



Aussie kids ready to share environmental tips

By **Belinda Tasker**

AUSTRALIAN school students will soon be able to swap their top environmental tips with millions of pupils around the world thanks to a groundbreaking computer program developed Down Under.

The program, known as the Study Wizz, will be launched in London tomorrow with the hope it will play a key role in tackling the global threat of climate change by teaching students about caring for the environment.

The Wizz basically creates an international classroom by allowing students to log on to a secure website so they can share written information, photos, drawings and videos about all sorts of environmental initiatives.

As a result, students in the drought-stricken southern NSW town of Goulburn could teach

pupils at schools in London or New York or Jakarta about water saving initiatives they have come up with.

Individual schools can also use the Wizz to monitor their energy and water use and work out ways to reduce them and save money in the process.

Australia's not for profit environmental education Gould Group and Tasmania-based IT firm Etech are the brains behind the Wizz.

And while the Wizz has the potential to reach students around the world, it doesn't come cheap.

Schools wanting to sign up will have to find \$3000 for the environmental education program.

But Gould's chief executive Ann Marie Colborne says the Wizz is a vital investment and that talks are underway with

the Federal Government to help subsidise the cost of the program.

"If we teach the kids and let them become environmental leaders, their parents can learn from them and change their behaviour," Ms Colborne said.

"If you think about each school and community in the world, then this can be a community hub and ideal opportunity to have a green hub space."

The launch of the Wizz comes after a successful six month pilot program with selected schools in Canberra and Victoria plus others in the United States, Britain, Hong Kong, China and Singapore.

Plans are already underway to have the Wizz available on iPods and mobile phones within 12 months so students can "learn on the move". – AAP

