

Dramatic invitation to warming spectacle

BY GINA SMITH

19/08/2008 12:00:00 AM

These performers may look as though they're having a lot of fun, but their subject matter is deadly serious.

The brightly coloured characters represent carbon dioxide, methane, water vapour and nitrous oxide a dancing troupe of greenhouse gases.

In a production of *Weather or Not It's a Climate for Change*, held at the CSIRO Discovery Centre every day this week, the characters unravel the science behind our weather and the processes involved in climate change.

Characters such as a Poo-looter, Storm Front, and Ms Sou-wester take a light-hearted and energetic approach to environmental education.

But the message behind the performance is clear, as Pat Toohey, alias Muzbar the "intergalactic weather detector", says. "There's something we can all do to affect the weather over the next 10, 50 or 100 years whether we like it or not." With a cast ranging in age from eight to 17, the production gives young people a leading role in climate change education.

The theatre provides a novel means of communicating science that, according to director Sue Jones, "We don't use enough in the sciences." A scientist herself, Ms Jones should know. She began her career in biological sciences at James Cook University, Townsville, but grew dismayed when exciting discoveries in her field were not reaching the public arena.

Productions such as *Weather or Not* are an attempt to change this by creating a fun and engaging way of communicating current science.

"The basic aim of what I do is for children to get a real appreciation and understanding of the natural environment around them, so that they will care about it and will protect it in the future," Ms Jones says.

The theatre presents science "in a manner where the audience can see what is happening and be part of what is happening. It brings the science to them in a different way, and keeps them really involved."

Despite the heavy subject matter, the performance ends on a positive note.

"It gives the children a feeling that they can be a part of all of this. Yes, we've got problems, but there are things we can do."

The dramatic performance is based on a book of the same name by Australian author and environmental educator Caren Trafford. The performances continue daily through to this Sunday.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

Indigenous knowledge and science
Bring your lunch and watch three films about indigenous knowledge and science. Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 12.30-1pm, free.

CSIRO's national collections
This exhibition provides a glimpse of CSIRO's collections of plants, seeds, insects, soils, wildlife, fungi, wood and even air. CSIRO Discovery Centre, Gunter Road Street, Givvo, 9-5pm, free.

Australian Science Festival



MIS Asia

Bill Gates predicts software revolution



Former Microsoft Chief predicts touch and speech interaction with computers.

[more](#)

Also in MIS Asia

- [Asia's IT talent quest](#)
- [Unified communications to dominate by 2018](#)