

Millennium Kids – The Quest: Exploring the Olympic Spirit

Proudly Sponsored by BHP Billiton Nickel West

Imagine a touring sustainability road show that combines characters including Para Olympians, Greek goddesses, donkeys and their carts, journalists, commentators, a Cameleer named Wahid and a Chinese laundromat owner. It's all part of *The Quest*, an Olympic-inspired program designed by students to explore the past, present and future, focusing on the environment and history of the Olympic Games.

Coordinated by Millennium Kids, a WA-based youth environmental organisation, and sponsored by BHP Billiton Nickel West, *The Quest* has been developed entirely by students to unite the school communities of Kwinana, Esperance, Rockingham and Kalgoorlie through the spirit of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Building on the Olympic ideals of friendship, solidarity and fair play, *The Quest* is a kid-driven series of workshops and community-based events designed to explore sustainability, minerals and gold and the history and culture of the Olympic Games.

As the Official Diversified Minerals and Medals Sponsor of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, BHP Billiton was keen to support a youth program that taught lessons in sustainable gold and mineral development along with an appreciation for the history of the international event. BHP Billiton first came into contact with Millennium Kids through their involvement with the WA Youth Awards and recognised an opportunity to partner on a range of youth initiatives across regional WA.

After agreeing on a framework for the program, BHP Billiton and Millennium Kids took 30 young people nominated by their schools to Fairbridge Village on a two-day residential workshop to plan and develop the program's format. The result was a creative feast of ideas comprising *The Quest*, which included a series of two-day road show events in each of the three regions to explore the key areas of sustainability, gold and Olympic history, culminating in a community event in each destination run by the students to celebrate the excitement and values of the Olympic Games.

Each of the 30 young people were taught leadership and team-building skills and assigned to one of the three locations to help plan and develop a unique and fun community event.

Kwinana, Esperance and Kalgoorlie each had ten schools participating from each of which ten students were elected to be involved.

As part of the Sustainability Road Show, participants undertook a Community Audit to identify what they like about their town and what issues concerned them. Each school team then worked with BHP Billiton and Millennium Kids to develop project plans to address their concerns which were showcased in a community event in the lead up to the 2008 Olympics. Projects were based on the themes of culture, history, physical activity and environment and included activities ranging from a novelty Olympic day in Kwinana to a surfing competition in Esperance and a baton relay in Kalgoorlie which began in the Chinese Gardens at the Mining Hall of Fame and continued from school to school incorporating all of the different cultures in Kalgoorlie.

Thirty of the most enthusiastic student leaders from the Sustainability Road Shows were given an opportunity to participate in a specialist leadership program in Bremer Bay in March. These students then become the MK Quest Team for their town, responsible for coordinating all of the kid-driven initiatives.

MK Director, Catrina Aniere says *The Quest* journey provided a chance for young Western Australians to experience and embody the Olympic ideals of peace, friendship and equality. It draws on the eight sustainability pillars of the Millennium Kids charter: leadership, peace and lifestyle, energy, air, water, trees, waste and native animals, breathing life into these principles through a series of fun, interactive workshops and events based around the history and culture of the Olympic Games.

“The program is not designed as a one-off event, but rather a means through which to identify and develop the leadership talent of WA’s regional youth. The plan is to build a capable and inspired team of young leaders on which to draw for support of future youth initiatives throughout the State.”

The program is part of the “society and environment” component of the school curriculum and teaches life skills, project management, international relations, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability.