



GETTING A GRIP: Climbing the rock-wall is a popular activity for visiting students at Outdoor School 15 Mile Creek.

PHOTO: Luke Plummer

'New' school reaching new heights

By **ALEX SCHLADETSCH**

STUDENTS from across the state are continuing to be the big winners from the transformation of the old 15 Mile Creek Camp into a fully-fledged school.

The revamped Myrrhee facility, now named Outdoor School 15 Mile Creek, is providing the Department of Education with one of its more alternative educational settings.

New and upgraded

buildings, as well as the appointment of 16 full-time staff as opposed to the previously single staff member, has helped to significantly increase patronage.

Owen Dixon, the leading teacher at the school, said the 15 Mile Creek Camp has been a part of the community for a long time, and for many it has been a magical place to explore the bush.

"We're not just a camp now, we're a school,

catering for children from prep to year 12," he said.

"Our curriculum includes teaching children about sustainability and nature through activities."

Mr Dixon said the aim is to develop an understanding of the relationship with the environment, and to inspire the students to work towards a sustainable world.

"If a group is learning about waterways, we'll take them on a kayak trip down a river, and we'll stop and show them the different

kinds of rocks in the water, or the different types of animals in the area," he said.

"We still paddle canoes and bushwalk and climb the rock-wall, but always within an educational focus."

With 300 acres of land to explore, it's easy to see why the school is so popular, especially to children from inner-city schools.

"We get kids coming in from Melbourne, and even Mildura," Mr Dixon said.

"It's a valuable asset to the people of the North East."