

2006

2006 CHURCHILL FELLOW REPORT- Juanita Caddy

The ACT's 40th anniversary CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP to
"investigate programs aimed at teaching children how to eat
well and to enjoy the pleasures that doing so can bring to
themselves, their families and the broader community"



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INTRODUCTION:

My fellowship enabled travel to the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States to study programmes which benefit children, their families and the wider community by re-connecting them with the joys of the table through growing, preparing, cooking and sharing food.

I extend my appreciation to the Churchill Trust: the investment made annually to enable ordinary people to pursue their dreams is an extraordinary and life changing gift and one for which I will always be extremely grateful.

My experience was enriched by the many people I met in the course of my studies and I thank them for their generosity of spirit in sharing their wisdom and experience as well as their enthusiastic support for my ideas.

So many people have played a part in shaping this project, but special thanks must go:

To Frank whose love, support and faith enabled me to consider undertaking the fellowship;

To my parents and grandparents: for it was at their sides I first learnt the joys of preparing and cooking food with love; and

To my colleagues past and present who over a journey of more than 25 years have shared their ideas, their recipes and most importantly their friendship.

This work is dedicated to my children, Luke and Lydia, who inspire me by their very existence to aim high-in the hope that they will always try do the same.

The word ecology comes from the Greek *oikos* ("household"). Ecology is the study of how the Earth Household works. More precisely, it is the study of the relationships that interlink all members of Earth's Household.

*When we try to pick out anything by itself,
we find it hitched to everything else in the universe*

John Muir, Scottish born naturalist

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

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My project involved travel to the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States to visit schools and organisations implementing programs designed to re-acquaint children with the joys of growing, cooking and sharing food with their family and the wider community.

Highlights:

Each and every person with whom I came into contact as a result of the fellowship gave freely of themselves, their work and their ideas. Every meeting and encounter enriched my experience and gave me an insight into the work being done by so many good hearted people in so many parts of the world. Many of these people are listed below in the body of my report-I am indebted to them.

Major lessons and conclusions

There is no one size fits all solution to the problem. There are countless ways to weave a food program into the curriculum at every level of education. The depth and breadth of the subject of gastronomy—its relevance in ecology, anthropology, history, physiology, and art—assures it could easily be integrated into the academic studies of every school, from kindergarten to university.

To make this a reality we need model programs implemented in every state and territory in Australia; when these models are good enough, we will have the momentum to seek the mandate and the money to make them a reality throughout the country.

Implementation Plan

- Identify pockets of good work nationally and develop a network and communication strategy for sharing ideas and good practice, perhaps via an internet based newsletter;
- Lobby governments for funding at a state level in order to establish a kitchen and garden in each state and territory to serve as an model and a resource, elements of which could be adapted to different local terrains; and
- Within the ACT-develop a model which can be accessible to and act as a resource for every school and teacher within its jurisdiction as well as for the wider community.

PROGRAMME:

The following people and organisations were instrumental to my project:

Karen Gibson

•School Service Partnership, Ealing, London

Janet Stein

•Client Services Manager, Maidstone, Kent

Loraine Gleave

•Head of PSHE, Stockport

Gloria Rye

•School Meals Development Officer, Wolverhampton

Tim Hull

•Essex County Council

Jason Walmsley

•SAIS School Meals Service Advisor, Chelmsford

Debra Toomey

•School Food Trust

Lyn Roberts

•i-City Learning Centre, Bristol

Niagara on the Lake Culinary School

Michael Stadtlander

•Eiginsinn Farm

Ann Cooper

•Director, Nutrition Services, BUSD

Melanie Okamoto

•Network for a Healthy California, Berkeley Unified School District

Marsha Guererro

•Director, Edible School Yard

Carolie Sly

•Center for Ecoliteracy

MAIN BODY:

I would like to begin my report by acknowledging those visionaries within Australia who for some years have been advocating many of the principles espoused within these pages. The need to re-educate our children in the ways of healthy eating is not new-the situation we now find ourselves in has taken much more than one generation to evolve.

For me life is given meaning and beauty by the daily ritual of the table—a ritual that can express tradition, character, sustainability, and diversity. These are some of the values that I learned almost unconsciously at my family table as a child. But what beliefs and values do today's children learn at the table?

The family meal has undergone a steady devaluation from its one time role at the centre of human life, when it was the daily enactment of shared necessity and ritualized cooperation. Today, as never before in history, the meals of children are likely to have been cooked by strangers, to consist of highly processed foods that are produced far away, and are likely to be taken casually, in haste, and, all too often, alone.

I believe public education can have a place in helping to restore the daily ritual of the table in our children's lives. Public education has the required democratic reach; but it desperately needs a curriculum that offers alternatives to the fast-food messages that saturate our contemporary culture. These messages tell us that food is cheap and abundant. That abundance is permanent; that resources are infinite; that it's okay to waste; that standardization is more important than quality; and that speed is a virtue above all others.

It is my contention that what may be required is a total mind shift—a back to the future approach—where children re-engage, not only with eating healthily, but using a food based curriculum as a means of awakening their senses and encouraging awareness and appreciation of the transformative values of nourishment, community, and stewardship of the land.

Such a curriculum is not a new idea in education. Waldorf and Montessori schools, among others, practice similar experiential, value-oriented approaches to learning based on participation. This kind of participatory learning makes all the difference when it comes to opening minds. The Edible Schoolyard, for instance, has shown that if you offer children a new dish, there's no better than a fifty-fifty chance they will choose it. But if they've been introduced to the dish ahead of time, and if they have helped prepare it, they will all want to try it.

Learning is supposed to be a pleasure, and a food-centred curriculum is a way to reach kids in a way that is truly pleasurable. At first, the kids may not quite believe that they are allowed to have so much fun outside in the garden. But before long, they all know what compost is, they know what's ripe and what's not ripe, and when. This is knowledge they have learned without realizing it from experiences like picking the raspberry patch clean every morning. While they are touching, and smelling, and tasting, so much information floods in—because they are using all of their senses. What better way to learn about geography than by combining aromatic spices to make an Indian curry?

This is the beauty of a sensory education: the way all the doors into your mind are thrown wide open at once. One of the teachers in the kitchen at Martin Luther King Jr Middle school says it so beautifully: “the senses are truly the great equalizer. They are the key to a really fulfilling life, and they are available to everybody.”

BRITAIN

I began my Fellowship with ten days in the United Kingdom, where I met with many organisations involved in implementing the School Food Trust's Healthy Schools program. I wanted to investigate Britain's experiences with revolutionising their school lunch program following the publicity aroused by Jamie Oliver's “School Dinners” television series.

The School Food Trust was set up in 2005 with £15 million of funding from the Department for Education and Skills to promote the education and health of children and young people in Britain by improving the quality of food supplied and consumed in schools.

Following the report “Turning the Tables: Transforming School Food” published by the School Meals Review Panel in October 2005, the Trust is now charged with taking forward the Panel's recommendations to transform school food and food skills to improve health and education for school age children and young people.

The Trust believes that this transformation of school food and food skills is critical to the health of a generation of children and will have a significant impact on Britain's economy. Obesity in children is rapidly increasing, children's knowledge of where food comes from has diminished and cooking skills across communities are declining.

I visited six organisations during a ten day period, deliberately choosing regions with a diverse socio-economic base. Without exception, these organisations have made huge changes to their systems and substantial financial investment has been involved to completely re-design the school lunch programs. This has also, as we saw in the “School Dinners” series, involved a re-education program for those “dinner ladies” charged with the responsibility of preparing meals, often for hundreds of children a day.

Schools generally seem to have embraced the notion of healthy eating and made great progress in improving the quality of school food. However it has not been easy; some parents, health professionals and even nutritionists have not always been as supportive as one might expect. Slowly though, parents are becoming aware of the changes through conversations at parents' evenings and through the school newsletters.

The results witnessed are evidence that the provision of healthy food can and does work. Individual primary and secondary schools have seen increases in uptake of school meals, sometimes by as much as 50 per cent.

Some examples are provided below:

EALING:

Between 2002 and 2006, the London Borough of Ealing has invested £1.1m in improving the quality of school dinners. Of the 83 schools in Ealing, the 59 who are served by the council meet once a term at a consortium to discuss issues.

Ealing have re-established or introduced cooking to ten schools in the last four years so that of 59 schools, only 9 now receive food transported from a central preparation kitchen rather than cooked on site.

Since September 2005, 89% of main menu items served in primary and special schools have been prepared from fresh ingredients. This figure is among the highest in the country.

Finally, after being scrutinised by the School Meals Panel (part of Ealing Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel), it was found that meals provided by primary and special schools in the Ealing school meals consortium were among the freshest and healthiest in the country.

WOLVERHAMPTON:

96% of schools in Wolverhampton are participating in the Healthy Schools program; 52 schools have already achieved "Healthy School" status.

The School Meals Catering Service for Wolverhampton has been improving school menus including the incorporation of wholemeal flour into pastry recipes. Community Food Advisors from the Food Health Team also pay visits to the primary and nursery schools which can involve a variety of activities including:

- story telling (fruit or vegetable based stories)
- food tasting
- sandwich workshops, where pupils try out vegetables and different breads before they make up a sandwich of their choice
- healthy lunch box information sessions for parents.

Swipe cards that not only reduce queues when buying their lunch but also collect information about what children are buying (and eating) at school have been introduced. Deansfield High School's scheme was funded with a grant of £25,000 from the Big Lottery Fund's 5 A DAY budget. Deansfield was chosen because almost two fifths of its pupils were entitled to free school meals and its catchment area is one with high levels of social and economic deprivation.

Two machines to recharge the card are available, while those on free school meals have £1.45-worth of credit automatically put on the card each day. Catering assistants swipe the card when the students make a choice of meal, or use the vending machine. The card receives points for each choice made, and the reward system is based on the choices made. For example, a fresh fruit salad would be worth 10 points while a cake would be 1 point.

The card also records the nutritional value of what has been bought and the school can print out a record of what an individual pupil, tutor group, year group or the entire school has been eating.

The swipe card system helps reduce the stigma of free school meals because all pupils have the same card and there is only one queue instead of two. Furthermore, evidence that the cashless system is working is demonstrated by the increase in sales in all the schools that have a system installed.

Every half-term the pupil representatives who participate in the School Nutrition Action Group (or SNAG!) meet to discuss the reward system and decide what that term's prize will be. The last individual winner received vouchers worth £50 to spend at a local store. When the pupil was awarded her vouchers she told Gloria Rye, who leads the Royal Wolverhampton Trust's food health team, that she never used to eat fruit but had been eating it every day since the school raised awareness of the need to eat more fruit and vegetables.

Gloria is encouraged by the initial results of the scheme: 'In the first term we introduced the smartcard scheme, fruit consumption was up 114% on the same term the year before and chip consumption reduced by 14%. In the second term fruit consumption was up 72% on the same time the year before while chip consumption had dropped by 33%.'

KENT:

In April 2005 Kent County Council Client Services undertook a survey of all the schools regarding the future provision of a school meals service. The outcome was that 370 schools wished to be part of a County let contract, the contracts to be based on Clusters ranging in size from 9 schools to 31 schools.

Client Services had already identified that there was a considerable skills gap in the kitchens, with many of the cooks unable to prepare even basic "home cooked" meals.

They started developing menus that were child friendly, used seasonal local produce wherever possible, which met the anticipated food standards and also fell within budget. When the Food and Nutrient standards were available, the menus were analysed and adjusted accordingly, costed and trialled by the pupils in a selection of primary schools. Not only did pupil meal numbers increase but also the number of adults taking a meal regularly increased significantly. It was felt they now had menus that could form the basis for a Craft Skills Training course.

The Council wanted to ensure that the cooks had a sound knowledge of Food Hygiene and Nutrition, so CIEH Level 2 courses were to be included within the training. To cover all aspects of the menus, such as sauces, yeast goods, vegetable preparation and presentation a 20 week course was needed. The training was to be made available to all cooks and assistant cooks in Kent schools. To encourage schools and contractors to release their cooks it was decided to make an allowance to the employer to fund a replacement on the training days. To ensure that the training was available County wide it was decided to use the Food Technology suites in secondary schools for the training. 3 or 4 courses per week for up to 10 people at a time were scheduled. Funding was to come from the Targeted School Meals Grant and the Schools Funding Forum approved £510,000 for the project over 3 years. The first course showed up a few areas that needed changing and stressed the need to employ a full time trainer. All schools were contacted and 3 courses were set up. Contractors and schools were invited to release students for the training and soon all courses were filled.

A production kitchen in a primary school was refurbished and a training facility incorporated for £98,000. Running costs for the project until 2009 will be £30,000 for food, £68,000 for staffing, £18,000 for the CIEH courses, £133,000 reimbursement to employers for day release and £100,000 for venue hire. They now have a purpose built training kitchen which has already been earmarked for some community training, cookery clubs and further development for school catering staff.

BRISTOL:

In the summer of 2006 Bristol's i-City Learning Centre ran a series of summer schools aimed at improving the type of food that children ate, as well as improving their health and encouraging family engagement.

In collaboration with Upper Horfield Community Trust they created a Community Garden. Young people laid out beds for fruit trees, vegetables, herbs and herbaceous plants. Supported by Bristol Fruit Sales, children were encouraged to eat fresh fruit, and to make their own healthy lunches. To develop an awareness of organic food production, visits were made to an organic farm in Cirencester.

Following the success of this work it was decided to extend the project. As a result Eat-a-Metre was conceived- an activity with extensive curricular links. Eat-a-Metre refers to the concept of a one square metre plot where an extensive range of vegetables and herbs can

be grown in a fairly short growing season. Using the growing plants, children can engage with difficult curriculum areas; for example by using data logging and spreadsheets to improve their ICT skills.

Lyn Roberts says "Every single school has the opportunity to grow with this project. They agree to set aside as many plots as they feel capable of handling".

In a truly inspirational whole of community approach, Lyn approached Leyhill Open Prison which has a reputation for supplying plants to the Chelsea flower show; they supplied over 230 trays of plug plants for the first planting of Eat a Metre. The Prisoners at HMP Leyhill have used this as their practical experience for a Horticulture qualification and are also very keen to help out next year!

Benefits of the project include:-

- 47 schools are now growing French beans, radishes, peas, beetroot, spring greens, chard, broad beans, potatoes, cabbage, turnips, salads, and herbs;
- Over 70 school staff: teachers, learning mentors, and classroom assistants have received extensive skill training;
- Children and staff are learning how to nurture, grow, harvest and cook their own produce;
- The project offers a variety of access points across the school curriculum not just in Science. Numeracy& Literacy, Geography, Citizenship, PHSE, Food Technology, and ICT are also linked in;
- On-line resource area has been established for teachers;
- Project linked to Bristol's Sustainable City's initiative - Bristol County Council donated 50 fruit and vegetable waste bins to support the schools to run their own composting programme. There is also an arrangement with the councils' Green Waste department and with the city council plant nursery, where schools can collect green compost for their Eat-a-Metre plots;
- Two difficult areas of the curriculum, Data Logging and Spreadsheets are being tackled in an exciting and engaged manner;
- The project supports both Eco-Schools and Healthy School Initiatives, along with international links in Uganda and Nicaragua.

ESSEX:

By 2003, with increasing levels of obesity and a growing awareness of food as a cultural and social issue, many schools in Essex were beginning to take over the management of school meals. The end of local authority contracts provided a further impetus for change.

In support of these changes, Essex County Council focused on helping communicate the changes and create useful networks. Some of the positive actions taken over the last three years include:

- the School Meals Support Group, created in 2004, acts as a steering group on transforming school meals. Environmental health, food producers, school catering, Healthy Schools staff, East Anglia Food Link (EAFL), Essex County Procurement Department and the Essex Schools Forum are all represented.
- seminars were run in partnership with a local organic farm to enable head teachers and school cooks to learn about ways to help smooth the transition towards healthy eating.
- education booklets were distributed by EAFL to all schools to reinforce the healthy eating message and provide information on sustainable food sources for those managing their own catering.
- gardening clubs, tuck shops, breakfast clubs and cooking clubs 'sprouted' throughout the region.

Healthy Schools support days saw chefs cook school meals to show schools and catering staff what could be achieved within a budget using fresh produce. The 'Food in Schools' toolkit was also disseminated in network meetings or twilight sessions with active promotions of the Food Partnerships Programme. Network meetings were also used to inform teachers of food safety standards and disseminate School Food Trust guidance.

The Targeted School Meals Funding was used to create a 'Core School Meals Team', responsible for allocating the targeted grant money in a fair and equitable fashion. It consists of a Healthy Schools adviser, County Education adviser (responsible for PSHE), a school caterer and a co-ordinator.

After carrying out a detailed audit of school meals provision the council requested bids for funding for staff training and kitchen equipment. In order to motivate school heads in realising the importance of healthy food in schools, they devoted one of the quarterly (term) head teacher meetings to the subject with the information then being disseminated to school staff.

A vital part of the strategy for 2006/7 has been the appointment of a Catering Adviser and the establishment of ten School Meals Support Manager posts to work with clusters of approximately 20 schools that manage their own in-house catering.

Creating a small network of head teachers and catering managers has allowed information, problems and solutions to be shared and has led to an increase in local procurement and greater investment in ingredients.

Individual schools have seen a substantial improvement in the uptake of school meals, often by as much as 50 per cent. Schools have also reported better behaviour in the classroom and fewer problems around the school generally. Schools have said that pupil attitudes are beginning to change; students are now more willing to try new things and are more interested in food as a whole. This is reflected in the food pupils bring to school, which is becoming healthier.

Essex School Meals Support Group is working with Suffolk County Catering to develop a resource manual to support catering managers. This manual will include seasonal menus backed up by nutritionally balanced recipes, menu planning, cooking tips, HACCP guidelines and seasonality charts.

Tim Hull from Essex County Council believes that they have always tried to address the matter of healthy school food in relation to the bigger picture that is summarised by Every Child Matters.

CANADA:

There were two visits organised for the Canadian leg of my study tour. The first offered an insight into the concepts of sustainable agriculture; the second was an opportunity to see the benefits of local networks of providers in action on a commercial scale.

The first visit was to Eigensinn Farm, near Collingwood, approximately two hours north of Toronto, Ontario. Here Michael Stadtlander and his family live and work the land to harvest the produce chef Stadtlander then prepares for guests at his restaurant, which is in fact a mud brick building accommodating approximately 20 guests. It is open 8 months of the year (access in winter is tricky!!) and is booked out months in advance. What food is not harvested from the 100 acres of surrounding farmland is sourced locally. Stadtlander has a reputation for marrying local ingredients with the flavours of both his culinary heritage and cosmopolitan experience.

It was then on to the Niagara on the Lake Culinary school, located on the shores of Lake Ontario in the south west of that province. Niagara on the Lake's many attractions include the historic Fort George and the Historical Society Museum, the Shaw Festival with its three theatres and the marina, all surrounded by beautifully rich farmland, local agricultural markets and the world famous Niagara wineries.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Culinary School was founded on the philosophy that the birthplace of Niagara regional cuisine and the home of the burgeoning Niagara wine industry would be an ideal environment to prepare students for a career in the luxury hotel and restaurant industry. The school capitalizes on the resources provided by the area to offer a program founded on the principles of practical training, professional instructors, unparalleled opportunities, and "eduployment".

- **Practical Training** is offered through an authentic fine dining and hospitality environment. The chefs of tomorrow learn in a real work context provided by a unique campus, made up of four deluxe hotels, three fine dining restaurants, a café, and two wineries. This is complemented by a focus on practical cooking skills, which comprise eighty percent of the program.
- **Professional Instruction** is provided by Executive, Sous and Pastry Chefs in luxury food and beverage establishments. Many are considered pioneers in local regional cuisine, and all have years of training, international experience, and substantial credentials. Trainees work alongside this cohort of staff consistently throughout both their class training and internships.

- **Unparalleled Opportunities** the curriculum is kept current with developing culinary trends, reflects the realities of the food service marketplace, and includes a year of work experience in a leading restaurant or hotel. Graduates are thus well equipped for employment upon completion of the program. The school also assists students with international internship opportunities in Europe or North America through the International Chefs Program.
- **Eduployment** means students' work is paid during their practical internship. This allows them to pay off school fees while they learn, and to leave the program without excessive debt.

The school offers a range of programs designed to prepare students for a variety of careers in the food service industry. In addition to the principal culinary program, students can also pursue a part-time hotel and restaurant, recreational, or management and development program. The common element among all of the Institute's programs is a focus on the principles of practical training, professional instruction, unparalleled opportunities, and "eduployment". This visit gave me an insight into the possibilities for Australian apprenticeships using a similar model.

UNITED STATES:

The main focus of my studies in Berkeley, California was the Edible Schoolyard (ESY), established over a decade ago within the grounds of the Martin Luther King Jr Middle School, which falls within the remit of Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD).

Assisted by grants from the Chez Panisse Foundation and the Centre for Ecoliteracy (CEL), the Edible Schoolyard provides urban public school students with a one-acre organic garden and a kitchen classroom. Martin Luther King Jr School is a public school with about 1,000 students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. It is a diverse group, socially, economically, and culturally—over twenty languages are spoken in the students' homes.

Using food systems as a unifying concept, students learn how to grow, harvest, and prepare nutritious seasonal produce. Experiences in the kitchen and garden foster a better understanding of how the natural world sustains us, and promote the environmental and social well being of the school community.

Children learn about the connection between what they eat and where it comes from, with the goal of fostering environmental stewardship and revolutionizing the school lunch program.

Linking garden and kitchen activities with classroom lessons using ecological principles, students develop a deep understanding and appreciation of how nature sustains life.

In the garden, students are involved in all aspects of planting and cultivation; and in the kitchen-classroom, they prepare, serve, and eat food, some of which they have grown themselves. These activities are woven into the curriculum and are part of the school day. A new ecologically designed cafeteria has just been built and the program is preparing for the transformation of their school lunch program.

It should be noted that the ESY is but one example (albeit a superb showcase of possibilities) of the work being undertaken within the BUSD. Ms Ann Cooper, the “Renegade Lunch Lady”, has spent the past 12 months working in her capacity as Director of Nutrition Services for the BUSD, improving meals at 16 public schools with a population of over 9,000 students. In her work with public schools both in California and previously in New York State, Chef Ann is at the forefront of the movement to transform the National School Lunch Program into one that places greater emphasis on the health of students than the financial health of a select few agribusiness corporations. Chef Ann's lunch menus emphasize regional, organic, fresh foods and nutritional education, helping students build a connection

between their personal health and where their food comes from. Ann is a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America, and the former president and current board member for Women's Chefs and Restaurateurs. She also sat on the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Organic Standards Board and Chefs Collaborative - all in an effort to raise awareness about the value of healthful seasonal, organic, and regional foods and nutrition education for America's children. Ann's work intersects with that of the ESY and the Centre for Ecoliteracy, also located in Berkeley.

From the inception of The Edible Schoolyard, the Centre for Ecoliteracy (CEL) has supported the project through grant making and has played a collaborative role in its development. CEL has assisted in the articulation of a framework for the ESY program, linking core curriculum to the enriched learning environment of the garden and kitchen classroom. In doing so, CEL has applied a pattern of education for sustainability which includes:

- a knowledge component connecting ecological content and an understanding of the patterns and processes by which nature sustains life.
- a real world context with a hands on experiential project that provides for the application of ecological knowledge.
- a social dimension in which students, teachers, parents, and others are given meaningful opportunities to work together as a community.
- a sense "connectness" to the land.

At the Centre for Ecoliteracy, experience has shown that growing a school garden and using it as a resource for cooking school meals is an ideal project for experiencing systems thinking and the principles of ecology in action, and for integrating the curriculum. Gardening reconnects children to the fundamentals of food—indeed, to the fundamentals of life—while integrating and enlivening virtually every activity that takes place at a school.

In the garden, children learn about food cycles and about integrating these into cycles of planting, growing, harvesting, composting, and recycling. Through this practice, they also learn that the garden as a whole is embedded in larger systems that are again living networks with their own cycles. The food cycles intersect with these larger cycles—the water cycle, the cycle of the seasons, and so on—all of which are links in the planetary web of life.

CONCLUSIONS:

I left Australia expecting to be able to synthesise, from the array of experiences to which I was exposed, a single model upon which to base a program for Australian children. I anticipated this model would work for all Australian schools. Instead, I returned from my travels with an understanding there can be no “one size fits all” solution. And that in fact there shouldn’t be-to attempt to create such a solution would undermine the very essence of the concept of understanding “our place in the world”.

It was often tempting to talk about “replication”. It’s the industrial model, the idea that you can take a design and replicate it everywhere in a cookie-cutter fashion. Anybody who has ever been involved in implementing social programs knows that replication rarely works. It’s too mechanistic. Perhaps, though, elements of programs might migrate, adapting to different local terrains?

I concluded we need to develop local solutions which work within the context of our individual schools and communities and within the budgets which will inevitably constrain us. Whilst the Edible Schoolyard is an enviable model upon which to base any program, I was also privileged to see in action many examples of work on a much smaller scale but with no less rewarding and inspiring outcomes. In some cases, these achievements are made even more inspiring for the obstacles overcome in achieving their fruition.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

My recommendations are premised on an assumption. That is that we all want our children:

- to have minds that can comprehend complex systems;
- to be social beings who can cooperate and read the needs and feelings of others and help resolve conflicts;
- to know the intricacies of the places where they live;
- to know they should ask what is upstream and who is downstream;
- who have practical competencies, who can pick up a tool-whether low-tech or high-tech - and use it gracefully, effectively, compassionately and
- who care about and feel responsible for their actions.

The temptation in a dangerous world is to live life vicariously through digital media. The assumption seems to be that our children will be economically successful if they become computer savvy at an early age. But being intimate with your world and developing

kinaesthetic skills should surely be of equal importance to high-tech know-how? When you ask business people what sort of employees they're looking for, they say, "Generalists, people who can think, who are resourceful, who can get along with each other."

The priorities we are imposing on our educational systems are failing to create these very capabilities.

For some time now in Australia what I would describe as "pockets of resistance" have grown and flourished-school communities and their teachers who "get it" and who have been implementing programs similar to those which I have described. Most of them are doing it on shoe string budgets and without the media attention afforded some "world-renowned" celebrities.

We can learn from the experiences of the British, and recognise that what is required is a national approach. One which is led by the Federal government, but with funding sourced from both public and private enterprise. Individual projects informed by models of best practice set up as resource centres for teachers and their wider communities and tailored to their specific needs.

My recommendations follow:

- Each State and Territory be funded to establish a model kitchen garden teaching environment which can be utilised as a practical source of information and learning for every school within its jurisdiction;
- This model could also incorporate some sectors of the community often in danger of disengaging -the elderly and the unemployed as well as utilising the skills and imagination of university aged students in their design;
- Grants could then be made available (as they currently are on a small scale) for individual schools to establish their own kitchen gardens;
- Formal and informal networks can be established to link participants on a national basis.

Strength is in numbers-with a united voice the message can be heard across the nation. If we as a community are serious about our children's physical and emotional well being, we must act now.