

The Farm of the Future



Shannyn Leskie, Indiah Hallows,
Josephine Mannall and Simer Kaur

Thurgoona 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 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**

The Farm of the Future

Authors: Shannyn Leskie, Indiah Hallows, Josephine Mannall and Simer Kaur

Teacher: Emma Flower

School: Thurgoona 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.



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About Rob

Rob Fenton grew up on a farm on Philip Island and this is where he developed an interest in farming and knew he would eventually follow in his father's footsteps.

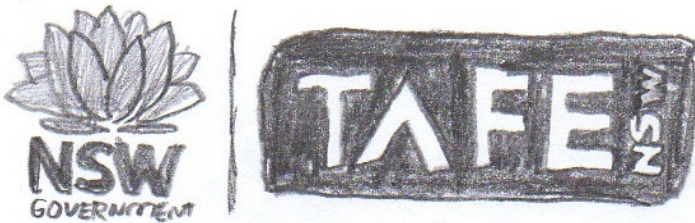
Rob now has five children of his own. One is designing permaculture, one is a vet and the other three have different interests.

The TAFE

Rob Fenton is the manager of the Riverina Institute of TAFE in Thurgoona. He is also a teacher and an expert wildlife ecologist.

The Thurgoona TAFE is an organic teaching farm. Students come from around the world to study there. Rob teaches students how to grow crops naturally and sustainably, without chemicals or oils.

It is the farm of the future!





Why farm?

Rob is very passionate about farming and loves his job. He couldn't imagine doing anything else. He is committed to making a difference to farming practices and teaching people to become more environmentally conscious, for future generations. He believes there are plenty of incredible job opportunities for people in agriculture.



Sheep

The sheep are a special breed called Damara and are ideally suited to the Australian climate. One thing that makes them unique is their long tails which stores fat, during hard times. These Damara sheep are protected by a donkey named Barbra. Barbra's job is to chase away the foxes if they get too close.





Pigs

The pigs on this farm are treated like wild pigs and are free to roam around in the paddock. Pigs can have 10 to 12 babies at a time and the pig in the picture was due to have piglets in May. The pigs on the farm are bred for meat.



Chickens

The free range chickens have lots of room to move, unlike caged chickens. They are protected from predators like foxes, by a guard dog called Bob.

Other chickens at Thurgoona TAFE are used to prepare and fertilise the soil for growing crops. They are placed in chicken tractors, which are mesh domes on wheels which are placed over the vegetable gardens.





Crops

The farm produces lots of different crops such as olives, pumpkins, mushrooms, green leafy vegetables, figs, spelt and many more. Spelt is a type of wheat, which is very hard to produce and is for people with gluten allergies.

The vegetables are seasonal and they only grow what they need, which reduces waste. Any scraps are feed to the pigs or chooks. The food is sometimes sold at the local farmers markets.





Bees

Thurgoona TAFE also has bee boxes. The bees are really important for pollinating the flowers and making honey, which can be sold. The farmers need to be careful not to have too many bees, or there won't be enough nectar for other animals that rely on it such as Sugar gliders.



Endangered plants and animals

Sections of the farm have been untouched to create a native corridor for animals. The green belts help protect the local endangered species, such as the Sloane's froglet and Sugar gliders. The Sloane's froglet used to be spread out all through NSW but numbers are currently very low.



The future of the farm

The organic TAFE farm is teaching the next generation about how to improve farming practises by using your farm to its advantage, reducing waste and help protect the environment for future generations. Farming of the future is about balancing agriculture and the natural environment.





Back row: Simer Kaur, Rob Fenton, Josphine Mannall

Front row: Indiah Hallows and Shannyn Leskie

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Local Land
Services
Murray



Local Land
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Riverina



Australian Government