Celebrating with our school gardeners

New scribe Millie Ross takes us to Petersham UK

Introducing new NGIV Directors

Double Trade Day spread

WISHING OUR READERS A HAPPY AND SAFE 2015
“St. Louis de Montfort’s should be proud of taking the lead in developing and trialling applied environmental education through their sustainability kitchen and garden”

…Former Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus to the Federal House of Representatives, 18th February 2014

St. Louis de Montfort’s Catholic Primary School in Aspendale is the proud recipient for 2014 of the prestigious Kevin Heinze Perpetual Award for school garden excellence.

The late Kevin Heinze was the face of the gardening world in Victoria for many years, as host of his popular “Sow What” program. Whilst Kevin may have said his last “cheerio” on this earth, the Victorian Schools Garden Awards are his living legacy and are now in their 37th year.

In addition to the considerable prestige, this award carries a prize value of $5000 which will no doubt be directed towards furthering the magnificent school garden program at St. Louis de Montfort’s. The Award capped off an amazing year for the Dolphin St school, after being directly lauded in the Federal parliament in February 2014 for its sustainability initiatives.

Their program includes Garden to Kitchen activities every afternoon, a sustainable education precinct that is used by both the school and wider community and an allied social sustainability component offered in tandem with the charity St. Vincent de Paul, called “Minni Vinnies”. The garden and sustainability program reflects the schools mantra that “creatures only exist in dependence upon each other to complete each other in the service of each other.”

Over 440 school children were witness to the Awards presentation at Melbourne’s Royal Botanic Gardens, representing schools from all over Victoria who had successfully navigated through regional rounds of judging in the various categories. Through their enthusiasm and participation, the 90 Victorian schools that entered reflect the increasing importance being placed upon the development of school gardens as teaching resources and in general, the importance of green-space in creating healthy surroundings, conducive to learning and life.

Other major prizes were as follows:
Turf Victoria Award
Rowville Primary School
Flemings Nurseries Mini Orchard Award
Clonard College

State Awards
Strathewen Primary School
Our Lady of Christians School
Frankston Special Development School
Huntly Primary School
Aitken College
St. Michaels Grammar School
Bentleigh West Primary School
Glen Katherine Primary School

Plants Plus – Most habitat-friendly garden winners
Our Lady of Christians School
Frankston Special Development School
Glen Katherine Primary School
St. Michaels Grammar School

Plants Plus – Most creative new garden using recycled materials
Nepean Primary School
Tooradin Primary School
Coatesville Primary School
Carrum Downs Secondary College
Plants Plus – Most creative use of the school garden as a demonstration site for sustainable gardening in the community
Wooragee Primary School
Yarra Primary School
Templestowe Valley Primary School
Oxley Christian College
Catholic Education Office – Most engaging student garden for teaching and play
Tawonga Primary School
Mildura Specialist School
The Patch Primary School
Cathedral College Wangaratta

Maxicrop – Best Edible Garden
Toolangi Primary School
Tyabb Railway Station Primary School
Clayton North Primary School
Murrayville Community College

Judging was based upon student involvement, parental, teacher and community involvement, general appearance and use, special features, new developments and grounds facilities.

The total prize pool allocated to winners in the various categories was approximately $40,000.

The VGSA is deeply appreciative of the support of its sponsors and the Victorian Government and extends its congratulations to all regional and major prize winners. The quality of entries illustrates the depth of commitment to sustainable green principles and engagement through gardening at so many of our Victorian schools. Slowly, but steadily the message is getting through. Generational change may indeed renew our ideals.

Michelle Agustus presenting the Plants Plus – Most Habitat Friendly Award to winners Frankston Special Developmental School.

Chris Kleating – Executive Director, Infrastructure and Sustainability Division DEECD presenting State Award winners Huntly Primary School.

Michael Patten presenting the Maxicrop Best Edible winners Tyabb Railway Station Primary School.

Evan Lard CEO of NGIV presenting on behalf of Turf Victoria the Turf Victoria Turf Package Award to Rowville Primary School.

Paige Fleming presenting – Clonard College with the Fleming's Nurseries Mini Orchard Award.