

UNE Landcare Group Newspaper Articles.

Armidale Express Extra 6/12/06

newsextra

PLC girls creek carers



MORE than 150 students from Year 9 at PLC Croydon (Sydney) have experienced some of the challenges and solutions to local stream management on Armidale's Dumaresq Creek.

During three afternoons at a revegetation site, being worked on by Armidale Urban Rivercare and UNE Landcare, three groups of 50 girls tackled water quality monitoring and streamside revegetation.

The students saw how exotic plants and weeds can stabilise stream banks and filter water entering streams.

They learned of the greater value of native plant communities for providing appropriate habitats for

invertebrate and vertebrate animals needed to maintain healthy aquatic environments.

By each planting a native shrub along Dumaresq Creek, the girls were able to contribute to improving streamside habitat and water quality in Armidale.

Dr Andrew Boulton and his team from UNE's Department of Ecosystem Management demonstrated water quality monitoring techniques to the students and helped them experience indicators of healthy waterways and what is involved in checking stream health.

The knowledge the students already had of water pollutants and their effects on streams gave them

a good background for experiencing the practicalities of water quality monitoring.

Dr Boulton is working actively to ensure that young people have opportunities to learn about the natural environment and how to help maintain the natural processes we rely on to sustain the Earth.

Angus Adair, from the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group and EPA, helped with the revegetation activities and was impressed at the level of environmental knowledge displayed by the girls.

Landcare in Schools co-ordinator, Ruth Tremont, was pleased with the field days.

"The girls engaged themselves with the demands of planting and

quickly picked up on ways they can help improve the health of land and water ecosystems," she said. "They were a pretty switched-on group."

The PLC Croydon students stayed at PLC Armidale, their sister school, and explored 'a sense of place' by experiencing aspects of local Aboriginal culture and European history, involving themselves in local Landcare activities, visiting grazing properties and national parks, and exploring aspects of the city of Armidale.

PICTURE: PLC Croydon students revegetating Dumaresq Creek banks at a UNE native planting site.