

# Landcare Link

Quarterly Newsletter of the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee  
April 2009

## Teachers focus on sustainability

Primary and secondary teachers converged on Toowoomba in March for three sustainability related professional development workshops. The sustainability science workshops were held at the Amaroo Environmental Education Centre (EEC) and featured presenters from the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC), Amaroo EEC, Natural Resources and Water (NRW) and the Queensland Museum. The workshops included activities on: water awareness, the by-products of landfill, biodiversity learning objects and the energy kits available through the Queensland Museum.



Searching for water bugs

The water awareness workshop included a tour of the Wetalla Water Treatment Plant with staff from Toowoomba Regional Council and an overview of the water purification process with NRW staff. The afternoon was spent at the Waterbird Habitat conducting practical monitoring activities to determine the health of the waterway. Teachers examined the riparian zone, sampled macro-invertebrates and conducted water quality tests with staff from the QMDC and Amaroo EEC. All three workshops were provided to teachers free of charge due to the support of the Southern Queensland Science Centre for Innovation and Professional Practice.

Below, and on page three, are a number of up-coming professional development workshops. If you have a group of teachers interested in a particular topic related to sustainability or natural resource management please contact QMDC ([pipb@qmdc.org.au](mailto:pipb@qmdc.org.au)) to discuss the possibility of running a local workshop.

## Professional development opportunities

### Digital Property Planning Workshop

**Date:** 7 May 2009 (1-3pm)

**Venue:** Toowoomba State High School, Mt Lofty Campus - C22 Computer Lab

**Program:** This workshop will support teachers to use geographic information systems (GIS) in an agricultural science context. The workshop will be facilitated by QMDC GIS officers and will provide an introduction to GIS, including manipulating existing projects, identifying and labeling features and creating shapes and lines. All participants will receive a detailed workbook. There is **no cost to attend** and a **\$100 TRS** support will be supplied by the Southern Queensland SCIPP to Education Queensland participants. Contact Kay Lembo at [klemb1@eq.edu.au](mailto:klemb1@eq.edu.au) to register.

### Plant Propagation Workshop

**Date:** Monday, 18th May (3.30-5.30pm)

**Venue:** Goondiwindi Botanical Gardens, Goondiwindi

**Program:** Looking for ways to source plants for your school or an interesting practical activity to support your Australian studies or plant-based science units? This **free workshop** will cover the basics of plant propagation in the school setting. Topics to be covered include: native plant propagation from cuttings and seeds; seed collection; planting techniques and care of plants once established. Afternoon tea will be supplied. Contact Kay Lembo at [klemb1@eq.edu.au](mailto:klemb1@eq.edu.au) to register.





## Educational Programs

### Property Planning 2009

The 2009 Property Planning program for Agriculture Science students will be held on Tuesday, 26 May on Googoorewon, a property near Allora on the Darling Downs. Students will have the opportunity to examine the property, looking at cultural heritage values, soil types, water issues, vegetation and biodiversity values and weed and pest issues under the guidance of technical staff. Teachers will be provided with a resource folder to guide students' prior learning. **To register** your class contact QMDC Education Officer Pippa Bagshaw on [pipb@qmdc.org.au](mailto:pipb@qmdc.org.au) or phone 07 4671 7900.



Students conducting water quality testing in 2008

### Special Forever

Special Forever is an environmental communications project for primary schools in the Murray-Darling Basin. It is an initiative of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and e:Lit (Primary English Teaching Association). The project aims to:

- involve students in becoming critically aware of their local environments, and of those across the Murray-Darling Basin;
- assist teachers in developing programs that enable students to communicate their understanding of environmental issues effectively; and
- produce and publish a range of student texts focusing on local environmental issues for a range of audiences.

Each year the project culminates with the publication of an anthology of students' writing and artwork and online multimedia texts. The 2008 anthology is entitled *The Places We Call Home*.

Schools can register and find out more visit [www.specialforever.org.au](http://www.specialforever.org.au).

#### Timeline:

- Term One – early Term Two: Schools register
- 19 June 2009: Schools submitted writing and artwork to Regional Coordinators.
- June – July: Regional panels select work for consideration for anthology
- 18 September: Multimedia texts submitted.
- August – October: Participation Certificates and Certificates of Merit finalised and distributed.
- November – December: Anthology published and distributed. Multimedia texts published on Special Forever website.

#### Queensland contacts:

Ross Brown, Amaroo Environmental Education Centre, phone: 07 4696 7140

Colleen Dunn, St George State School, phone: 07 4620 8333

Rosemerri Bladwell, Eulo State School, phone: 07 4655 4898

*By: Ross Brown, Principal Amaroo Environmental Education Centre*



## QMDC Education Officers

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### Murder Under the Microscope

Murder under the Microscope is an online program designed for students in Years five to ten and links to several curriculum areas. It is an eco-murder mystery in which students are presented with an environmental crime and must find the cause (villain), the effect (victim) and the specific environment (crime site). Registration via the website is now available. The cost of registration is \$66 per team. The 2009 program will start on April 29, 2009. More information is available on the website [www.microscope.edu.au](http://www.microscope.edu.au).





### Earthchild Institute

The Earthchild Institute aims to raise awareness and motivate youth and adults to adopt sustainable behaviour. The link below directs you to a teacher resource page providing links to a number of education for sustainable development websites. The focus of the links ranges from useful background information for teachers to interactive sites aimed at students.

<http://earthchildinstitute.com/>

### MDBA International River Health Conference

Students from all around Australia will converge on Canberra from the 18-20 October for the 2009 River Health Conference.

[www.onelifeoneworldourfuture.com/index.php?pageid=419](http://www.onelifeoneworldourfuture.com/index.php?pageid=419)



## Professional Development Opportunities cont.

### 16th Biennial Conference of the National Association of Agricultural Educators

**Date:** Sun 10th - Thurs 14th January, 2010

**Venue:** University of Queensland, Gatton Campus

**Program:** Delegates can look forward to a wide range of practical workshops and excursions. The keynote speaker will be Professor Barry McGaw, Chair of the National Curriculum Board.

#### Target Audience(s):

- Secondary teachers of Agriculture and Horticulture.
- Primary teachers who wish to use agricultural projects as a context for the teaching of Science and/or SOSE.
- Secondary teachers of Sciences and/or Humanities who wish to deliver their learning outcomes in the dynamic context of agriculture.
- Careers teachers/training providers who wish to learn more about employment opportunities in the Primary Industries sector.

For further information and to be added to the conference mailing list please contact Nigel Grant at [nigel.grant@scotspgc.qld.edu.au](mailto:nigel.grant@scotspgc.qld.edu.au)

### Biosecurity Workshops

The Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity (CRCNPB) is conducting plant biosecurity workshops for primary and middle school teachers in Toowoomba.

**Date:** Monday 6 April 2009

#### Program:

- Learn about plant biosecurity and why it is important.
- Participate in hands-on activities and investigations.
- Meet a plant biosecurity scientist and hear about their research.
- Take home free samples of CRCNPB resources, including examples from the upper primary unit Plant Pest Investigators.

Half a day TRS is available for participating teachers. To register for this workshop contact Melanie Hay by phone, 02 6201 2882 or email

[m.hay@crcplantbiosecurity.com.au](mailto:m.hay@crcplantbiosecurity.com.au)



## Awards and Competitions

### Schools First

Schools First is a national awards program aimed at bringing together students, teachers, parents and community members, to support each other and help improve student outcomes. The awards are open to all Australian primary and secondary schools. Schools First provides financial recognition of success in establishing effective school-community partnerships; and financial support to build stronger school-community partnerships. There are two categories of awards:

**The Impact Awards** are for those school-community partnerships that can demonstrate improved student outcomes as a result of their partnership.

**The Seed Funding Awards** are for those schools that are either in the process of setting up a partnership or in the early stages of the partnership and are seeking funding to help the partnership develop further.

Workshops are planned to provide community and school participants with practical guidance on how to create successful school and community partnerships and strengthen existing ones. The workshops will also provide more information about how Schools First works, the awards criteria, and the way the awards are structured. The only workshop in the region will be held in Toowoomba on Thursday, 28 May. To register and for more information visit [www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/cms-home/index.phps](http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/cms-home/index.phps)



## Awards and Competitions cont.

### Australian Museum—Eureka Prizes

Presented annually by the Australian Museum, the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes reward excellence in the fields of research & innovation, science leadership, school science and science journalism & communication. Students and teachers are eligible for various categories. Entries close on **1 May 2009**. For more information visit [www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka/](http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka/).

### Prime Minister's Prizes for Science

The Australian Government awards five prizes annually for outstanding scientific achievements and excellence in science teaching. Each award comprises a gold or silver engraved medallion, with matching lapel pins, and tax-exempt grants totaling \$500,000. Categories include prizes for excellence in science teaching in primary and secondary schools. Nominations are due **Friday, 8 May**. Further information can be viewed at [www.innovation.gov.au/scienceprizes](http://www.innovation.gov.au/scienceprizes) and inquiries emailed to [pmprize@innovation.gov.au](mailto:pmprize@innovation.gov.au).

### 2009 Peter Doherty Awards for Excellence in Science and Science Education

The Peter Doherty Awards recognise students, teachers, laboratory assistants and science education partners that demonstrate an outstanding and innovative contribution to science and science education in Queensland. A total of 25 awards in four categories, to the value of \$89 000 are available this year. Nominations close **29 May 2009**. For further information visit <http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/area/science/all-stars.html>

### 2009— International Year of Reconciliation

Celebrate Indigenous culture and build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by learning about Indigenous history and culture.

Reconciliation Australia's website provides useful information on the importance of all Australians building mutually respectful partnerships. Visit [www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au).

NAIDOC Week will be celebrated from 5-12 July in 2009. A list of resources and links are available at [www.ozprojects.edu.au/course/view.php?id=35](http://www.ozprojects.edu.au/course/view.php?id=35)



### Schools Tree Day

This year's Schools Tree Day will be held on Friday 31 July. Planet Ark is asking teachers who are looking for a way to make a positive environmental difference, to register as Site Coordinators. Tree planting can take place within your school grounds or approved public land. Site Coordinators are required to organise and supervise their registered tree-planting site. Planet Ark provides support to all registered Site Coordinators through its National Tree Day Hotline and website, where downloadable resources, a step-by-step guide to organising your tree-planting and lesson plans from the 'Get Growing!': Environmental Education Kit, are readily available. For more information visit <http://treeday.planetark.com/>

## Events Calendar

<b>April</b>	22 -	<b>World Earth Day</b> <a href="http://www.earthday.net">www.earthday.net</a>
<b>May</b>	3-9 -	<b>International Composting Awareness Week</b> <a href="http://www.compostweek.com.au">www.compostweek.com.au</a>
	22 -	<b>International Day for Biological Diversity</b> <a href="http://www.cbd.int/idb/">www.cbd.int/idb/</a>
<b>June</b>	5 -	<b>World Environment Day</b>
	8 -	<b>World Ocean Day</b> <a href="http://www.theoceanproject.org/wod/">www.theoceanproject.org/wod/</a>
<b>July</b>	4-7 -	<b>Conference of the Australian Science Teachers Association</b> <a href="http://www.cdesign.com.au/conasta58/">www.cdesign.com.au/conasta58/</a>
	5 - 12 -	<b>NAIDOC Week</b> <a href="http://www.naidoc.org.au">www.naidoc.org.au</a>
	31 -	<b>National Schools Tree Day</b> <a href="http://treeday.planetark.com/">http://treeday.planetark.com/</a>





## Grants and Funding Opportunities

### National Science Week 2009

National Science Week is on the 15 - 23 August. Funding is available through the Science Teachers Association of Queensland (STAQ) to help Queensland schools celebrate science. A total of \$8300 is available through STAQ to all teachers in Queensland in the form of grants valued between \$100 and \$500 to complement school-based science activities for students in schools during National Science Week. Closing date for applications is **Friday, 5 June 2009**. For more information contact Susan Kennedy Smith, STAQ National Science Week Representative, skenn15@eq.edu.au.

### Junior Landcare grants

**Coles Junior Landcare School Garden Grant** - Schools and youth groups can apply for grants of up to \$1000 (ex GST) to create gardens in their school or community such as bush tucker gardens, waterwise gardens or vegetable gardens.

**Yates Environmental Management Planning Grant** - Schools and youth groups can apply for grants of up to \$1000 (ex GST) to undertake School Environmental Management Plans (SEMP) or to undertake works identified in an earlier SEMP. Closing dates for 2009:

Round 2: Friday, 15 May

Round 3: Friday, 7 August

Round 4: Friday, 23 October

To download application forms and for more information visit

[www.landcareonline.com/funding\\_opportunity\\_details.asp?fo\\_id=6](http://www.landcareonline.com/funding_opportunity_details.asp?fo_id=6).

### BP Grants for Schools Qld 2009

BP Australia is able to offer Queensland Secondary Schools the opportunity to apply for an education grant. Up to \$2500 is available for projects which enhance student learning by broadening their perspectives beyond the traditional classroom environment.

Categories for projects are Science and Technology, Environmental Issues, Energy and Engineering. Applications close **Friday 17th April**. For more information, go to [www.bp.com/sectiongenericarticle.do?categoryId=9028334&contentId=7051553](http://www.bp.com/sectiongenericarticle.do?categoryId=9028334&contentId=7051553).

### Landlearn

Landlearn is a Victorian statewide education program that aims to encourage studies of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management. The site includes free downloadable learning activities, reasonably priced curriculum resources (\$15) and information about careers in this field.

[www.landlearn.net.au](http://www.landlearn.net.au)

### Gickr—photos in motion

Gickr allows you to create animated images from photos. The software is free to use and is a useful tool to create slideshows, cartoons, or moving individual images. You may need to access this site from home as some school servers will block the site.

[www.gickr.com](http://www.gickr.com)

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## We want to hear from you!

**Have your students produced some artwork relating to a school sustainability project or have they composed an interesting short story or poem they would like to share?**

The *Landcare Link Newsletter* would love to feature inspirational pieces from students across the region.

We are also interested to receive information from teachers on the projects and learning activities being undertaken.

Students that contribute work will receive an encouragement prize for their efforts!

Send your contributions [pipb@qmdc.org.au](mailto:pipb@qmdc.org.au) today.

