



SPEAKING 4 THE PLANET

Report 2013-2015



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The work you are doing with the schools for environment day is really special and I hope that this event is something that will continue to grow and get increasing support for in the future. Sutherland Shire Council

Speaking 4 the Planet is a wonderful opportunity for high school students in The Hills Shire to develop their public speaking skills whilst speaking about something that they are passionate about – our planet. The event provides a great platform for schools to compete and students to perform. We are always looking for ways in which we can support high schools, and given the success of this event last year, this is a good fit, and we will be supporting the event again next year. The Hills Shire Council

S4P was an excellent opportunity not just to support the SP4 cause but to encourage children in the art of public speaking. The youth of today are the decision makers of tomorrow. Bunnings, Castle Hill

Skills in Public Speaking, both impromptu and prepared can make an enormous difference to people's lives. I have seen evidence of this in the 27 years I have been a member of Toastmasters, both in my own life, the skills gained by other Toastmasters and the excellent results achieved in the 65 Speechcraft Courses our Club has conducted. Carole Sharp, Miranda Toastmasters

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SECTION 1: HISTORY

Speaking 4 the Planet (S4P) is a public speaking and drama competition for high schools students. S4P is held in conjunction with World Environment Day (WED), which is celebrated each year on 5 June. This is an internationally recognised day endorsed and supported by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). It is designed to raise global awareness of the need to take positive environmental action.

For the S4P events, students are required to speak and perform on subjects linked to the WED theme. They are also asked to make their presentations quirky! S4P is shaped by the view that, if we are to achieve sustainable communities, we will need people to be able to think creatively – often away from the mainstream – and express and support novel ideas in public arenas. We will need people who can persuade decision-makers and community members to take the sustainability options and directions.

Speaking 4 the Planet enabled our school's environmental team [Gymea Green Group] to not only discuss important environmental issues at a school level in the English classroom leading up to the day, but to send representatives to help create ideas for environmental change. As it turned out, many of those quirky ideas weren't too far from the realms of possibility! Paula Stuart, Gymea Technology High School

S4P is an idea of 4Sustainability Education Consultancy. The inaugural S4P event, supported by Sutherland Shire Environment Centre (SSEC), was held at The Jannali High School on 5 June 2013. Seven schools and 35 students participated in that first S4P competition.

In 2014, two S4P events were held: one in the Sutherland Shire at Port Hacking High School; the other in The Hills Shire at the council's new administration building in Baulkham Hills. A total of 10 schools and 65 students participated. In 2015, S4P was held in three locations: Sylvania High School in the Sutherland Shire, James Busby High School in the Liverpool City local government area, and again at the council's main building in The Hills Shire. Thirteen schools and 120 students participated across the 2015 events.

In total, 20 high schools and 220 students have participated in Speaking 4 the Planet since it began in 2013.

Three elements of the most recent S4P 2015 stand out. Keep Australia Beautiful National Association (KABNA) provided judges and support for each event and encouraged connection with the international Eco-Schools program, which it manages in Australia. Further support came from Toastmasters groups in each of the three regions where the event was run. This connection created opportunities for students to speak in front of these local groups; it also opened conversations about the conduct of the well-regarded SpeechCraft training for students. Finally, an innovation for the 2015 events was the involvement of the Food Technology students at participating schools. S4P provided support for these students to cater with low-environmental-impact, plant-based foods.



SECTION 2: S4P IN PRACTICE

The finer details of a Speaking 4 the Planet event are individualised to suit the venue, the hosting organisation and the participating schools. But the key elements remain the same.

■ **Competition format**

S4P is a public speaking and drama competition for high schools. Students from Years 7 – 12 can participate. The event has three sections: prepared speech (5mins), impromptu speech (3mins), impromptu drama (3-6mins). The focus for all talks and performances is the UN's World Environment Day theme.

■ **Hosting and location**

A tradition is building around hosting the competition. The school of the winner of the prepared speech section is invited to host the following year's event. So far, schools have embraced this opportunity very warmly. In one very large local government area where the schools are widely spread, the venue has been the council chambers in the council's administration building. It is a wonderful venue, and the students thrill at speaking in the chambers.

Preparation at the venue has included displays of school project based learning achievements and art work relevant to the WED message. In 2015, support was provided to enable schools to do the catering for the competition. Schools took up the invitation to use plant-based ingredients. Further curriculum links have been therefore available for the host school.

■ **Teacher support**

A Teachers Resource Pack is prepared for use in classrooms or across the whole school. This package identifies teaching and learning strategies linked to the WED theme, and it helps teachers prepare students for the S4P event. Each year, teachers have thanked the organisers for the package. "Everything I needed to know was provided," said Angelina Bea, a teacher from Liverpool Boys HS.

■ **On the day**

On competition day, participants are welcomed by the Mayor and school Principal. The MCs – usually a pair of students who have been coached in the lead-up to the event – then begin the competition with the prepared speeches. When these are concluded, the specific topic for the impromptu speeches and drama is given. An extended morning tea break is taken to allow preparation time for the next sections of the competition. It also allows judges to convene and determine the winner of the prepared speech section. After the break, impromptu speakers and actors deliver their talks and performances. In 2015, the theme was "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care." Students for the two impromptu sections were asked



to speak or perform with a specific audience in mind. Some chose business and political leaders, while others chose parents, peers and teachers.

■ **Judges and judging**

Judging panels have included representatives from sponsoring organisations and businesses such as Paddy Pallin and Bunnings, Toastmasters groups, SSEC, KABNA, Australian Packaging Covenant and local councils. Judging criteria are linked to curriculum requirements for speaking and drama. A template is provided to make judging a bit easier, but given the quality of the speakers and performers, judging is perhaps the toughest job all day!

■ **Speaking circuit for winners**

The winners of the prepared and impromptu speech sections are invited to repeat their performances at the local Council and local Toastmasters groups. The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre has invited winners from all three sections to speak and perform at each of its last three AGMs.

■ **Funding**

Funding and in-kind support come from a variety of sources, including local councils, KABNA, SSEC and a range of sponsors. The main program costs are in managing and evaluating the events, and in preparing materials to support teachers and students.

Each year, sponsors have made generous donations for the prizes and gifts, and grateful to be given an opportunity to participate in some way on the day.

■ **Promotion**

Behind the scenes, SSEC prepares the art work for the certificates and manages the website. Transcripts of the winning speeches are uploaded onto the website. Schools are supported to cater for a low-impact plant-based lunch.

Media support is provided by local councils. The event is registered on the UN's website.

■ **Evaluation**

After the event, all participants are invited via email to provide comments and suggestions for improvement.

Just wanted to say a big thank you for all the work you put and the council put in for the Speaking 4 the Planet Day. It was a fantastic day for us. The students very much enjoyed learning and seeing other speeches and the eco-dramas. Please definitely put our names down again for next year. Sincerest appreciation. Paul Apostolou, a teacher from the Australian International Academy in Kellyville

SECTION 3: SPEECHES AND PERFORMANCES

Student speeches and performances have been very high quality. And they have hit the mark on being quirky and communicating effective, action-oriented messages related to the UN's WED theme. Suggestions have included alternative energy, food miles, soil and water quality, pollution, poverty, and local shopping. One 2013 speech proposed a National Left-Overs Program that involved underground transport of city left-overs to country farms. Another ironically proposed we train animals to pick up litter and keep our streets clean.

Over the three years and in all the S4P events, speakers have asked insightful and critical questions – tough questions. Many are gathered here:

Why don't we know where all our food comes from? Do we actually need to eat as much as we can? Where have we gone wrong that some people die of eating too much while others die of starvation? How have our governments lost control to big corporations? Will we consume the planet into extinction? Why do we keep destroying the planet and the people on it? Why are there poor people in the world?

Why can't we be better at sharing? What are you going to do now to not waste the Earth's resources and help fix this situation?

Tim, a student from The Jannali High School, ended his talk with a critical message: 'If an opportunity to save the planet doesn't come knocking at our doors, we must make one.'

In 2013, Melissa, a student from Port Hacking High School won the prepared speech section with a talk on encouraging people to eat less meat in order to protect our soils and climate. She suggested we 'Veg In' at the weekend rather than 'Veg out'. Jenni Gormley, Chair of the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre, has since worked with Melissa to create a website for this idea. Further activities are being prepared.

Other winners have spoken about ecological footprints (Abdallah, Rouse Hill HS) and about how the world's poorest people would be hardest hit by global warming even though they contribute very little of the world's greenhouse gases (Emma, Sylvania HS). One student, Julious from Liverpool Boys HS said, 'In this world we put profit above people, greed above need, and the rule of gold above the golden rule. We're using Mother Nature as a credit card with no spending limit, driving animals away from their homes and leading them to extinction never again to see their own uniqueness.'

In the impromptu drama, S4P has seen students begin a skit in the present and then take the audience 400 hundred years into the future and into the dreams of a climate change sceptic. In another, students played chess and discussed climate change; each piece lost in the game was a small island being drowned by rising ocean levels. Another performance challenged people to think creatively inside and outside the box of ideas for sustainability.



SECTION 4: CURRICULUM LINKS

S4P helps schools meet the expectations of the Australian Curriculum about integrating sustainability into teaching and learning. Teachers say that S4P provides multiple opportunities to link with a wide range of curriculum requirements. Examples include:

In English, Stages 4 & 5 Outcome: EN4-2A. Effectively uses a widening range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing texts in different media and technologies.

Texts in English, Stages 4 & 5 include a focus on sustainability and environment. Those texts include:

- 'The Killing Sea', which opens up conversation about the world around us and the ways in which the climate is changing, causing more natural disasters and creating an impact on humanity. This is used in Year 7.
- Anh Do's autobiography, 'The Happiest Refugee', (Year 10), leads into the documentary 'Go Back to Where You Came From' in Year 11. (**Legal Studies** also uses this documentary). Book and program invite conversations about natural resources in Australia, refugees, lifestyle, citizenship, human rights and global responsibilities.
- 'The Rabbits' picture book and the movie, 'Rabbit Proof Fence', allow teachers and students to cover sustainability of cultures in a globalised (Western) society.
- Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth' is studied in Stage 5.

In Geography, Stages 4&5, Focus Area 4G4 is Global Issues and the Role of Citizenship. In this, students learn about the nature of the issue such as climate change. They explore the different perspectives, the responsibility of governments, actions of individuals and groups, and the implications for social justice and equity. Students consider the interrelationships between people and environments. Stage 4 & 5 topics include People, Places, Environments, Management and the Future. Syllabus Concepts include: place, space, environment, interconnection, scale, sustainability, change. And students are required in Stage 5 to communicate geographical information to a range of audiences using a variety of strategies.

In Science, students learn to work scientifically and communicate to a range of audiences. Each Stage 5 student 'Presents scientific ideas and evidence for a particular purpose and to a specific audience, using appropriate scientific language, conventions and representations (SC5-9WS). In Stages 4 & 5, students learn to show a 'willingness to engage in finding solutions to science-related personal, social and global issues, including shaping sustainable futures' (SC4-2VA, SC5-2VA).

In drama, S4P provides opportunities for students to use voice, movement, timing and use of space effectively and appropriately to the style of the piece. It requires them to work together in design and delivery of a drama piece with a specified purpose and time.

Across all curriculum areas, S4P provides opportunities for students to develop original ideas, to think critically, to communicate clearly and to choose language, tone and style appropriate to the purpose of the speech or performance.

Many thanks for organising the event. The students had a great time and the principal has received positive comments regarding the event too. We will certainly support it again next year. Thanks to you, Kath [The Hills Shire Council] and the others involved. Looking forward to next year. Pip Dellar, a teacher from Rouse Hill High School

SECTION 5: BENEFITS

S4P has been beneficial for participating students, schools, supporting organisations and local councils. It offers teaching and learning opportunities across numerous curriculum areas. It links curriculum and school values to the broader world of environment, society and politics. It strengthens connections with councils, community organisations and businesses also keen to build a world worth living in. And it invites the students (and all participants) to look deeply into their own views and values related to healthy communities living on a healthy planet.

Here's what some participants have said.

■ **Councils**

Speaking 4 the Planet delivered many benefits to our Council. We strive to support local schools in terms of environmental education and always seek opportunities to engage. This event is a great fit in terms of our approach to education in that it brings students together who have a passion for speaking out for our environment and are interested in enhancing their public speaking skills. It provides Council with the opportunity to recognise students in this area. And it has led to new relationships, particularly with local businesses and organisations that supported the event. The Hills Shire Council

Liverpool Council is proud to be involved in Speaking 4 the Planet. It is a great initiative to raise awareness of sustainability among students, and a valuable opportunity for students to speak passionately about an important local and global issue.

Sustainability is part of everything we do at Liverpool Council – from our unique Community Recycling Centre which diverted 125 tonnes of landfill in its first six months, through to providing free monthly Sustainability Workshops for our community to recycling bins in our council offices.

The Speaking 4 the Planet event aligns with Council's aim for Liverpool to be a 'Natural Sustainable City' which we do by encouraging the community to create and carry out environmentally sustainable practices. Our Environment Restoration Plan aims to protect our local bushland, while building community networks and partnerships, and through education programs.

The S4P competition helps us build good relations with our local high schools and demonstrate our commitment to supporting the important messages of World Environment Day. Liverpool City Council

■ **Sponsors**

It was excellent liaising with the folk from Keep Australia Beautiful which led to a greater understanding of their function within schools. Bunnings, Castle Hill



Thanks to S4P Bunnings Hoxton Park has developed a relationship with Liverpool City Council Environmental Team. Bunnings, Hoxton Park

Keep Australia Beautiful is always looking for ways to empower young people to do the right thing by our environment and Speaking 4 the Planet has been a highlight of 2015 in this regard. In 2014 we were charged with managing the international "Eco-Schools" program in Australia, so we're really focussing on activities that help students to develop themselves as school sustainability leaders and initiatives that support teachers with sustainability education. Speaking 4 the Planet achieves these things, plus it's a huge amount of fun and brings together a wide group of supporters from the community that will surely continue to grow. Stacey Passey, Programs Manager, Eco-Schools Australia, KABNA

Speaking 4 the Planet is an innovative way to get young people thinking about environmental issues. Because it is based on the UN annual WED theme, a new aspect of the environment is considered each year. SSEC believes that once people thoroughly understand humanity's inter-connectedness with our planet's eco-system they will see the need to properly protect it. If we can educate our children about this, then sustainable behavior from society and government will follow in the years to come. Jenni Gormley, Chair, Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Schools

Speaking 4 the Planet directly links to the Australian Curriculum focus on Sustainability. Students are given opportunities to develop their public speaking and drama skills...This is a great opportunity for students and provides many benefits. The day encourages students to think about their daily lives and how they contribute to the planet. In addition, it allows them form relationships with other school students and community members... In the two years that our school has attended, students have been given exceptional opportunities. The first year one of our students was invited to speak on the radio and present her thoughts about sustainability. In addition, this year two of our students were invited to be part of a Toastmasters club night. The students presented their speeches in front of the members and were given feedback. This has provided students with more relationships within the community! Jemma Saville, Rouse Hill HS

S4P provided a network to interact with other like-minded individuals where everyone had a voice. Our students really enjoyed the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. And there were specific educational benefits for our Year 8 geography students, Year 9 Eco Rangers and our senior hospitality students. Di Vince, Sylvania HS

S4P created opportunities beyond the day. Emma Douglas, the winning S4P 2014 winning student welcomed the opportunity to speak at Sutherland Shire Council, and participating teachers from other schools were very excited about sharing the school's Eco Rangers programs and resources. Mechelle Brunton, Sylvania HS

The boys loved it! All students said they had a lot of fun. Some of my students were a little shy with the drama performance when we practised at school, but they thoroughly enjoyed the day because it was a comfortable environment. It also challenged them to think about the environment in different ways. Hearing many speeches



from students across schools made them think about the importance of caring for the environment. We have since had the opportunity to participate in a local Toastmasters meeting where two of my students presented their speeches. They got to meet the National Public Speaking Representative which was a great honour for them. One student also addressed the Liverpool City councilors. Angelina Bea, Liverpool Boys HS

The two girls who participated liked meeting students from other schools and developing their skills in public speaking. Both girls have continued to enter speaking and debating competitions. We have an environmental group and their teacher would also like to be involved in future competitions. The information about the competition was very clear. Catherine Divitale, Tara Anglican School for Girls

■ Students

My least favourite part of the day was recess, because we weren't doing fun things like the speeches. Hoxton Park HS

■ Toastmasters

The Toastmasters groups that supported the 2015 event also benefited. And their participation opened up conversations about running SpeechCraft courses for students. Courses will be conducted in Sutherland and Liverpool.

Benefits are that members of our club can see the excellent work being conducted in public speaking in our schools. The members who attended the competition and the members who attend the meeting when the students present their speeches. Both events I believe will highlight awareness of Toastmasters in the community, and our club Miranda Toastmasters in particular. Carole Sharp, Miranda Toastmasters

By arranging the SpeechCraft course, this will help our Toastmasters with their training skills and help expand their comfort zone by going outside their normal club audience. The SpeechCraft course for the students will be a contribution from Double C Toastmasters to our local community. Luci Sepp, Double C Toastmasters



SECTION 6: FUTURE OF S4P

S4P has adapted and improved each year for schools and participating organisations.

Broad recommendations and directions include:

- Consolidate sponsorships with key businesses and organisations.
- Seek high level support from relevant government departments and school sector organisations. Invite representatives to the events.
- Enable schools in other states of Australia to participate.
- Consider bringing winners from around the country into a national competition.
- Consider strategies for involving Eco-Schools in other countries to hold local events.
- Strengthen the S4P website.
- Identify relief teacher funding to enable a practice day at each participating school.
- Strengthen curriculum links in the Teachers Resource Pack. Develop some shorter teaching and learning activities.
- Strengthen links between participation in S4P and KABNA's Eco-School program.
- Manage the contact with media directly as well as with local councils.
- Continue to link S4P to the WED theme, but invite districts to run the event at a time in the year that best suits them, rather than ask that it be held around WED on 5 June.
- Have a lucky-door prize for participating schools: a sustainability professional development session.
- Continue to develop the Writing 4 the Planet and Art 4 the Planet initiatives.
- Invite schools to bring a student photographer and reporter. Gather the best of their photos and stories after the event for the website.
- Invite parents and other significant local community members to the events.

Speaking for the planet was an interactive event that engaged young people by allowing them to utilise their creative talents to learn more about how they, as individuals, can help reduce waste and pollution and provide positive contributions to our planet. The day was facilitated well and I feel the students benefited from the opportunity to hear from the local community but also from being provided the opportunity to showcase their understanding of the topic and learn from each other in a way that is both fun and educational. Rebecca Deep from 2realise, the Partnership Brokers in The Hills

SECTION 7: TESTIMONIALS

The students spoke well and they presented wonderful, original ideas. I also enjoyed seeing young people from different schools connect with one another. ...there was positive feedback generated and Council was happy to be a part of an event that show-cased positive ideas and contributions made by young people as well as raising environmental awareness. I would definitely recommend it to other Councils – perhaps there could be an inter-council event. Richelle Figliuzzi, Community Development Officer, Sutherland Shire Council

Speaking 4 The Planet is a wonderful opportunity for schools and students to showcase their ideas and thoughts in conjunction with World Environment Day. As a judge for the competition, I was astounded by the quality of thoughts/ideas the students put forward. So many elements of their day to day education can be integrated into their ideas around sustainability particularly as the United Nations declared 2014 the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). I would recommend more schools get involved in such a project as the benefits to the students is far and wide Suzie Field, Partnership Broker, Southern Sydney Business Education Network

Just wanted to say a big thank you for all the work you put and the council put in for the Speaking 4 the Planet Day. It was a fantastic day for us. The students very much enjoyed learning and seeing other speeches and the eco-dramas. Please definitely put our names down again for next year. Sincerest appreciation. Paul Apostolou, Australian International Academy

The Speaking 4 the Planet event was effectively managed by Know Hands Education Consultancy. Throughout the entire lead up to the event, Know Hands maintained effective communication and provided updates throughout. Phil ensured that every aspect of planning in the lead up as well as post event activities were managed and completed to a high standard. The actual event was a success and all students participated in at least one of the three categories- impromptu speaking, prepared speaking and the drama performance. Each of these three categories challenged the students, who were judged by a representative from three different organisations. This year's event was very successful and all involved on the day enjoyed the event and were very positive. We look forward to participating again and supporting the 2016 event. Sarah Callus, The Hills Shire Council

The Pallin family, proud owners of Paddy Pallin, retailer of adventure gear, have a very long history of supporting environmental conversation. The family set up the Paddy Pallin Foundation, a charitable organisation, to enable Paddy Pallin and its customers and friends to contribute to better conservation of the natural environment for future generations and the animals and plants that inhabit them. Speaking 4 The Planet is one of many great ways to involve the leaders of tomorrow in environmental education and appreciation. Paddy Pallin



SPEAK FOR THE PLANET

On Thursday 4th June, a group of students from The Hills Grammar School set off to the very fancy Council Chambers in Norwest for what was to be a truly fun and educational event. First we began with an introduction by Phil, the MC of the event, and we learnt what the theme of the day meant, "7 billion dreams. One planet. Consume with care".

We each had a chance to write down what our dreams for the future planet were and we stuck the pieces of paper on a big board for everyone to see. It was really great to see what other people's thoughts were on the planet, and what their hopes for the future generations and planet were. The day really changed my perspective of the Earth, and encouraged me to be more caring towards the environment, for example, bringing food in waste free packaging, rather than glad wrap or foil.

One fact I would definitely take away from the day is that we would need 3.6 Earths per person if we were to sustain the lifestyle of the average Australian person. We need to make sure that we limit our carbon footprint and make sure we create a sustainable future for the generations to come. We want the next generations to experience seeing the wonderful thing that we are proud to call our world today, but it won't happen without us taking action against having too big a carbon footprint.

After the first prepared speeches which were very informative, we had recess which was also our time to prepare for the impromptu speeches and drama performances. It was really cool to hear what the impromptu speakers had come up with in a short space of time. The idea was for them to direct the speech at a particular audience, for example kids or teachers. There was a wide range of speeches directed at different audiences, and it taught us how to approach the issue in different ways. The drama pieces were really funny, at the same time as raising important issues concerning the environment. My group did an allegory and we used the actions of "Earth", "Wasteful" and "Pollution" as metaphors for serious things happening in the world. For example, when wasteful took Earth's food at lunchtime, this was symbolic of people taking Earth's resources, as we need to try and reduce our carbon footprint.

The day ended with a lovely presentation, and we were given our own plant to take home. Overall, I really enjoyed the experience of being able to stand up and speak about some very serious issues in our world today.

It was great to hear everyone else's thoughts and get inspiration from others. I would definitely come back next year!

Chelsea McVay, Year 9 student, The Hills Grammar School.



2013-2015 SPONSORS AND LOGOS

