric aircraft to the Island, an aircraft run on batteries that can be recharged by renewable energy.

In the future, Peter looks forward to continuing to advance the revegetation project, educating people about the need to protect the environment and engage in sustainability education and minimise their emissions. *"We want to support the use of renewable energy and be part of the efforts to minimise our footprint. I would say to students, in the future invest in green energy, find the way to making a difference from wherever you are! It doesn't matter what industry you come from; you have the power to make a change!"*

For more information about Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort, visit www.ladyelliott.com.au



SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS NETWORK LIMITED

Become a member school today

**JOIN THE COMMUNITY OF CONNECTED
SCHOOLS SHARING AND SHOWCASING
THEIR WORK EDUCATING FOR
SUSTAINABILITY.**

Email info@ssn.org.au for more information
Becoming an SSN member school is free of
charge and provides discounts to all of our
learning experiences.

Eile Guenego

Fourteen-year-old Eile Guenego is a student from Long Island, New York. An art lover, avid reader and talented cartoonist, Eile has learned to see education in an integral way where subjects are connected to each other, exposing the more profound meaning and purpose of learning.

When you speak to Eile, it is easy to see why some people in her family believe she is an 'old soul'. She speaks gently and has a peaceful demeanour. During our chat, she happily invites her dog 'Opal' to sit next to her, both seem ready for our conversation.

I start by asking Eile about her school. Eile's school is in Long Island, NY not too far from where she lives with her mum, dad and brother Lochlan, 'Loch'. Eile and her brother transferred to PSOLI from a state school in NY when Eile was in third grade. One of her first memories in PSOLI was visiting the school and realising how different it looked from the previous one.

When I ask Eile, what was the first thing that made an impact on her she recalls noticing the size of her classes. *"There were 11 kids in my entire class. In the beginning it was a surprise, but now I realise that I am able to say that I am good friends with my entire class and their families! We have been friends from the moment I started school"*.

Eile feels that her education journey through the years has played a crucial role in her life.

Being close to her teachers is one of the things Eile enjoyed the most, *"My understanding is that teachers are not there to give you bad or good grades, they become your acquaintances; they become your friends. You learn to share your plans, projects and even your dreams with them"*.

Eile felt a strong connection with her community and her teachers became a part of her life. She happily shares, *"One of my teachers had his own film club every Friday. I also used to play scrabble with them during the breaks, and so did my brother"*.

Eile became interested in art from a young age. She is now a very talented artist, a skilful cartoonist. At school, her Arts teacher was very supportive of her love for drawing. While creating art, she learned about science through artistic posters on various topics such as the layers of the atmosphere, the water cycle and photosynthesis.

YOUTH FEATURE

One of Eile's favourite experiences came in 6th grade when she was asked to develop a project for the Science Fair.

Speaking to her mother about it, they came across an article about how plants react to intention and attention – *"I thought the article was very interesting and perfect for the science fair. So, I did some research and found more about how plants react to attention and positive reinforcement. After that, I decided to try it and see if I could prove it is real".*

For the next couple of months, Eile planted four plants and recorded herself talking to them in different ways. She would say beautiful, positive things, water and give attention to the first one. Plant no. 2, was watered but received no attention. Eile wondered how her third plant would react if, instead of using her voice, she used a non-human voice to talk to it. So, she used 'Siri' on her mum's phone and made it repeat positive phrases.

Finally, the hardest thing to do was plant experiment no. 4. For this particular one Eile had to recite some negative phrases to the plant. After a few weeks, she started seeing the results, and the entire family was surprised. Of all the plants, it was the first one that was thriving. It was so big and was still growing! The rest of the plants seemed malnourished, and some had not survived. *"I recorded all my findings, had my notes and research ready. I took some photos and videos and presented my results, charts and analysis at the Science Fair in 2018. I was so happy to find out I was the winner, but mostly, I was happy that my project had worked, and that I was able to show that good intentions give good results!"*

Through her school, Eile and her friends are encouraged to care for the environment and together work towards sustainability. At school, they have their own botanical garden, where students can grow and harvest their individual plants. *"We learn about horticulture in the vertical gardens placed inside our classroom. We grow lettuce and other vegetables, we plant them and watch them grow! For science, we have some animals like lizards and different insects that we keep for observations; we are encouraged to have them with us outside of their terrariums! They were around us while we had our lessons, they even climbed on us while we learned about science!"*

For Earth Day her school gets recycled material from families and friends and involve the students in art projects reusing the materials which are then showcased around the school campus. *"We also have a "trash-less lunch" on this day. We have our lunch, and the packaging goes back in our lunches and into our houses; nothing stays in our school. I have learnt how important it is to be aware of your waste".* Learning about sustainability has been crucial to Eile. She understands the importance of taking care of the planet's resources and she is committed to encouraging others to take care of the Earth.

Eile has now finished 8th grade and is getting ready for high school. She is a bit nervous about the change but feels so inspired by the way she was able to experience her middle-school education. She feels ready and excited to learn more about art and english. When I ask her if she will miss her school she says, *"I will. I am lucky. I know I have learned in a different way, and I loved it".*



Introducing

Kelly Malloy

Kelly lives on the Gold Coast with her husband Craig, two children Zara and Lincoln and a rather spirited pooch 'Skippy' which they rescued from an animal shelter. Her days are spent working full-time for the mental health charity LIVIN as the fundraising and events coordinator; running the kids around to soccer, basketball and piano lessons; helping with children's school P&F Committee and Sustainability Committee, and most recently, has become a volunteer member of the SSN assisting with our social media platforms.



Born in Darwin and living in five different states by the time she was nine years old, Kelly's family finally settled on the Gold Coast, which Kelly refers to as home. *"My Dad was an agricultural pilot, so we moved to where the work was",* says Kelly. *"I remember bits and pieces of the different towns we lived in when I was young but one thing I remember entirely, was that we were always happy".*

Kelly was able to revisit a lot of these regional towns that she lived in as a child when her family of four packed up their lives in 2017 and traveled around Australia for ten months, living in a camper trailer. The experience is something that enriched all their lives with the unique gift of sharing memories, challenges and adventures that were only made possible by traveling and seeing the places in person. *"It was an incredible experience for the four of us in so many ways, traveling around this magnificent country",* Kelly says.

Three years later, Kelly still believes it was the best education they could have given their children in life, learning and appreciating the importance of looking after the environment and the land.

"We all learned so much about the landscape, the people, the history and the environment in general and even though as a family we were always extremely passionate about environmental and conservation issues, our trip around Australia made it more real how important it is to protect and preserve this beautiful country in any way that we can".

With both Kelly and her husband Craig coming from generations of farmers in their families; Kelly's in Australia throughout Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia and Craig's in New Zealand's North Island, there was always a respect for the land and only using what was needed, ingrained in their upbringing.

PARENT FEATURE

"I have always been a bit of a greenie, as in I have always been aware of environmental and conservation issues. My younger sister Helen, received her PHD in Mapping Science to apply machine learning in deforestation and has been involved in research field trips for universities and through her volunteer work at the London Wetlands Centre even met Sir David Attenborough. Helen is now actively working on research projects for several Australian Universities, so I guess we could say it is in our genes!"

When Kelly became a mum back in 2009 with their daughter Zara, the feeling of urgency to protect the environment and become a sustainable community for future generations was more apparent.

Inspired by her kids' motivation, ideas and determination, Kelly wanted to be involved in activities related to sustainability and education.

"I found out about the first Sustainable Schools Network Symposium at Somerset College last year, my daughter and I were there this year for the second one as well. I sat in on all of the online seminars delivered for teachers and parents and was so inspired! I reached out to the Sustainable Schools Network and put my hand up to help in any way that I could".

Kelly is also an active volunteer with her children's school, St Francis Xavier Primary School's Sustainability Committee and assisted with their campaign entry for last year's Gold Coast School Sustainability Awards which the school proudly won! She has also been assisting with creating campaigns with her daughter for the school like the recent Bread Tag Collection Competition being run in their school.

For Kelly sustainability is also about social considerations, which is why working for a mental health charity, 'Livin', brings her so much joy. *Livin* are working hard to support everyday Australian's including young people especially in light of mental health issues arising from COVID-19. Kelly through her volunteer work at St Francis sees the wellbeing benefits for children being involved in social justice and environmental initiatives.



Kelly Malloy and her family during their travels.

"When children have a sense of purpose, become connected with a cause and feel they are a part of a group or community, it helps them emotionally. Through incredible organisations such as the Sustainable Schools Network, we can give them the knowledge, tools and confidence that they can make a difference to their planet through sustainability, that is the best gift we could ever give our children".

Whilst life is a juggling act for Kelly, as with most of our amazing SSN volunteers who juggle work, parenting and volunteering, the rewards make the work worth it. If you have any spare time, resources and skills your children's school will value your help. Parents are a great resource for schools to help start or maintain sustainability initiatives. It takes a whole school to educate for sustainability.

The Sustainable Schools Network could also use your help. There is much work to be done and we value the enthusiasm and diverse skills our community can offer to help us reimagine education. We are seeking ongoing small contributions and can welcome volunteers from around Australia.

If you'd like to help email info@ssn.org.au to make enquiries.

The Sustainable Schools Network
aim to educate and connect
school communities to imagine
a sustainable future.



Sustainable
SCHOOLS NETWORK
REIMAGINING EDUCATION

