

Landcare Link

Quarterly Newsletter of the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee
October 2010

Term Three was another busy term, and Term Four is shaping up to be much the same. The Darling Downs South West Region "Year of Environmental Sustainability" Symposium was held in the last week of the term in Toowoomba, and you can read more about that below. We are also on the look out for enthusiastic and motivated schools to sign up for the Earth Smart Science program in 2011. A special thanks to the 15 schools, from Wallangarra to Thargomindah and in-between, who worked so hard with such great results in the Earth Smart Science program this year. As the Year of Environmental Sustainability draws to a close, Sandy and I are looking forward to visiting most of the ESS south-west schools over the coming weeks.

Pippa and Sandy, Education Officers, QMDC

Earth Smart Science in 2011

We, along with Lee Reushle from Amaroo EEC, are on the look out for any motivated teachers or principals from State primary or P-10 schools to become involved in the Earth Smart Science program in 2011. There have been some fantastic outcomes in school sustainability this year with great student engagement and access to numerous different professional development opportunities for teachers, both online and face-to-face.

Not only will your school save money on energy and water bills, there is also access to great resources and experts in the field, as well as support through school visits and online tools. There are also opportunities to engage with teachers in similar situations to you to share ideas and resources.

QMDC will hold online information sessions on Thursday, October 21 and Wednesday, November 3 from 3.30-4.30pm. Register to find out more about ESS, its benefits and opportunities. Please email Sandy at sandy@qmdc.org.au or Pip at pipb@qmdc.org.au for more information, or to register for the session.

To read more about the ESS program visit the [QMDC website](#) or go to the Queensland Sustainable Schools website at www.sustainableschools.qld.edu.au.

Darling Downs South West Region YES Symposium

Darling Downs and South West Region YES Symposium was held at Highfields State School on Monday, September 13. Students and staff from across the Darling Downs and South West Queensland attended the event, which included presentations from Waterwise, The Queensland Museum, QMDC and Bunnings.

The 2010 Green and Healthy Schools Awards were also presented at the symposium, with Dirranbandi State School taking out the "Greenest and Healthiest School" Award. Congratulations to Dirranbandi S.S. on their award. If you want to get involved in the Green and Healthy Schools program for 2011, go to the Keep Australia Beautiful [website](#).



*The way we
communicate
with others and
with ourselves
ultimately
determines the
quality of our
lives – Anthony
Robbins*





Habitat Investigation field day

More than 70 senior biology and geography students from across the Darling Downs participated in the first Habitat Investigation field day at Irongate Conservation Park near Pittsworth in August.

The field day, which was organised and run by staff from the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC), was held to give students the opportunity to develop skills in flora and fauna monitoring techniques. Students participated in activities that focussed on various monitoring techniques including the line transect, quadrat technique and the visual assessment technique.

QMDC Biodiversity and Pest Management Regional Coordinator Holly Hanlon said the field day was organised to provide students and teachers with experience in surveying and monitoring techniques.

“Having hands-on experiences is really important, and we were able to provide that in a number of different ways during the field day,” Ms Hanlon said. It was the first time the regional natural resource management organisation had held the Habitat Investigation event.



Students from Darling Downs Christian College with QMDC staff member, Holly Hanlon.

“We are really pleased with the outcomes of the day; the students were engaged and were involved in learning about a number of different techniques.

“It was also important for students to understand why we collect the flora and fauna data, and how it is used in vegetation and biodiversity management planning.”

Volunteers from the Pittsworth Landcare Group were also on hand to speak to the students about the history of the park and the plans they have for the future of Irongate Conservation Park.

The Habitat Investigation field day is aimed at Senior Biology and Geography students. Another field day is planned for 2011.

The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery — Mark van Doren, American writer and educator, 1894 - 1972

If you would like to see a professional development workshop delivered in your area or on a particular topic please let QMDC know.

The Learning Place—Curriculum exchange feature

“Reduce, reuse, recycle” is the feature resource on the [Learning Place Curriculum Exchange](#). This resource has information on recycling, what can and can’t be recycled, and what you can do at home, at school and in the office.

[The Curriculum Exchange Resource Centre](#) (login required) also has a lot of great resources to help you with your teaching around sustainable education. The “Fuelling our futures” unit is the feature resource on this page. This unit has been developed as part of the Solar and Energy Efficiency program for Queensland schools, and is an inquiry-learning unit that supports students to develop an understanding of energy and sustainability. It is a Year 6-7 resource.

Remember, all resources on the Learning Place have been approved for use in classrooms.



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Online Resources

Special Forever

Special Forever is a Water Education Project. Now in its 18th year, Special Forever is supported by a great website with access to information, resources, downloads and examples of student work.

How does *Special Forever* work?

- Information package sent to primary schools in the Murray-Darling Basin in February.
- Schools register their interest in participating.
- Regional Coordinators for the 21 regions across the Basin are selected and complete the professional development program.
- Teachers plan and implement a unit of work based around one of the project themes.
- Schools send up to 20 pieces of writing and 20 artworks produced as part of the *Special Forever* to their Regional Coordinator by the end of Term 2.
- Teachers can submit multimedia works produced by students as part of the *Special Forever* direct to e:lit for selection and publication on the website at any time.

Now is a good time to start thinking about getting involved in 2011, as information packs are sent to schools early in Term 1. To register, or for more information, please go to the [Special Forever](#) website.

Calling all backyard scientists, bird watchers and bushwalkers—help scientists address climate change

Earthwatch, a not-for-profit conservation organisation, is calling on all Australians to get their hands dirty by observing nature from their own backyard, local park or bushland and recording information online at www.climatewatch.org.au.

ClimateWatch is an Australia-wide initiative involving more than 80 different species from plants, to birds, frogs, mammals and reptiles. The species have been specifically chosen by scientists to bridge the information gap and better understand how climate change is affecting our natural environment.

Earthwatch Science Director Andy Donnelly said they looked for those subtle shifts in the timing of natural cycles across the country such as the falling of leaves or the migration of birds.

“There are lots of things that bushwalkers and birdwatchers notice in nature that never get recorded, so we are encouraging them and everybody else to take part,” he said.

“ClimateWatch is something everyone in Australia can get involved in whether it’s on the way to work, with a group of friends or in the backyard.”

To become a Climatewatcher register at www.climatewatch.org.au.

Operation Climate Change

Operation Climate Change is a Western Australian resource that provides integrated learning experiences for children in Years 5 to 10 to explore the issues of the ‘footprint’ of their community.

The Operations are structured learning experiences exploring Climate Change, Purchasing and Waste, Biodiversity, Transport and Air, Energy and Water. Each Operation has three missions integrated across subjects, provides critical thinking strategies and useful assessment tools to map understandings in key areas.

This is a relatively new online resource. Go to www.operationclimatechange.com.au for more information.

Learning



Through



Landcare





Funding Opportunities and Competitions

Junior Landcare grants

The closing date for this round of Junior Landcare grants is **October 22**. NB: There are *NO Coles grants* available this round, only Yates grants.

Schools and youth groups can apply for grants of up to \$1,000 (ex GST) to undertake School Environmental Management Plans (SEMP) or to undertake works identified in an earlier SEMP.

Funds from the Yates SEMP grant can be used to improve the school environment and encourage life-long learning for sustainability. Projects range from developing a SEMP for the school or identifying and protecting significant natural assets, to implementing actions from an existing SEMP – for example, carrying out energy, waste and water audits.

For more information, go to www.juniorlandcare.com.au/Grants.

Gambling Community Benefit Funds

One-off grants of up to \$35,000 are allocated to approved not-for-profit organisations to help them provide community services or activities that benefit the community. These grants are not intended to replace existing sources of support for these organisations. Grants of more than \$35,000 are considered for more complex applications which have significant community benefit.

Who can apply?

Applications must be from Queensland-based organisations. The majority of Queensland not-for-profit community organisations are eligible to apply for a grant, either in their own right (if incorporated) or through a sponsor (if not incorporated).

Funding Rounds

The GCBF has four annual funding rounds. The closing dates for the final 2010 round is **November 30**. **If your eligible application is not successful in the first funding round, it is automatically considered in the next funding round.**

For more information, go to www.olqr.qld.gov.au/grants/gcbf/index.shtml.

Gambling Community Benefit Fund — Solar Sport and Community Group grants

Solar sport and community group grants are available to eligible organisations through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund (GCBF). Eligible organisations can submit applications for both a solar sport and community group grant and a separate GCBF grant per funding round.

The next funding round will be open between September 13, 2010 and November 30, 2010. For more information go to www.olqr.qld.gov.au/grants/gcbf/solarSportAndCommunityGrants/index.shtml.

What's been happening around the region

Do you want to engage your students in fun, hands-on sustainable education activities?

There are a number of tools available through the QMDC library to help you to identify areas for energy savings.

Biodiversity kit

The biodiversity kit includes a microscope, magnifying glasses, nets, sorting and sampling accessories and identification information.

Poultry Resource Kit

This primary resource kit contains a teacher resource kit, DVD's, books and student worksheets to provide information about keeping chooks.

Bird Watching Kit

This kit includes four sets of binoculars and several bird books, including *Birds of the Darling Downs* and *Birds on Cotton Farms*.

Crows Nest S.S. launches Green Bag



Last year, students at Crows Nest S.S. identified a need to eliminate plastic bags from their township. After writing letters, designing a logo and negotiating with local businesses, generous sponsorship was provided by their local Crows Nest Community Heritage Branch. This year's students, The Green Team, have continued the project, and sales of Crows Nest's very own bag started in early September.

Their catch cry in all advertising is 'Make our town plastic bag free!' This is an excellent example of how community and schools can work together to improve environmental sustainability.

Wallangarra S.S. Sustainability Week

Wallangarra S.S. held a Sustainability Week in the second last week of Term 3. The week involved students participating in hands-on activities around sustainability, including paper-making, tree-planting, wormfarming and gardening. The week culminated with a Sustainability Celebration on the Friday.



Ballandean S.S. Water Quality Monitoring

Students from Ballandean S.S. have been working with Stanthorpe Landcare Coordinator Harley West to monitor the quality of the water in Severn River. Harley has been teaching both students and teachers how to use the water quality kits, so the students now know how to measure and record turbidity, electrical conductivity (EC), pH and temperature. They will continue to monitor the water at the same site every three months.

Yelarbon S.S. Sustainability projects

As part of their sustainable project at school, the students at Yelarbon S.S. have been working towards building a chook house. The students won some money in the annual Waggamba Landcare Schools Competition earlier this year so put some of that money towards buying the materials needed for the chook pen. Helpful teachers, parents and community members then lent a hand to build the pen. The students have also built a veggie garden, made paper bricks and have a worm farm up and running.
















Dirranbandi S.S. Outdoor Environmental Learning Area

Dirranbandi P-10 were lucky enough to get funding in 2009 through the Coles Landcare grant and have been working hard on building an Outdoor Environmental Learning Area since then. The school now has an enclosed area that houses some raised garden beds, compost bins, an orchard and a shed to store materials. Students will grow fruit and vegetables and cook with them in their kitchen. Students will also be using the outdoor learning area to learn about the most efficient ways to water their garden beds.

Events Calendar



October	Energy Awareness Month 
	International Walk to School Month 
1 October	Walk to Work Day  (Pedestrian Council of Australia)
3 October	World Habitat Day 
5 October	World Teacher's Day
10 October	International day for Disaster Reduction 
12 October	Arbor Day  (Southern Regions) BCC 
October 17	International Day of Eradication of Poverty 
TBA	YES State Symposium - includes Case Studies, Principal Champion report, Bunya to Bay, Young Ambassadors, Earth Charter Celebrations, Challenges showcase and extension activities etc
19-25 October	National Water Week 
24 October	United Nations Day  and World Development Information Day
6 November	International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict 
10 November	World Science day for Peace and Development  (UNESCO)
21 November	World Fisheries Day 
5 December	International Volunteer Day

We want to hear from you!

Have your students produced some artwork relating to a school sustainability project or have they composed a 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 to sandyr@qmdc.org.au or pipb@qmdc.org.au today.



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