

Outdoor School at 15 Mile Creek a hidden gem

Last month I visited the Outdoor School at 15 Mile Creek. I was accompanied by Dr Warren Garrett who, in November 1972 as District Inspector, met with the parents of the then, 15 Mile Creek Primary School, to discuss its future. The school's enrolment was about to fall below the minimum number to keep it operating.

The parents and community wanted to retain the school site for the use of children and so the idea of a school camp was born. Five years later on the 29th of April 1977 the 15 Mile Creek Camp came into existence. This only happened due to the extraordinary ongoing contribution of district principals, local teachers, Wangaratta and Benalla service clubs, business people and local families.

The camp has now grown into a premier bush outdoor school for state primary and secondary school children. It operates with a staff of 18, has 110 hectares at its disposal and provides an extraordinary range of on and off site educational programs. Activities range from gardening, fishing, cycling, bushwalking, camping and canoeing to learning about leadership resilience, sustainability and social awareness – all in line with our State Education curriculum.

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I was shown around by the school program manager, David Cavicchiolo and joined in with the children from Tallygaroopna, Congupna, Dookie and Corowa for a sandwich-bar lunch.

This 15 Mile Creek School, in the Rural City of Wangaratta, is, I think, the largest (in area) non-farm enterprise in the municipality. The campus principal, Rhys Evans, his staff, and Rural City residents should be very proud of this 'hidden' gem.

- Cr Ken Clark OAM