

Andrea Mitchell - Our Local Land Hero



Edward Davis, Isaac Andrews and James Hall

Savernake 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 Local Land Services and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

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

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Authors: Edward Davis, Isaac Andrews and James Hall

Teacher: Leonie Orr

School: Savernake Public School

Local Land Heroes

In 2014, students involved in the **Creative Catchment Kids** program researched and wrote stories about 'Local Land Heroes' - people, businesses or industries who contribute to productive agriculture and healthy environments along the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes acknowledges the United Nations
2014 International Year of Family Farming.

www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en/



Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.



Local Land
Services
Murray



Local Land
Services
Riverina



Australian Government

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Andrea Mitchell is our local Savernake environmental champion.

Andrea grew up in the suburbs of Melbourne and her early home was in Thomastown. Thomastown was on the outskirts of Melbourne. Andrea enjoyed open spaces where she could ride her bike, play basketball, take many walks when she often collected the newspaper for her father from the local shop!



Andrea's family included her parents Marie and Keith Patford, her two brothers Simon and Matthew and a sister Lyndal. Andrea was the eldest of the four children. Together as a family they travelled throughout Australia on holidays, exploring a variety of landscapes and environments. These adventures with her family influenced and promoted her keen interest in the environment.



Camping inspired Andrea's love for the environment and Australia's heritage. Many family trips involved exploring the native vegetation and visiting many Aboriginal sites.

After high school, Andrea followed her artistic interest. She took a tertiary course in fine arts and drawing, both at university and TAFE studying at the Phillip Institute. It was here that she developed her love of photography.



The desire to move to a larger property, in undulating countryside, away from the sprawling city and domesticated animals saw Andrea and Simon move to 'Kilpa' Savernake. This move to rural New South Wales was the start of a life-long connection with a new farming community.





Andrea was a founding member of the local Corowa and District Landcare Group, taking her little children with her when the group met. It was through this Landcare group that Andrea further developed her interest in her local community and natural resource management that is needed to protect the environment in which she lived.

Andrea supported the Savernake and Native Dog Swamp (SANDS) project which studied many areas of the environment including truffles, fungi, plants, animals, lizards and insects. This project, which was undertaken on 'Kilpa' and other district farms, took many months. It measured numbers of living plants and animals so future comparisons could be made to determine what management practices were needed.

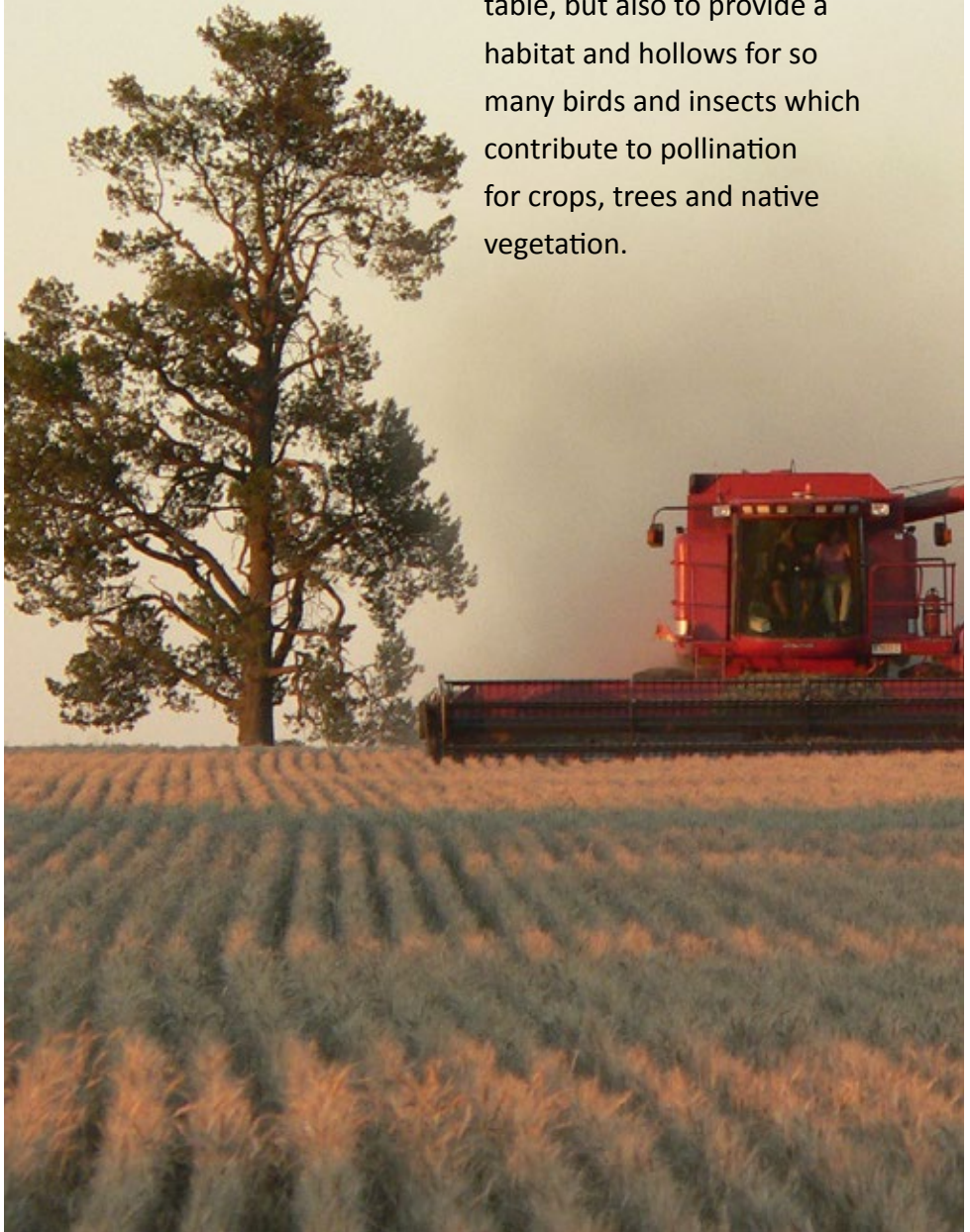




Andrea believes that many ecological practices are vital to ensure there is sustainable farming within the Savernake district.

The Mitchells have planted saltbush to help their farm and stock. Saltbush provides vegetation that is high in protein. Its root system has a positive impact on the water table and continues to grow even when temperatures reach over 30° C.

Andrea sees the need to preserve single paddock trees as vital for not only the water table, but also to provide a habitat and hollows for so many birds and insects which contribute to pollination for crops, trees and native vegetation.





Revegetation around their property has also taken priority. Andrea and Simon and their children Scarlett, Sophia, Braden and Alexia continue to plant trees to provide an understory in parts of their farm for the many insects, animals and birds. They also enjoy the beauty created: gold flowering wattles and burgundy hopbushes (bottom left), fruiting butterbush (bottom right), hearing wind made by the bullokes, birds calling and smelling the fragrant flower filled air.





The preservation of Australia's history is also very important to Andrea. Throughout their property they have located many artefacts that belonged to the original custodians of the land, the Pangerang people. These artefacts include an Aboriginal well and elders chair, found amongst the rocky granite outcrops.



Andrea spent several years working with the Murray Catchment Management Authority in the seedbank which stored a large variety of native species found in our local area.

Our local land hero, Andrea continues to pursue her interests through Landcare, planting trees, producing booklets, Instagram photography to promote farming at Savernake as a positive, ecological and sustainable venture.

Andrea Mitchell really is a local land hero.





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Australian Government