

New 'how-to' DVD showcases local environmental volunteering project

A DVD that promotes the benefits and contributions of environmental volunteering was launched last night at the al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences and Human Development at Roselands.

The 'stars' of the DVD are young muslim students and volunteers from the centre who have taken on a project to rehabilitate part of the foreshore along the Cooks River. The DVD was put together by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA, with grant funding from the Australian Government, and the support of Canterbury City Council. The DVD shows a successful partnership formed between these organisations, with Council providing plants, tools and training for the volunteers. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA provided the group with a grant and funded the DVD to tell this story and encourage other community members across Sydney to participate in similar projects.

The City of Canterbury Mayor, Cr Robert Furolo launched the DVD in partnership with the Sydney Metropolitan CMA and said "This group is an inspiring example of what can be achieved by a group of like-minded people.

"Its great to see a local community group adopt a patch and we encourage other community groups to join in similar projects close to their area.

"The Cooks River is one of the few waterways in our City. We have been investing substantial funds into improving the health of the River and its foreshore.

"The work of the al Ghazzali Centre is instrumental in revegetating the corridor, attracting flora and fauna back to the area, and linking this patch at Campsie, to the great work done down the River at Gough Whitlam Park," Mayor Robert Furolo said.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA Board Chair Mr Bob Junor was thrilled to be at the launch and said "This DVD is a powerful tool for anyone wanting to do something positive for the natural environment but don't know where to start or who to talk to. The al-Ghazzali volunteers are champions within this community and their sense of community spirit is an inspiration to us all".

Imam Afroz Ali, President of the al-Ghazzali Centre said their "Mizaan Ecology program and in particular the Cooks River project is of physical benefit towards environmental protection as well as a spiritual one. Similarly, our partnership with Canterbury City Council and the Sydney Metropolitan CMA is one of mutual benefit of good citizenship and environmental care."

The DVD tracks the volunteer group during one of its monthly meetings on site. Interviews with team members, Council staff and supervisors describe the project from different perspectives, and there are practical tips on how to turn an existing community group into a Bushcare group. The key message of the DVD is that environmental volunteering can be a lot of fun, whilst also making a valuable to the local environment and community.

In the DVD, the Mizaan Ecology volunteers talk about what they have learnt since becoming involved and the satisfaction they feel in taking on a piece of degraded native vegetation and helping to make it healthy bushland again. They are learning more about Australian wildlife as the areas where they have cleared weeds and replanted with native vegetation become home to increasing numbers of birds and lizards.

Copies of the DVD are available from the Sydney Metropolitan CMA on 9895 7794.

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Attach photo with caption:

Mayor Robert Furolo with DVD project partners Mr Bob Junor (left) and Mr John Carse (right) of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA, and Imam Afroz Ali of the Al-Ghazzali Centre.

