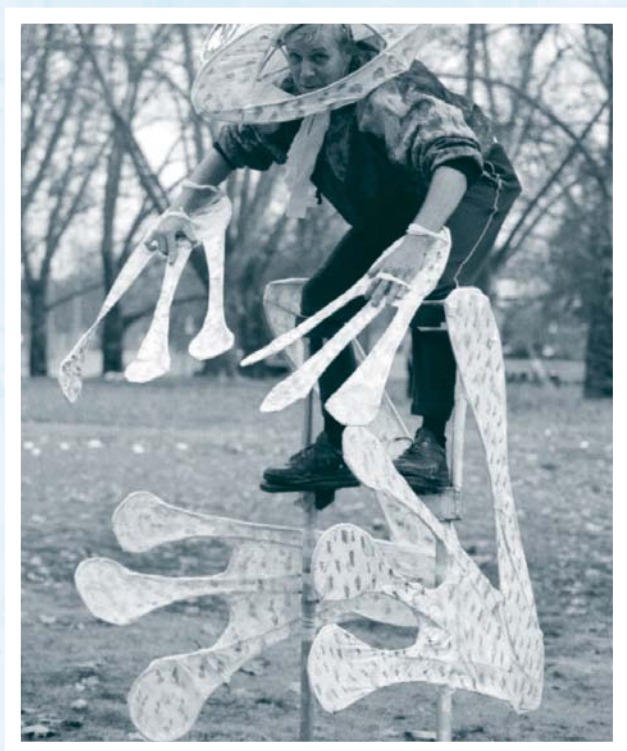


# Enchanted River Festival



**Clockwise from top left**  
A fire drawing lights up the night. A luminous giant frog features during the lantern festival. Lady dragon fly on stilts. No one could miss this larger-than-life amphibian!

**Creative designer Annie Edney says 'Part of the aims of Enchanted River is to invigorate the community feelings about the Murray River so that people will be inspired to become involved in a hands on way with helping to protect the river, and nurture her back to health - where possible.'**

Photos courtesy of Enchanted River Festival Steering Committee.

**W**hen artist Annie Edney invited North East Waterwatch Coordinator Toni Costello to become involved in the 'Enchanted River' Festival, they didn't know it would be the beginning of a valuable partnership in environmental education.

'Enchanted River' is an annual community celebration of the Murray River incorporating arts, education, environment, local government and community. It is an opportunity for the diverse local community to celebrate the life, beauty and shared identity of the Murray River environment. The Festival, directed by local Annie Edney, involves many young people from the Albury/Wodonga border region including students from local primary and secondary schools and other community groups.

The Enchanted River Festival program includes a series of community workshops with professional artists and river scientists including catchment and river education, song writing, community singing, lantern making, sculpture, fire art, physical theatre, circus and dance.

Leading up to the Festival, hundreds of students involved in the Waterwatch program are introduced to live river creatures including yabbies, river crays and macroinvertebrates. The Waterwatch coordinators also showcase the 'Enchanted River' education kit on CD Rom, that has a great story about the adventures of river creatures with fantastic photos and lots of information about the river habitat and water quality.

All of the participating groups learn skills to create artwork or a performance for a magical lantern procession and spectacular outdoor theatre event in front of a huge audience each June.

Toni Costello, North East Regional Waterwatch Coordinator believes 'Enchanted River is very beneficial to our regional community. We all have great concerns for the health of the Murray River and catchments, and this partnering of environmental groups, local councils, community health, the arts and the broader community is seen as a very strong progressive move towards a better understanding of the issues at hand. It will also lead to a more harmonious engagement of and improved relations between diverse groups in our community'.