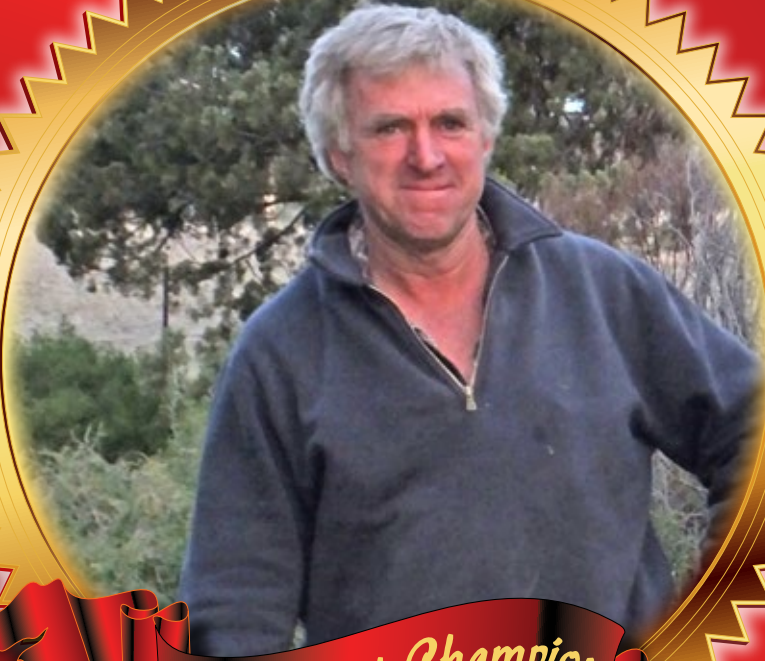


Catchment Champion: Mark Ryan



Catchment Champion

Chelsea Dempster and Bethany Snowden

Finley High School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of the Murray Darling Association and Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between the Murray Catchment Management Authority and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to natural resource management issues. www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants. www.wirraminna.org

Murray Darling Association

The Murray Darling Association has membership of over 100 Local Government councils in the Murray-Darling Basin, as well as community groups, businesses and individuals with an interest in ensuring that the Basin continues as a valuable asset for all Australians. Since 1950, the Association has initiated various school and community education programs on managing the Basin's land and water resources. www.mda.asn.au



Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area. www.envirostories.com.au

Catchment Champion: Mark Ryan

Authors: Chelsea Dempster and Bethany Snowden

Teacher: Helen McRae

School: Finley High School

Catchment Champions

In 2013, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about 'Catchment Champions', people who have made important contributions to managing natural resources in their local community. The program was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee catchment management authorities.

The Catchment Champions books are part of the Enviro-Stories Education Program.



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Introducing Mark Ryan

Mark Ryan, otherwise known as Marko, is a local farmer who lives at Equity Park on the outskirts of Berrigan. Many people know him for his participation in various conservation efforts throughout the Berrigan Shire. Some of these projects include the regeneration of the Tank Paddock as well as school tree planting programs. He has also been involved in the Land and Water Management Plan.

Growing up

Mark Ryan was born on the 4th of July, 1954 at St. Vincent's hospital in Melbourne. He is the son of Patricia Marie and Francis Patrick Ryan.

Mark's parents were married during the September of 1953 and also have three other sons and two daughters.

Mark grew up on a farm in Colac. In 1970 he moved from Colac to Inverleigh which is 30 kilometres west of Geelong. It was here that Mark went to St. Joseph's Boys College in Geelong.



Growing up

As Mark grew up on a farm he enjoyed a wide variety of activities. Some of these included making and driving bilycarts and building huts. He also really liked ferreting, rabbiting and especially climbing Cypress trees. Mark had some neighbours who were around the same age as him, so most of these activities were done with them. On occasions Mark and the neighbours would go walking and explore the local lake for a day at a time. It is clear that Mark loved nature from a young age.





Family

Mark married Maree in 1979. He is the proud father of Sally, Robert, Amy, Jessica and Emily. He now also has three grandchildren. Mark's children also share his passion for conserving natural plants and wildlife.

Previous work

Mark has worked as a farmer for most of his life and agrees farming is the most important career on the planet. Another job Mark had was working at Ford in Geelong during 1975.



Why Mark became involved in natural resource management

Mark became involved in natural resource management because he has always had the intention of leaving any property he purchased in a better condition than when he first bought it.

Being environmentally friendly also helps business. The environment is a crucial part of any farming enterprise. This is because farming and growing crops are greatly impacted by the condition of the environment, such as the condition of the soil and the water.



What else has Mark been involved in?

Mark has been a part of the Land Water Management Plan for numerous years and has also played a large role in the planting of many native trees in the Berrigan Shire and Tank Paddock. He has helped in providing a track in the Berrigan Tank Paddock so that people can easily observe the native plants and animals. Mark has also been involved in many other volunteering efforts in the area.





Ecological practices at Mark's own home

Mark has transformed his piggery into one that is good for the environment. He uses rice straw for bedding and then recycles that straw by spreading it onto his paddocks. Not only this, Mark and his wife, Maree, have fenced off sixty hectares of bushland so that in the future it can be a place to educate people from urban areas about the local wildlife and native plants.



Volunteering

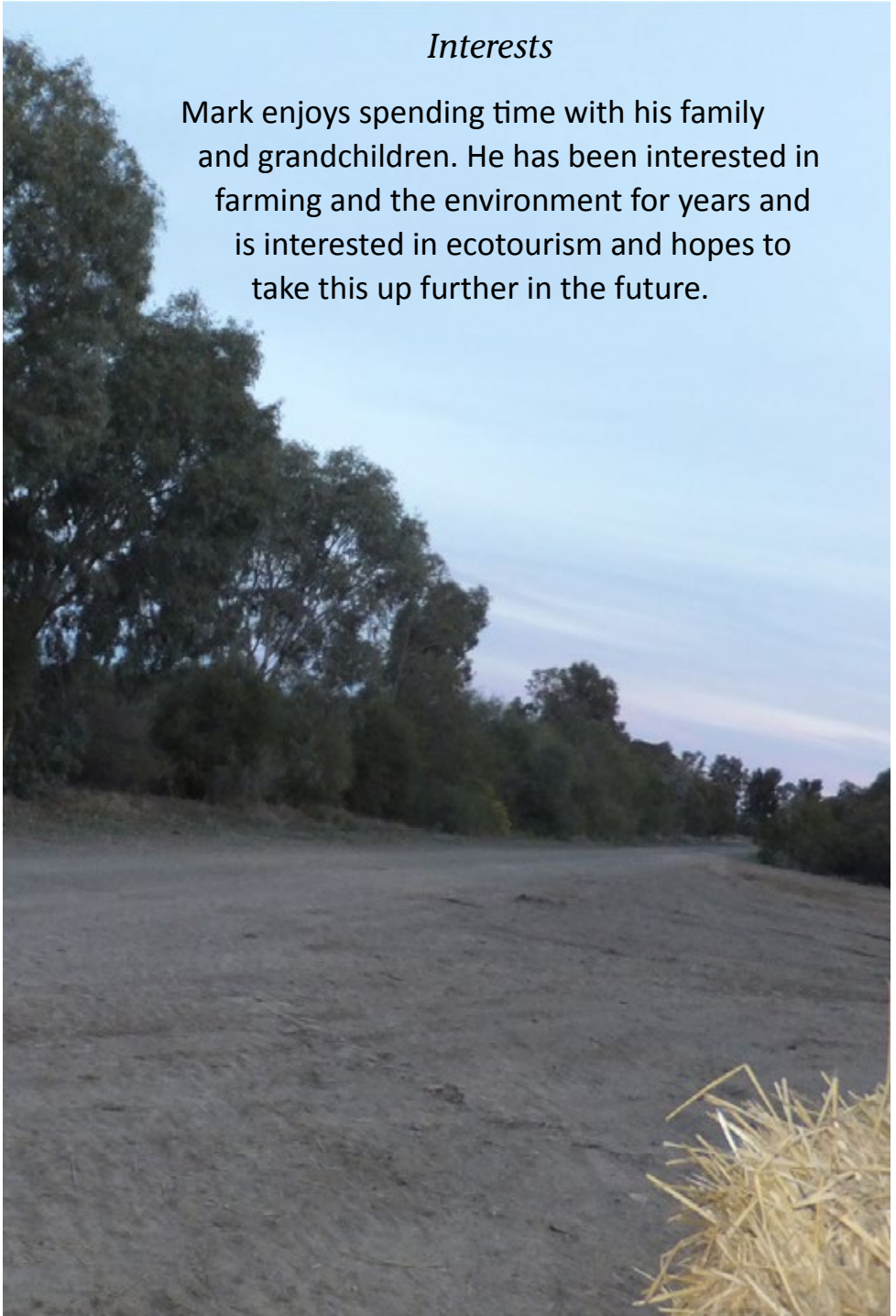
Mark has volunteered in the Berrigan Tidy Towns project and various conservation efforts in the area.

All of the work he has done to regenerate the Berrigan Tank Paddock has been done voluntarily and we would like to thank Mark for his sense of community. Mark also finds it rewarding to volunteer by being a blood donor.



Interests

Mark enjoys spending time with his family and grandchildren. He has been interested in farming and the environment for years and is interested in ecotourism and hopes to take this up further in the future.



Future

In the future Mark wants to continue volunteering after he retires. He also wants to lead ecotourism tours and give people from the city the opportunity to visit and observe the natural bushland and wildlife which people in the country have the privilege of seeing every day.

Mark is an extremely dedicated farmer and environmentalist who has definitely worked hard, dedicating his life to conserving bushland and habitat for wildlife. Due to Mark's passion for the environment, people in the Berrigan Shire and neighbouring communities have been given the opportunity to learn about and enjoy our native wildlife and bushland. For this we are extremely grateful and we would like to thank Mark for the extensive time and effort he has put into the local communities and areas.





Bethany Snowden, Chelsea Dempster and Mark Ryan

2013 Year 9, Finley High School

The 2012 and 2013 Creative Catchment Kids writing program was showcased at the Seventh World Environmental Education Congress, held in Morocco during June 2013.



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