

# Anna and Cogs: An Organic Farm at 'Tiverton'



Charlotte Clarke, Faith Smith, Leah Watson,  
William Cheshire and Daniel Hawkins

Holbrook 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.

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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 PeekKdesigns, 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)**

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William Cheshire and Daniel Hawkins

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School: Holbrook 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/](http://www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en/)



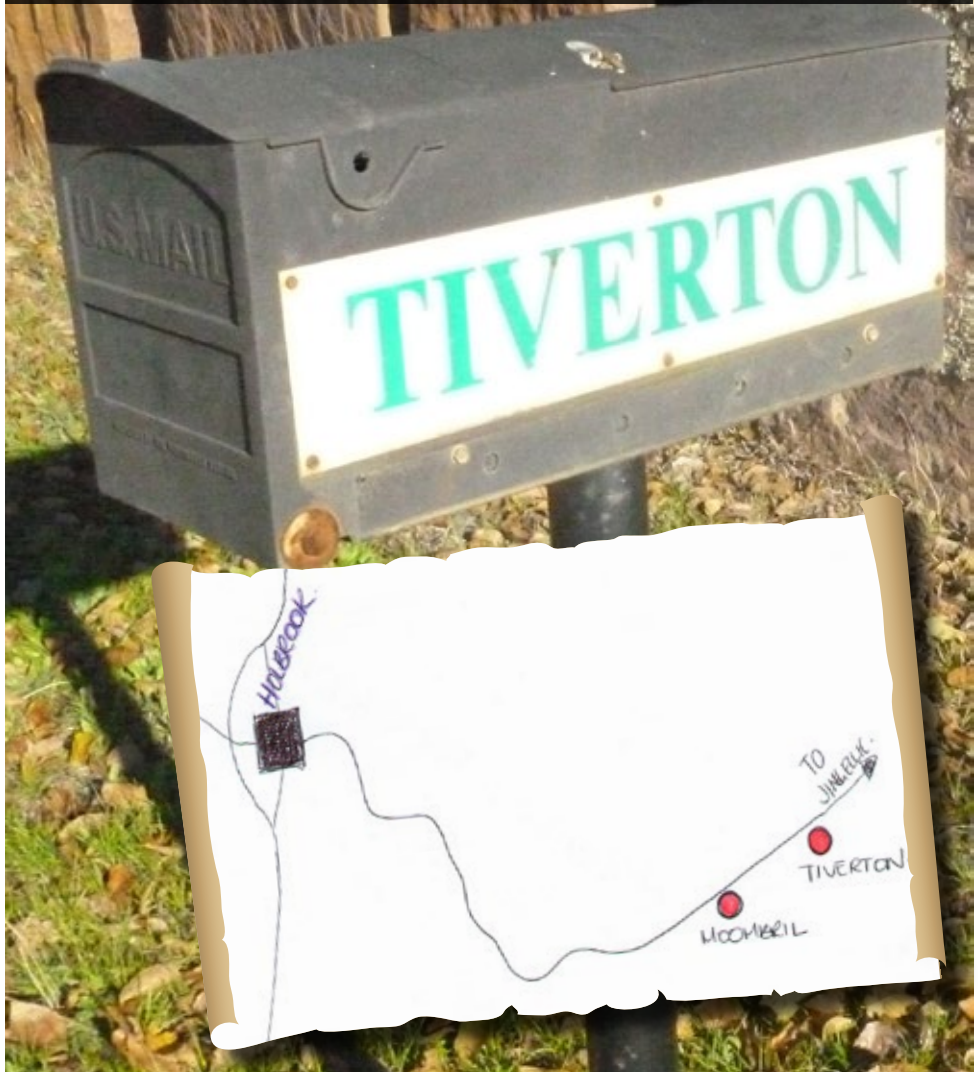
Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.



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Anna and Michael Coughlan live on a farm called 'Tiverton', about 10 minutes out the Jingellic Road, Holbrook, New South Wales. They have lived at 'Tiverton' for about five years. Anna and Michael are a big part of the Holbrook community. 'Tiverton' is different to other farms and this is why they are our Local Land Heroes.







### *Family Life*

Michael and Anna Coughlan are married with five children. Anna was born in Morundah (near Narrandera). Michael was born in Khancoban, in Australia's High Country. Michael's nick name is Cogs. They both grew up on farms. They now live on 'Tiverton' and rent out their other property, 'Moombri'. Michael and Anna are encouraging their children Lily, Molly, Harry, Isabelle and Emma to have an agricultural future.



### *‘Tiverton’*

‘Tiverton’ is an organic farm. On ‘Tiverton’, they only have beef cows. ‘Tiverton’ has 180 paddocks, which house 80 bulls and 1800 heifers, plus calves. At the age of one, they send the calves to the Wodonga Sale Yards to be sold for meat. Anna and Michael rotate their cattle through each paddock and the cattle only stay there for one night. The cattle visit each paddock about two times in a year.





As the cattle are rotated often, they are disease free. When cattle are in a paddock for a long time, they eat the pasture down and these cattle are more prone to disease. On 'Tiverton' they don't use any machinery. They only use a motorbike to rotate the cattle to each paddock. 'Tiverton' has no permanent paid employees. Anna pays people to come and check the pregnant cows and to fix the fences.







### *‘Moombril’ and Woomargama National Park*

Anna and Cogs’ ‘Moombril’ property backs on to the Woomargama National Park. This property is special because it is home to a large number of endangered species, such as the Eastern quoll and Phantom wattle. The Regent honeyeater, Superb parrot and Powerful owl can also be seen.







### *The Changes in Farming*

The people who lived on 'Tiverton' before Anna and Michael used chemicals and machinery. When they first moved to 'Tiverton', they put cattle into a paddock for the night and the next morning there were 49 cattle dead from all of the chemicals in the ground. Anna and Michael never used chemicals or machinery for their farm again.





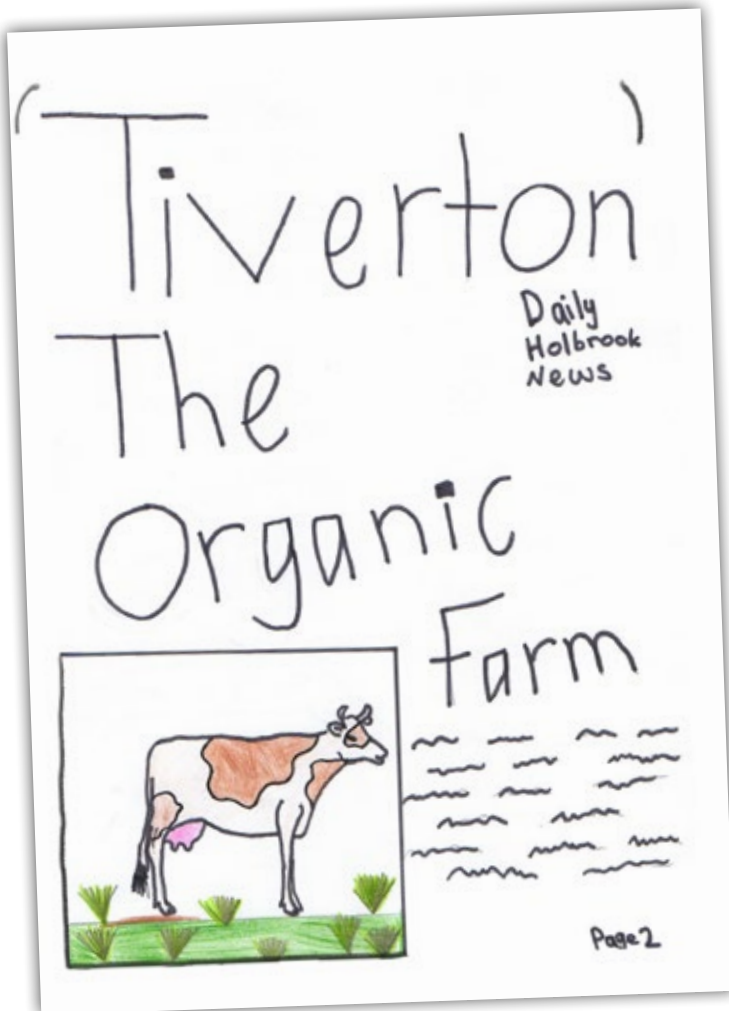
## *Sustainable and Environmentally Friendly Farming*

As Anna and Michael have an organic farm, it is very sustainable. They have left their creek alone and are now lucky enough to have Pygmy perch. Pygmy perch are a small native fish that are now a threatened species. They have also planted a lot of native trees. As they don't use chemicals on their farm, they have more bird life, beetles and fungi.



## Stories

Anna and Michael have not yet won any awards but they have had lots of newspaper stories written about them. Many stories have proven to some farmers that the way they do things isn't so bad. Some farmers have started to change how they do things with the knowledge gained from Anna and Michael.





## *Fire at 'Tiverton'*

A fire in January 2014, affected both of their properties, 'Tiverton' and 'Moombril'. They fought the fire using dam water in their paddocks. The dams on the farm don't have to be refilled because they were built on springs and can fill up quickly. Even the air crane *Elvis*, helicopters and fire trucks used water from their dams to fight the fire.





## *Future of 'Tiverton'*

Anna and Michael wish to stay on at 'Tiverton' for a long time. They hope that their children will one day take over the farm or at least practice the same farming techniques they use. They hope that the farm influences other farms in the district to be more sustainable.

Anna and Michael can now see the difference in their farm without the use of chemicals.



## *Thank you*

On behalf of Holbrook Creative Catchment Kids, we would like to thank Anna and Michael for letting us study their property. They have taught us about different farming techniques and how to farm organically. We hope someday we can use this knowledge in our lives.







Back Row: William Cheshire, Leah Watson and Faith Smith

Front Row: Daniel Hawkins and Charlotte Clarke

2014 Year 6, Holbrook Public School

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