

Putting farming into National Science Week 2014.

“*Science feeding the World- food for our future*” was the theme for National Science Week 2014 (NSWk). At Hopetoun Primary School, classes put farming into NSWK with two sessions from the 3-year Wimmera HUB’s SPP ‘*Sustainability and our Farmlands Environments*’ project led by HUB SPP environmental educator, Jeanie Clark, from Warracknabeal.

The F-y2 junior session had a focus on living and non-living parts to a farmlands environment as the children built a model with native and introduced living things on a base of land, water and air. “It was fun” said a Grade One boy.



A couple of the children were able to correctly identify the seeds of crops that are growing on their farms and put them into this model. In doing this, they used science observations well by describing their size, shape and colour as identifying features.

A book recently written under the SPP at Rainbow PS by a couple of Y5/6’s told how plant varieties can mix together to create a new variety of that crop, in this case Gunyah Field Peas.

The Y3-6 middle-senior session had a focus on the sciences in farming and the sustainability stories. It was great to see that nearly all of these students knew there was science in farming- whether it involved observation, monitoring and experiments on farm. Some children with farming backgrounds shared their knowledge well with the class during the session.

The complexity of, and linkages in, the farmlands environments were reduced to single sustainability issues, of pests or dry times or improving machinery or plant breeds, in science-based picture books which the children enjoyed reading. These short books were written and illustrated by neighbouring primary schools through the SPP over the last 3 years: St Joseph’s 3-6 (2012), Beulah F-6 (2013), and Rainbow 5/6 (2014). The first two sets of these are already available free on their school websites and can be downloaded at any time for anyone to enjoy .



“It was delight to see a couple of the Hopetoun students report that they had their ‘imagination ignited’ by the session, as “igniting imaginations’ with science is a general aim of National Science Week,” said Mrs Clark.