

Swarovski Foundation Waterschool Australia – June 2023 Report

Contents

Swarovski Foundation Waterschool Australia – June 2022 Report	1
Acknowledgment of Country	1
Program Update	1
Teacher Training	2
Quotes and Feedback	3
Personal Interest Story	4
Major Project Highlight.....	7
Media coverage over the past quarter	8
Web page engagement.....	9

Acknowledgment of Country

Acknowledgment of Country

Earthwatch Australia acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our company is located, and where we operate and educate through the Swarovski Waterschool Australia program. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present.

Earthwatch is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to Australian and global society. We recognise that sovereignty over these lands and waters was never ceded.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have cared for these lands long before we arrived, yet we all hold a responsibility to do our part, and to combine our efforts to help heal Country.



Program Update

Earthwatch Australia remains the official local delivery partner for the Swarovski Foundation Waterschool Australia program.

Recruitment for the 2023 program has now closed. A total of 22 schools applied for the program, with 15 schools across New South Wales selected to participate. Introductory information sessions

were completed by the National Coordinator with the lead teacher and a senior member of school faculty.

Due to a severe teacher shortage across NSW, schools are operating with staffing levels as low as 66% of staff requirements, and many extra-curricular activities have been postponed until 2024. As a result, in late Term 2, several schools were forced to discontinue the Waterschool program for this year. Schools on the waiting list were contacted, however all declined to join the full program due to time and staffing constraints. All schools expressed a desire to participate next year.

In order to meet the 15-school deliverable target for 2023, the National Coordinator has leveraged relationships with local Environmental Education Centres to identify 1) schools wanting to join the program, and 2) audience schools wanting to attend Term 4 peer-teaching events and action project exhibitions. Three schools have expressed their interest in becoming audience schools, bringing the current total to 15 schools involved in the 2023 Swarovski Foundation Waterschool Australia program.

Teacher training was carried out in Term 2, with additional water-related topics introduced to the Earthwatch Expert sessions relating to urban greening, soil health, food biodiversity, and human health. The 2023 Connect to Country sessions led by Aboriginal Elders, educators, and knowledge holders focused on Creation Stories, Art, and Indigenous Plants.

The National Coordinator facilitated Waterschool peer-teaching workshop planning sessions for an additional 9 schools in Term 2, bringing the total to 13 sessions for the year. These visits have engaged 407 students (surpassing the annual student engagement target of 375) across the 13 schools. This completes the workshop planning phase for 2023, with check-in sessions with schools planned for early Term 3 to support workshop progress.

As schools confirm their workshop topics, local mentors are being engaged to provide location-specific water knowledge and technical skills where required. This community connection will continue throughout Term 3, through in-person and online activities as best suits the schools and the mentors.

Travel to Austria in June 2023 for the Swarovski Foundation 10th Anniversary involved facilitation of a Water themed workshop by the Australian National Coordinator on Day 1 of the global meeting held in Wattens. This week-long event was invaluable to strengthen connections between National Coordinators for the Waterschool program, to build relationships with Foundation Trustees and employees, and to understand wider Swarovski Sustainability-related operations and objectives.

The National Coordinator will meet with the Swarovski Australia Marketing team in July to discuss opportunities for employees to volunteer in 2023 end-of-year activities, and options for including Waterschool Australia media and communications in stores across NSW.

Teacher Training

Online teacher training sessions were held through May and June. All teachers involved in the implementation of the Waterschool program, as well as any senior staff members, were invited to attend these sessions. Across all sessions, a total of 45 teachers attended to learn about water challenges, possible solutions, and Aboriginal water perspectives. Most importantly, they were guided in how to accurately and respectfully transfer Indigenous information to their students, and

were provided with local, national and international frameworks and interactive resources to support classroom learning and future workshop development.

The following table summarises attendance for each of the 2023 Teacher Training sessions. Although teachers were only required to attend one Earthwatch Expert and one Connect to Country online session for this component of the program, some teachers attended more than two sessions.

Presentation	Presenter	No. of Attendees
Water Supply & Use	Dr. Scott Wilson (PhD Ecotoxicology)	4
Tidal Wetlands	Jock Mackenzie	7
Climate Resilience	Steve McDonald	4
Water Pollutants	Dr. Scott Wilson (PhD Ecotoxicology)	6
Soil Health & Urban Greening	Sandra McCullough (Master of Urban Horticulture)	5
Human Health & Food Biodiversity	Hannah Gentle (Master of Human Nutrition)	3
Connect to Country: Creation Stories	Uncle Shayne Williams (PhD)	4
Connect to Country: Indigenous Plants	Mr. Adam Bruggeman	7
Connect to Country: Art	Aunty Margaret Foat	5
Total attendees		45

Quotes and Feedback

Teacher feedback from the online training sessions was positive. The following information was shared during and following sessions to describe the value of this component of the program to teacher understanding, student learning, and local community building.

Water Supply & Use

Session feedback: "Really well thought out, great summary of information to share with students"

Session feedback: "Taught most of this last Term with Year 7's, was great to know it was accurate/have expert confirmation, and now really interested in a rain garden!"

Teacher connection outcome: sharing between teachers that bird seed makes a great root base for a rain garden at school from previous experience.

Human Health & Food Biodiversity

Teacher education outcome: Background to what biodiversity is in relation to food production landscapes (and seascapes) was great for a teacher understanding pending a local community garden visit with students, and the link between environmental and human health was also a valuable takeaway.

Teacher connection outcome: There was also an offer to share pollinator plants between schools - a snip of salvia to attract the native blue-banded bee to the school veggie patch.

Water Pollutants

Teacher feedback: “Expected it to be very much related to plastics, was good to learn more about other pollutants/contaminants, was really informative, credit card of plastic per month was a shocking statistic!”

Teacher feedback: “Useful for having conversations with students on wider water education (even if workshop/action project will focus on a different water topic this year)”

Tidal Wetlands

Teacher feedback: “Great to widen scope of water system – conserving water upstream aids in wetland health downstream”

Connect to Country: Art

Teacher connection outcome: Art teacher brought onto call to see how ceramics can be used to help restore river beds following flooding in Georges River.

School connection outcome: Offer for nearby schools to use kiln at high school to fire ceramics.

Connect to Country: Indigenous Plants

Community connection outcome: School visits by presenter and team to design Indigenous Gardens as part of NSW DoE Reconciliation Plan/Indigenous-related components of NSW curriculum.

[Personal Interest Story](#)

Kellie Hall and Lloyd Godson, The Nature School, Port Macquarie NSW

Kellie and Lloyd co-lead the Swarovski Foundation Waterschool program at The Nature School in Port Macquarie. After attending the 2022 SWS Flagship Event as an audience school in 2022, they applied for the 2023 program and were selected to participate in the full 2023 Waterschool experience.

Kellie shared her views about water education, student empowerment, and the power of peer-teaching for enhancing Year 7 student educational outcomes in a blog now hosted on the Earthwatch Australia website (see below).

Due to the close proximity of The Nature School to an elected tidal wetland (mangrove) research site, Lloyd has been selected to participate in an Earthwatch-led community training day to learn select citizen science research skills and build community networks through the Earthwatch MangroveWatch citizen science program. Local school teachers, University students, Council members, Landcare employees, and New South Wales Fisheries staff will attend the training day led by Earthwatch Wetlands Program Manager, Jock McKenzie. Lloyd will accrue valuable knowledge and skills that can be used in a school setting to educate and empower students to become local mangrove champions. This community collaboration brings a wider water perspective to Year 7 students participating in the Waterschool Australia program, and helps build local mentor connections and possible collaboration for future on-ground action projects.

Hyperlink to access blog on the Earthwatch Australia website:

[News & Media](#)

Swarovski Waterschool Australia: The Nature School in Port Macquarie

08 May 2023

[News & Media](#) > [News](#)

2023 Participating School – The Nature School in Port Macquarie, NSW

Article prepared by Kellie Hall

After successfully establishing The Nature School Primary, in 2023 The Nature School launched its innovative educational model for Secondary students, which prioritises experiential learning through nature and promotes sustainability. The School's curriculum is integrated and designed conceptually, with each term focusing on a particular topic. The first term focused on fresh water, connecting the Swarovski Foundation Waterschool Australia program with the NSW Syllabus, under the guidance of experienced Year 7 teachers, Kellie Hall and Lloyd Godson. To deepen their understanding, students engaged in a variety of Field Studies activities, including sensory mapping at local water sites, comparing the role of water in different communities, and interacting with Council experts at working sites in the urban water cycle. They also delved (literally!) into the importance of mangrove environments, capturing footage and creating documentaries to highlight their significance for local species and global biodiversity.

Furthermore, students conducted waterbug surveys in a nearby rainforest to assess the health of a freshwater habitat, developing hypotheses based on their initial guided waterway and habitat assessment. They collected waterbug samples, represented data, and drew conclusions to deepen their understanding of the water cycle. In addition to field-based work, students also explored the distribution and scarcity of water, discovered the water footprint of everyday items, and learned about water purification methods, harvesting techniques, and digital technologies for water conservation.

The Nature School's approach to education fosters students' holistic development and prepares them to become environmentally conscious citizens. By connecting with nature on Field Studies days and applying their knowledge and skills to real-world challenges, students gain a deep appreciation for the world around them and a sense of responsibility towards its sustainable future.



Photo: Students from The Nature School with Swarovski Foundation Waterschool Australia National Program Coordinator Hannah Gentle at the 2022 Waterschool Australia flagship peer-teaching event.

The school Principal and student representatives from The Nature School attended the Swarovski Foundation Waterschool Australia Flagship Event as an audience group in October 2022. Two teachers and 20 students from The Nature School will participate in the full Waterschool program in 2023 as part of Year 7 curriculum learning.

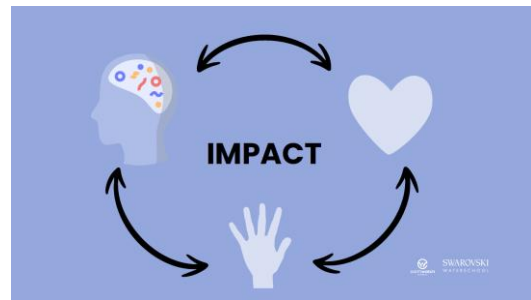
Major Project Highlight

Swarovski Foundation 10th Anniversary – Global Meeting – Water Ceremony and Workshop

In June, the Australian National Coordinator attended the week-long Global Meeting in Wattens, Austria hosted by the Swarovski Foundation to celebrate 10 years of philanthropic efforts and global impact.

They facilitated a Water Ceremony with fellow Waterschool Coordinators. Waterschool Australia program successes and Indigenous perspectives then featured in the Water workshop, along with an interactive exercise and discussion about water equality.

The Water workshop successfully conveyed Waterschool aims, objectives, activities and outcomes to the wider Foundation network, including the Global Curriculum, and introduced the Head, Heart and Hand model as a balanced and inclusive framework for achieving sustainable livelihoods through education to reduce inequality.



Media coverage over the past quarter

Platform	Post	Reach	Engagement Rate	Reactions	Saves	Impressions	Clicks	Shares
Instagram	Earthwatch Australia on Instagram: "The 2023 Swarovski Waterschool Australia program is now well underway in NSW schools. We would like to take a moment to appreciate the..."	251	10.29%	28	2	272		
Facebook	(1) Earthwatch Australia - Posts Facebook	961	4.75%	5		1,010	39	3
Facebook	(1) Watch Facebook	346	4.95%	5		384	12	2
Instagram	Earthwatch Australia on Instagram: "To acknowledge and reciprocate the support of First Nations Elders in the delivery of the Swarovski Waterschool Australia program, our 40th..."	142	10.29%	18	0	175		
Facebook	(1) Earthwatch Australia - Posts Facebook	240	8.03%	8		249	11	0
Instagram	Earthwatch Australia on Instagram: "In celebration of World Oceans Day, we are leading the creation of a new water education module: Water and Oceans to contribute to the..."	134	10.71%	18	0	168		
Facebook	(2) Earthwatch Australia - Posts Facebook	113	2.44%	2		123	1	0
	Total	2187	7.35%	84	2	2381	63	5

Web page engagement

Landing Page	Total Page Views	Views per user
Swarovski Waterschool Australia Program Earthwatch Institute	151	2.9
Impact Report 2022 (earthwatch.org.au)	208	1.18
News and Media: Swarovski Waterschool Australia: The Nature School in Port Macquarie	41	1.52
Education Resource Hub: https://earthwatch.org.au/education/school-programs/swarovski-waterschool-australia/swarovski-waterschool-australia-education-resource-hub	36	2.4

This concludes the Swarovski Foundation Waterschool Australia Quarterly Report for June, 2023.



SWAROVSKI
WATERSCHOOL

The 2023 Swarovski Foundation Waterschool Australia Quarterly Report (June) has been prepared by Earthwatch Australia Education Program Manager, Hannah Gentle and reviewed by Earthwatch Australia Head of Education, Michelle Tripp. Social media posts and media coverage information created and collated by Earthwatch Australia Digital Marketing Assistant Monisha Alexander. A special thanks to Dr. Scott Wilson, Jock Mackenzie, Sandra McCullough, and Stephen McDonald for their on-going contributions to the Swarovski Foundation Waterschool Australia program activities.