

THE GILLAMII CENTRE

FLORA, FAUNA AND FARMING: CONNECTING KIDS TO COUNTRY



CSGS20151 STATE NRM

Since land settlement and the inception of Industrial processes, the South Coast region has experienced significant loss of native vegetation, leading to land degradation, straining of ecosystem processes and disconnecting humans from nature. Experiences, encounters and connection with the natural world is critical to forming lifelong environmental attitudes and values, which will shape resource management in the future.

This project provides an immersive learning experience and adopt a patch program for our communities future generation, with the potential to become deeply rooted within schools to connect kids to country and foster sustainable attitudes towards land management for the future.



EXCURSION 1: BALIJUP SANCTURAY

On the 1st of June 2021, 50 year 4, 5 and 6 students from Cranbrook, Frankland River and Tambellup Primary School arrived at Balijup Sanctuary filled with anticipation for the first excursion of the year.

Our first excursion for the Connecting Kids to Country, environmental education program was a huge success. The excursion was held at Balijup Sanctuary in Tenterden, which is a great example of some of the fantastic outcomes that can occur when protecting remnant bushland, including protecting populations of Quenda, Brushtail Possums and Brushtail Phascogales. The students from Cranbrook, Frankland River and Tambellup Primary School came back raving about what they had seen, excited to discover more about their environment from our excursion specialists Sarah Comer (DBCA), Basil Schur (Green Skills), Sandra Gilfillan (South Coast NRM) and May Penny (Menang Elder).

Some of the activities included Quenda digging surveys and Black Cockatoo hollow surveys with Ecologist Sandra Gilfillan. "I talked to the kids about the importance of having suitable nesting hollows in trees for Cockatoos to breed in, and how trees will only form hollows when they are 100-150 yrs old or more. This gave them a sense of the long term and continuing care that is required to keep habitats suitable for animals to use. In the same sense, long-term and continuing education of kids about environmental issues is vital for building a strong sense of belonging to country in kids."

The students sat down with Aunty May Penny, a local Noongar Elder who grew up in the very bushlands they were exploring that day. Students listened to her talk about growing up and sustaining themselves in the bush, and finished the excursion with a visit to lake Nunijup.



Clockwise from top left: Sarah Comer explaining habitats and radio tracking
2: Students at Lake Nunijup.
3: Sandra Gilfillan hollow surveying
4: Gillamii Officer Ashley helping with Quenda digging Surveys
5. Aunty May Penny and students



EXCURSION 2: RED GUM SPRINGS

On August 3rd 2021 three buses of very excited students made their way to Red Gum Springs in the Stirling Range National Park. The theme was 'Ecosystems from the ground up'.

Elements that make up the ecosystem from the bugs down below to the trees up high and how do we interact and impact the ecosystem.

Environmental education specialists included Svetlana Micic (DPIRD Entomologist), Wendy Bradshaw (Environmental consultant), Jeremy Spencer (Great Southern Biologic) and Larry Blight (Kurrah Mia). The students rotated through activities enabling them to explore the unique ecosystem.

Starting from the ground, Svetlana got the students hunting for and identifying invertebrates through a leaf litter and shrub activity. Students then explored Indigenous culture and environmental interactions with Larry Blight, learning about bush foods, and how tools were made and used.

Moving up the layers of the ecosystem the students explored the role of Flora in the ecosystem with Wendy Bradshaw, and began learning about certain impacts on the ecosystem with a very interactive lesson about Dieback.

Although the students live within close proximity to the Stirling Range National Park, very few have had the prior opportunity to visit the national park let alone explore and learn about their surroundings.



- Clockwise from top left:
- 1: Larry Blight showing the Booka (Roo skin coat)
 - 2: Invertebrate hunting
 - 3: Larry demonstrating Noongar tools
 - 4: Listening to the flow of water through the trees with Wendy
 - 5: Dieback discussions with Jeremy



natural resource
management program



Connecting
Kids to Country

FLORA. FAUNA. FARMING.



EXCURSION 3: BOB'S LAKE

The final Connecting Kids to Country excursion for 2021 was held on the 26th of August, coincidentally this was the only excursion we experienced with wintery weather conditions. That didn't dampen the experience for the students, eager to explore Bob's Lake in Cranbrook with Steve and Geraldine Janicke (Janicke Environmental), Anne Bondin (WA Birdlife), and Wendy Bradshaw (Environmental consultant).

The theme was 'Flora, Fauna and Farming'. Combining newfound knowledge of our regions natural environment with how we can support, enhance, and protect the natural environment. Bob's Lake is situated on a farm and highlights the importance of protecting the natural environment amongst our agricultural landscape. The farmers on this property have chosen to enhance natural assets on their farm, and in doing so receive the benefit from the environment which our students explored.

The students rotated activities in mixed school groups, learning about pollination with Wendy which was enhanced by seeing pollination in action outside of the classroom. Anne Bondin from Birdlife WA guided students around Bob's Lake to learn about wetland birds armed with scopes and binoculars. before looking at life under the water with the Janickes. Steve and Geraldine Janicke are no strangers to the waterways of the Cranbrook Shire. Students explored water quality, salinity and the almost undetectable life of water invertebrates.

This excursion pieced together the experiences and learnings over the year about habitat, ecosystems, flora and fauna with human interactions and how we co-exist with the environment. At each excursion it became more and more clear how environmental education needs to be supported outside the classroom allowing kids to connect to country authentically.



- Clockwise from top left:
1. Bird surveying at Bob's Lake
 2. Invertebrate catching with the Janickes
 3. Using scopes to find wetland birds
 4. Learning about pollination with Wendy
 5. Exploring Macroinvertebrates

Flora, Fauna and Farming: Connecting Kids to Country

CSGS20151 Community Stewardship Grants 2020
Monitoring and Evaluation

3 Schools
50 students
Years 4, 5 and 6



Student Feedback

KWL Charts were collected from each student across all the three schools. These charts are separated into three sections for each student to reflect on pre and post excursion including 'What do I know?' 'What do I want to know?' and 'What have I learned?' These are some highlights from the first excursion survey.



WHAT DO I KNOW?

"Things work together"

"Bush is often near farming land"

"there are all kinds of animals like Kangaroos, Karda and Bobtails"

"Fox and Feral Cats are killing native animals"



WHAT DO I WANT TO KNOW?



- "What happens if there is no habitat?"*
- "How many types of plants are there?"*
- "How long do Brushtail Phascogales Live for?"*
- "How many animals are in Balijup Sanctuary?"*
- "Do new shoots come through after the bushfires?"*
- "How many nocturnal animals live in the bush?"*
- "How do animals get their food?"*

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?



- "Everything an animal needs is in it's habitat"*
- "Animals need habitat to survive"*
- "There are three types of black cockatoos"*
- "Nana May's Family (Menang) used to eat bobtail eggs"*
- "There are hollows for animals to live in"*
- "You can track animals for years and monitor them"*
- "there are different layers in every habitat"*



Thank you to the West Australian Government's State Natural Resource Management Program for supporting this project



Connecting Kids to Country

FLORA. FAUNA. FARMING.

Staff Feedback

"The program was extremely beneficial for our students. They were able to work with specialists in their field and really understand the biodiversity of the country where they live. Also fantastic to be able to network with other schools."

-Tambellup Primary School Principal



How important do you believe environmental education is?

66% Extremely Important
33% Important

Would on going environmental education opportunities such as Connecting Kids to Country be of benefit to your school?

100% schools answered Yes

What worked well?

"It was great meeting up with other schools in different nature reserves. The different presenters were very interesting and shared their knowledge at a level the kids could understand."

"Every session was excellent and hands-on."

"short rotations, differing locations, combined schools"

Improvements?

"I think the last excursion worked the best. Shorter sessions, with small gaps in between. Then finishing at lunch, that way we can all get back to school before the school day is finished."

"The Gillamii Centre are to be commended for running such a fantastic program and we are privileged to be involved."

AT HOME RESOURCE PACKS

At the end of the three excursions, each student received their at home resource/activity packs. These were designed to continue the exploration and connection into their own environments around the school, at home or around the town. Each pack consisted of:

- Branded tote bag
- Activity Journal
- Invertebrate hunting kit
- Gillamii Cap
- Wildflower faces learning and colouring in book
- A native seedling



“Our challenge isn’t so much to teach children about the natural world, but to find ways to sustain the instinctive connections they already carry.” ~ Terry Krautwurst

MURAL- CONNECTING THROUGH ART

The final component of Connecting Kids to Country was the creation of a collaborative mural, providing a powerful reflection of the environment through the eyes of the next generation. The students reflected on what they learnt at each excursion through the experiences and knowledge from the specialists, moulding this into a creative tile pieced together by artist Amanda Bradshaw. This mural will be displayed in each town, connecting the wider community with this representation of environment around them through our youth's eyes.



KNOW YOUR PATCH

About the program



Connecting Kids to Country

In an effort to bring consistency in environmental education opportunities for local schools, Gillamii obtained funding from the State Natural Resource Management Grant to initiate the Connecting Kids to Country environmental education program. Experiences, encounters and connection with the natural world are critical to forming lifelong environmental attitudes and values, which will shape resource management in the future. This program is all about providing opportunities for our future environmental stewards to learn, explore, and connect with the environment.

In the programs first the year 4,5,6 students attended three excursions exploring environmental themes through activities lead by environmental specialists. This year we are collaborating with DBCA's Environmental Education and Behaviour Change Coordinator Joselyn Juraszek to initiate the Know Your Patch program.

Know Your Patch aims to identify and encourage a sense of place in our youth, resulting in respect for, connection to, and care for the nature and heritage of our local environments. This program provides the framework to support young people to plan and carry out action projects that tackle the big issues of human impact, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation at a local scale.

Know Your Patch

KNOW YOUR PATCH 5 STEP PLAN



STEP 1: IDENTIFY A LOCAL BUSHLAND

Find a bush land in your school or community. Who is responsible for looking after it? Explore the local bush land and find out what it was like 10, 20, 100 and 200+ years ago.

STEP 2: EXPLORE AND INVESTIGATE

Experience what lives in your bush land and collect data on the birds, invertebrates, plants, and animals. Can you identify what is native and what is introduced? If you can't, who could help you or where could you go to find out?



STEP 3: THREATS AND SOLUTIONS

Identify the threats that the plant and animals in your bush land face and find out how they impact them. What is being done and could be done to reduce the impacts?

STEP 4: CREATE AND ACT

Plan and carry out an action project to address one of the threats the plants and animals in your bush land face. Who in your community can help make your project a success?



STEP 5: CELEBRATE & EVALUATE

Celebrate your successes with your school and community. Who needs to hear what you have to say and how will you let them know? Review your action plan and discuss what worked and what didn't work? Create a new action plan.

Session Plan

The initial year of implementation will include a 5 session plan. The program is designed to be flexible for each individual school, and will take shape through the influence of students and teachers.

Session one: Virtual Incursion

A guided brainstorming session with Joselyn and Ash where students can begin to think critically about their local environment in the past, present and future.

Session two: Mapping your Patch

Using SWAY and Google Earth, students will explore their patch from above. Resources to guide exploration will be provided.

Session 3: Visit the Patch

An excursion to the near by patch guided by Gillamii, Wendy Bradshaw and Joselyn Juraszek. Students will run through activities to collect data and information while exploring their patch including habitat assessments and surveying to determine who lives in the patch, looks after the patch and threats to the patch.

Session 4 and 5: Share your vision

Students to present on their patch to determine what they see the environment looking like in the future, and if there is any action they could take now to set it on this trajectory. This will form the basis of future projects and initiatives driven through student action.

GET TO KNOW YOUR PATCH

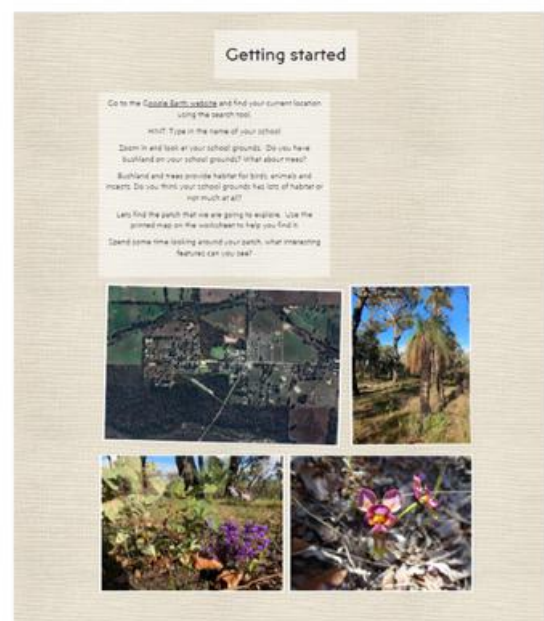
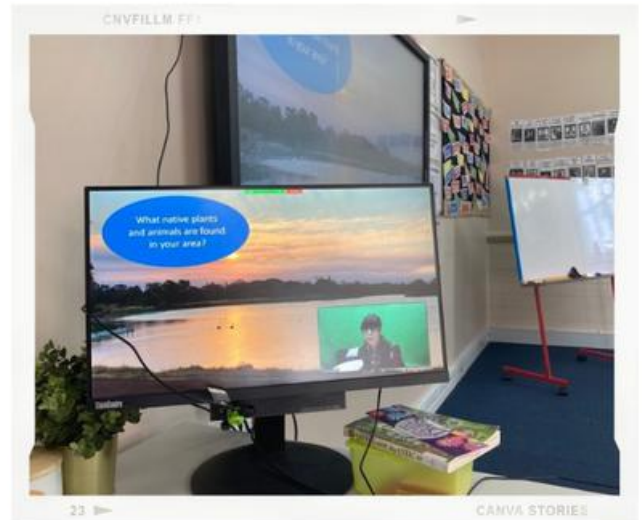
Sessions one and two explored each School's Patch through a virtual medium. Together with Joselyn Juraszek, DBCA's Environmental Education and Behavioural Change Officer, two interactive incursions were delivered at each school.

In session one students were guided through some brainstorming with Joselyn and Ash where students began to think critically about their local environment in the past, present and future. The students got to meet Jos over Zoom which was exciting in itself, and Ash facilitated the activities in person. During this session, students began to think about what they already know about the environment they live in, what they like about their patch, dislike about their patch, and what they thought their area looked like 500 years ago.

In session two students mapped their Patch using SWAY and Google Earth. Students enjoyed exploring the mapping program, navigating measurement and perimeter tools, and gained an understanding of the bigger picture of their patch.

This is the link to one of the SWAY Sessions:

<https://sway.office.com/Apve5dTAgeobtxdP?>



EXPLORING THE PATCH

The first Patch visits took place in June 2022, across a half day excursion to their Patch. Cranbrook and Frankland River year 4,5 and 6 students walked to their local bush reserves surrounding the town, and Tambellup students walked to the Gordon River Reserve. These areas have been carefully selected for their environmental significance to the town. Guiding the Patch visits was local environmental consultant Wendy Bradshaw, Gillamii's Project Officer Ashley Marjoram, and local Menang Elder May Penny.

The aim of the session was to explore what was in their Patch and assess the over all condition, provoking thoughts about what the community could potentially do to enhance and protect the Patch, and determine what they might want to explore in the future. The visits were received with a lot of enthusiasm from the teaching staff and students, with the Know Your Patch model providing an attainable platform for on going environmental education that can align with and enhance the current curriculum. Over the excursion we navigated activities such as the scavenger hunt, invertebrate survey, and habitat assessment in the patch journals which have provided the perfect foundation and baseline for future activities.



THE VISION

Vision

What is your vision for your Patch in 50 years time?
What environmental features are essential in your vision (abiotic (non-living) and biotic (living)). Draw a picture with labels below.



Suggest three ways the community could work together to make your vision happen.

1. Planting trees
2. Picking up rubbish
3. Every body help to keep it good

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Vision

What is your vision for your Patch in 50 years time?
What environmental features are essential in your vision (abiotic (non-living) and biotic (living)). Draw a picture with labels below.



Suggest three ways the community could work together to make your vision happen.

1. Breed more native animals.
2. Adding rubbish bins
3. Plant more vegetation

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Vision

What is your vision for your Patch in 50 years time?
What environmental features are essential in your vision (abiotic (non-living) and biotic (living)). Draw a picture with labels below.



Suggest three ways the community could work together to make your vision happen.

1. more bins around the nature reserve
2. more days to collect rubbish
3. more man made nature homes for possums and birds

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Actions

- Picking up Rubbish
- Plant more trees
- More animals, be more respectful around them
- Signage
- More Bins around the Nature Reserve
- More manmade nature homes for possums and birds
- Dieback sprayers
- Less extinct animals
- Less fires
- Weeding
- Trap Pests
- Less Pollution

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

CONFERENCES AND EXHIBITIONS

This project has provided a platform to connect the natural resource management industry and education industry, and in doing so our Project Officer Ashley was invited to attend the National Bi Annual Australian Association for Environmental Education conference, where she was able to network and share the project. This is where our connection to Joslyn from DBCA was made and our collaboration on the Know Your Patch program was seeded. We have also been able to display artwork and information about Connecting Kids to Country at exhibitions in our community, and our abstract was successful for the 2022 State Natural Resource Management conference, where we will be displaying the mural.



BRANDING

Instilling the initiative in our community, Creating a logo to brand the Connecting Kids to Country, Environmental Education program creates an identity for the program in the community and industry. Synergy Graphics and Gillamii designed this logo to represent the program and has been highly beneficial as an image for communications with stakeholders and potential further funding from the community.



ARTICLES AND SOCIAL MEDIA



The project has been shared in regional news outlets such as the Great Southern Herald, community newsletters, Industry newsletters and shared across social media platforms



CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

APPROACHING STAKEHOLDERS

To raise awareness about the environmental education initiative and engage and consult with key stakeholders and potential sponsors, targeted communication materials were created. Below is a list of various stakeholders that we engaged with to promote, resource, organise, and initiate the Connecting Kids to Country Program

- 27th/04/2022 Meeting Frankland River Primary School with year 4,5,6 teacher Lis Oversby and Principle Sasha Claughton. Discussed what was required in their schools for environmental education and capacity to support the program in the long term, structure of the Know Your Patch program and dates for initial sessions.
- 28th/04/2022 Meeting Cranbrook Primary School with year 4,5,6 teacher Nekesha Fish and Principle Craig Lewington.
- 29th/04/2022 Meeting Tambellup Primary School with year 4,5,6 teacher Jess McPartland and Principle Cindy Veitch.
- 3/03/2022 Tambellup Community Crop Committee meeting, discussed capacity to support the connecting kids to country program.
- 16/12/2021 Cranbrook Shire Council Presentation
- 4/05/2022 Frankland River P and C meeting, Introduced the Know Your Patch program to the committee.
- Applied for Bendigo Bank community funding to support a year 6 ecology camp, branded under the Connecting Kids to Country program. Also applied for the Mt Barker Co-Op grant to support the ecology camp, both applications were successful.



Connecting Kids to Country

FLORA. FAUNA. FARMING.

INTRODUCTION

Since land settlement and the inception of Industrial processes, the South Coast region has experienced significant loss of native vegetation, leading to land degradation, straining of ecosystem processes and disconnecting humans from nature. Experiences, encounters and connection with the natural world is critical to forming lifelong environmental attitudes and values, which will shape resource management in the future. This project provides an immersive learning experience and adopt a patch program for our communities future generation, with the potential to become deeply rooted within schools to connect kids to country and foster sustainable attitudes towards land management for the future.

"Our challenge isn't so much to teach children about the natural world, but to find ways to sustain the instinctive connections they already carry." - Terry Krautwurst

About us
Gillams is a not for profit organisation who aims to lead, inspire, and support productive agriculture, rural communities, and health natural ecosystems. Whilst the two areas of natural resource management and agricultural production are to some degree distinct, they are also inextricably linked. This provides opportunities for Gillams, industry, government, and community to work together to create a sustainable and fruitful future for our region.

Know Your Patch: Connecting the Community

Know Your Patch aims to identify and encourage a *sense of place* in our youth, resulting in respect for, connection to, and care for the nature and heritage of our local environments. This program provides the framework to support young people to plan and carry out action projects that tackle the big issues of human impact, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation at a local scale.

In collaboration with the Department of Conservation, Biodiversity and Attractions, Gillams initiated Know Your Patch with all three schools adopting their own patch within walking distance of the schools. Virtual sessions were run with each class before heading out to explore their patch, enabling students to decide what they want to learn about and take action on.

Connecting Through Art

The final component of Connecting Kids to Country was the creation of a collaborative mural, providing a powerful reflection of the environment through the eyes of the next generation. The students reflected on what they learnt at each excursion through the experiences and knowledge from the specialists, moulding this into a creative tile piece together by artist Amanda Bradshaw.

Environmental Education in Action: Connecting the Schools

The main objectives for this program was to provide opportunities for our communities youth outside of the classroom, connecting and learning about the environment around them and providing schools with a sustainable model for on-going environmental education.

To achieve this we established a program which aligned with the current curriculum and connected schools with environmental experts and resources in our region. This resulted in the delivery of multiple activities designed to enhance knowledge and connection to their environment, beginning with three themed excursions.

Prior to each excursion, schools received resources such as worksheets and video links that explored the themes of the upcoming excursion. The excursions were resourced with incredible specialists from across the region who guided exploration and learning at each excursion. Students rotated through guided activities which explored the overarching themes.

The Excursions took place within significant locations including Baljup sanctuary, Stirling Range National Park, and the Baljup Wetlands. Students were guided through activities including tree hollow surveying, invertebrate hunting, bird watching, and enriching story telling by local Menang Elders adding to their knowledge and understanding of their local environment piece by piece.

85% of school faculty who participated in the program before environmental education is very important to the school curriculum, 55% before vs 66% now

66% of students engaged across three schools

10 Environmental education specialists attended over the course of the program, including representatives from DECA, DPWS, Bardi, and environmental specialists.



Thank you to the West Australian Government's State NRM Program for supporting this project, and all the invaluable in-kind support from DECA and DPWS.

DEVELOPING A SPONSORSHIP OUTLINE

The final stages of the initial Connecting Kids to Country Project was to begin developing a sustainable sponsorship model that doesn't rely on ad-hoc government funding. To construct this we spoke relevant stakeholders including schools, shires and local businesses and groups.

The existing 'Our Patch' program run by Nature Conservation Margaret River, is entirely funded by local businesses such as the Rotary Club of Margaret River, the Shire's Environmental Management Fund, and philanthropic contributions. Our location has varying challenges compared to Margaret River, they have a robust tourism industry and larger population, however our region supports great variety from viticulture to broad acre farming and other small businesses that provide opportunity for sponsorship support.



SPONSORSHIP

Know Your Patch will be managed Gillamii's Environmental Education Officer, Ashley Marjoram. Ashley has a Bsc in Conservation and Wildlife Biology, and is particularly passionate about creating education opportunities for the next generation of environmental stewards.

The program will be supported by a range of presenters, including scientists, rangers, environmental educators, and Aboriginal custodians helping to provide meaningful incursions and excursions. Know Your Patch is supported by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions framework created by Joseyln Juraszek which enables access to great resources and support.

Know Your Patch provides a series of incursions with interactive teaching resources and excursions out into the environment to learn about each schools local patch. Where possible excursions will be linked with local environmental projects, groups or issues to expose students to real life examples of environmental surveying, research and rehabilitation activities.

Proposed Budget requirements

Education Officer costs (0.1fte)	\$7500.00
Travel Costs	\$2000.00
Specialist Presenter fees (including indigenous consultation and engagement)	\$4000.00
Bus Hire (group excursion)	\$900.00
Resources and materials	\$1000.00
Total	\$15,400

What's in it for a Business Sponsor?

Know Your Patch provides a great opportunity for businesses and groups to be associated with a local school environmental education program that caters to the individual school, and provides resources and experiences that are otherwise unavailable to our small rural schools. The sponsor will be recognised in all promotional materials associated with the program receiving exposure within the local community through news outlets, signage, and social media, and at large during industry conferences, membership newsletters such as the Australian Association for Environmental Education, and other supporting funds at the time such as Lotteries West, and the Government's State Natural Resource Management program.

Your support enables kids to connect to country and the community to foster our future environmental stewards for the region.



CONNECTING KIDS TO COUNTRY

This project has strengthened our connections to stakeholders in our region who see the importance and value in imbedding consistent environmental education opportunities in schools.

It became apparent very quickly how niche environmental knowledge and education is, and that support is beneficial to the delivery of environmental education within schools. The momentum that this program has created has been great and has set the foundation for the schools and Gillamii's commitment to continue collaborative environmental education, supporting initiatives with in-kind support and commitment into the future.

*"The Gillamii Centre are to be commended for running such a fantastic program, and we are privileged to be involved" -
Cindy Veitch Tambellup
Principal*



Gillamii and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions are already committing in-kind time to supporting the continuation of 'Know Your Patch' under the Connecting Kids to Country Program, which will hopefully see many cohorts of children become environmental stewards as they begin to learn about and take action for their Patch.

We will continue to seek community support for the program which will assist with future program costs. Our region has a broad range of industries, however seeking funding from larger bodies such as GSDC, Lotteries and the Government will also be valuable in supporting the synergistic partnership between Schools and Organisations such as Gillamii to carry out environmental education in the long term.

