



# Education program 2020 highlights

How did the education program fare throughout the intrepid year that was 2020? Find out as we celebrate the highlights and good news stories.



# Education program highlights

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# Young Environmental Leaders YEL program



Overall, **33** schools and **154** students registered for YEL this year.

**70** students from **12** schools attended the first YEL forum held in Berri in March 2020 and were able to spend time connecting to nature and learning about mindfulness. Soon after this event the YEL format changed.

For the remainder of the year, our dedicated YEL schools were able to access content through Microsoft teams, Youtube and via email to hold their own YEL forums at school.

**Sustainable farming**, with a focus on diversifying food crops, was the topic for term two and students learned about natural resources, sustainable farm practices and breeding crickets!

Term three and four topics of **biodiversity** and **water** were combined and YEL students were able to learn all about our local River Murray turtle species, their cultural importance and how we can all play a part to look after turtles.

Video content and online access proved to be an effective way to deliver this program.

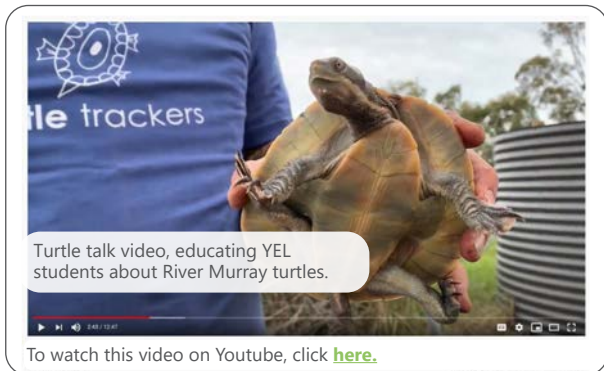


YEL students learning about indigenous culture at the term one forum in Berri.



What is sustainable farming?  
Youtube video for term two forum  
featuring Zoe Starkey, Regional  
Agriculture Landcare Facilitator.

To watch this video on Youtube, click [here](#).



Turtle talk video, educating YEL  
students about River Murray turtles.

To watch this video on Youtube, click [here](#).



Ramco PS students trying edible  
chocolate crickets.





# River Murray Youth Council RMYC program



18 passionate students from across the Murraylands and Riverland actively participated in the RMYC program this year.

Information sessions in March 2020 included learning about fish, frogs and turtles at Martin Bend wetland in Berri and designing **fish habitat** to install in the Swanport wetlands in Murray Bridge.

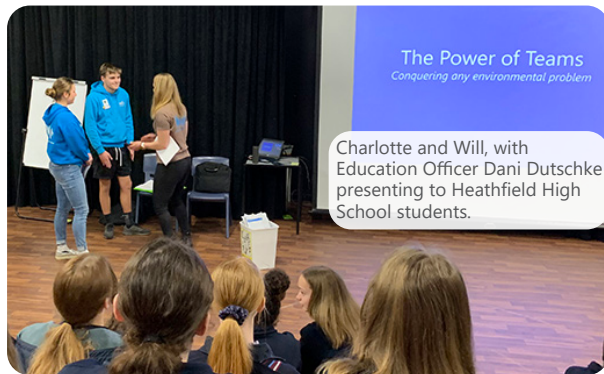
COVID-19 restrictions did not stop the students from connecting with regular meetings held on Microsoft Teams. Students chose topics of interest and guest speakers joined the group

each fortnight. Meetings also included a regular spot for Ian "Wally" Walton to inspire and teach about **leadership and team work**.

Students shared what they had been learning at school, during VET programs and how they choose to **volunteer** during the school holidays.

In July, two RMYC students made an impactful presentation to peers at Heathfield High School about the power of working as a team.

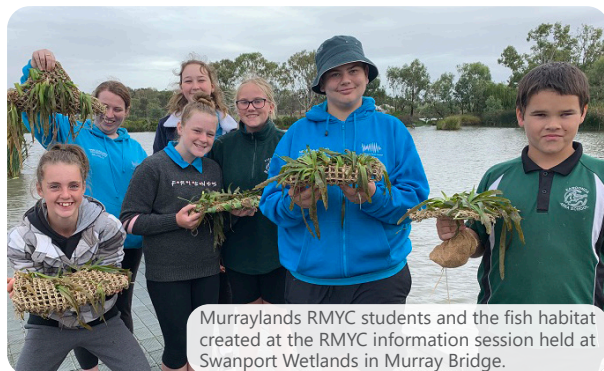
To end the year on a high, both groups joined at Monarto Safari Park with leadership activities and a bus tour of the park.



Charlotte and Will, with Education Officer Dani Dutschke presenting to Heathfield High School students.



Courtney Monk, Wetland Ecologist, speaks to Riverland RMYC students as part of the RMYC information session held at Martin Bend in Berri.



Murraylands RMYC students and the fish habitat created at the RMYC information session held at Swanport Wetlands in Murray Bridge.



RMYC students attended an end of year trip to Monarto Safari Park which included leadership and team activities, preparing native animal enclosures and a tour of the park.





# Precious plants for precious people



More than **400** precious plants (silver daisy) were given as gifts across the region in an effort to educate about our **threatened species** and to coincide with Mother's Day.

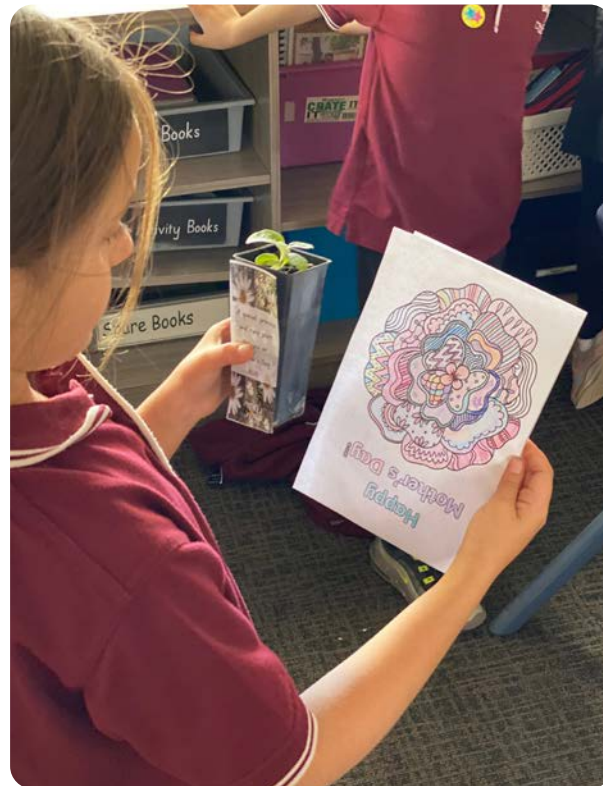
The education team worked closely with staff from the Sustainable Landscapes team to develop and share online resources including two videos, mother's day card, gift wrap and instructions.

Participating schools collected their precious plants from a local 'pick up' station and the materials were taken back to school or sent home for students to utilise and prepare.

Dani Dutschke was interviewed on Hills radio about the ever-popular program and how it sparked joy in the children to be able to give their loved one such a precious plant.

To watch the video about the precious plants program click [here](#).

To watch the video about how to plant a precious plant seedling click [here](#).





# Exploring art and science local reptiles



Approximately **180** students from across the Riverland were treated to hands-on presentations with live reptiles as part of the Art and Science events for **National Science Week** in August 2020.

The two day event was a great **collaboration** between: Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Education Team, Riverland West Landcare, Charles Tambiah – artist and scientist, Liz and Clint Frankel – local artists, Chaffey Theatre Renmark, Waikerie Primary School and Animals Anonymous.

The Art & Science activities were designed to give students the opportunity to get up close to and learn about **local reptile species** (both live animals and hand-made models), creating opportunity to develop skills and experience while studying reptiles and taking great photographs. The hands-on art activity encouraged to use their knowledge to make their own reptiles.





# School holiday activities

# fungi foray



The usual fungi foray in the forest was not able to be held this year but the Education team worked closely with the Landscape Resilience team to make sure families could still learn about and get out to search for **important fungi species**.

The teams developed and shared materials online to equip families to undertake their own fun and safe fungi adventure with opportunities to contribute to **citizen science** as well.

Four educational videos were developed, uploaded and shared to the **community**.

**100 fungi kits** were given to families who signed up to take part. Each kit contained the find our fungi book, fungimap mirror and magnifying glass - everything needed to go exploring and learning about our fabulous fungi.

To view the four fungi videos click [here](#).





# Water management 3D wetland model



The theme for term four was **water** and lots of local schools had been learning about **water management**, locks and weirs.

So with that in mind, it was the perfect time to tour the 3D Water Management model which was commissioned by the DEW Water Infrastructure and Operations team in 2019.

Karen Bishop (Riverland West Landcare) hosted more than **80** students from across the Riverland. The education sessions included the model and an activity where students

designed their own **river and wetlands** and had a chance to manage the water flowing through their designs.

These sessions have added value to the learning already happening at school and have been a great way to illustrate to the students exactly how **water in the river and its wetlands** are managed.





# Education sessions and other support



Throughout 2020 more than **930** students from **33** different schools across the Murraylands and Riverland region have benefited from an education session delivered by or facilitated by our team.

Sessions are delivered either in school or as part of an excursion. Topics included **frogs, soils, reptiles, fish, water quality, pest plants and animals, macroinvertebrates** just to name a few.

**76.6%** of schools (primary and secondary school sites) from across the entire region have communicated with, received support from or worked directly with the Education team this year.

**66** teachers from across the region have been supported by the team to access information, resources, guest speakers and activities on a wide range of subjects including **citizen science, cultural values and importance, sustainable farming, landforms and geography, native animals, pest plants and animals, sustainability** and so much more.

The Education team supports and partners with many **community volunteer groups, Local Action Planning groups** and **Landcare groups** to provide opportunities for community members.

The team provide support to assist community to learn about and participate in hands-on activities and **increasing knowledge** and **awareness** of local issues and projects.

**Resource loan kits** containing equipment (water and soil testing), animal models, fact sheets, hands-on activities and teaching resources were borrowed by schools and the community **46** times.

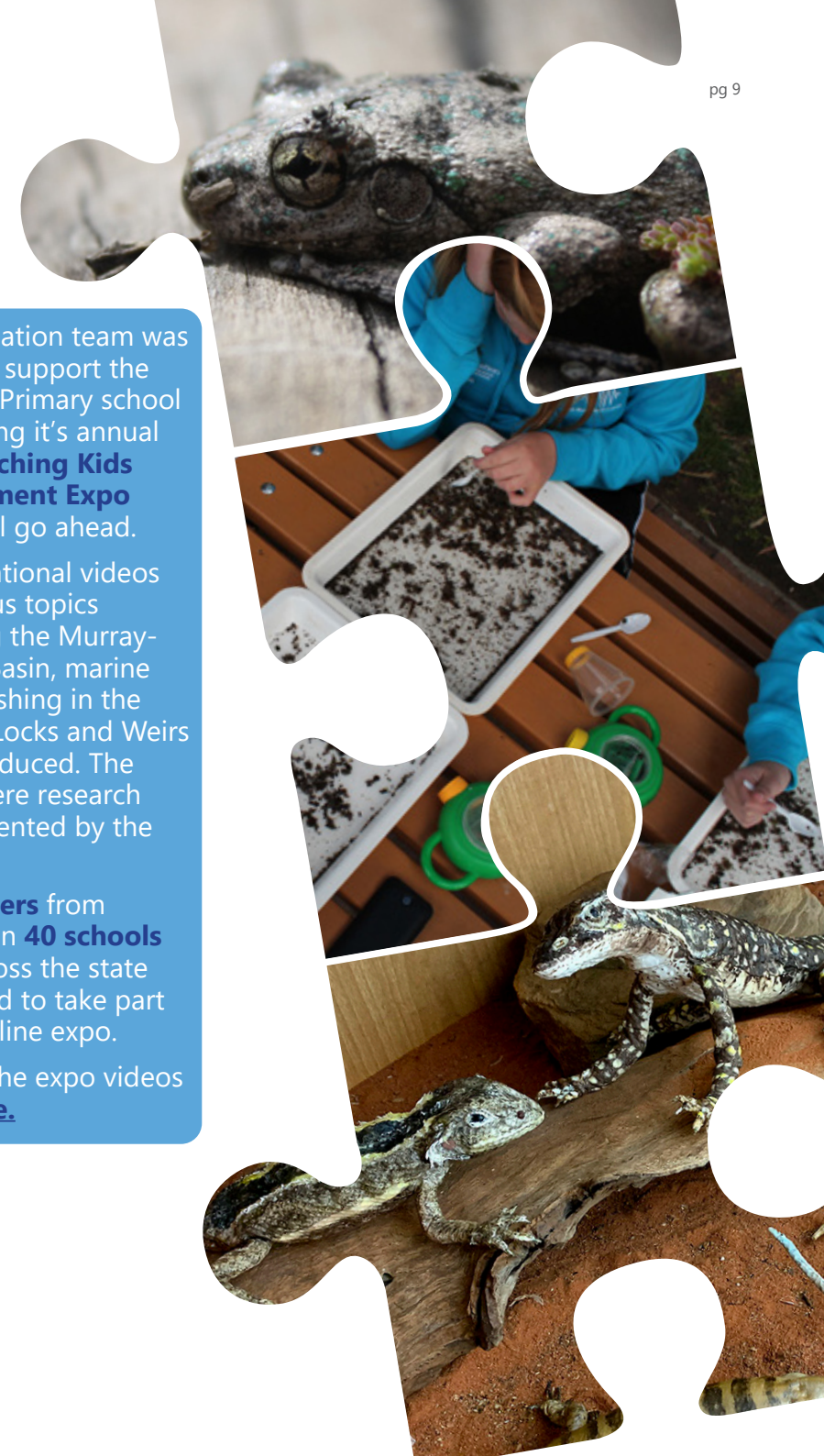
These kits create a great hands-on learning experience and add value to topics at school or to community events.

The Education team was proud to support the Barmera Primary school in ensuring it's annual **Kids Teaching Kids Environment Expo** could still go ahead.

**14** educational videos on various topics including the Murray-Darling Basin, marine turtles, fishing in the Murray, Locks and Weirs were produced. The topics were research and presented by the students.

**63** teachers from more than **40** schools from across the state registered to take part in the online expo.

To view the expo videos click [here](#).





For more information about the  
Education program contact:

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