From desert to oasis

The landscape at Deer Park Primary School has undergone a "breathtaking" change over the past year.

The school's pupils are leading the way in showing how schools can play a role in better water management and sustainable urban landscaping.

Last week, at a Community Harvest Day at the school, the main focus became nurturing the next generation's connection with nature.

Brimbank suffers from a 'heat-island' effect - where hard surfaces such as buildings, roads and concrete absorb heat and cause a hotter micro-climate than in vegetated areas.

The school's pilot program, School as a Catchment, demonstrated how combining infrastructure and greenery can save water, increase biodiversity and give hands-on learning opportunities, with students and the community celebrating the revegetation of what had been 598 square metres of asphalt and underused space in the school grounds.

As part of the project, the school community has planted a variety of edible plants, local native species and shade trees.

Science and sustainability teacher Ross Dixon said Deer Park North had been transformed.

"The remarkable change to the school's landscape in the past 12 months has been breathtaking," he said. "The enthusiasm engendered in the children by the creation of the new garden spaces has developed their sense of connection to the natural world."