



Media release

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Green curriculum for schools

Help is at hand for teachers to introduce sustainability concepts to students and school grounds.

Up until now primary school teachers have had difficulty accessing materials that help them meet curriculum requirements set by Education Queensland around managing school grounds and teaching biodiversity.

NQ Dry Tropics developed Healthy Habitat for Schools in response to this need.

Part of the initiative is a free online tool kit available to all schools. It covers topics like planting cyclone resistant native trees, avoiding dangerous plants, declared weeds, companion planting for school vegetable gardens and ideas for student activities.

Townsville South State School has just 60 students, making it the smallest and one of the oldest state schools in Townsville. It has grand plans for its large playground and it's a pilot school for this initiative.

NQ Dry Tropics' Laura Dunstan says, "Teachers have been asking for help like this for a while.

"Through this whole of school program everyone is involved from teachers, grounds persons, parents and carers to students in every year level.

"There are free online resources, professional development workshops and curriculum based classroom activities. It really fills the needs that schools have at the moment to reach their biodiversity goals."

South Townsville State School's playground is still recovering from the damage caused by Cyclone Yasi.

Principal Ian Griffith says, "Our yard used to sing with the sound of birds. They're only just starting to come back after the Cyclone. We need help to understand what the best species are to plant and where to plant them."

The school is creating an outdoor classroom where students can learn about the environment around them. Healthy Habitat for Schools will be an invaluable tool kit to develop this.

Healthy Habitat for Schools was launched this week. Schools wanting to know more should contact Laura Dunstan on 4722 5732. See the schools tab on www.nqdrytropics.com.au for more information.

NQ Dry Tropics' region includes the local government areas of Townsville, Charters Towers, Burdekin, Isaac, Barcaldine, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and the Whitsundays. **Media contact** Kathy Cogo 4722 5730, 0438 163 232.