

# Varapodio Estate



Patrick Roden, Alyssa Gale, Lauren Boundy,  
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Buronga 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 Western 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 in western New South Wales. The program was generously funded by the Western Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes acknowledges the United Nations  
2014 International Year of the 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.



Design by Peekdesigns, [www.peekdesigns.com.au](http://www.peekdesigns.com.au)

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The Scopelliti's own and run the Varapodio Estate at Buronga, NSW on the Sturt Highway.

Varapodio is a small Italian town in the province of Reggio in southern Calabria. It was the home town of the first generation of the Scopelliti family who migrated to Australia in the late-1940s.





Joe Scopelliti was born at the Wentworth Base Hospital and has lived on his farm, in Buronga NSW, since he was six months old.

Photo: Joe with his two sisters





Joe's wife, Donna Scopelliti, was born in Mildura Base Hospital and grew up on a sheep station just past Pooncarie in NSW.

Photo: Young photo of Donna



Donna met Joe through friends. They married in Mildura at Sacred Heart Church.

Donna moved onto the property following the wedding. They have lived there and raised a family ever since. They have two boys who both attended Buronga Public School. Jacob is 16 years old and Thomas is 14 years old.



Varapodio Estate has 3500 olive trees which the Scopelliti's use to make many different types of products. These include olive oil, olive soaps, olive oil moisturiser and even olive oil ice-cream.

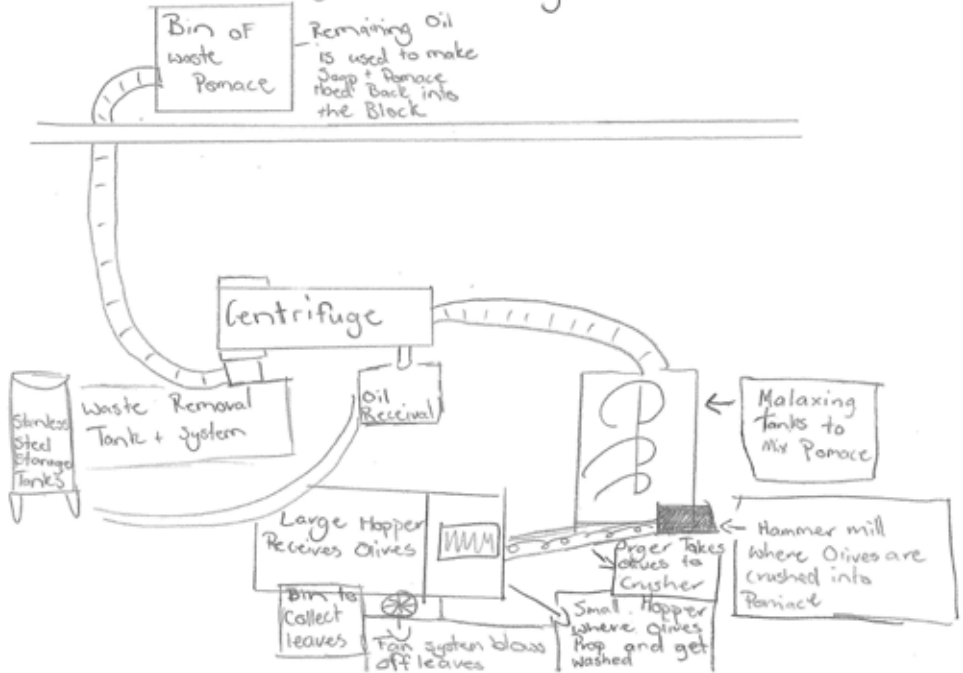
They also sell on the internet:  
[www.varapodioestate.com.au](http://www.varapodioestate.com.au)





The Scopelliti's have two to four pickers to hand pick the olives using rakes. The olives fall on a big sheet and they have to be processed for 12- 24 hours. They have enough olives to last the whole year.

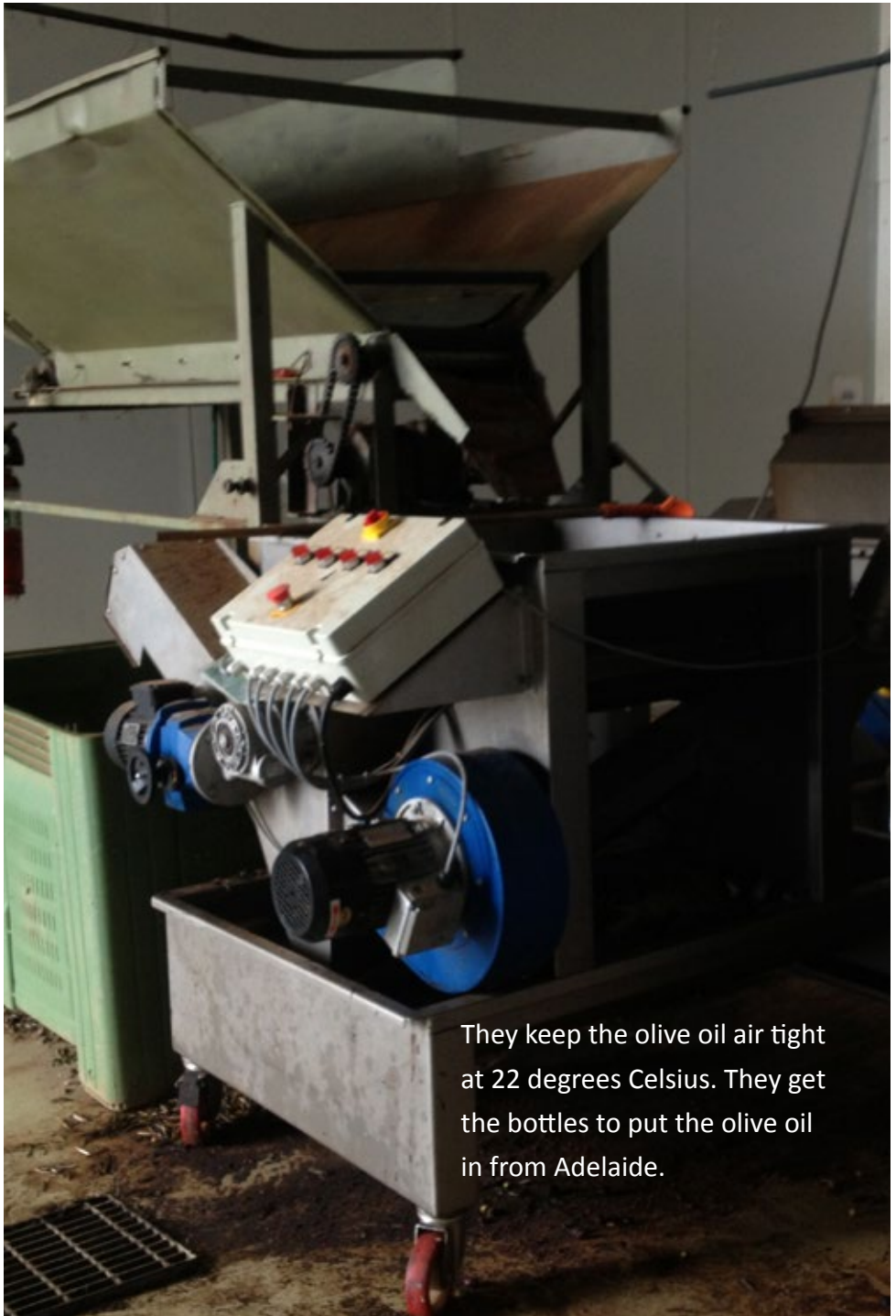
## Olive Oil Making Plan



They use lots of different machines to process the olives to make into olive oil.

One bin of olives equals 50 litres of olive oil.

The machines they use are imported from Italy.



They keep the olive oil air tight at 22 degrees Celsius. They get the bottles to put the olive oil in from Adelaide.



Overhead sprinklers originally irrigated the farm, which wasn't very water efficient and now they water with drip irrigation. They diversified their farm to include olives as well as citrus, when citrus prices dropped too low to be able to make a living from.





People will have to start thinking a little differently about how they farm to make sure they have a product that people want. This is why the Scopelliti's diversified from citrus to include olives as well.



The Scopelliti's win awards every year. They have even won awards in Italy for their olive oils.







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Local Land  
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Australian Government