

Catchment Crawl



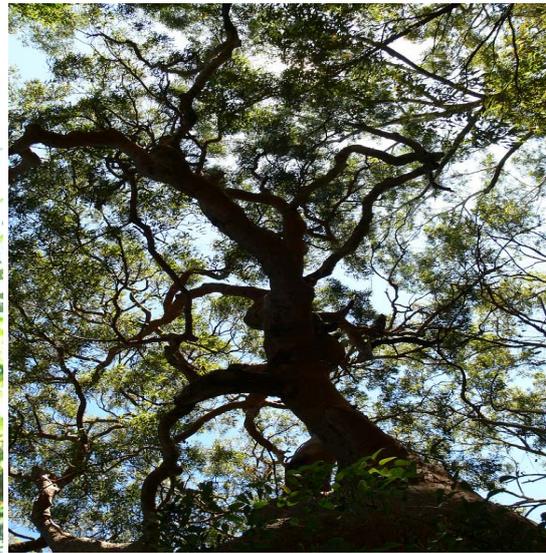
On Thursday 29th of April, Molly, Ethan, Abby and Mr McLachlan embarked on a Catchment Crawl run by the Wyong Council.

The weather was fine and sunny as we joined other students from the catchment area at the Wyong Council Chambers. We boarded a bus and drove to our fist destination, Crackneck Lookout in the Wyrabalong National Park. We walked from the lookout down to Blue Lagoon.





During our walk we learnt about different plants and animals that live in the National Park. We were able to see Red Gums and Banksias and discovered that they are very old and some grow slowly because of the salt water spray. The old trees become homes for a variety of animals after ants and grubs eat out the centre of the tree creating hollows to live in.



We learnt about keeping our native plants healthy in the National Park and the importance of decaying vegetation to a Remnant Coastal Rainforest. The dead leaves and branches give nutrients to the soil and help other plants survive and grow stronger. Some of the plants in the park had very thick leaves which help them survive in a salty environment. Our Park Ranger, Lynne Irving, was very helpful and taught us a lot in a short period of time.



Towards the end of the walk we looked at the threat of Lantana on our native bushland. The Lantana strangles native plants and grows much faster, killing off the chance for new growth.



We stopped for recess at Blue Lagoon and had some fruit. It gave us a chance to relax and talk to other students. The views of Blue Lagoon were beautiful and it was the perfect place for a break. It wasn't long however, before we were on our way to our next destination, Saltwater Creek.



Saltwater Creek was very interesting. We listened to Julia and Jenny talk about storm water and the importance of keeping rubbish out of our drains. We also learnt about the importance of staying away from drains and not playing in them. There are big grates that scoop up debris from the water and keep the drain clear. The council come along with trucks and take the branches and rubbish away.



After looking at Saltwater Creek it was back on the bus and on our way to Saltmarsh rehabilitation. We had to stop off at Stockland Bay Village to pick up our lunch. This gave us an opportunity to look through our 'catchment show bags' and watch Ice Age.



At the Saltmarsh rehabilitation area we found out that 85% of Saltmarsh in the Lake system have been destroyed. These Saltmarsh flats are extremely important to the health of the lake and provide a way to help break down the weed and grass in the lake. The Saltmarsh is able to break the vegetation down without smell and also provide a home for small animals. We looked at the piles of wrack in the dump zone and Julia told us about how it was scooped up. The seahorses that live in the grass are able to fall back into the water through gaps in the scoop and swim away.



It was now time for lunch and a break. We were treated to Subway sandwiches and a cookie each. They were delicious. After lunch we boarded the bus and started our trip home. We stopped to look at The Entrance channel and Jenny spoke to us about how parklands have taken over natural Saltmarsh and native grasses.

It was a fantastic day and we would like to thank Jenny Lee and Julia Lee for organising the day and Mr McLachlan for taking us.

Ethan, Molly and Abby

