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COBAR GROUP WINS COUNTRY ENERGY WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL CARE AWARD

Educating themselves and others and seeking to shape natural resource policy led to the Buckwaroon Catchment Landcare Group winning the Community Group Award at the 2007 Country Energy Western Catchment Environmental Care Awards on the weekend.

They received a trophy and \$500 cheque from Bob De Jong team leader of Country Energy Cobar field service centre and Suzie Bunting of the Western Catchment Management Authority (Western CMA) at an awards ceremony held as part of the Western Catchment Landcare Forum in Cobar on Saturday, September 1.

With over 80 people in attendance, representatives of the Group were recognised for their achievements during the 13 years it has been in operation and shared their experiences while encouraging other landholders to join or form Landcare groups.

Chair of the Buckwaroon Catchment Landcare Group, Lachlan Sullivan, said that 'being part of a group like this has been a great way to learn from landholders that have a wealth of knowledge and are willing to learn and to try new things'.

Chair of the Western CMA, Rory Treweeke, said the Buckwaroon Catchment Landcare Group were worthy recipients of the honour.

"The Buckwaroon Catchment Landcare Group has actively sought education and training to further their knowledge," Mr Treweeke said.

"I am aware that seventeen of their members undertook the five-day 'Business of Farming' training in February to improve their farm business skills.

"They have also invested their time and efforts into educating others. With the assistance of the Western CMA, the Group developed and implemented an education program for Year 6 students at local primary schools on priority natural resource management issues for their district.

"Based on the success of last year's activities they will conduct the same program with students at St John's Primary, Cobar this Friday, September 7.

"In addition, the Group initiated the formation of the Cobar Vegetation Committee, which now operates as a separate identity. The group members wanted to address their concerns about the Native Vegetation Act in a constructive and effective manner.

Although the Western Catchment Environmental Care Awards offered prizes in seven categories, only one prize was awarded due to a record low numbers of entries.

"A low level of participation in awards such as these is being reported across other catchments.



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"The drought has placed great stress on rural communities and I personally believe many landholders are focussed on surviving, rather than anything else.

"That makes the efforts of the Buckwaroon Catchment Landcare Group even more outstanding and underlines the benefits of people working together, particularly during hard times," Mr Treweeke said.

Regional general manager, north western, Pete Halliwell said Country Energy is delighted to be part of the Western Environmental Care Awards and to play a role in helping to foster sustainable land practices in the western catchment area.

"It's highly commendable that during tough times of drought communities are continuing to work together to recognise the best ways to manage our environment for the future," he said.

"Country Energy is also seriously committed to its role in environmental sustainability, Mr Halliwell said."

Chair of the Western CMA, Rory Treweeke, thanked Country Energy as the major sponsor of the Awards, as well as the other sponsors, CSA Mine, Peak Gold Mine, Endeavor Mine, Western Catchment Landcare Steering Committee, Brookside Damaras, Landmark Russell and the Orana Credit Union.

The Buckwaroon Catchment Landcare Group is now eligible for the NSW Landcare Awards.

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Caption: Suzie Bunting Western CMA, Lachlan Sullivan, Buckwaroon Catchment Landcare Group and Bob De Jong of Country Energy.

