



Wildside Exhibition Opening speech

(We've had a number of requests for this text, because it was a little hard to hear Kristie and the students on the day!)

Welcome parents, carers, staff and students to the opening of our Walk on the Wildside exhibition. We really appreciate the support you have shown by being here this afternoon.

We acknowledge the Wurrundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our Wildside exhibition is a wonderful example of how we celebrate the deep connection the Woi Wurrung people have with Country — the birds whose songs guide the seasons, the plants that provide food and healing, and the living landscapes that continue to nurture us all. We can learn so much from the way our native birds, plants, and animals live in harmony, each sustaining the other, and the responsibility we each hold in protecting this balance as the traditional owners have done for tens of thousands of years before us.

Our Walk on the Wildside Project was possible because of Noel's successful application for a Victorian Junior Landcare and Biodiversity grant last year. The grants support a range of activities to help protect, improve and expand habitats for native plants and animals, and encourages the next generation of young people in valuing and actively caring for our natural environment - something we pride ourselves on here at BSPS, a particularly wonderful thing to be doing against the backdrop of the skyscrapers of the CBD only a couple of kms away.

Noel and Eileen designed the project to:

- increase biodiversity within our school
- create habitat for indigenous birds who are struggling, particularly the smaller insect-eating birds
- create nesting opportunities for local parrots who are affected by shortages of tree hollows
- Learn about the birds and plants that are indigenous to our area

There are so many groups and individuals to thank, each of whom made important contributions in bringing the project to life:

- Noel, who was really the brains and inspiration for the project

- Jenni and Noel for volunteering throughout the unit and helping to lead the Wildside Scavenger Hunt and construction of the Year 3/4 Wildside Garden, now named Tweet Tween Town
- Wildlife Victoria for donating 8 possum box flat packs
- Rowan Ewing for his expert knowledge which was used to create the Wildside Scavenger Hunt and the Wildside Garden. Thank you for organising all of the plants and supporting the students to place them in the correct spots in the garden.
- The Melbourne Men's Shed who cut up all of the flatpacks for the parrot nesting boxes and the 8 volunteers who supported the students to construct the boxes.
- Melville Timber - who donated the marine plywood we used for the project
- Merri bek council - particularly Charlotte the Conservations Projects Officer who donated over 100 plants and stakes to the project.
- Kylie for her contribution to the mural
- Anna for skill in tapping into our students' creativity, and curating our beautiful art exhibition,
- And to Eileen, for her boundless energy, enthusiasm and commitment to sustainability education at our school.

Please take a copy of the Wildside Adventure Map, and enjoy scavenger hunting around the different locations. Thank you all for being part of this amazing learning experience for our students.