

MEDIA RELEASE

The Mallee Campus of the Sunraysia Institute of Tafe and the National Centre for Sustainability hosted two very successful 'Alternative Fuels - Biodiesel Workshops' recently, engaging two experts from the University of Western Australia.

“Over fifty people from the region and beyond attended the workshops, held at the Mallee Research Station, Walpeup and the Swan Hill Campus, and gave very positive feedback on the content and presentations” said Jenny Grigg, Manager of the Mallee Campus.

Jonathon Thwaites and Professor Phillip Calais from the University of Western Australia, undertook a laboratory- type demonstration that gave participants a practical insight into the production process and how to blend and mix various substances including vegetable oil to safely create a sustainable fuel for use on farms, in road vehicles and in all manner of equipment. They were also shown a basic titration test for oil before the conversion to biodiesel to achieve a neutral PH in the final product.

Discussion was lively during the workshops and centred around aspects such as safety, environmental issues, vehicle conversion, storage, transport and licensing. Participants undertook an Occupational Health and Safety test at the end of the session to enhance their knowledge on how you may safely produce biodiesel for your own use.

Biodiesel, as one of several alternatives to traditional fuels, has been embroiled in politics with respect to excise tax. This complex topic was an opportunity for some to air their concerns about the levels of support for those who use considerable quantities of fuel in their farming and business operations.

“We are currently negotiating to have a small production plant called 'Biomaster' to be shipped over from Bioworks Pty Ltd in WA for a limited time for demonstration purposes at the Swan Hill Campus” said Ms Grigg. “This will offer people some follow up to the workshop and show how a small but worthwhile quantity of Biodiesel can be produced from new or waste vegetable oil.”

It is hoped to have the presenters back next year and also do some further training in the production and commercial application of this particular Biofuel.

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Several photo's of Swan Hill workshop following







