

asen newsletter



february - march 08

since training camp, asen kids have been real busy. campaigning, hanging out with school kids, organising to take action against climate change contributors, and playing pranks on fossil fools ... not to mention the usual talking and learning and dreaming. to keep you in the loop, here are some little windows into ASEN's many-placed soul ...

schools outreach



Outreach to school students is one of the coolest things that ASENers are up to these days. Its happening all over the continent, through many different avenues. ASEN kids from several Sydney collectives were invited to attend a "youth environment summit" in the Blue Mountains, NSW. This event was hosted by the local council for school students from year three to year twelve. ASEN peeps ran workshops about building and maintaining enviro groups, facilitation, clean energy campaigns, fundraising, campaign strategy, and climate justice.

By all accounts the school students were amazing - articulate, passionate, inspiring. Libby and Hannah from Sydney Uni Collective reckoned their workshop, with students from year 3 to year 12, was the best one they'd ever run. Students of widely different ages discussed how to organise democratically and collectively, and all listened to and respected each other. Every person's say was respected and considered important, age was not a barrier. At the end of their discussion the students felt re-inspired to get active on environmental issues at their schools. The workshop helped them work through some of the problems they had been experiencing in their organising. A watching teacher provided positive feedback; he was especially impressed with the way the workshop facilitators spoke with the students as equals, engaged and inspired them to take action for themselves. Many of the students who attended this

summit returned to their schools to set up collectives and start organising. Lapstone Primary started greening up their school and got themselves in the paper for their efforts. Students from different schools talked of setting up a Blue Mountains youth network of environmental organisers.

ASEN peeps returned to some of these schools to continue to support them in their organising and campaigning. Together, ASEN kids and students from Springwood Primary strategised about what environmental issues they wanted to take action on and how. They took their concerns to their local member, Bob Deebus, who failed to be inspired by or even to take seriously the concerns of his young constituents. The school students found his behaviour dismissive, but they were not deterred and their passions did not diminish. They made other plans, again with ASEN support, and will continue to campaign for environmental justice.

The reportbacks from this endeavour were overwhelmingly positive, and everyone involved (as well as many more jealous listeners) were inspired to do more schools outreach. Hopefully ASEN will be a part of a great deal more organising with these capable and bright and sparkling students.

green jobs

In an era of neo-liberal capitalism, it's pretty hard to find a job that fulfills the soul, pays the rent and doesn't in some way contribute to environmental destruction. Most of the available means by which we can make a living either directly or indirectly contribute to an economic and social system which oppresses and exploits people and the environment.

Many peeps active in ASEN dream of a future, an alternative present, in which people's work is meaningful to them. A world where people can contribute to community and environmental well-being rather than being forced to degrade it to pay bills.

If we want to have a future we can live in, we need to start demanding and creating these alternatives now. The Green

Jobs working group gathers together ASEN kids to organise around developing these alternatives. Together with other groups like the National Union of Students (NUS) and the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC), this working group is gonna set up sustainable careers fairs, to counter the lack of choice available at most regular careers fairs on campuses. They also wanna set up pilot green jobs schemes, especially for lower income earners who are the most disadvantaged by the current system. They want to work with unions to help make this happen.

The green jobs kids are also working on definitions of 'sustainable' and 'green jobs,' to avoid the scourge of greenwash and to make sure we develop real alternatives. It provides a pretty cool opportunity to think about what we what the world to look like, and how we are gonna work towards these dreams.



fossil fools day

On April 1 'fossil fools day' was "celebrated" across Australia. People concerned about the destruction of our planet and future by the fossil fuel industry took part in pranks and actions to highlight the foolishness of these industries. ASEN's climate working group helped organise cool actions and creative dissent, including rallies, culture jamming, and even converting streets.

Enviro collectives everywhere organised their own decentralised actions. Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney hosted fossil fools tours of the city. Awards for being top "fools" and future-eaters were presented to BHP, Morris lemma in NSW and ANZ, amongst others. Brisbane peeps "cleaned coal outside of the BHP executive building, attracting sweet media attention for their efforts. A rally in Sydney attracted 40 police, an APEC bus and the riot squad, despite the protest's carnival air. Other collectives organised to give out carbon fines to polluting vehicles and thankyou notes to bike riders. Banners were dropped all over the

country. UNSW kids unplugged vending machines, labelling them "OUT OF ORDER - FUELLING CLIMATE CHAOS." All round it was swell fun and festive, despite the serious subject matter. It's time to step up and take creative community action against climate change and other environmental injustices.

climate camp

The time for direct action on climate change has come, and the camp for climate action is coming to Newcastle this year in July. ASEN has paid organisers in WA,

SA, QLD, NSW and Victoria, who are working on getting the word around the continent, and then getting people across the continent to Newcastle. They have been running Non Violent Direct Action trainings, as well as concentrating on outreach to students and the broader community. Transport is already getting organised, and students are being supported to start setting up their own groups in which to take action. ASEN kids are involved in the climate camp organising collective, as well as the communications, legals, actions, programme and safer spaces working groups. ASEN has been getting a legal team together to offer support at the camp, as well as advice and representation later if it is necessary. There is also a superbig forum being organised in Sydney at which George Monbiot will hopefully speak.

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