

Tony Piggin: Farmer, Educator and Environmental



Angela Craft, Ruby Van Ree,
Joshua Sharp and Ryan Wandel

Corowa South 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

Tony Piggin: Farmer, Educator and Environmentalist

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Teacher: Lee McDonald

School: Corowa South 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.



Local Land
Services
Murray



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Tony has had a close connection with Corowa since his birth at the local hospital 60 years ago. From an early age, Tony has been involved with the agricultural activities of the family farm and has really enjoyed it.

Photo: Ryan, Ruby, Tony, Angela and Josh



Tony attended primary school in Corowa. Yanco Agricultural High School was the next step in his formal education. At this all boys boarding school, his knowledge of farming was extended in the areas such as agriculture and science. Tony also liked theatre and acting.



Photo: "Bilawi" remnant vegetation



Tony didn't study agriculture at university because he wanted to try some new subjects like theatre and history. He taught for ten years, teaching english, science and history. Tony was still actively involved in farming. Tony also feels that it is very important to take education very seriously.



Photo: Tony teaching about Kangaroo Thorn



Tony's farm "Bilawi", is situated 16 kilometres out of Corowa. It has been in Tony's family since the 1800s. Tony currently operates his property with a ratio of 70% cropping and 30% pastures and livestock. It also includes 400 acres of irrigation and lucerne.

Photo: Irrigation on "Bilawi"



In 1996 Tony was a founding member of Corowa District Landcare Group. He has been chairman of the group and at present still holds a position as a committee member.

Tony has chosen to still be involved in Landcare today because it helps to build opportunities for him to do new things on his farm.

Photo: Solar panels



Tony grows a variety of native grasses including Kangaroo grass, Wallaby grass and Microlena. The seed he grows is valued by cattle producers for important things like pasture development. The extent of his seed production is small, about 2% of his farm.

Photo: Kangaroo Grass



Tony has high value crops and practices sustainable agriculture. Stubble retention enables straw to break down to add nutrition to the soil. Tony has noticed an increase in worms in his paddocks since using stubble retention. Sheep trading is also an important part of his farming practice.

Photo: Stubble retention



Native wildlife, corridors and connections and curlews are all important to Tony. At his farm he has established a Bush stone-curlew protected breeding site. He has put in an electric fence that has an extra fence coming off it to stop foxes. This site has no curlews in it at the moment. 8% of “Bilawi” is remnant vegetation.



Photo: Tony and his electric fence



Tony loves to be outside and prefers it to being stuck inside. He really enjoys passing on his knowledge about farming and agriculture to others, especially school kids. He also loves holding field days so other people can see his farm. The many corridors create a safe place for small birds to hide from the Wedge-tailed eagles.

Photo: Tony showing the children Kangaroo thorn



Overseas travel is one of the things Tony likes to do best. So far Tony has been to New Zealand, Europe, Canada and Turkey. One of Tony's favourite hobbies is skiing. Tony has been skiing in New Zealand, Canada and Turkey. When Tony goes overseas or to other countries he goes roadside farming.

Photo: Tony's overseas travels



Tony would like to see “Bilawi” go through a succession process. His daughters as well as other family members have a strong interest in the farm. Currently he is considering various options for the future directions of the property. Tony will always have a strong connection with land care and environmental work.

Photo: Tony and the mud-brick home he built “Bilawi”





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2014 Year 5 and 6, Corowa South Public School



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