

# Our Very Special Enviroman



*Catchment Champion*

Lalita Weir-Smith & Ceilo Martin

Kapooka Public 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](http://www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html)

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## *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](http://www.wirraminna.org)

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## *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](http://www.mda.asn.au)

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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](http://www.envirostories.com.au)

# Our Very Special Enviroman

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School: Kapooka Public 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.



**Catchment Management  
Authority**  
Murray



**CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY**



**Catchment Management  
Authority**  
Murrumbidgee

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This book tells the story of Bernie Ward, Wagga's most treasured Enviroman.

He works at the Riverina Environmental Education Centre (REEC) and has contributed to the knowledge of the students in the Riverina by sharing his love of the environment. He is a brilliant teacher.

We all enjoy a visit to REEC so come on, read on with us, and learn about our favourite Enviroman! What are you waiting for, read on!



## *Childhood*

On the 30th of June 1972 an Enviroman was born.

Bernie Ward comes from a family of eight which included Chris 45, Mark 43, Bernie 41, Daniel 31, Tim 28, Mathew (deceased) and his parents Linda and Peter.

Linda and Peter got married on the 14th of June 1980. Bernie is third youngest in his family. Bernie always wanted to be a teacher but he says, "When I was young I wanted to be Elvis and play rugby league for Australia."





### *Education*

Bernie lived in a normal house just like you and me, but having seven in the house including him made everything crowded. Bernie also had a pet Alsatian dog called Sandy.

His first school was Burleigh Heads State School in Queensland followed by Mount-Austin High School in Wagga Wagga. He finished his studies with a Bachelor of Education degree from Charles Sturt University.



## *Wedding*

Bernie got married on the 28th September 2011. They had two weddings as they are both from different cultures, one in Vietnam and the other in Australia. Bernie says, "It was quite strange to have my fiancé change her dress three times in one wedding."

His wife's name is Dung (pronounced Yung). Dung's name is hard to pronounce and spell so she goes by her middle name which is Kim. Kim is going to have a baby this year in August.



### *Animal Encounters*

Bernie's favourite animal is the kangaroo because it is very strong and it adapts very well to its environment.

His strangest animal encounter was with a snake in Vietnam. His wife's family skinned the snake and gutted it and they had the snake for dinner in spring rolls. He thought it tasted very different but also nice.





## *Passions*

Along with many other passions Bernie's most favoured hobby is travelling overseas. He has been to South Korea, Cambodia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Vanuatu and Vietnam eight times.

This year Bernie has to think about another passion, "My newest passion will be our baby expected later this year."



### *His Job*

Bernie works at the REEC (Riverina Environmental Education Centre). He is just one of the wonderful staff members that work at the REEC. Bernie works as an environmental teacher and teaches children about all the flora and fauna where we live. He teaches that we can and should look after our environment.

## *Displays*

Bernie helps to make interesting displays for the centre. He gets the creatures for these from customs, because a lot of people go overseas, and bring back dead animals or animal features that they are not supposed to.



Bernie asks customs if he can have these animal features or dead snakes and use them for educational purposes. He takes them back to the REEC classroom and puts them in a display cabinet or on the wall. REEC displays these animals to raise awareness to the world wide problem of the killing of our beautiful animals.

Bernie uses the displays to help educate the students that visit. He explains how he got them and what might have happened to the animal that was slaughtered. This helps raise awareness about why some animals become endangered or even extinct. Bernie hopes that by displaying these animals, students and their families won't buy the products when they travel overseas.





### *Equipment*

Bernie uses lots of different science equipment. Some equipment he uses are salt metres to test for salinity; pH testers to test the acidity of the soil and water; and turbidity tubes to test how dirty the water is. When students visit they learn how to use most of the equipment. They take a bucket of water from the creek so they can run tests to find out the water quality.



### *Other uses for the REEC*

As well as learning, Bernie helps us to organise other events at REEC such as cross country and obstacle courses which are fun in this beautiful environment.





### *Thank you*

Bernie still teaches children at the REEC and hopes to stay working until he moves to another town. He enjoys his job very much and we would like him to be our guide on all our future visits.

On behalf of Kapooka School we all thank Bernie for being our tour guide and local enviroman. He is our Catchment Hero for teaching us so many interesting things.





Ceilo Martin, Lalita Weir-Smith & Bernie Ward

2013 Year 4/5, Kapooka Public 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.



Catchment Management Authority  
Murray



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



Catchment Management Authority  
Murrumbidgee