The Urrbrae Wetland Early Years Learning Opportunities Overview

**Belonging, Being, Becoming**

The Urrbrae Wetland is a safe and secure environment which offers a range of learning experiences that encourage children to explore the natural environment and understand how to safely and ethically interact and study the living and non-living components of nature.

The Wetland Manager will work with the key teacher to formulate and adapt a positive experience, which meets individual desired outcomes and provide a context for learning through which children make connections between prior experiences and new learnings.

These experiences all encourage the children to look, touch, listen, smell, explore and make discoveries and connections to develop a sense of wonder about nature whilst encouraging appreciation for the environment, care and respect for all the living and non-living components.

“**Children who respect the environment feel an emotional attachment to the natural world, and deeply understand the link between themselves and nature, will become environmentally literate citizens.”**

(Early Childhood Environmental Education Programs: guidelines for Excellence" written and published by, The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) in 2010)

**Possible activities -** These are flexible activities and can be easily adapted to suit specific needs – just contact the Urrbrae Wetland Manager

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|  | **Focus** | **Time** | **Description** |
| **Wetland Walk** | How The Wetland Works | Approx.30 min | The children are taken on a guided walk around the wetland. They visit the inlet pipes to see where and how the water enters the wetland, discovering the kinds of pollution that come in through the stormwater pipes and the structures that help to remove the pollution from the water (trash racks, reed beds). |
| **Wetland Scavenger Hunt** | Living and Non-living Components of the Environment | Approx.30 min | The children are provided with a list of things they need to find around the Urrbrae Wetland. For each of the items ethical conversations are encouraged to allow the children to determine whether they:* Look, touch, smell and record the item (take a photo, draw a picture) and then leave it in nature.
* Look, touch, smell and collect the item to take back to the Wetland Learning Centre to study further, before returning it back to nature.
* Look, touch, smell and collect the item to take back to their own classrooms.
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| **Wetland Safari** – Land Creatures | Living things Above the Water | Approx.30 min | Children explore and investigate the wetland using a variety of observation tools including magnifiers and binoculars and simple identification charts. They aim to identify as many different living things as they can, ticking them off as they go. This includes birds, insects, plants and animals. Throughout the activity questions are posed to the children to encourage them to think about how these creatures may rely on one another. |
| **Wetland Safari** – Water Creatures | Living things Below the Water | Approx.30 min | The children investigate and examine the creatures living in the water, by catching creatures in water samples collected by the Wetland Manager. Using different tools children catch and sort the creatures then study them under digital microscopes in the learning centre to identify as many as they can. The children are the able to release their creatures back into the water, concluding with a discussion as to the role these creatures play in the wetland and how they can be influenced by human actions. |
| **Water Testing** | How clean is water?  | Approx.15 min | The children collect a sample of water from the Wetland, then preform a simple turbidity test to determine how much particulate matter is in the water (dirt) and compare this to drinking water. The children are then able to observe and articulate why it is not safe to drink the wetland water, and what other ways we could use the water instead.  |
| \*Key connections with the [Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf) include OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD and OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING.  |