

The [World Environment Day](#) was first held in 1974. Since then it has been the United Nation's principal campaign for raising awareness on emerging [environmental issues](#) ranging from marine pollution, human overpopulation, and global warming, to sustainable consumption and wildlife crime. The World Environment Day (WED) has now become a globally celebrated day with participation from over 143 countries. This year's theme was 'Connecting People to Nature – in the city and on the land, from the poles to the equator'.

In this spirit the Ryde council organised a great day out which connected people with nature. Staged at the Field of Mars Reserve visitors could take part in nature walks through the protected nature reserve, children were fascinated by the reptile show displaying turtles, snakes and alligators and hobby gardeners could pick up Australian plants & shrubs for free from the [The Habitat Nursery](#). A large number of stands focussed on protecting the environment. The Waste Challenge told children and adults alike what recycle in which bin in a playful and fun way. After mending the Tzu Chi stand in the morning the Waste Challenge was the team's favourite attraction in the afternoon.

Tzu Chi joined the Gladesville Environment Day with 13 volunteers making it one of the largest groups. After planning the event for a number of weeks we had collected a multitude of topics, ideas and activities which Tzu Chi promotes and engages in. After planting more than 400 trees just across the road the day before, it was natural to let people know that they can join Tzu Chi every first Saturday of the month to plant trees in the Ryde and Lane Cove area. Another ongoing project is the Tzu Chi monthly environment day in Eastwood. When starting the monthly environment day we thought that telling people about the adverse impact of plastic waste running down our rivers into the ocean is good but actually doing something against it is even better. Anyone who has participated for example in a Clean-Up Australia day has seen how much plastic waste is out there and would not only be more sensitive to spotting it but also more considerate to avoiding it. If you agree that one Clean-Up Australia Day a year is not enough you can join Tzu Chi's monthly ones every fourth Sunday of the month. Logistically the hardest item to get to the Field of Mars was the stand for the [Boomerang Bags](#). Boomerang Bags are self-made shopping bags sewn from recycled materials. The idea to make reusable shopping bags and use these instead of plastic bags originated from two ladies in Queensland and has since gone global. Tzu Chi has joined the idea and created its boomerang bag community. We sew bags every Friday in Eastwood and welcome new joiners. On the day it

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was great to make contact not only with so many visitors but also with owners of other stands.

[5 for Ryde](#)

is a group promoting five simple things that everyone can do to waste less and save the environment. One of the five initiatives is reducing single-use plastic bags in Australia through reusable bags. No wonder we could not stop talking about Boomerang Bags, KeepCups and other reusable items. We might have also found two new joiners to sew reusable bags. All the talking makes hungry. Lucky our stand was set up right next to the [Vege4Love](#) food truck which served very nice vegetarian Asian food. After such nice lunch the afternoon went by real quick. By 2pm we started to pack everything including the Boomerang Bag stand and drive it back to the center. All in all it was a fun day of learning about reptiles, plants and recycling and meeting a lot of like-minded people. We are looking forward to join again next year perhaps with Australia even hosting the WED.

