

Mark's Spray Barn



Brooke Greiner, Jonte Balnaves, Zali Harris
and Corey Johnson

Lavington 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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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.



Design by Peekdesigns, www.peekdesigns.com.au

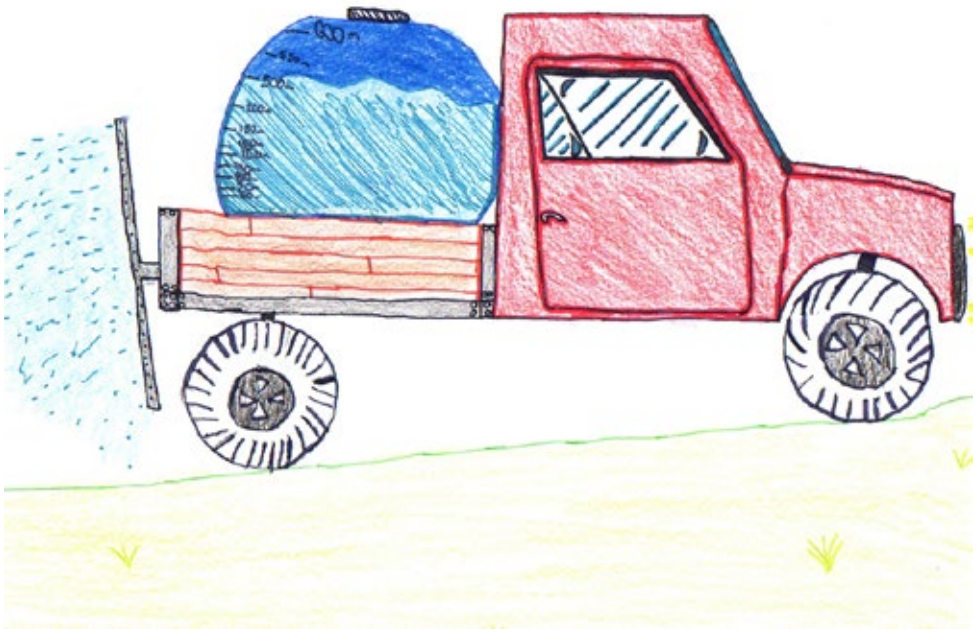
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Our story is about our Local Land Hero, Mark's Agricultural Services. Mark Lavery owns three businesses called Mark's Spray Barn, Mark's Agricultural Services and Mark's Environmental Services. Mark has been in this industry for the last twenty years.

In the beginning

Mark's Agricultural Services began 20 years ago. It was started by his wife Sally and himself. Mark ran a farm in Jindera, which he had to sell in early 1993 due to rising interest rates and foot and mouth disease spreading in Europe. After the sale of the farm, all Mark was left with was a Hilux ute and a goldacres sprayer. This was the beginning of Mark's businesses.





In the early days, Mark was busy doing many jobs but eventually he just sprayed weeds. Three years later, Mark hired his first employee. The business grew by securing a contract with National Parks and Wildlife Services and other government agencies. Business was booming, so Mark employed another six spray technicians and operated a fleet of spray units.



Mark's Environmental Services started in 2002 to cater for government work on things like catchment areas, national parks, roadsides and local councils. This side of the business specialises in weed eradication with minimal environmental impact. Mark uses special chemicals that don't harm the environment. Sometimes weeds are hand removed and they also do revegetation plantings to help the environment.



Mark's Spray Barn started in 2006. It was built to cater for the retail side of the spraying industry. The name Mark's Spray Barn came about as his name is Mark and the store is in a barn style shed. The store supplies spray units and chemicals from one litre to ten thousand litres. Mark's Spray Barn is located in Catherine Crescent, Lavington.

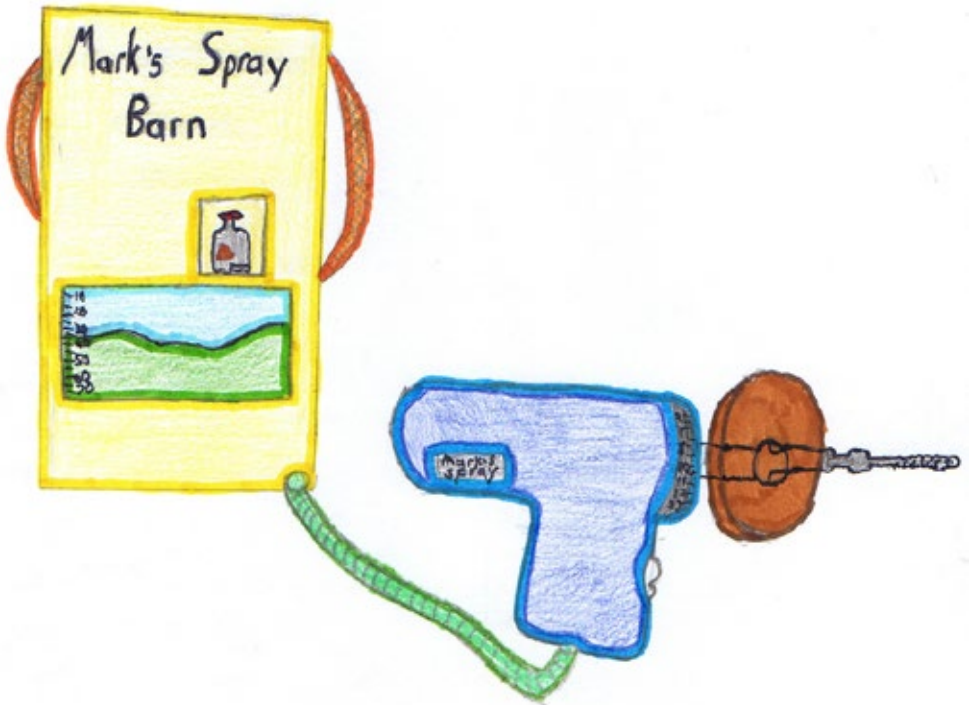
Spraying Equipment

One of the common practices Marks uses is hand spraying. He has ten vehicles equipped for hand spraying. The vehicles can reach a speed of twenty kilometres per hour whilst spraying. Another service Mark provides is fertiliser spreading. A four wheeler with a three hundred kilogram hopper at the back is used to spread granular fertiliser on soft, wet paddocks and sporting ovals.





Boom spraying is another service that Mark has to help with bigger spraying jobs. The booms are eighteen metres wide and are equipped with air injected nozzles to help stop chemical drift. All Mark's equipment is designed to either eliminate or minimise spray drift. For smaller jobs, Mark has a two Suzuki's fitted with a boom sprayer with a width of ten metres. They are used in the wet season or along water channels.



Other services Mark supplies are stem injections on large trees to control the elm leaf beetle. The chemical is absorbed via the root system and goes up to the leaves, which can control the beetle for up to three years.

Another service is a lawn mower that has a boom width of one and a half metres. The sprayer is fully protected to not spray non-target plants. This is ideal for small, tight areas and is ideal for lawns, bowling greens and schools.

In the community

Mark sponsor's many sporting clubs and has also assisted in drought relief fundraising for famers. He recently went to Bourke in northern New South Wales with three thousand bales of hay for farmers that were drought stricken. Mark is the only member of his family involved in agriculture.





Today Mark employs over twenty employees between the three businesses at peak season. Mark's employees travel about thirty thousand kilometres spraying roadsides per year to improve road safety. Mark says the best thing about his industry is the places they go and see. They get paid to work in some magnificent national parks and meet lots of great people along the way.



On behalf of Lavington Public School we would like to thank Mark and the team at Mark's Spray Barn for telling us about their industry and businesses.





Corey Johnson, Zali Harris, Brooke Greiner and Jonte Balnaves

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