

**Partners/Sponsors** Natural Heritage Trust,  
Department of Sustainability and Environment-River Health Program.

**Monitoring Groups/Site Information**  
1809 Groups, 12,126 participants, 2583 sites

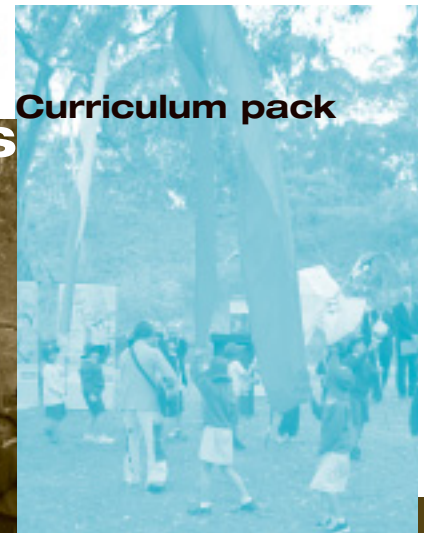
**Coordinators**  
Jane Ryan, Paul Puhar, John McCoy,  
Toni Domaschenz, Sara Johnson, Celeste Hevey

What did they look like in our grandparent's time?  
How healthy do our rivers look today?  
**Statewide**  
How have our rivers changed?  
How healthy are they?  
How healthy will they be?  
How will our rivers look in the future?

Waterwatch is a national community water quality monitoring program. The Victorian program has a dual purpose, it aims to educate Victorian communities to the value of our water resources whilst generating water quality data which is used, credible and accepted amongst natural resource management agencies.



Viewbank Primary School students bring a Sacred Ibis puppet to life.



Curriculum pack

Viewbank Primary School students perform for Minister Thwaites.

## River Reflections

**C**oinciding with Waterwatch Victoria's 10 year birthday celebrations was the "International Year of Fresh water" declaration by the United Nations. Recent hardships faced by Victorians with water shortages challenge communities to change for a sustainable future. Driving community change is education programs like Waterwatch. Each year the Victorian Waterwatch program produces a schools curriculum pack. Curriculum packs provide educators with a vehicle to extend learning beyond the initial contact with students, where the intention is to bring about a change in people's perceptions, attitudes and lifestyles. In 2003 it was "River Reflections".

River reflections was designed to offer educators a resource that delves deeply into the way communities are connected to their waterways. Teachers and students through the use of the kit are transported into a past, present and future theme that explores historical connections, river health assessments and an important question, How do we want our rivers to be in the future?

Launching the curriculum pack in March 2003 was the Minister for Water, the Honourable John Thwaites. Assisting the Minister were delegates from Department of Sustainability and Environment, Catchment and Water Services, Adrian Spall and Victorian Catchment Management Council's Christine

Foster. Students from the local Viewbank Primary School presented the Minister and distinguished guests a carnival atmosphere designed to celebrate the richness of our River assets in Victoria.

River Reflection kits were well received with over 400 primary and secondary schools formally registering to take up the curriculum pack and more than ten times that figure taking up the education kit from a wide variety of natural resource management agencies. Schools and community groups participating in the River reflection activities were given the opportunity to share their ideas, memories and reflections through the production of a River Reflections yearbook, published in November 2003.

"Imagery was really powerful... students were really engaged, generally a really good resource for teachers..."  
Marion Vorwerk, Mildura West PS.

"Once we received the kit it was clear a lot of thought went into the development."  
Helen Barton, Jeparit PS.

"My first impressions were positive, this is exactly what I needed, I received my copy by 11 am and was already using it in class by Noon. I liked the way the resource was integrated across all Key Learning Area's (KLA)...all in all a very creative kit."  
Leonie Anglim, Hughesdale PS.