

Enriching a community mix

Steve Drill

A COMPOST chef is teaching Clayton students and their parents how to cook up a community garden.

Megan Floris visits St Peter's Primary School every Wednesday to teach children about growing vegetables, flowers and fruit.

Deputy principal Paul Muling said the garden not only helped students understand how food was produced but it had brought the wider school community together. He said parents had helped build the garden and also built friendships.

"The whole purpose was to get the community involved in what we are doing," he said. "A lot of our children come from families of different backgrounds and there might have

Leader06
educationawards

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PAUL MULING

been language barriers preventing their parents from getting involved with the school.

"But the garden has really broken down those barriers."

The school recycles all its food scraps through the garden, making the garden part of its curriculum.

Mr Muling said the garden was also a good way to engage with students who found it hard to sit in a classroom all day.

"We have kids who have social and emotional problems and we can support them by getting them out into the garden and teaching them that way," he said.

The program has earned the school a nomination in the Leader Education Awards. The awards recognise schools' contribution to the community and prizes worth \$40,000 are up for grabs.

Anyone can nominate students or a teacher in one of three categories: primary, secondary and teacher.

Entries close August 28. For an entry form by mail, phone 9875 8250 or download from www.leadernews.com.au/education.



Savio, 11, and Shreya, 10, contribute to compost. Pictures: MARTIN REDDY N06WG706



Stephanie in the garden. N06WG706

MP's alert on water margins

MONASH residents can't afford to be drippy about water conservation.

Clayton state Labor MP Hong Lim said while reduced water use had bolstered Melbourne's storages, restrictions would continue indefinitely.

Mr Lim said more than 181 billion litres of water had been saved in the past five years through continuing water restrictions, which limit the hours people can use hoses and sprinklers.

But low rainfall had made even more stringent restrictions, limiting the use of sprinklers to every second day, now likely.

"Only effective water conservation has saved Melbourne from now being in extra restrictions," Mr Lim said.

"We still have to be careful with our water and water restrictions are likely from September 1 unless there is good rain this month.

"There is a prospect of at least average rainfall this month and the Bureau of Meteorology has advised that there is a good chance of above median rainfall for the next few months."

Mr Lim said Melbourne residents were using 22 per cent less water now than they did a decade ago. "We need to make water-saving a lifelong habit," he said.

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