

Manly Village Public School students studied the penguin colony at Sydney's Shelly Beach and developed a conservation plan

Project protects Little Penguin habitat



Manly Village students are hoping to see the return of the Little Penguins to their area

Congratulations to the teachers and students at Manly Village Public School for their innovative environmental education work.

While the school is a long way from any snow or ice, these Sydney students have been on a fascinating journey to help the smallest of the world's penguin's return to Manly and Shelly beaches for breeding.

The Manly Harbour area is home to the last remaining mainland colony of Little Penguins, also known as Fairy Penguins, in NSW.

During a six-week program with Taronga Zoo's Education Department, the students learned the skills required for penguin habitat protection and developed materials to tell the community about how to help penguins survive.

The students were briefed by Taronga's keepers about the threats to penguins and learned how to get involved in securing a future for these little creatures in the Manly community.

The Years 5 and 6 students created penguin rescue diaries and when they visited Shelly Beach last term, they looked at the existing habitat, rated the suitability of the surrounds as a penguin habitation and made recommendations to make the site more suitable to the penguins' needs.

The beach audit is part of the Little Penguin Project, developed by Taronga Zoo's education team and relates to the Department of Education and Training's Environmental Education Policy.

The students have also conducted an Environmental Expo at Taronga Zoo and attended guest speaker presentations by experts from Taronga's Marine Mammal and Penguin Division, local council bush regeneration, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Manly Environment Council.

Overall, the project aims to encourage students to educate their communities about sustainable living and to give them a love for and an understanding of wildlife.

It has also provided the school and its community with some practical advice about smart ways to be involved in the protection of local wildlife and really make a difference.

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