

# Media Release

24<sup>th</sup> May 2011



## Primary Students Lead the Way in Sustainability

Over 70 local primary school students and teachers came together on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May to learn about environmental sustainability in the community and plan Green Learning Centres for 2020. Initiated by the BGK LLEN and Tomorrow's Leaders for Sustainability, and funded by Bayside City Council, this Youth Environment Forum was the first of its kind in Victoria.

In many Australian youth surveys, environmental concerns rate highly amongst today's students. Increasingly, schools are encouraging students to play a role in improving environmental sustainability within their school. This Forum was developed to increase student knowledge of current environmental practices and assist them to become sustainability leaders of the future.

Jane Stewart, one of the co-founders of Tomorrow's Leaders for Sustainability, said that "the Forum assisted young people to understand the key issues of sustainability while participating in challenging activities that greatly extended their appreciation of leadership".

During the Forum, students heard from guest speakers, participated in experiments and received information from some of Australia's leading environmental educators. During the day students learned about current sustainability practices in the areas of energy, water, construction, recycling and gardens. They were then able to put this knowledge to use as they worked in groups to build 3D models of 2020 Green Learning Centres.

Students incorporated creative environmental sustainability solutions such as roof gardens, grey water, community gardens, wind turbines and solar power into their models. When commenting on the day one Year 5 student said that she "learned that sustainability can make a BIG difference in the school, at home, in the local community and the whole wide world."

Louisa Ellum, Executive Officer of the BGK LLEN, said the forum "gave schools a chance to meet and learn about initiatives in neighbouring schools, something that today's busy teachers often don't get an opportunity to do". Students learned to work with peers from other schools and teachers were able to build relationships with one another and consider working together on local sustainability projects.

The Forum was a great success with students and teachers wanting it repeated, not only for schools in the local area but also for schools across Melbourne.

### **For more information or media enquiries contact:**

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