



Greg Aplin MP

Member for Albury

MEDIA RELEASE

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TAFE NSW training farm bringing the world to Albury

Member for Albury Greg Aplin has praised a unique TAFE NSW on-farm training facility that is luring “eco-warriors” from across the globe.

The TAFE NSW National Environment Centre (NEC) - a sprawling 400-acre TAFE NSW training farm at Thurgoona – is the nation’s leading accredited training provider for permaculture and currently has visiting students from five different countries.

One of those students, Brazilian man Gustavo M.C.Martins, has worked with tribes in the Brazilian Amazon for a decade and has enrolled in a Diploma of Permaculture at NEC to learn new techniques to make their homes more sustainable.

A number of the Amazonian tribes are teetering on the brink of extinction, with incursions by illegal loggers eating away at their rainforest homes.

“I want to use permaculture principles to support their lifestyle so they don’t vanish,” Mr C.M.Martins, 37, said. “I will take the skills I learn from TAFE NSW back to Brazil and continue working with the indigenous tribes to make their lifestyles more sustainable.”

Permaculture is a system of agricultural and social design principles centred around simulating the patterns of nature.

Mr Aplin said it was heartening to see the hands-on training provided by TAFE NSW being exported around the world for such worthy causes.

“To think a training package devised and delivered here in Albury could help improve the lives of Amazonian tribespeople is staggering and very exciting,” Mr Aplin said.

“The NSW Government is proud of the role it’s playing in modernising TAFE NSW so it can continue to effectively do what it always has – train the community for the jobs of today and tomorrow.”

As part of the permaculture course, students help manage the the NEC’s Green Gate Organic Farm and are mentored by the Head Teacher of Agro-Ecology Rob Fenton, one of Australia’s leading authorities on organic farming and permaculture.

Mr Fenton said the TAFE NSW Certificate IV and Diploma in Permaculture were popular with people who wanted to set up a similar system at home, those studying organic farming, and aspiring professionals who wished to work as permaculture consultants or designers in the public or private sectors.

The TAFE NSW NEC offers a range of specialist training in civil construction, natural resource management, spatial information, water operations, permaculture, organic farming, environmental studies and sustainable agriculture.

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