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**Media Release**  
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**Regional environmental educators come together for United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.**

The region's newly formed group of environmental educators met last week at the West Byron Wetlands in recognition of the launch of the United Nations Decade for Sustainable Development.

The North East Environmental and Education Reference Group (NEEERG) discussed a strategic approach to education for sustainability for the region.

Byron Shire Council hosted the meeting at the West Byron Wetlands new interpretive centre in Bayshore Drive Byron.

The NEEERG Coordinator Linda Tohver said the need for environmental education was growing and the region was starting see successful projects happening with the early successes of this reference group," said Ms Tohver.

"Our group, made up of environmental education and communication practitioners from government organisations in the region are facilitating greater and more successful local and regional coordination and collaboration on environmental education programs." Ms Tohver said.

"The group has brought together skilled educators working on issues such as waste, water, biodiversity and toxic chemicals throughout the North Coast region. Our education programs individually target areas such as schools, youth, colleges and community.

"Through this group, we are identifying opportunities to work together and increase our environmental education outcomes of knowledge, skills and actions for our communities.

"The Group is providing a forum for some of the best practice in environmental education through projects such as the North East Waste Forum's Eco-friendly Youth Project recipient of the environmental trust grant. This project draws on the experience of Rous Water, North Coast Water, Byron Shire Council, other NEWF member Council educators and Byron Youth Services to engage youth and youth centres in the region in more sustainable practices.

Byron Shire Council's environmental education is currently focussed in areas including demand management education in Mullumbimby and environmental sustainability with effluent reuse at the West Byron Wetland site.

Members of the NEEERG include educators from Councils including Byron Shire, Lismore City, Clarence Valley, Tweed Shire, as well as North East Waste Forum, North Coast Water, Rous Water, Coastcare, Landcare, TAFE and Dorrroughby Environmental Centre.

Byron Shire Council General Manager, Ms Pam Westing, said Byron Shire Council was honoured to host the group and is looking forward to working together with other Councils in the region on education projects that will achieve greater sustainability outcomes.

“Environmental education in this region is vitally important and an important part of Council’s business so we wish this new group every success,” said Ms Westing.

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) was launched at the UN headquarters in New York on 1 March 2005.

The aim of the DESD is to build an awareness and understanding of the principle and goals of education for sustainable development.

For further information contact:

UN Decade of Education for Sustainability: <http://www.deh.gov.au/education/decade/>

<http://www.deh.gov.au/education/decade/strategy.html>

**For more information please phone Linda Tohver at NEWF on 6685 3651 or Tracey Griffin at Byron Shire Council on 6626 7000.**

**THE END**



Members of the North East Environmental Education Reference Group at the West Byron Wetlands Interpretive Centre.

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