

4 November 2008

Bourke students care for Darling River

Bourke school students did some 'hands-on' learning last week, taking part in a tree-planting and Waterwatch day on the banks of the Barwon River.

Organised by the Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), the activities were part of the Brewarrina to Bourke Demonstration Reach project.

Students from five Bourke schools: Bourke Central School, Bourke High School, St Ignatius School, Pera Bore Christian Community School and Koinonia Christian Academy, took part in the activities held on the riverbank behind the Back O' Bourke Centre on Thursday, October 30 and Friday, October 31.

The students planted approximately two hundred native trees including River Red Gum, River Cooba and Coolabah trees.

Their planting sites have been identified by a plaque and each student wrote their name on a tag attached to the tree they planted, so they will be able to watch their own tree grow.

A dozen members of the Kurnu-Barkindji Landcare and Cultural Management Group helped the students plant the trees and will be responsible for their ongoing care and maintenance, including watering and weed control. The group members have been employed full-time to provide this service in collaboration with the Bourke OEC, Birrand CDEP and NSW Department of Primary Industries.

The trees were planted using a lance to inject water approximately 60cm below the soil, which becomes a reservoir for the trees to become established and allows the trees to develop deep roots.

The students also took part in Waterwatch activities, which allowed them to see first-hand the condition of waterways and learn how they can contribute to the health of the river.

The students looked at water samples and macro-invertebrates, which are indicators of water health, and learnt about how aquatic ecosystems work.

Western CMA Community Education Officer, Lisa Crisp, wanted to acknowledge everyone who assisted during the day.

"The Western CMA and Department of Primary Industries would like to thank the Kurnu-Barkindji Landcare and Cultural Management Group and the Bourke Shire Council who helped to ensure the days ran smoothly," Ms Crisp said.

"They were quite hot days so we all appreciated the staff, marquee, ice and drinks they provided, as well as the water-cart used for the tree-planting.



MEDIA RELEASE



"We are also grateful for the support of the principals, teachers and students from the five schools that took part.

"We planted the trees so that in the future they will create a native canopy and encourage other plant species to grow beneath them.

"As well as making the riverbank more attractive, the trees will stabilise the riverbank and prevent erosion. Ideally, at the end of their lifecycle they may fall into the river, which will create valuable native fish habitat," Ms Crisp said.

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Captions:

- Principal, Miss Therese Clancy, with Jessy and Aaron of St Ignatius School, Bourke
- Students from the Koinonia Christian Academy undertaking Waterwatch activities
- Members of the Kurnu-Barkindji Landcare and Cultural Management Group

