

29 August 2018

Media Release:

Sensational new garden for Cessnock High School

Students at Cessnock High School have a new recreational space designed to stimulate their senses and assist with learning, thanks to a \$7,000 donation from Yancoal Australia's Astar Coal Mine.

The new sensory garden is a quiet and peaceful space for students, providing a natural environment filled with strong sight, touch and smell impacts.

Eliza Lewis, Head Teacher Special Education at Cessnock High School said, "The Sensory Garden has huge importance for the students in our Support Unit who benefit immensely from tactile experiences that stimulate and develop their senses."

"Current research reveals that time spent in natural environments has been proven to provide both staff and students with a number of health benefits, including stress reduction. Our Support Unit caters for students with a range of diagnosis who will be able to use the garden in various ways suited to their individual needs.

"Thanks to the Yancoal Astar Community Support program, our Support Unit garden design not only offers curb side visual appeal for the passing public, but also enriches the learning environment for our students through stimulating all five senses," said Eliza Lewis.

The sensory garden features mushroom tables and stools, picnic tables with seating, a landscaped garden area and soft fall flooring. The garden has also been found to help promote positive behaviour in the playground.

Astar Coal Mine Operations Manager Brian Wesley said, "We are very pleased to be helping fund a new educational and environmentally friendly project that benefits Cessnock High School students.

"Our Community Support Program is designed to help make a positive difference to the people that live in our local community and this is a sustainable project with the potential to be used by hundreds of students in the years ahead."

The donation was part of the Yancoal Astar Community Support Program, which aims to make a positive difference in the local community and the lives of the people who work and live in the areas it operates.

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