

Rod Dunlop's *Adventures with Weeds*



Taylah Gardiner, Kyah-Jane Barton,
Kayleigh Wolfe and Bethony Newsome

Kapooka Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners 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.

www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/

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

Enviro-Stories

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

Rod Dunlop's

Adventures with Weeds

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School: Kapooka Public School

Local Land Heroes - Securing Our Region

In 2015, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their 'Local Land Heroes' who are involved in pest management in the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions. These heroes are local individuals, couples, a business or industries that have made a difference in their local community by contributing to the management of pest animals and plants. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a PeekDesigns education program.



Local Land Services



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Rod Dunlop is a 65 year old man who operates from a small farm at North Wagga. When Rod started work, he worked for a company and then decided to start his own career. In the early 1970s his career started to develop, evolve and turn into long term business. Eventually, he started his own little company which became very successful.

As well as helping landholders control weeds he also enjoys growing fat lambs.



Rod's first Toyota spray vehicle in the early 1980s



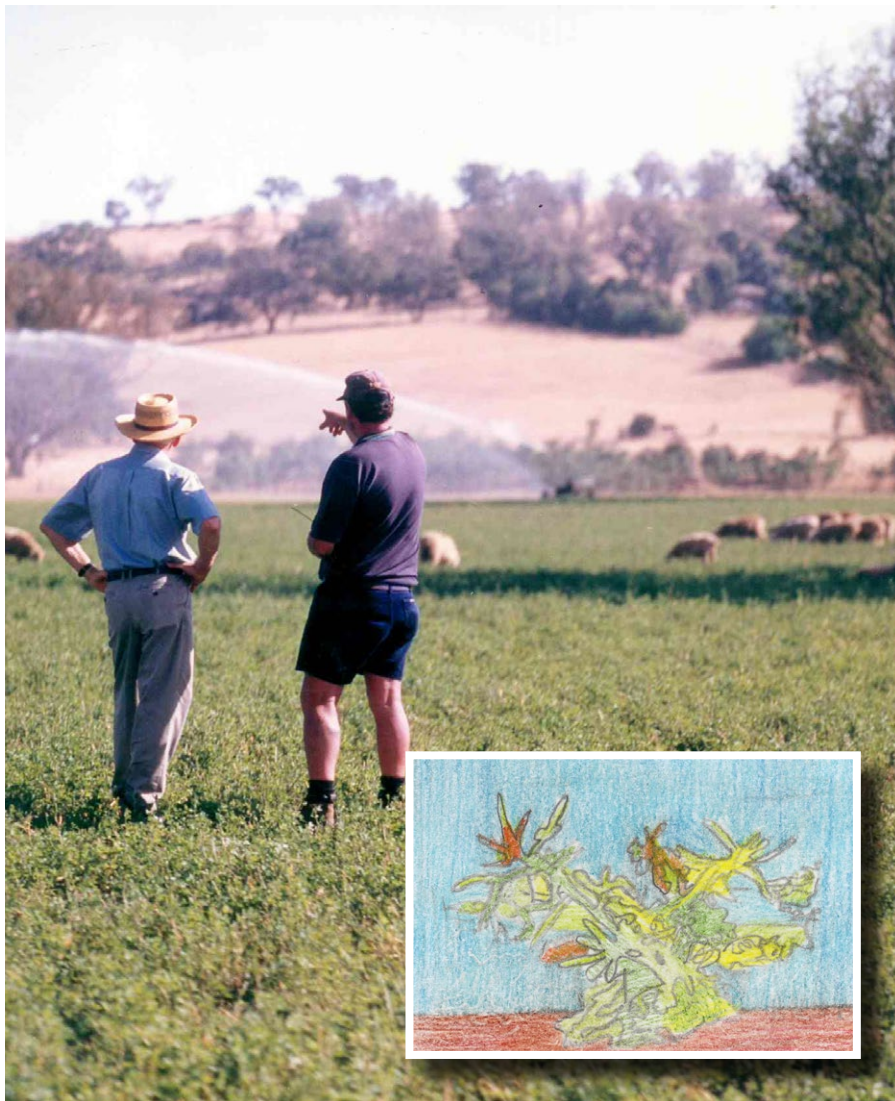
Rod mixing chemical and filling his truck from water tank.

Rod's company does things like treating weeds, eradicating them and controlling them. To do this, Rod uses lots of different machines, tools and chemicals. He has to use protective gear and his maths must always be very good when calculating quantities. Not only does he get hired to treat places like Kapooka, Rod occasionally has to treat his own properties and gardens. He also share farms on various small properties around North Wagga.

One place Rod treats is the Kapooka Army Base. Our school is surrounded by the base which has a lot of natural bushland and open paddocks.

Rod is contracted by the Australian Government to help look after this land. Once the Kapooka Army Base had to close down for 24 hours because of a locust plague that was affecting the field when the soldiers went out bush. Rod had to help manage these pests.





Rod Dunlop has found a lot of weeds that affect the local area. There are common weeds like the Bathurst Burr (drawing), Paterson's Curse, Vipers Bugloss and St. John's Wort. These weeds affect animals and the environment.

Weeds like St. John's Wort are native to Europe, Asia and North Africa. It was brought to Australia in 1875. St. John's Wort is not allowed to grow in New South Wales because it can poison the livestock that eat it.



Paterson's Curse (pictured) is not considered noxious here in New South Wales. Paterson's Curse originated from Western Europe and the Mediterranean areas.

It takes one to six weeks for weeds like Paterson's Curse to die once sprayed, but others like the St. John's Wort takes six weeks to two months.

The way to identify the St. John's Wort weed from other yellow plants is to hold one of the leaves up to the sun, and you will see lots of little pin-sized holes in it. That's how you know!

Rod has to know what he is doing and looking for. He also gets advice from government groups, like the Department of Primary Industries, to help him with the latest advice on taking care of weeds.





Applying fungicide for canola aphids.
It was estimated to cover four tonnes per hectare.



Goldacre Crop Cruiser

Rod has two large 4WD vehicles. One vehicle has big boom sprays for larger paddocks. He has a smaller vehicle with long hoses that he can use to do hand line work to spray the hard-to-get weeds. When he uses the big truck, this is called “broad acre” spraying. This is when he sprays for broad leaf weeds in clover paddocks or crops such as wheat, canola and barley.

Some of these big spay units can be worth up to half a million dollars.

When doing work, the average area Rod and his workers have to decontaminate is around 200 hectares. Often he has to treat smaller areas using a hand line from a truck. This is good for spraying weeds like blackberries. In his career he must have sprayed over half a million hectares.

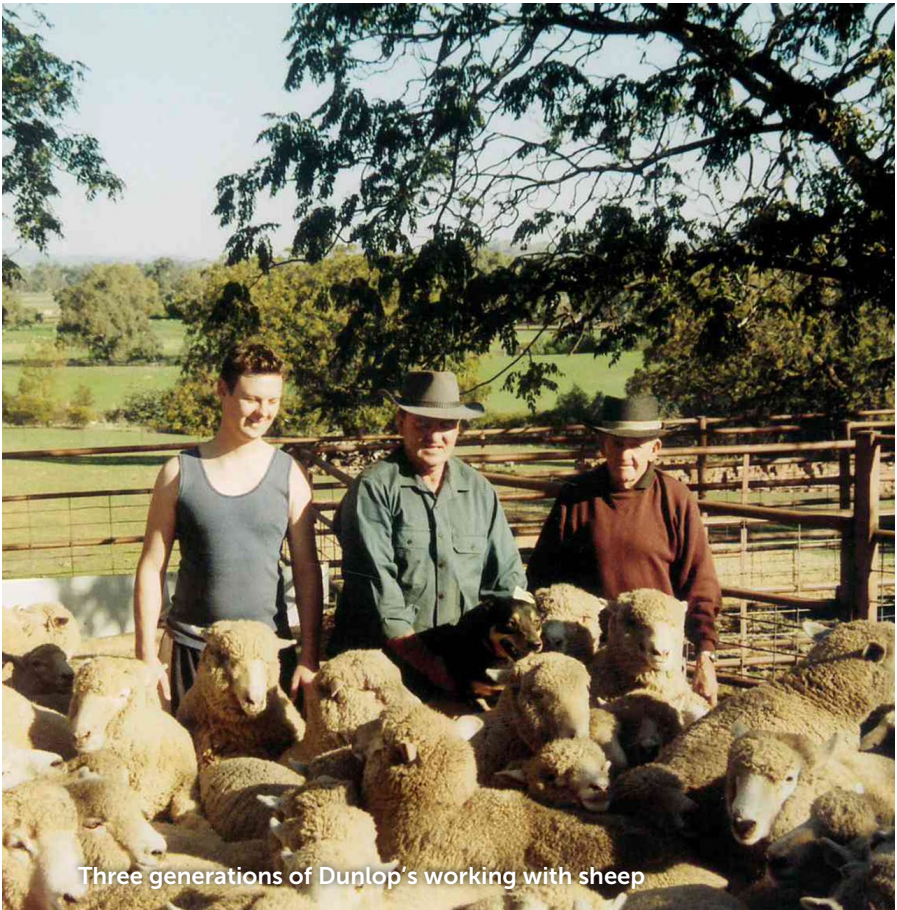
When Rod is really busy he works 14 hours a day.





You may think that running companies would be fun. But it's not always fun. As well as paying the water and electricity bills at home, you also have to keep track of how much you pay your workers and what jobs you have done.

Rod has to make sure his equipment is in tip-top shape for the next job. Rod's job requires a lot of planning, hard work and book keeping of records. Rod's wife, Mary, looks after the books and his son, Nicholas, helps out a lot with the spraying.



Rod says that you can never forget that there are benefits in running your own company. You get to meet new people and visit places, be recognised throughout your community and be given an important role in other people's lives. You help farmers make money, pay their bills and support their families so they have good farms to grow up on.

Rod Dunlop's mother had cancer and because of this he decided to help kids with cancer. At just one rally Rod and his team mates earned \$100,000.

After this absolutely amazing achievement, in 2002 Rod helped build a house in Hilltop Estate, Wagga Wagga, for his favourite charity called "Country Hope". It managed to sell for \$220,000.

Country Hope is very dear to Rod's heart and he has helped raise over one million dollars for kids with cancer. The Queen awarded Rod the Federation Medal and certificate for his services to the community.



The Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Mr. Kevin Wales, presents Rod with his Federation Medal



Taylah Gardiner, Kyah-Jane Barton, Kayleigh Wolfe
and Bethony Newsome with Rod Dunlop

2015 Year 4-6, Kapooka Public School

CONGRATULATIONS

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the
2015 NSW Junior Landcare Team Award and will be
competing in the 2016 National Landcare Awards.



Local Land
Services

