



Monitoring Information
 21 groups, 156 participants, 29 sites
Education Participation 7 883 participants
Coordinator FTE 2.4
Program Budget \$235 000

Waterwatch Coordinators



Carolyn Humby



Jessica Aiken



Toni Costello



Bruce Birrell



A student completes her tree-planting activity at the SEED event.

Sowing and growing together

By sowing a School Environmental Education Day (SEED) in Victoria's North East, a strong partnership has grown between a school community and catchment managers, and provided the catalyst for a new regional resource.



What's in the net? Waterwatch Coordinator Carolyn Humby samples macro-invertebrates from Lake Sambell, Beechworth.



Performers from Vox Bandicoot show that sustainability education can be fun!



SEED was given the thumbs up by this group of students.

This Waterwatch-initiated event in Beechworth provided a hands-on, fun event to engage and inform over 140 students, teachers and parents on a range of local environmental issues. SEED highlighted how to live sustainably by showing how people's actions connect them with their local environment.

Interactive activities supported four main environmental themes – our Water, our Waste, our Biodiversity and our Atmosphere. Community and catchment management groups including Green Corp, the Lions Club, Waterwatch, NeverWaste, North East Greenhouse Alliance, the Indigo Shire Council and performance troop Vox Bandicoot helped to reiterate the message 'Think globally, Act locally'.

"The event was a great example of community learning together to care for our environment" reflected St Joseph's Primary School teacher Maureen Flanagan. "I felt the activities were engaging – your message certainly reinforced what we have been doing at school... Many parents could tell me how talkative their child was about the day... I am sure they will appreciate Lake Sambell more because of the experience. Congratulations to you all!".

Natural resource management partners have continued to consult and exchange education ideas following the positive school and community response to SEED. A regionally-specific education package has since been funded to provide a holistic approach to sustainability education, and value-add to existing programs such as Waterwatch. It is hoped that the package will not only enhance these partnerships but also sow the SEED for bigger and better regional educational outcomes in the future.

Waterwatch Objective 4:

Establish and maintain effective partnerships between the community and catchment managers



National Water Week was a great opportunity to shine the light on catchment management themes and messages.

Catchment health messages 'took to the road' as part of National Water Week – first stop, Bandiana. Waterwatch joined Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre, Wodonga TAFE (Horticulture Division) and various other natural resource management staff to deliver an environmental road show for over 500 youth in the Albury-Wodonga area. The event aimed to increase awareness and understanding of local water quality by demonstrating ways to monitor and improve catchment and stream health.

Waterwatch Objective 1:

Increase community awareness, understanding and ownership of water issues and their relationship to catchment health

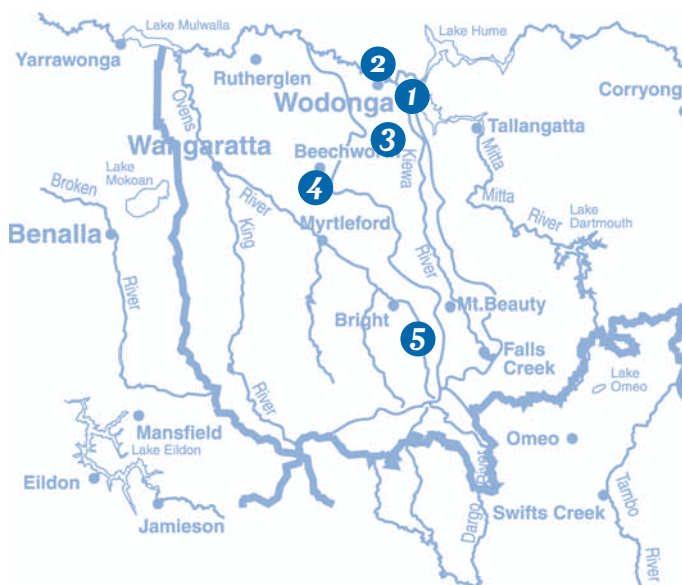


A local community group is helping to manage Wodonga's Willow Park wetland and creek.

Through monitoring and caring for a stormwater treatment wetland and the nearby creek, 'Friends of Willow Park' have developed a strong connection with the City of Wodonga. Observations and water quality data has been gathered since December 2006. Results are regularly forwarded to council staff to help assess if the stormwater system is functioning effectively, and inform recommendations for the management of the area.

Waterwatch Objective 2:

Involve communities monitoring their local waterways to collect and provide data which is credible, accepted and used



Waterwatch provides action learning opportunities for students outside of the classroom.



Students at Harrietteville Primary School work together to understand and improve local water quality.

Waterwatch Objective 5:

Provide school learning opportunities and be an integral part of the curriculum

Woody weed removal, water quality monitoring, track construction and wetland planting were all part of the 'Restoration of the Yackandandah Parklands' project, the 15th Green Corp initiative for the Indigo Shire. Waterwatch monitoring of the Yack Creek tributary in Isaacs Park, Yackandandah, not only provided a baseline dataset for evaluating future site improvement, it also instilled a greater sense of purpose and motivation for the works crew - "My favourite part of the program was checking out the aquatic life in the water – I couldn't believe it!"

Waterwatch Objective 3:

Increase community involvement in water management decisions and gain community commitment to action in addressing waterway and catchment issues



Indigo Shire's Green Corp crew survey macro-invertebrates at a restoration site.

Other outstanding highlights and achievements

Facilitator Bruce Birrell celebrated 8 years with Waterwatch.

North East Waterwatch played a key role in the development of the North East Sustainable Schools project.

Partners/Sponsors Natural Heritage Trust, North East Catchment Management Authority, Department of Primary Industries, Environmental Protection Authority, Indigo Shire, Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre, North East Victorian Regional Waste Management Group, North East Greenhouse Alliance, North East Water, Rural City of Wangaratta, Wonga Wetlands.

Photos courtesy of North East Waterwatch and North East Catchment Management Authority.