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## REMEMBRANCE AND EDUCATION FOR YOUNG BAARKINDJI PEOPLE

Baarkindji people from Haythorpe Station near Menindee have signed on to an educational project to sample stream water in their area, following successful tree planting and Waterwatch activities in recent months.

The Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is conducting practical educational opportunities for the young people to highlight vegetation and salinity issues in their area. Haythorpe Station is on an Aboriginal-owned station, located approximately 35km upstream from Menindee on Baarkindji traditional land.

Western CMA Aboriginal Community Support Officer, Dot Stephens, ran the Tree Planting Day at Haythorpe Station, educating and involving the youths over two days.

"The young people planted about thirty native trees, each in remembrance of someone they loved", she said

"It was a good opportunity to educate them about their environment, and it gave them something fun to do in the school holidays," Ms Stephens said.

Individuals aged between 3 and 23 took part in tree planting and Waterwatch activities to mark National Tree Planting Day on July 29. Western CMA Water Quality and Salinity Officer, Craig Alison, says the initiative will educate children about their local environment.

"The children were interested in learning more about their environment and how they can affect it," he said.

The young people were involved in collecting and identifying vegetation in the area and examining the erosion and habitat to determine where they should plant their trees.

They sampled water for salinity, sediment and temperature to recognise the effects these factors have on the overall water quality. They then sampled water bugs which are indicators of water health.

"They found native grasses, Accacias (wattles), saltbush species, Eucalyptus (gum trees) along with other native plant species common to the Lower Darling floodplain"

Mr Alison said the Tree Planting was the first of a number of educational activities, and hopes the initiative will become a monthly occurrence. The Haythorpe group has also registered to become a Community Stream Sampling group.

"The Bureau of Rural Science, a commonwealth agency, has contributed financially to the WCMA to implement the community stream watch project with about \$40 000 to use over three years", Mr Alison said.

"The focus is the community involvement and raising awareness about water health."



# MEDIA RELEASE



"People can take monthly readings of the salinity levels and analyse them to see how healthy our waters are because if they're too high there is a negative impact on water health and the plant, animal and human communities it supports".

The Haythorpe group will undertake Community Stream Sampling in early March. While the participants from the tree planting will be involved, Dot and Craig are hoping to attract others.

"These programs are great because they allow the kids to take part in their community and understand how things happen in the environment by being involved", Mr Alison said.

People interested in Community Stream Sampling in their area should contact their local Western CMA office or ring 1800 032 101.

## **ENDS**

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Captions:

Photo 1) The Haythorpe Group: Back L-R: Pamela Philp, Tiveta Newman, Feleitu Newman; Front L-R: Joseph Newman, Steven Newman, Andrew Philp

Photo 2) L-R: Willie Philp, Pamela Philp and Dot Stephens looking at the map before water sampling.

Photo 3) Vincent Newman enquiring about a plant he discovered at Haythorpe Station.

