

# Media Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Students seek surf-side conservation

A group of year 9 St Joseph College students experienced the coast in all its glory last Friday as part of the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee's (GORCC) Environmental Education program.

Fifteen students swapped their regular classroom for the Torquay coastal reserves to participate in hands on conservation work near Whites Beach in Torquay, as part of their outdoor education program.

GORCC Education Coordinator Pete Crowcroft said the practical aspect of GORCC's environmental education programs allowed students to see how every day action impact the environment.

"GORCC's education programs highlight how particular behaviours and activities can affect the coastal environment.

"We talked about dune stability and erosion control methods, as students were able to see the environmental damage caused by illegal access and dune surfing at Whites Beach.

"It's incredibly important we have successive generations understand and improve the environmental health of the dunes. Today was a great activity to share that understanding."

"Dune systems are continually exposed to high winds, tides and rainfall and continue to be trampled by beachgoers leaving designated tracks and ignoring signs, which is having a devastating impact on local habitat.

Students worked in small groups to remove invasive woody weeds from the dune system to allow for native revegetation in winter.

Year 9 Outdoor Education Coordinator Lukas Capicchiano said the community service component of the curriculum was a great way for students to foster a deeper appreciation for the coastal environment.

"The on-ground education helps develop an in depth understanding about the importance of coastal conservation in this beautiful environment we are fortunate to use," he said.

The year 9 students participate in a semester long outdoor education program which includes weekly visits to the coast.

"Students have the opportunity to be involved in outdoor activities such as kayaking, snorkelling, surfing, trail running and more along the coast in the outdoor education program St Joseph's offers.

"It's great to be able to incorporate the practical aspect of conservation into the recreational activities as the experience helps enhance student's environmental knowledge," Mr Capicchiano said.

St Joseph's College is one of several local schools and groups involved in GORCC's free environmental education programs.

To find out more about GORCC's free environmental programs, or to get involved, visit [www.gorcc.com.au](http://www.gorcc.com.au) for all the details.

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*Caring for the coast and community*

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