

Inspiring Women in Environmental Science 2015

The Catchment Program staff from Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) recently planned, developed and delivered a conference *Inspiring Women in Environmental Science*. We were able to assemble expert women scientists from nine varied and interesting environmental scientific organisations. Over 130 high school students from four different schools assembled at Melbourne Girls College alongside the Yarra on 18th June 2015. The day began with presentations from Kate McCabe of Melbourne Zoo, who highlighted the external work the zoo does for threatened species; Prue Addison, of the Australian Institute of Marine Science, on how they measure the health of the Great Barrier Reef; and Fam Charko, of Port Phillip Eco Centre, who showed the short film “*Baykeepers*”, documenting how the age of plastics has invaded the Bay and the growing effort to combat the rising plastic tide.

The students then broke off into their workshops, choosing from a rich pool of the seven on offer:

- Cesar - *Ultimate Insect I.D Challenge*
- Port Phillip Eco Centre - *Bag Plastic! Life cycle analysis and alternative technologies for plastic bags*
- Zoos Victoria - *Long Distance Relationships and Arranged Marriages - Romance Zoo-Style*
- University of Melbourne - *What now? Science careers worth pursuing.*
- Two Hands Project - *Seabirds and junk food – not a healthy mix.*
- City of Yarra - *What is WSUD and how does it work?*
- MCMC - *1,000 ways to be an environmental scientist: How mixed learning methods can open up your future.*

The day finished with a very robust panel discussion with many insightful questions from the students, utilising the opportunity to garner information and advice from such a wealth of experience.

MCMC felt that the aims of the project were well met when we received feedback from the students including:

“The conference highlighted how many different fields and ways there are to pursue science as a career, and inspired me to really think about science as a career.”

“I was inspired to further my personal study of scientific studies as they are valuable assets to have.”

“I was inspired to follow my passion in a way that I hadn't really considered before. I could identify so closely with the women on the panel who were so passionate about their field, and had been for a long time.”



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