



KOJONUP DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL FARM

Promoting Home Grown Produce

The Kojonup DHS Farm, made up of 480 acres, was purchased in 1968. The farm runs 600 ewes in a closed flock. We have several acres of bush which has been left, some fenced off, for students to use for additional study. Initially only high school boys benefited from the programmes at the farm but today, girls and boys from K - 10 spend time here. High school students carry out farming activities, such as crutching, drenching and feeding sheep as well as seeding and harvesting, (crops are grown for the farms own use). Fencing, paving, rendering and construction are carried out by students of all ages. Students are also involved in primary industries such as hydroponics, aquaculture, propagation of plants, raising chickens and of course growing vegetables. Some classes have individual plots and others grow class plots. Vegetables are grown during first semester and include radish, beans, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, beetroot, carrots and spinach. Some are grown from seeds, while others are grown from seedlings. Recently we have grown a small selection of vegetables over the summer period, so that students learn about the specific growth periods of vegetables.

All of the vegetable gardens are found in the newly covered orchard area. This netting is manufactured to keep out fruit fly and as a result also keeps out insects which are harmful to vegetables. The orchard will be planted this year and will not only give the students an appreciation of the seasonality of fruit but also how good fruit tastes when it is picked from the tree.

When picked, the vegetables are taken home by the students and sometimes they are processed or cooked at school. Some classes have learnt to preserve their produce by dehydrating, pickling, bottling and making jam.

We have four gardens within the farm yard. The Bush Tucker Garden, English Garden, Italian Garden and Maori Garden. These productive gardens relate to the four main cultures which make up the Kojonup community. Classes from Year 3 to 6 look after these gardens respectively, and in doing so start to get an awareness of the cultural diversity within our town.

We also have the Noongar Meeting Place, which has been developed over the last two years from PALS (Partnership, Acceptance, Learning and Sharing) funding, from the Department of Indigenous Affairs. We have been fortunate to have positive links with the local adult Noongar GSIT (Great Southern Institute of Technology) Horticulture class and their input has greatly added to this area. The six Noongar seasons are represented here and mosaics and signs illustrate the animals and plants which are available at these times for tucker.

Kojonup District High School is a Waste Wise School, a Water Wise School and a Member of AuSSI (Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative), so many of the projects at school and the farm, relate to sustainable practices. We also encourage the students to make things out of preloved materials. We often advertise in the local paper for second hand items and have received very generous support. From farm equipment, to paving bricks, paper brick makers, kitchen equipment, laundry troughs, kitchen sinks, jam posts, compost, sheep manure, straw, surplus fruit and vegetables, plants and plant material, the list goes on.

We are grateful for the funds we have received from the Waste Authority, the Department of Indigenous Affairs, The Healthy Schools Project and Kojonup's "Renew" Op Shop which have been used to improve the facilities at the farm and hence the educational opportunities we can provide for our students.

We also thank Open Gardens Australia for the opportunity to open our productive gardens to the general public. We held our Open Garden on the weekend of 10th and 11th May 2014.