

Media Release

12 MARCH 2009

YOUNG PRIDE OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT CALLS FOR GREATER ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP FROM TEACHERS

The 2008 Pride of Australia medal recipient, Ellen Sandell calls for greater leadership in teaching sustainability, as part of her keynote address to hundreds of school teachers on Thursday 19 March at the Melbourne Museum at 9am.

The forum, **Toolbox for Environmental Change**, is Victoria's largest sustainability education forum bringing together over 300 educators from across Victoria to focus on the environmental sustainability issues facing our schools and communities today.

Ms Sandell, who has represented Australia at two United Nations climate change conferences, in Bali in 2007 and Poland in 2008 said,

"Climate change is not just an environmental issue, it is something that will affect us all, no matter who we are or where we live. Young people will be hardest hit by climate change, which is why youth need to be at the forefront of addressing this issue, and demanding stronger action from our leaders. The good news is that young people have immense power to solve the climate crisis, with their passion, ingenuity and technological know-how."

The **Toolbox for Environmental Change** forum, now in its ninth year, is run by Greening Australia, in partnership with Sustainability Victoria and Museum Victoria sponsored by Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Other presenters include Greening Australia and Zoos Victoria, who will talk about whole school sustainability and biodiversity projects aligning with the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative.

Jess Baillie, Greening Australia's school programs coordinator, said the forum attracts hundreds of educators from across Victoria and interstate.

"The forum equips teachers with knowledge, contacts and resources for teaching sustainability in schools. We ask teachers what other support they need to integrate sustainability education into their current curriculum. We encourage teachers to strategically apply for grants and take time in planning and provide them with practical information on technological applications within the environmental and school setting."

The **Toolbox for Environmental Change** forum encourages teachers to share examples of whole of school plans and network with other schools.

The event, powered by GreenPower, will be a Waste Wise Event and catering will be locally sourced in an effort to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the forum.

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Notes to editors

Media are welcome - the morning will be the best for photo opportunities.

Program:

9.00 - 10:15 am	Plenary Session (photo opportunity) Key note address, Ellen Sandell
10:20 – 11:00 am	Displays from over 35 organisations (further photos opportunities) Interactive displays featuring solar in schools demos, kitchen gardens, school projects, interactive gaming, teachers and students interacting
11:00 – 12:30 pm	Workshops
12:30 – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:30 – 4:30 pm	Workshops

Keynote speakers

Ellen Sandell is currently the Victorian Director of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) and runs AYCC's national education program 'Switched On Schools'. In 2008 Ellen won the Pride of Australia Medal, a Telstra Environment Award and the British Council Emerging Leaders Award for her environmental work. She was also a finalist in the Young Australian of the Year Awards and the Melbourne Awards.

Ellen is the founder of the award-winning Leadership in Environmental Action Program (LEAP), an innovative environmental leadership conference for high school students, held each year in September. She has represented Australia as an observer at two United Nations climate change conferences, in Bali In 2007 and Poland in 2008.

Guy Pritchard, Zoos Victoria and Jess Baillie Greening Australia

Greening Australia and Zoos Victoria will present on the beginnings of their partnership- including delivering biodiversity audits in schools with environmental student leaders, generating community biodiversity projects and in-school habitat actions. So far both organisations have worked with a number of pilot schools including Mill Park SC, Hurstbridge PS and schools in the Healesville area developing the program in schools and on community sites connecting them with local 'focal animals' that can be seen at the Zoos such as the legless lizard and the spotted-tail quoll.

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