

## SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND DISCOVERING DEMOCRACY MATERIALS

### CASE STUDY: TAKING ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

#### Rationale/Purpose:

The unit will enable students to research a range of Tasmanian environmental issues, both current and from the past, with the view of analysing the strategies used by people and groups, to get things done. Students will take action on a local environmental issue and assess the effectiveness of strategies they used.

#### Unit outline/overview:

The unit has three sections:

1. My Environment
2. Tasmanian Environmental Activism
3. Taking Action

#### Resources:

- *Getting Things Done* in Discovering Democracy Middle Secondary Units
- *Taking Issue* in Discovering Democracy Through Research
- *Who Rules Here?* in Discovering Democracy Through Research
- *Stories of Democracy* CD ROM
- *Discovering Democracy Middle Secondary Units Assessment Resources*
- *For the Forests – A History of Tasmanian Forest Campaigns*, compiled and edited by Helen Gee, The Wilderness Society, 2001 (ISBN 1 875768 09 2)
- *Everybody, Everybody, Everybody – Environmental Citizenship and Active Citizens Make a Difference* (<http://www.pa.ash.org.au/afssse/>)
- Jeff Erickson, *Learning Civics by Changing the Community* in *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, Jan/Feb 2001

#### Discovering Democracy Matrix

(The table below shows where the Discovering Democracy materials are in use in this unit)

	Stories of Democracy CD	Middle Secondary Units	DD Through Research
1. My Environment			
2. Tasmanian Environmental Activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Biographies</li><li>➤ “Getting Things Done” section</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Page 173</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Page 12</li><li>➤ Page 47</li></ul>
3. Taking Action			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Page 21</li><li>➤ Page 174</li></ul>

**Links to 11/12 TCE Curriculum:**

The unit will link in with a range of TCE units in traditional discipline areas as well as student leadership and community participation programs.

- 12 HS 833 C *Australian History*
- 11/12 GG 833/832 C *Geography*
- 12 EV 846/845 C *Environmental Science*
- 11/12 PS 902 A *Political Issues*
- 12 LS 845/844 C *Legal Studies*
- 11/12 *Community Landcare*
- 9/10 *Society and Environment*
- 11/12 *Tourism*
- 11/12 *Horticulture*

# 1. MY ENVIRONMENT

**Objective:** students share their prior knowledge about political action for the environment and identify environmental problems and issues in the school and local community.

## 1.1 GREEN GRAFFITI

Write each of the sentence starters below on a sheet of butcher's paper. Organise students into groups of 4-5 and distribute different coloured pens to each group. Each group is then given one of the sentence starters and given five minutes to list their ideas. On completion, the sheet is handed to the next group and so on until each group has contributed. Discuss and summarise the findings of the graffiti.

- *My main environmental worry is...*
- *Some ways I take action for the environment are...*
- *Some current environmental issues are...*
- *Some of my favourite activities, pastimes etc in the environment are...*
- *Some major environmental issues in the past in Tasmania have been...*
- *My opinion on the management of Tasmania's natural resources is...*
- *The **MOST** important thing I can do for the environment is...*

## 1.2 CLASS NOTICEBOARD/ SCRAPBOOK

Students collect articles from newspapers and the electronic media about the Tasmanian environment and natural resource management and post them on a noticeboard or collate them in a class scrapbook. Use them as a resource during the course of the unit. Analyse the main issues.

## 1.3 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD

Visit the site listed below and ask students to complete the report card for the school. The report card enables students to assess the levels of recycling, energy conservation, reuse of resources, conservation of water and pollution in their school/college.

Discuss with students if there are other school-based environmental issues not covered by the survey. Or, alternatively, they could construct their own report card incorporating the appropriate priorities for the local context.

<http://www.cmc-ocean.org/mdio/reptcardprint.php3>

## 1.4 COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY

- Ask the students to identify the most pressing environmental issues faced by the community. A useful way to begin would be to ask students to consider the environment problems between the school/college and their home or in their local community and to re-read the class scrapbook. Ask family, neighbours and local leaders for their ideas.
- Classify the ideas. Categories might include: *vandalism, pollution-rubbish/air/water, public health and safety, weeds, feral pests, clearing of natural vegetation, urban infill, fire management and community apathy.*
- Divide the class into three groups and ask each group to reach consensus on what they think is **THE** most pressing environmental problem facing their community.
- Ask: *"As a citizen of this community you want to do something about the environmental problem - what would be five key questions you would like answered"* Students formulate questions in groups and table them for the whole class.

### **1.5 GUEST SPEAKER**

Invite a guest speaker from the local council, a relevant government department, community group or lobby group to speak to the students and to answer some of the questions developed in **1.4** above. If this is not possible, students could send questions via letter or email. Some ideas: local council waste management officer, representative from a cycling group, Landcare project officer etc

## 2. TASMANIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

**Objective:** Students to begin an inquiry into a current or past Tasmanian environmental issue.

### 2.1 POLITICAL ACTION

Introduce students to activism and civic involvement. Identify and share as a class examples of student civic involvement in the school and local community. Ask them to think of other people who have made a positive contribution to the community, the cause or issue they were working for and some of the key methods they used to achieve their goals and to list their ideas in a table, like the one below. (This activity need not focus on environmental action alone)

(NB. The *Stories of Democracy CD ROM* has excellent brief biographies of a range of political activists)

Name	Cause / Issue	Methods Used

### 2.2 FRANKLIN DAM CASE

Explain to students that one of the biggest environmental issues ever in Tasmania, and possibly Australia, was The Franklin Dam case. The case was an excellent example of how civic involvement can influence government decision making. The unit “Getting Things Done” in the *Discovering Democracy Middle Secondary Units* looks specifically at the Franklin Dam Case.

Students complete Activity 3 on page 173 of the unit. The activity involves students in the analysis of various sources and identification of the type of citizen action in each and assessment of its likely success or failure.

Alternatively, students could complete the worksheet activity in the *Discovering Democracy Middle Secondary Units Assessment Resources*, page 70

### 2.3 SURVEY OF ATTITUDES AND INVOLVEMENT

The book *Discovering Democracy Through Research* is an excellent resource for planning and using surveys and the inquiry approach in general. Using the Teacher Guidelines on page 12 and the *Good Citizen Survey Pro-forma* on page 47 as a model, students are to develop a survey for primary and high school students and members of the wider community to find out their thoughts on the following:

- Caring for the environment
- The most pressing environmental issue facing the local community
- Their level of civic involvement for the environment

Results can be shared via a noticeboard display and through the school newsletter.

### 2.4 CASE STUDY

(\*Key Assessment Task\*)

Students are to independently research a current or past Tasmanian environmental issue. They are to present their findings in the form of an oral and written report to the class.

Students can use the class scrapbook, graffiti sheets and the survey (See 1.1, 1.2 and 2.2 above) to identify an area of interest to them. The research should involve the use of primary and secondary sources, information and communication technologies and the use of a survey or interview.

The book ***For the Forests*** by Helen Gee (see resource list) details the history of Tasmanian forest campaigns and may be of use to students.

### 3. TAKING ACTION

**Objective:** students plan and undertake civic action for the local environment.

#### 3.1 LOCAL ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

Using the Ocean Charter from the International Year of the Ocean in 1998 (see website below) as a model, students develop their own charter Local Environment Charter drawing together all of their thoughts and ideas from the unit so far. Hold a public signing ceremony.

<http://ioc.unesco.org/iy0/activities/charter2.htm>

#### 3.2 COMMUNITY PROJECT

Using one of the local environmental problems identified in 1.4 above, students are to engage in the civic involvement process outlined below from the unit, “Joining In” in *Discovering Democracy Middle Primary Units*. Please visit the following website to access the “Joining In” unit of work:

[www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy)

(NB Other units in the *Discovering Democracy* materials outline alternative approaches for civic involvement that may be more appropriate for your students: *Taking Issue*, page 21 in *Discovering Democracy Through Research* and *How do you go about setting up an effective organisation?* on page 174 of the same book.)

#### CIVIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Ask: *What is the most important environmental issue facing the local community?*

Decide upon one issue and choose a name for the class group.

1. Students draft a letter seeking approval from the principal/school council.
2. Develop a constitution for the group.
3. Form committees.
4. Select leaders and committee members.
5. Hold a meeting and ratify the constitution.
6. Plan the civic action
7. Undertake the civic action
8. Report on outcomes
9. Evaluate the civic action

For example, students could introduce a school or local community environmental award to recognise citizens who are working to protect the environment for future generations. Students could develop judging criteria and find a sponsor in the local community. Use the Landcare awards as a model (see website below). The awards could be incorporated into the school recognition process.

[http://www.landcareaustralia.com.au/national\\_awards/default.htm](http://www.landcareaustralia.com.au/national_awards/default.htm)