

1 December 2008

## **WATERWATCH WELCOMES LOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Louth Public School has become the latest group to join the Waterwatch program.

They are now part of a team of 150,000 students around NSW who are actively involved in learning about and protecting local waterways.

Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Waterwatch Coordinator, Damon Cusack, said the school signed up during Water Week in October.

"The school developed a Waterwatch plan and as their first step scheduled a training day, which was held on the banks of the Darling River at Louth on October 23," Mr Cusack said.

"Waterwatch is a hands-on educational program that enables people to assess the health of their waterway.

"The principal, Jenny Turner, and seven of the primary school students were shown how to test for water temperature, salt levels, Ph levels and water clarity or turbidity.

"The school plans to test the water on a regular basis and over time the students will learn about changes to water quality from season to season and eventually from year to year.

"The students were also shown techniques for collecting and identifying water-bugs. Some water-bugs are more tolerant of pollution, while others require cleaner water to complete their lifecycle.

"Recording the species of water-bugs present provides a good indicator of water health and adds to the overall picture of the River's water quality.

"The students then uploaded their data to the Waterwatch website, which allows the group to store their results and compare the tested location to others within the Western Catchment and throughout NSW.

"Since the training day, the students have also visited and monitored a site at the junction of the Warrego and Darling Rivers to compare different stages of the River.

"The Waterwatch program takes environmental education out of the classroom and puts it into a very practical, real-life setting. While the students are learning about the natural and human impacts on our rivers and creeks, they also contribute to a vast network of valuable information about our waterways," Mr Cusack said.

Anyone who is interested in being involved in the Waterwatch program, which is open to community groups and individuals as well as schools, should contact Damon on 02 6872 2144.

**ENDS**



# MEDIA RELEASE



For further information:

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Caption:

Jaymie-Lee, Sophie, Lincoln, Mark, Bonnee, Meg and Kate from Louth Public School during the Waterwatch excursion to the junction of the Warrego and Darling Rivers

