

# The Canal Uncovered



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## *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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## *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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The Mulwala Canal is a very vital asset to New South Wales farming. The Mulwala Canal is the longest canal in the Southern Hemisphere and is 2880 kilometres long. The mouth is at Lake Mulwala and the canal ends at Deniliquin, supplying more than 2400 farms along the way.







The Mulwala Canal has a capacity of 10,000 megalitres per day and annually supplies over 1,000,000 megalitres to 1,700,000 acres in the Murray Irrigation Area. The canal has been supplying farms with water for nearly 80 years and needs to continue to do so to ensure the future of the farms and the families that work them.





In 1935, the Prime Minister came up with the idea to build a lake on the farming land between Yarrawonga and Mulwala. The New South Wales government built the canal to capitalise on the water being held in the lake. The water from the canal opened up a lot of the land in New South Wales for farming that was deemed unsuitable due to lack of water.



On Saturday 6th April 1935, over 3000 people turned out to see the NSW Premier, Mr. Bertram Stevens, turn the first sod. Premier Stevens made the bold statement that the building of the canal would allow Australia to compete more effectively in world markets because the canal was ensuring the farms along its course would never have to endure the effects of drought.



The Mulwala Canal started to be built in 1935. About 3000 men came to build the canal. These 3000 men came to Yarrawonga and Mulwala for work because the depression was taking place and work was very hard to come by. Many of the workers stayed on to work the land once the canal was completed.





They used draught horses to help them pull the drays to remove the dirt for the canal course. Paddle steamers had a vital role of removing the soil to further afield. The men and their families lived on the side of the canal in 4x4 metre tents.





In recent times, Goulburn-Murray Water decided that the land beside the canal, and especially at the mouth in Mulwala, is too valuable to leave empty and they are trying to build houses on the land. The Mulwala residents, especially Mrs. Helen Purtle, are passionate about retaining the land as it is.

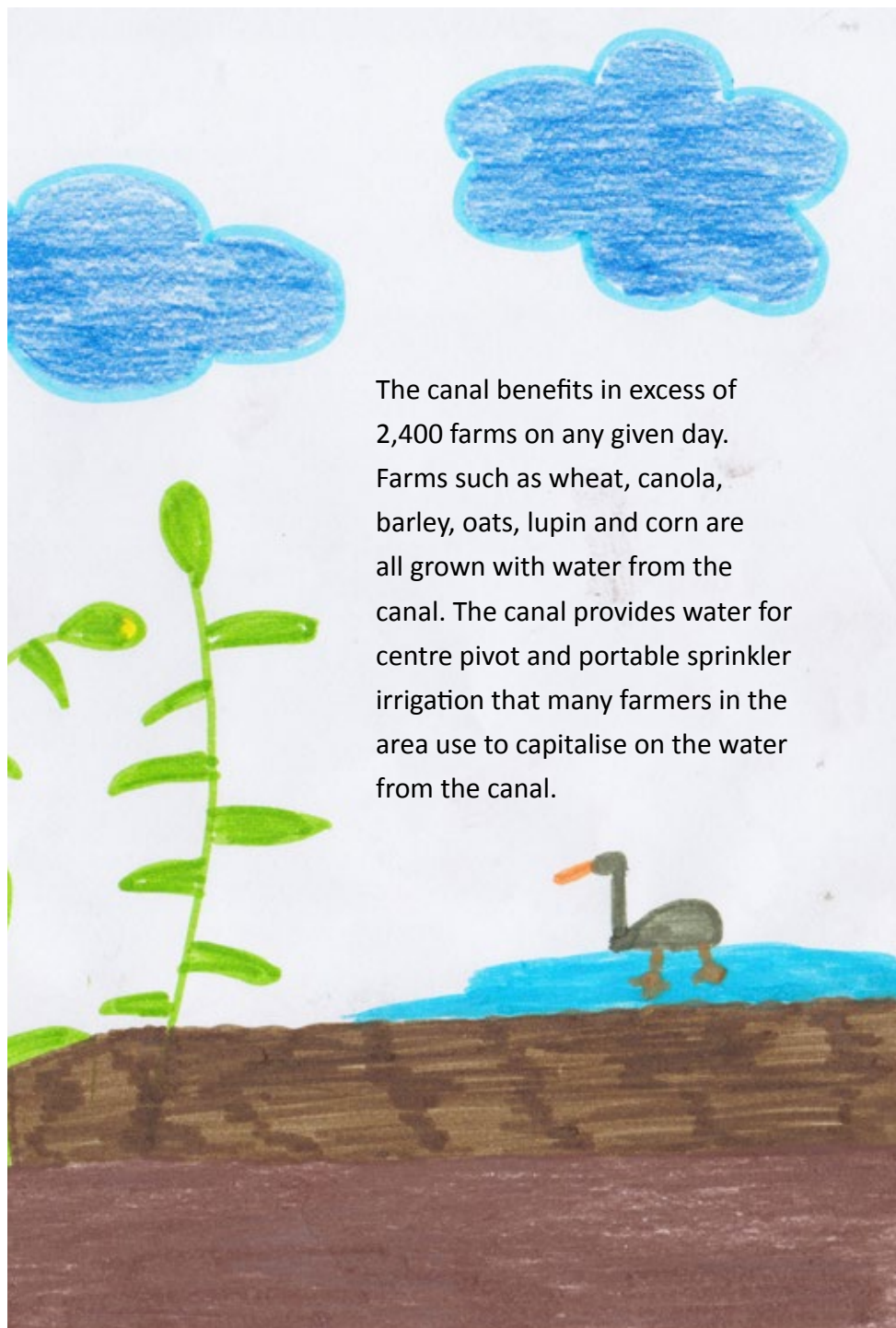


Mrs. Helen Purtle is appealing to the National Heritage Trust to make this land heritage listed. She would like to retain the land in its natural beauty for many more generations to enjoy. If houses were permitted to be built there would then be pollution and an affect on water quality in the canal.









The canal benefits in excess of 2,400 farms on any given day. Farms such as wheat, canola, barley, oats, lupin and corn are all grown with water from the canal. The canal provides water for centre pivot and portable sprinkler irrigation that many farmers in the area use to capitalise on the water from the canal.



The Mulwala Canal provides water for many farms from Mulwala all the way to Deniliquin. The canal is an important part of our farming history and farms of the future. It will ensure generations to come are able to continue the work of the generations before them.





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