



Newhaven College Junior School

Could you introduce us to your school?

We are Newhaven College Junior School. We opened in 2011 with 175 students, one grade at each level of P-6.

Describe your school garden.

We have transformed a patch of bare ground into a beautiful and bountiful 5x20 metre vegetable garden, to be enjoyed and marveled by the entire school community. We made a decision to situate the garden away from the buildings, to allow for additional buildings required for student growth in the coming years.

The school garden program is an ongoing Grade 4 project. The aim is to tie in other themed gardens that compliment this garden, and each year the students will have a different garden, (such as a bush tucker garden), to nurture and develop.

How does the garden fit into school life?

The vegetable garden is central to the Grade 4 studies in Integrated Studies. This links sustainability, ecosystems, endangered species, alternative energies, waste and caring for our planet together.

Designing and creating this garden has enabled the children to experience a wide variety of activities across all areas of the curriculum. The passion and enthusiasm they have shared with one another, and their co-operation over the project has been outstanding. They even take their on-going rosters very seriously, and enjoy them immensely.

We add our lunchtime scraps to the compost bin, which requires a dedicated team of students who have a bit of a walk from the classrooms. We have a classroom award called the "Golden Lunch Box", which is awarded to the class with the least rubbish, which is a good incentive to minimise waste.

Describe a problem that you have had to face or tackle.

The junior campus is on 82 acres of ex-farmland previously used for cattle grazing. The natural elements such as wind, vermin, lack of water to the area, and the sourcing of seeds and plants, have all been a big challenge. We also have a problem with wallabies, hares, rabbits and rats which all try to get into the food scraps in the compost, located on a hill nearby.

Do you have an interesting fact or story to share?

The students have said they would like to supply a local restaurant with their vegetables, and team up with a community group to ensure that their program is sustainable for the long term. What a great idea!

There are also plans underway to plant fruit trees, crops and more crops, reinstate the hothouse, and eventually use the produce in the school canteen.

SCHOOL STORIES



How has the Australian Organic Schools program benefited your school?

Our Australian Organic Schools grant was absolutely our dream come true – as we had no funds to commence this and it was not a priority on the budget, but certainly a high wish list item for Grade 4. The key outcome of the funding has shown the children what amazing things can be done with a small amount of money.