

APPLICATION FOR THE BRIAN FOREMAN SCHOLARSHIP 2012

APPLICANT'S NAME: ANNE PETTIT

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CURRENT ROLES:

Environmental/Sustainability Educator and Advisor – Varied community, committee and agency roles, paid and voluntary, involving sustainable living education, waste education, bush care and other aspects of environmental education through program development and coordination; development and delivery of courses, workshops and presentations; project initiation and support; mentoring and volunteer support and proactive involvement in issues impacting on healthy environments and sustainability.

Coordinator – Mindarie Regional Council children's waste education extension program.

Treasurer and Community Member – Two Rivers Catchment Group.

Community Member – Town of Victoria Park Community Environmental Working Group.

Member – Australian Association of Environmental Education.

Member – Waste Educators Networking Group.

Member – Friends of Kensington Bushland group.

THIS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO MY CAREER IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:

I am an avid and professional environmental educator, devoting a lot of energy in diverse ways to encourage and involve adults and children in practical ways of building and sharing learning to support actions in everyday living that reduce waste and energy and water use and support biodiversity and other aspects of living more sustainably.

Receiving the Brian Foreman Scholarship would support me to attend the AAEE Conference where I am registered to deliver two presentations - one about some new approaches to the language we use in environmental and sustainability education and one about a novel waste education extension program in WA. Both of these are very practical, and I hope they will interest and inspire other environmental educators. Being at the conference will also be a fantastic opportunity for me to attend as many of the presentations, round-tables and workshops as possible and to meet and exchange ideas with others – a real chance to initiate and build stimulating relationships for future exchanges and collaborations.

As a recipient of the Scholarship, I will also be able to raise my profile in the environmental education community and hence my capacity to contribute to the field at both a practical and professional level.

I am also planning to extend my experience with a visit to Tasmania to meet with and exchange ideas with environmental practitioners and to explore some wilderness areas, enriching myself personally and expanding my knowledge of an important region of our diverse and beautiful country.

HOW WILL AAEE BENEFIT FROM THE EXPERIENCE?

Nationally, the opportunity will enable me to make a unique contribution as an environmental educator with a diverse background, broad interests, knowledge and interesting perspectives in promoting and delivering education for sustainability. My local chapter in WA will benefit through personal reporting of my experiences and on-going opportunities for extension activities resulting from my learning.

A POST-CONFERENCE REPORT:

Reporting on a great experience...

I am privileged to have attended the 2012 AAEE National Conference as this year's recipient of the Brian Foreman Scholarship.

The conference got off to a wonderful start with the very special Welcome to Country ceremony at the Royal Botanic Gardens on Sunday evening. This set the tone beautifully for a rich and lively conference experience. The tour earlier that day was interesting, especially

meeting Neil Blake of Baykeeper Coastwalk, inspirational for his long-term commitment to community environmental education.

The days were very full – how to choose which sessions to attend with such a lot on offer? The Keynote speakers were great and it was disappointing to only have a pre-recorded message from Minister Garret...no opportunity for questions! I attended a very wide range of presentations and several round-tables. Jonathan Thwaites mention of the significance of language resonated with me because of my interests in language for sustainability and the types of knowledge that complement factors that support behaviour change for more sustainable choices. Words do have the potential to inform and inspire but also to confuse environmental messages and even erode capacity for making sustainable choices in daily living.

I was interested in the work of Anthony James on 'efficiency'. Achieving net greenhouse/environmental benefit is now so critical and yet it remains difficult to quantify and, in my experience at community level, under-emphasized as a goal in educating for environmental sustainability. Perhaps part of the solution for this problem is to take opportunities when educating about any aspect of environment to highlight how daily actions can either support or do harm to what we are trying to protect.

Some other key elements of the conference that will enhance my work were sessions about academic writing, evaluation, translating environmental learning into sustained action and the experiences of other environmental educators in their schools and community programs. The networking was so enjoyable and interesting, in particular hearing the perspectives of visitors from outside Australia.

The conference dinner was lovely in the grand Plaza Ballroom of the Regent Theatre. Great conversations, dancing and I had the added thrill of bidding for and winning the Carbon Training International Scholarship which will provide a very useful complementary skill for me. Carbon pricing measures in Australia will provide much-needed impetus for increasing community-wide understanding about energy/carbon relationships and interest in identifying how to quantify and make savings through efficiency and behaviour change.

After the conference I spent a few days in Tasmania - in lively conversation with friends in Hobart about all things sustainability - and at Roaring Beach, a beautiful region in the south-east, near Port Arthur. This provided such a contrast to the bustle of inner-city Melbourne and brought home to me the environmental challenges of these very different environments.

Returning to Perth, I feel stimulated as well as thoughtful about where my energy and commitment to education for sustainability is best placed and I look forward to being involved in a wide range of continuing and new projects.