

Bush Ranger Cadet Group

Page Index

[Description](#)
[Participants](#)
[Findings](#)
[Outcomes](#)
[Impact](#)
[Related Documents](#)

Quick Links

[Download Infosheet](#)
[Download Report](#)
[Visit Website](#)

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Project Title | The Impact of a CALM Bush Ranger Cadet Group on Learning Within Two Schools in Western Australia |
| Project Team | Dr Sandra Frid, Associate Professor Len Sparrow, Professor Sue Trinidad, Ms Melanie Smith, Ms Tania Broadley (SiMERR WA) |
| Period | 2007 - 2008 |
| Funding Agency | SiMERR |
| Organisational Base | SiMERR WA |

Description

[↑ Top](#)

The SiMERR National Survey (Lyons, Cooksey, Panizzon, Parnell & Pegg, 2006) noted that “science teachers in non-metropolitan schools indicated a significantly higher level of unmet need for alternative activities to suit gifted and talented, special needs and Indigenous students than did their metropolitan colleagues” (p. vii). Parents in remote areas were also concerned about whether their children had access to a good range of learning experiences. The introduction and continuation of CALM (Conservation and Land Management) Bush Ranger Cadet groups might meet some of these expressed needs.

Conversation and Land Management (CALM) Bush Ranger Cadet groups have had a history of successful engagement with schools since their inception in 1998. They have given more than 7000 young people opportunities to learn about conservation and biodiversity, and to develop both academically and personally. It is suggested that such groups can have a significant influence on student learning, especially in the content area of science, as well as motivating and engaging students with school in a wider sense.

This project aimed to evaluate the impact of the introduction of a CALM Bush Ranger Cadet group into a school community. The impact on the school was viewed in a broad general sense by student attendance, selection of science subjects, commitment of students to the Bush Ranger scheme, and the synchronisation of Bush Ranger activities with local community expectations. There was also a specific focus on the engagement of Indigenous students with school, science, and learning in general.

The project developed two case studies that involved a researcher visiting the school to interview teachers and students to identify and describe:

- Key factors that help or hinder the initiation and continuation of a CALM Bush Ranger group in a school setting;
- The impact of a CALM Bush Ranger group presence in a school on student attendance, student engagement, and student learning; and
- Examples of effective practice for CALM Bush Ranger groups.

Participants

[↑ Top](#)

One rural school that has a Bush Rangers program that has been in operation for many years; one rural school with a program that was established but had not been in operation for as long. Both schools were Christian Aboriginal Parent Schools (CAPS).

Findings

[↑ Top](#)

A main impact of the Bush Rangers programs on students at these two schools was development of social and personal skills, in particular leadership skills, confidence, life skills and a sense of responsibility and maturity. The team building and interpersonal skills fostered at the camps was noted as a strength by all people involved in the program, and students also noted how the program supported them in making friends. The outdoors focus of Bush Rangers activities appeared to complement the Indigenous students' learning styles through their hands-on, visual and concrete nature. The students commented on how they enjoyed “going out bush” rather than being in a classroom, and this was identified by them as a very positive feature of the program.

Additional aspects of the impact of a Bush Rangers program as noted by participating staff was that it added another dimension to the school curriculum that could act as a drawcard for enrolments and could assist with increased school

attendance, although no one had collected any quantitative evidence to examine these views. It was also noted that the program had the potential to create career pathways for conservation work, although again no one had examined in detail the potential or impact in this regard.

Staffing was identified as an issue in that a teacher's involvement in the program is labour intensive, and in particular the organising for and participation in camps requires substantial amounts of time and effort. However, it was clear that for these schools the camps were a focal point of the Bush Rangers program and were successful for developing students' personal and social skills.

Outcomes

 [Top](#)

A report on the findings of the project has been prepared for CALM, that includes the impact of the Bush Rangers program at the two schools, along with the issues, concerns and challenges identified by the schools as impacting upon the ongoing running of a program. Of particular note here is that the potential of a Bush Rangers program to both develop and support science curricula at a school needs to be explicitly fostered.

Impact

 [Top](#)

The project has provided insight into how the introduction of a CALM Bush Ranger Cadet group into a school can impact upon students' development of personal and social skills. Since these findings appeared to be particularly relevant to the Indigenous students at the schools, the project has identified a need for much more extensive research into the nature of school curricula, especially science curriculum content and related learning activities.

Related documents

 [Top](#)

Click [here](#) to download this infosheet.

Click [here](#) to download the report on this project.

Click [here](#) to visit this project's website.

 [Top](#)