

# Sheree Hamson: Culcairn's Local Agronomist



Clayton Scott, Sophie Schulz,  
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Culcairn 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 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)

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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/](http://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



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Sheree Hamson grew up on a farm in Lockhart. She attended Lockhart Central School until Year 10 and then went to Scots School in Albury where she boarded. Sheree wanted to be an agronomist since she was sixteen. Her passion for agronomy came because she loves the environment and farming.



Sheree went to Charles Sturt University for three years to become an agronomist. She then went to the University of New England for two years to become an agricultural teacher. Sheree was inspired to become an agronomist as she was passionate about farming and spent any opportunity with her father doing farm work.





Sheree is thirty-five years old and is married to Shaun. They have three children named Madeline, Thomas and Jake. Sheree thinks that when they are older they will be farmers but she is not too sure about becoming agronomists. They all live together on their farm “Kirndeem” on the Walbundrie Road, just out of Culcairn. They also own another farm at Alma Park called “Mullemlah”.



Sheree has lived on “Kirndeen” with her husband since 2006. On Sheree’s farm she has South Devon beef cattle which are grass fed. Sheree and her husband produce crops such as canola, wheat and pasture for stock to eat. Their farm is 700 acres with the Billabong Creek running through it.





After purchasing “Kirndeem” in 2006, Sheree and her husband fenced off both sides of the Billabong Creek with the help of the Catchment Management Authority. Sheree chose to fence the Billabong Creek to create a corridor for wildlife and to protect the creek from further degradation. It also helped manage stock grazing along the creek in a more sustainable and productive manner.





Sheree has fenced off the creek for the environment to help it revegetate with native plants. The creek has plenty of native grasses, bottle brushes and wattle. The Local Land Services come out to her farm to collect seeds from her native bottle brushes. Sheree keeps hollow logs for the habitat of native animals such as Squirrel gliders.



Sheree planted lucerne paddocks next to the house to reduce fire impact and to make fodder. In 2010, the creek flooded the farm. Even though the flood caused damage, it produced more native plants and made all the native trees grow. The flood also added to the ecosystem and corridor for wildlife, including the endangered Squirrel gliders and the Black wallaby. The wildlife is quite friendly and can be seen around the house.





Sheree now works for 'Ag n Vet' as an agronomist in Culcairn. Agronomists mainly work with farmers to improve their farms productivity. Sheree advises them on what crops to grow and when to plant them, and also advice on soil amelioration. If a farmer has something wrong with their crop, Sheree helps to find out what pest it is, then tells them what the best management is for their situation.





Another aspect in Sheree's job is to give farmers advice on the type of machinery to use. Sheree suggests to the farmers to retain stubble which helps increase the carbon in the soil. Stubble retention increases the carbon and microbes, improving the microbial ecology of the soil. Improved soils makes for better cropping and pasture productivity.



Sheree describes herself as a 'consultant' to farmers and helps them to run their farms. Farms feed the world and agronomists are an important part of helping to maximise production. Sheree helps to find the balance between the environment and agriculture. Sometimes the balance is difficult to achieve, but Sheree aims to use an integrated pest management approach to care for the land and its sustainability.

On behalf of the Creative Catchment Kids from Culcairn Public School, we would like to thank Sheree for letting us see her farm and for teaching us about agronomy and the environment.







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