



2026

Young

Environmental

Leaders (YEL)

Everything you need to know about the Murraylands and Riverland YEL program for students in year 5-6.



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Overview

The Young Environmental Leaders program is **free*** and open to students in **years 5 and 6**, providing them with unique opportunities to learn about, connect with, and respect their local environment.

Students participate in hands-on activities and projects, while also learning and practicing skills in leadership, communication and public speaking. All of these experiences will assist them in developing as leaders in their school community.

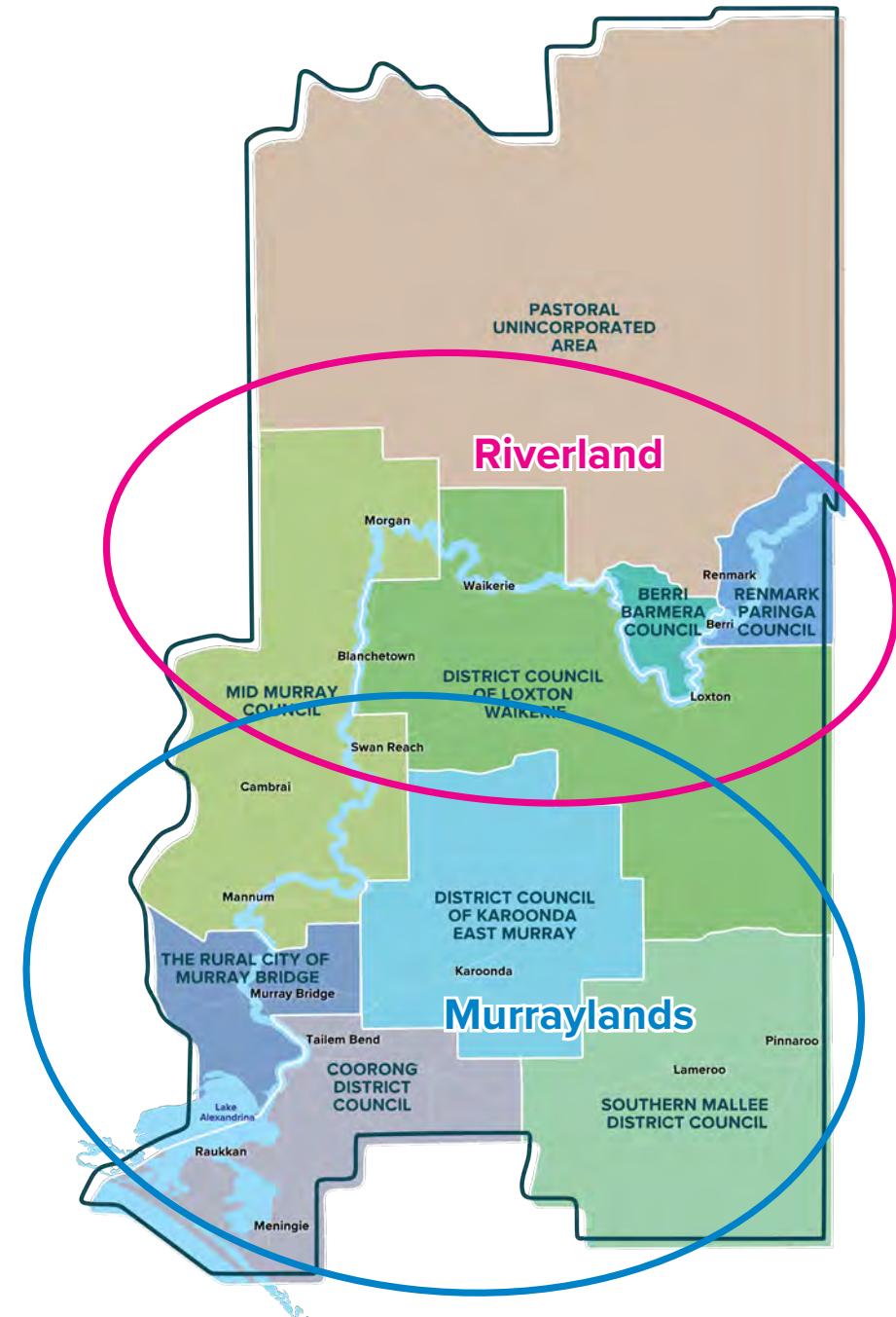
In 2026, forums will be held each term in the Murraylands and Riverland areas.

Not sure what area you are in? Refer to the map.

Locations change each term to spread the love across the region, and you're most welcome to attend any of the forums if the location and topic better suit your school.

Schools outside the Murraylands and Riverland region are also welcome to be part of YEL, with the understanding that the forums will always be held within our region and schools are responsible for travel arrangements to and from YEL events.

**YEL forums and all activities associated with the program are free. Schools are responsible for transport/travel to and from forums and for any cost associated with release of teachers. Schools in the Murraylands and Riverland region are eligible to apply for funding through the [Grassroots Grants program](#). This funding (subject to approval) may be used to assist in participation of the YEL program including travel costs and TRT.*



Overview

What's the aim?

Empower young people by fostering a strong connection with nature and their local landscapes, ensuring they can appreciate it into the future.

Our goal is to involve as many local schools as possible, providing students with opportunities to develop as young leaders.

We believe in the 'ripple effect,' where students learn through hands-on activities and then share their experiences back at school and with the wider school community.

Additionally, we encourage students to actively participate and take positive actions within their local environment, community, and at home.

Empowering
Take action

Need to know:

Forums are open to all Murraylands and Riverland schools, catering to students in years 5-6.

Each forum is hosted in a different location across the region, requiring some travel.

Schools are encouraged to bring 4 students to each forum, ensuring suitable group numbers. Different students can attend each forum.

If you wish to bring more than 4 attendees, such as members of your environment group, please arrange this with your local [Education Officer](#).

Students can be accompanied by a teacher, SSO, or parent volunteers, as arranged by the school. Transport to and from forums is the responsibility of the school.

Schools are required to register online for each forum to secure places.

**Represent
your school**
Great locations

What's involved?

Schools are invited to attend as many forums as possible, although there is no requirement to attend all. Each school group must be accompanied by at least one adult, such as a teacher, SSO, mentor, or parent, to supervise students and assist with learning and activities.

The forums run from 10 am to 2 pm and revolve around various environmental or agricultural/horticultural themes. These sessions include hands-on activities and personal skills development for all participants.

Please remember to bring morning tea and lunch to each forum. The Education team provides tea and coffee for teachers/adults and water for refilling bottles.

Attending teachers will have access to valuable resources and will receive professional development certificates.

1 forum per term
10 am - 2 pm
PD certificates

Benefits

The YEL program provides many benefits to the students, teachers and mentors, allowing them to:

Students:

- Develop a connection to the natural environment, resulting in healthier, happier kids who are more mindful of their surroundings.
- Build confidence and skills in leadership, public speaking, peer teaching, and more.
- Establish friendships and exchanging ideas with students from other schools.
- Gain knowledge and skills in caring for and conserving local landscapes.
- Feel inspired and empowered to take action and make positive changes in their local community and at home.
- Exposure to a wide range of environmental and agricultural career pathways.
- Be rewarded for their efforts in learning and sharing throughout the year.

Teachers/mentors:

- Receive information for lessons, resources, activities, and curriculum links to utilise and share at school.
- Network with and learn from other teachers and professionals.

- Develop knowledge and skills in caring for and conserving local landscapes.
- Gain professional development recognition for the forums they attend.
- Learn about local ecologically significant sites across the region

Schools and community:

- Direct links to the curriculum. This is learning in authentic context.
- Develop relationships with community members, partnership schools, outside organisations and the Education program.
- YEL students pass on knowledge and skills to peers, teachers, friends and family members.
- Enhance student leadership and participation in community events and activities.
- Contribute to improved sustainability due to student-led projects e.g. improved biodiversity or waste reduction.
- Receive in-school support for learning and on-ground projects from Education Officers where possible.



Curriculum

The information and activities presented at YEL forums link to various curriculum subject areas including science, HASS, geography, health and physical education, and even maths.

YEL activities tie in well with science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). Environmental issues, often complex, require innovative solutions. The Education team encourages hands-on practical activities that enable learners to experiment, use new technologies, test ideas, and create innovative solutions to real problems.

The YEL Program supports students to become curious about their local landscapes, helping to develop environmentally responsible leaders.

In both STEM and sustainability, relationships with local industries and communities play a crucial role in teacher and student learning. YEL contributes to the development of these relationships through expert guest speakers and linking with existing projects.



Links with the Australian Curriculum (v9) for years 5/6

Year 5 geography [AC9HS5K04, AC9HS5K05](#)

Year 5 science [AC9S5U01](#)

Year 6 science [AC9S6U01](#)

Links to general capabilities

Literacy skills are developed by students presenting ideas and opinions, through sharing their learning back at school and within their wider community.

Critical and creative thinking is developed when students consider environmental issues and propose and investigate solutions.

Personal and social capability is developed through interacting with students from different schools, working in teams, and developing leadership skills.

Ethical understanding is developed by students engaging and discussing the ethical values of environmental issues such as climate change and sustainable living.

Cross-curriculum priorities - sustainability

YEL helps students to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living.

Students focus on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action.

Forum dates

In 2026, YEL forums will be held each term in the Murraylands and Riverland areas.

Information about locations and topics, along with the registration link, will be emailed to schools at least 3 weeks prior to each forum. To secure places, schools need to register their YEL group for each forum.

Schools are encouraged to attend as many forums as possible throughout the year.



Term 1

Murraylands:

Week 8

Thursday 19 March

10 am - 2 pm

Topic: Precious Plants and Pollinators

Location TBA

Riverland:

Week 9

Wednesday 25 March

10 am - 2 pm

Topic: Precious Plants and Pollinators

Location: TBA

Term 2

Murraylands:

Week 8

TBA

Riverland:

Week 9

Wednesday 24 June

10 am - 2 pm

Topic: Regent Parrot Tree Planting

Location: Overland Corner

Term 3

Murraylands:

TBA

Riverland:

Week 9

Wednesday 16 September

10 am - 2 pm

Topic: TBA

Location: TBA

Term 4 YEL

Celebration and sharing

Murraylands:

TBA

Riverland:

TBA

Support = success

To maximise the outcomes for participants, YEL students, teachers/mentors and schools are encouraged to actively participate and support the program to the best of their ability.

It is not a requirement or expectation for schools to attend all YEL forums, or that the same students attend each forum.

The content and activities at each forum will be tailored so that anyone who attends can learn and take away valuable knowledge and skills.

Here's what you need to know, including some tips on how to help everyone gain the most from the YEL experience:

Schools/leaders:

Select students to attend the forums. If you would like to bring more than 4 students, please inform your Education Officer as places may be limited at some forums.

Provide support, time/resourcing for an adult mentor to attend YEL forums with students and assist in sharing information back at school. This support may vary for each school group. In the past, schools have supported teachers, SSOs, or parent volunteers to bring students to YEL forums.

Support students in their YEL participation and to share the learnings and new leadership/public speaking skills at school.

Promote the work of YEL students throughout the school community (e.g. on school Facebook page and in newsletters).

Teachers/mentors:

Register your interest to ensure you receive forum information. Simply email your Education Officer (page 12) to be included on the email list.

Register your school and students via the link provided for each YEL forum. The details and links will be sent to each school at least 3 weeks prior to the event.

Ensure that each student and attending adult has completed a signed photo release form prior to attending their first forum.

Transport students on time, support and supervise them during forums.

Provide support to students at school to help them share what they have learned

Share ideas, resources, activities and information with fellow teachers after forums.

Students:

Aim to actively participate in activities and presentations during the forum.

Aim to share information back at school based on the skills learned.

Have the opportunity to earn rewards for sharing what they learned back at school and taking action at school or in the community.

Throughout the year, think about their connection with their local landscapes and consider what they can do to make change and live more sustainably.

Have the opportunity to meet and mingle with students from other schools across the region.



Feedback

The YEL program has been successfully running in the Murraylands and Riverland region for more than 10 years.

In that time, hundreds of students have developed as leaders both within the program and back at school.

Many students have continued their leadership journey by participating in the River Murray Youth Council Program in high school, and some have even pursued university degrees, now working in environmental and agricultural fields.

The longevity of the program speaks for itself. But don't just take our word for it, here are some words of wisdom from past YEL students and teachers to encourage you to get involved and be part of this great program.

“The venue was excellent, the day provided relative ‘real life’ examples and experience of aspects of students current and prospective future life and career opportunities.

I believe examples of the relevance and relatability may be encompassed in the following quotes (from YEL students):

“This is some of the things we do at home, it’s cool to see it here”.

- YEL student

“Now I understand what Dad does with his work, I can tell him about it tonight”.

- YEL student

“Today was amazing because I was able to learn about things in a fun way!”

- YEL student

“I think the YEL program is well prepared and executed by passionate staff who even in the extreme inclement weather managed to adapt and make the sessions interesting for students”.

- YEL attending teacher

The best thing about YEL: “The sharing of local knowledge and what is happening around us in our environment, as well as how we can actually help.

It is great for the students and even myself to hear about the problems as well as the positive things happening around us.

It was great to hear what local people are doing in our community to look after our environment”.

- YEL attending teacher

YEL teacher participant feedback:

Do you think the YEL format is still working?

“Absolutely, the [students] are excited and motivated to come, continue to take notes on the day without prompt and plan their sharing and presentations independently.

The response and feedback from the peers, family and school community is extremely positive, many people commenting on the new information they are gaining via [the students] and the forums”.

Are you happy with the way we are delivering the forums?

“Definitely, it is a ‘best practice’ example I feel”.

Sharing

After each YEL forum, students are encouraged to share their knowledge and skills within their school community. Sharing with peers is an important element that makes the YEL program so effective. Whether it involves presenting at a school assembly, or leading an activity with a group of students, there are various ways to share, create the ripple effect and ensure the excitement and information flows through the whole school community.

Students who commit to sharing their knowledge are rewarded for their efforts.

Once information or activities have been shared, students can explain what they have done in order to receive their reward(s). This can be done in several ways:

- YEL sharing report cards, which students can fill in and return via email or bring to the next YEL forum.
- Teachers/mentors can email Education Officers with information about the sharing including photos or copies of articles etc.
- Students can update Education Officers at the next YEL forum.

Each YEL student will be rewarded for sharing their knowledge and skills after YEL forums. The keepsake serves as a tangible reminder of their experiences.

There are many ways for students to share their knowledge and skills:

News

Newsletter articles are a great way to update the school community about what students have learnt and achieved at the YEL forum.

Kids teaching kids

Repeating an activity or designing a new one from skills learnt at YEL is a perfect way to teach peers or younger students.



Presentation

Visual and verbal presentations about YEL forums are a great way to share and can also help build leadership and technical skills.

Action

Taking action is the best! Students could plant trees or develop/design a new garden area at the school. Any on-ground/hands-on action is a great way to spread the love.

Any efforts towards taking action for the environment at school or home will be rewarded.

**The keepsake/reward item is yet to be decided for 2026. In previous years it has included badges and keyrings.*

Safety

Permissions:

Schools are responsible for obtaining parent permission for students to attend and travel to/from YEL forums.

ALL YEL attendees (both adult and student) will need to provide a signed photo consent form - refer to page 13-14.

Safety at YEL forums:

The main goal of YEL forums is to engage students in hands-on projects and activities outdoors in the environment and in the community.

Excursion approvals, risk assessment and safety of students is the responsibility of the school and supervising adults in attendance.

Education program staff work to provide a safe environment for all YEL attendees. All staff have current senior first aid, mental health first aid, WWCC and RRAHN-EC.

A general risk assessment will be provided to schools prior to each forum with details specific to that event. Schools are invited to use this information to inform required risk assessment.

Weather

Weather checks and alternative locations will be provided in the lead up to YEL forums to ensure the best action is taken.

YEL forums will be canceled in advance if extreme or catastrophic weather is forecast.

External providers

Where external providers are used to provide activities (including but not limited to boat rides, kayaking, live animals and walking tours), safety information and instruction will be as per the providers policies and adhered to by attendees.

Clothing/PPE

All YEL attendees are asked to wear sturdy enclosed shoes to all forums and to dress appropriately for the weather on the day.

Hats are essential and sunscreen will be provided.

Long pants are preferred and will be required at some locations. Attendees not wearing required clothing will not be able to participate in activities.

Personal protective clothing or equipment (including safety glasses and gloves etc) will be provided as required for activities/projects.



YEL Program registration

If you're interested in being part of the YEL program in 2026, register your interest now to receive all information about upcoming forums. To do so, simply email your local Education Officer, and you will be added to the contact list, or you can let us know via this online form: forms.office.com/r/dFVE9QRPzt or scan the QR code.



Murraylands



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The Education program is supported by the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board through funding from the landscape levies.
landscape.sa.gov.au/mr/education



Children Consent Form

TALENT RELEASE FORM

For the use of images for promotional purposes

I: _____
(parent/s/guardian's name - PLEASE PRINT FULL NAME)

On behalf
of: _____
(child's name - PLEASE PRINT)

SCHOOL: _____

1. am the parent or guardian of the child named above;
2. consent to the use of my child's image and performance in video footage or photographs taken by the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board on behalf of the Minister for Environment and Water (the Minister) for the purposes of promotional activities or other purposes, (including print publications, websites and advertisements or other means of communication);
3. agree that copyright in any recording made or image taken by the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board of my child, or any performance of my child, in connection with promotional activities is owned by the Minister and I further agree that any use by the Minister of my child's performance or my child's image is authorised for the purposes of the Copyright Act 1968, Privacy Act 1988 and any other applicable laws such as the Information Privacy Principles (SA);
4. acknowledge that my child's participation in promotional activities may be edited at the sole discretion of the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board;
5. acknowledge that the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board is not obliged to include my child in the promotional activities;
6. release the Crown in right of South Australia from any claim by my child or anyone on my child's behalf for any cost, expense, loss or damage arising out of the use of video footage, photos, or other images of my child for promotional activities or other purposes, (including print publications, websites and advertisements or other means of communication);
7. acknowledge that there will be no payment or other consideration paid for the use of my child's image or my child's performance.

Signed: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____



Adult Consent Form

TALENT RELEASE FORM

For the use of images for promotional purposes

I: _____

(PLEASE PRINT FULL NAME)

of: _____

(address - PLEASE PRINT)

1. am over the age of 18 (eighteen);
2. consent to the use of my image and performance in video footage or photographs taken by the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board on behalf of the Minister for Environment and Water (the Minister) for the purposes of promotional activities or other purposes, (including print publications, websites, social media and advertisements or other means of communication);
3. agree that copyright in any recording made or image taken by the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board of me, or any performance of mine, in connection with promotional activities is owned by the Minister and I further agree that any use by the Minister of my performance or my image is authorised for the purposes of the Copyright Act 1968, Privacy Act 1988 and any other applicable laws such as the Information Privacy Principles (SA);
4. acknowledge that my participation in promotional activities may be edited at the sole discretion of the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board;
5. acknowledge that the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board is not obliged to include me in the promotional activities;
6. release the Crown in right of South Australia from any claim by me or anyone on my behalf for any cost, expense, loss or damage arising out of the use of video footage, photos, or other images of myself for promotional activities or other purposes, (including print publications, websites and advertisements or other means of communication);
7. acknowledge that there will be no payment or other consideration paid for the use of my image or my performance.

Signed: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

