

Outdoor and environmental education has the potential to create positive cultural changes in the way students view and interact with their environment. Conversely, there is the potential to overwhelm students with the scope of environmental problems existing today, generating learnt helplessness instead of empowering students. Learnt helplessness strips students of the confidence to use practical tools with which to address environmental issues as they feel the problems become too big to address. Environmental education, to be sustainable, needs to provide students with confidence, strategies and tools they can implement to make a difference

A new facility striving to provide high quality outdoor and environmental education is the Adelaide Hills Wilderness Lodge near Stirling, only 25 minutes from the CBD. Established by tertiary educators in Environmental Science, they have designed environmental education programmes to educate, empower and excite and interest in all ages of students, enabling them to make positive changes in their lives.

Instructors seek to continually improve existing programs and develop new ones such as the recent addition of a bird of prey free flight display. Birds are living examples of physical and behavioral adaptations, natural selection, energy transfer, and human's impact on species survival. The lodge is now able to offer fantastic free flight displays with eagles, owls and parrots contributing to students understanding of these magnificent creatures and their role in the environment

In other modules Digger the Leaf-Tailed gecko teaches about camouflage, while Freddie-Freetail the Bat awakens a sense of wonder about the nocturnal world. Meet Smooch the Red-tailed cockatoo, our new crocodile, woylies, potaroos, quolls, reptiles and of course a kangaroo or two. Dive into the Watery World of Mini-Beast through microscopes. Learn about feral animal management and meet Roxy the Fox who will help you learn about the impact of feral animals in Australia.

To ease teachers' workload, 2007 changes include the introduction of teacher packs, with background information on each of the programs. Schools can design their own stay from many offered modules. A new menu is also operating, and accommodation rooms have been renovated. Programs include stream ecology, reptiles, birds and mammals, birds of prey flight displays, ropes course, forest ecology and orienteering. A series of new Aboriginal programs are also available.

Over the last twelve months the Adelaide Hills Wilderness Lodge has provided visitors access to a stunning mix of natural bushland, endangered species, great food, and fun filled, action packed days in a living classroom. This classroom includes 10 acres of predator proof forested wildlife sanctuary where reintroduced local species live up the night.