



## WilderQuest Learning - Frequently asked questions

<p><b>What's the thinking behind the WilderQuest Program?</b></p>	<p>In his 2005 book <i>The Last Child In The Woods</i>, journalist and author Richard Louv outlined the consequences of what he called Nature Deficit Disorder - a lack of time spent in outdoor play - on children's health and social capacity. As custodian of the state's protected natural heritage, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) is in a unique position to help address what experts here and overseas have agreed is a growing concern: that a deficit in the time children spend in nature will negatively impact their social, physical and mental development.</p> <p>Part of NPWS role is to build support within the community for the work we do. This includes encouraging people of all ages to spend time in nature, and develop a closeness to the State's protected natural spaces. In helping children between the ages of 5 and 12 and their families to become familiar with, and excited about spending time in nature, we're creating a broader constituency for protecting our natural heritage for years to come.</p> <p>WilderQuest Learning is the education component of the WilderQuest Program, targeting primary school teachers and educators.</p>
<p><b>What are the education benefits of WilderQuest?</b></p>	<p>WilderQuest has been developed as a way to convert screen time into outdoor play – and ultimately, a greater appreciation and love of natural spaces.</p> <p>WilderQuest is based on cognitive learning strategies – it helps children retain and apply what they learn through a more experiential approach. It teaches and builds enthusiasm for nature through play, rewards and experiences in national parks.</p>
<p><b>What does WilderQuest Learning entail?</b></p>	<p>WilderQuest Learning provides a valuable classroom resource for students and teachers to explore authentic Australian environments, develop knowledge and skills through challenging and fun activities, and inspire interest in the living world and natural environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children in Early Stage 1 and Stages 1, 2 and 3 (Kindergarten to Year 6) in NSW schools learn about the natural environment through the study of Science and Technology and HSIE (Human Society and its Environment) and the new History and Geography syllabuses. WilderQuest will support the syllabus outcomes of these learning areas.</li><li>• WilderQuest Learning support the syllabuses of these learning areas and help children develop their numeracy and literacy skills through the games and lesson activities provided in ten week, cross-curriculum teaching and learning programs.</li><li>• The website hosts a range of online and downloadable activities, colouring templates and ideas on outdoor games and experiences, and the iPad app can be used as a learning tool.</li></ul>

<p><b>What does WilderQuest Learning entail? (continued)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using WilderQuest Learning in the classroom allows students to use and develop their computer-based technology skills in line with curriculum.</li> <li>• The portal allows teachers to register the students in the class easily. Teachers can then track student progress as well as give bonus points for activities off screen and outdoors.</li> <li>• WilderQuest Learning includes cross curriculum activities for the classroom. These are linked or able to be downloaded from the teacher portal.</li> <li>• Hands-on problem-solving activities and tools are provided to safely and effectively take students to the outdoor classroom in the playground, or to natural environments close by. Classes can also visit a national park on a WilderQuest-themed school excursion.</li> <li>• Fieldnotes, amazing facts and Aboriginal cultural connections will also inspire teachers to take students outside where so much learning can take place.</li> <li>• We are helping teachers do this safely and effectively with the activities and tools in the WilderQuest Learning portal. Classroom activities are linked to the curriculum across different key learning areas, with a focus on hands-on activities that incorporate the outdoor classroom wherever possible.</li> <li>• Underpinning all this is the intention that WilderQuest will be a shared home-school resource – meaning children, teachers and parents and carers will all have opportunity to participate in the learning experience.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Are there specific study areas WilderQuest Learning will pertain to?</b></p>	<p>WilderQuest Learning can be included as a resource for the study of Science and Technology and Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) for the NSW Curriculum, as well as Science, History and Geography syllabuses for the Australian curriculum. For more information check out the WilderQuest Learning Curriculum Links table.</p>
<p><b>Is it safe?</b></p>	<p>WilderQuest offers a safe online experience that can be easily monitored by teachers, parents and carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A responsible adult helps children set up their profile.</li> <li>• Any real-world rewards that children earn as a result of WilderQuest online are sent to the parents or carers.</li> <li>• The online WilderQuest experience does not incorporate any socially interactive elements for children.</li> <li>• The class login allows teachers to see how their students are engaging with the site and to add rewards as bonus points. Students are only identified by nickname to the teachers responsible for their class. Student identities are not collected or accessible.</li> </ul>

