

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS NETWORK JOURNAL

TALLEBUDGERA STATE SCHOOL

*Erin Merrin
Green Cauldron Farm
Meghan Rooney
2019 Sustainability Symposium*



Sustainable
SCHOOLS NETWORK

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Photography

Cover courtesy of Lyons Images

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EVENT CALENDAR

**14 March: SSN Networking Night #1
@ Currumbin RSL**

20-22 March: Storyfest

29 March: Earth Hour Schools Day

**13 MAY: THE 2019
SUSTAINABILITY SYMPOSIUM**

**24 May: Applications close for the
Gold Coast School Sustainability
Awards**

**31st May- 9th June: Gold Coast Green
Week**



2019 SUSTAINABILITY SYMPOSIUM

Igniting souls, inspiring change
A glocal event



CITY OF
GOLD COAST

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

FEATURING

**MELATI WIJSEN, MOLLY
STEER, KAREEM EL-ANSARY &
HOLLEY SOMERVILLE KNOTT**

Workshops by local schools & organisations
Day session for students, tickets \$25 each. Evening
professional development dinner for Principals,
Teachers & Parents, tickets \$90
ssn.gcth@gmail.com for registration or buy online at:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2019-sustainability-symposium-tickets-56611252781>

13 MAY 2019

Tallebudgera State School

Tallebudgera State School is all about sustainability. From veggie gardens that feed their increasingly sustainable tuck shop, native bees that pollinate local flora, planting trees in partnership with council to assist with the koala corridor, compost and worm farms, solar schools and water aware programs and now the Tangalooma Eco Marines Program.

The Tallebudgera State School Environmental Program has now been put under the Tangalooma EcoMarines banner. As one of only two schools on the Gold Coast to participate in this program, they have four ambassadors and twelve support crew involved. To be accepted into the program students must apply, and the program lead Nutana Donaldson stated, "The response is always phenomenal with so many students wanting to apply for the positions". Further, Nutana noted, "The program assists students to learn and take action to combat pollution at a local level with a specific focus on water pollution", and as a result students are becoming conservation leaders.

The whole school community is behind sustainability initiatives at Tallebudgera State School and they are leading the way as winner of the 2018 QLD Tuckshop of the Year. Tuckshop Convenor, Bernie and her team of volunteers are moving towards a more sustainable tuckshop by introducing wrapper free Wednesday lunches and free fruit Friday, using recyclable packaging and eliminating drinking straws.

Tallebudgera P&C work tirelessly to support the EcoMarines with funding and volunteer time. School staff help to recycle and promote wrapper free Wednesday and any other EcoMarine initiated programs. In its third year now, the Tangalooma EcoMarines Program is one of the schools strengths, performing school litter audits and waste audits, organising the school CUAD and running poster competitions to reduce litter and create bin signage. This year they will be putting together a video showcasing what they do to promote sustainability.

Students are the key organisers leading the charge. Like anything new, the program has faced challenges, such as meeting time and data collection constraints, on the journey towards being more sustainable. When students are leading the program, fitting extra things into their day can be difficult. Some activities, like wrapper free Wednesdays data collection, was originally an issue due to it occurring during key learning time. But process efficiency evolved.

The EcoMarines now meet on a Friday morning to discuss possible actions, interpret the wrapper free Wednesday data, plan school newsletters contributions and campaigns for increasing environmental awareness.

Tallebudgera State School EcoMarines plan to expand wrapper free Wednesday to everyday. Already they have managed to reduce the number of bins that go out for collection. Last year the average number of wrappers dropped by more than 50% with some classes having zero wrappers.

Students will continue raising awareness through competitions, assembly presentations, and newsletter education to the community. The EcoMarines will also participate in events like World Environment Day and National Recycling Week, and will visit Tangalooma to train up the ambassadors and meet with like-minded students.

taste of Tallebudgera



Photography by David Lyons

Be sure to get your tickets to the 2019 Sustainability Symposium and register to participate in the Tallebudgera State School EcoMarines workshop.

"This has been a great journey for all of us at Tallebudgera State School. My advice to everyone reading this is to start your journey. Every step you take is a step closer to a sustainable future." - Nutana Donaldson





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Entries open on the 1st of March, &
close on the 24th of May, 2019

\$1000 main prizes for winning primary &
secondary school

Begin or improve your school's
sustainability program now

Email awards@ssn.org.au or president@gecko.org.au
for entry details and more information
www.ssn.org.au www.gecko.org.au

Sustainable Schools Network Evening Networking Event

WHEN: THURSDAY 14TH MARCH
TIME: 7PM

WHERE: CURRUMBIN RSL, CURRUMBIN QLD

HEAR FROM GREEN HEROES & HOW THEY INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF
CONSERVATIONISTS

Introducing

ERIN MERRIN

*The Chairperson of the Sustainable Schools Network
and Head of Humanities at All Saints Anglican School*

Growing up Erin spent time outside gardening and remembers if something broke, they fixed it! The sense of responsibility and appreciation she felt for Mother Earth is credited to her mother.

In 2010, Erin's daughter was born lighting a spark and calling her to action! Since that time Erin has led All Saints Anglican School (ASAS) towards a cultural shift that's necessary for sustainable futures. She has taken lots of small steps that together combine to make a difference or shift people's attitudes for the better.

At ASAS, there have been numerous positive, sustainable achievements including:

1. a significant campus wide student-powered paper recycling scheme that currently recycles a range of paper waste across the School campus;
2. a renovated community farm garden;
3. the \$2 million School solar project; and
4. a significant wetlands project that now sees the School as self-sufficient in terms of water used for irrigation & toilets.

Erin believes her most important achievement is that of education. Student feedback such as "*Geography was one of the most important subjects I did at School because it taught me about sustainability*" reinforces this. Erin knows social change is happening. Recently, a graduating Year 12 student gave thanks with a card saying, "*I am going to find alternatives to renewable energy that will be affordable and accessible to all people in the community*".

The journey to educate for sustainability is not without challenge. Erin has learnt to pick her battles, and that she cannot change everyone or everything. Finding areas where her expertise and skills can be used has been vital to continuing her passion and drive for sustainability. Erin recommends that when feeling overwhelmed, it's important to focus on what you can achieve and how you can make a difference. A favourite quote is by Margaret Mead, "*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has*".

ASAS has strongly supported her initiatives to date, including time being allocated for auditing the School's sustainability practices. Their commitment to implementing her sometimes 'eccentric' ideas is much appreciated!

After meeting Katie Norman, a parent from Somerset College, who is also extremely passionate about sustainable education, it became quite clear there was a need for a coordinated approach to sustainability education in the Gold Coast region.

Katie and Erin were aware that many schools and organisations are doing great things, but that it can be time consuming and difficult to access helpful resources. They believed that a Sustainable Schools Network could be the perfect solution to engaging schools, students and teachers in more sustainable practices - sharing ideas, stories, solutions and their approaches to sustainability in schools.

Erin hopes that her involvement on the SSN Board enables her to share ideas and knowledge on education for sustainability. She also anticipates learning more about sustainability and best practice examples to improve her own knowledge and in turn, share this with students, teachers and the community.

Ideally, she would love to see the entire community working collaboratively with schools in the region or even across Australia to improve the sustainability of all communities from a local to a global level.



Erin has been in education for 15 years. Alongside teaching Senior Geography, she is passionate about sustainability education -the driving focus of her curriculum development, extra-curricular involvement and her personal life.

Erin continues to develop significant awareness for sustainability in her school community, encouraging teachers from Pre-Prep to Year 12 to incorporate sustainability as an underpinning factor in all curriculum areas.

She also works with the Social Justice and Sustainability group (student committee) who educate, advocate for change, host awareness events, and participate in wider community activities such as Beach Care.

Green Cauldron Farm

A large photograph of a farm landscape at sunset. The foreground is filled with rows of green leafy plants, likely kale or chard. In the background, there are rolling hills and a prominent mountain peak under a bright orange and yellow sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare effect.

Green Cauldron Farm is based in the stunning Tweed Valley and has a new perspective on farming. James and Katie share their fresh ideas and their reasons for being on the Board of the Sustainable Schools Network.

James and Katie Geraldts have always been passionate about food, in particular understanding where our food comes from and how to grow it. They have operated a small-scale garden for many years and invested a lot of energy to research the best methods for growing sustainable and regenerative organic produce. A couple years ago they decided to scale this up to a large commercial enterprise called Green Cauldron Farm. With the aim of sharing with others the importance of developing a sustainable and local food system, Green Cauldron Farm is becoming an icon of new farming and farming education practices in the Tweed region.

Green Cauldron Farm is doing things differently because James and Katie come to farming with fresh eyes and a range of experiences that bring new perspectives and ideas to traditional farming methods. With backgrounds working in IT and education, their focus is on food production supported by systems that allow process efficiency. Katie and James are passionate about providing an education component. These two farming entrepreneurs have already been instrumental in bringing internationally recognised farming educators to the Tweed so that they can share their network learnings to inform and inspire more people involved in growing their own food.

Check out the Tweed Destination Sustainable Farming Program that Green Cauldron Farm have been central to organising.

For Katie and James, sustainability is core in all domains of their life. They've identified key drivers that will ensure continuity. As Farmers they must understand and implement the means to support those drivers. Green Cauldron Farm embeds sustainability principles at every level, resulting in sustainable families, sustainable businesses and sustainable communities.

Education is a key driver for change and there's been an amazing focus in the community around environmental sustainability, pollution and waste reduction. While these contribute to creating a sustainable ecosystem, there is room for applying sustainability principles elsewhere.

In particular, ecological sustainability needs to be a focus - there is need to nurture our soil and water to ensure food security for future generations.

Katie and James are Board and Founding Members of the Sustainable Schools Network and Green Cauldron Farm is a Founding Partner of the SSN. Embarking on this role, they know the SSN shares their passion for sustainability education and want to work with future change makers who are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of living in a balanced world.

By working closely with schools around Australia, Katie and James aim to reach out to the young minds who will make a difference in the future. Food is something everyone relates to, resulting in a message that has huge appeal.

We all have to eat to survive, so ensuring the best possible outcomes in how we manage food production and to get students interested at the earliest possible age will be the best way to do this. We believe that through the appeal lens of food and agriculture we can promote the message of sustainability.



Green Cauldron Farm aims to include an education centre, with a working model for teaching sustainable agriculture principles to the next generation of food producers. Through education programs, a shift back to small scale, local food production serving local communities and emphasising the importance of ecological sustainability will be encouraged. The ideal is many small food growing hubs throughout Australia all working together to grow the food of the future, reducing food miles and ensuring what we eat is grown in the best possible way.

MEGHAN ROONEY

Youth perspective

For outstanding commitment and dedication to her school, studies and community and environment

Meghan was the 2018 recipient of the Spirit of Somerset Award and the Hinwood Award.

These awards recognise Meghan's exceptional leadership, effort and contributions across a very wide variety of causes, and the exceptional performance quality proudly embraced by Somerset College.

Meghan was the leading senior student in the newly developed Sustainable Spartans committee and has now enthusiastically taken on the role of Youth Ambassador for the SSN. Meghan is passionate about leading and educating others about sustainability and 'earthly well-being' and proudly wears her messages on her own T-shirt line Earth-Tees, co-founded in 2017.



Meghan Rooney is an inspiring youth ready to take action for a sustainable future. Meghan was involved with the creation and leadership of Somerset College's Sustainable Spartans. In this role, she was a driving force behind a number of changes, including:

1. initiating plastic-free food containers and cutlery;
2. introducing Water 3 machines and recycling bins; and
3. sewing re-useable Bounce Bags from old uniforms.

The Bounce Bag program in particular was one of Meghan's favourite Sustainable Spartan initiatives. This program enabled those who purchased goods from the school shop to borrow a Bounce Bag (and return it) instead of using plastic bags. The bags are an environmental and social action, preventing uniforms ending up in landfill and bringing students and community members together in this multi-generational activity.

As a budding entrepreneur and concerned citizen Meghan and her mum, Alison founded a sustainably sourced T-shirt company in late 2017. The goal of Earth-tees is to promote awareness through the design and message. Even by wearing her own t-shirts, Meghan has been able to educate others on the importance of sustainability and the simple, effective, steps they can take. Meghan identified, "my friends are now incorporating more sustainable practices in their lives which is incredible!"

Working through challenges by reassuring and assisting team members has become second-nature to Meghan. She identified helping other students by finding common connections to reassure and assist them and at times by conducting the initial research. According to Meghan, the most important thing is persisting as the education process is ongoing and little steps make a difference.

The Sustainable Spartans committee really allowed Meghan and other like-minded individuals to finally make an impressionable impact on the community. Recently graduated, the desire to continue developing great sustainable ideas and solutions meant being involved with the SSN as a Youth Ambassador was the perfect opportunity.

As part of the SSN team, Meghan hopes to educate others about sustainability to the point where they're willing to implement their own positive actions. Sustainability is a wide and overarching term that can often seem quite daunting to individuals, which often prohibits them from taking any action.

With education, anyone can start taking steps in the right direction towards a more sustainable lifestyle. Supporting each other in these endeavours is key - Meghan would like to escalate all sustainable efforts by creating networks with like-minded people. Ultimately, Meghan's goal is to help facilitate and encourage a noticeable sustainable improvement within our community.

Meghan is studying Veterinary Science at James Cook University in 2019 and is looking forward to continuing her efforts in sustainability as Youth Ambassador for the Sustainable Schools Network.

If you'd like to order an earth-tee and help spread the sustainable word, please visit :

<https://www.earth-tees.com/>

Also follow our Instagram:

@earth.tees

*Better with
Bees ...*



EARTH TEES...



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13 MAY 2019

YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY IS INVITED TO THE

2019 SUSTAINABILITY SYMPOSIUM

MAY 13, 2019 | MONDAY | SOMERSET COLLEGE

The inaugural 2019 Sustainability Symposium aims to connect Tweed and GC Schools in their commitment towards sustainability education. Students, teachers and school communities are invited to learn, share & develop 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, responsible citizenship and critical thinking. The three main objectives are:

1. establishing a common language regarding sustainability
2. addressing the 12th sustainable development goal (responsible consumption and production), and
3. building partnerships for sustainable education within our local region.

We are looking forward to igniting souls and inspiring change!

Thank you to our Event Partners:
**Somerset College and the
City of Gold Coast**

Thank you to our GOLD Sponsors:
**City of Gold Coast Water and Waste,
Griffith University, & Cr. Hermann Vorster**

Tickets are limited so secure your schools spot now by following the link to:
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/2019-sustainability-symposium-tickets-56611252781>