

Weed Warrior



Felicity Macauley, Ellie Disher and Lauren Gleeson

Barham High 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

Weed Warrior

Authors: Felicity Macauley, Ellie Disher and Lauren Gleeson

Teacher: Fiona Smee

School: Barham High 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.



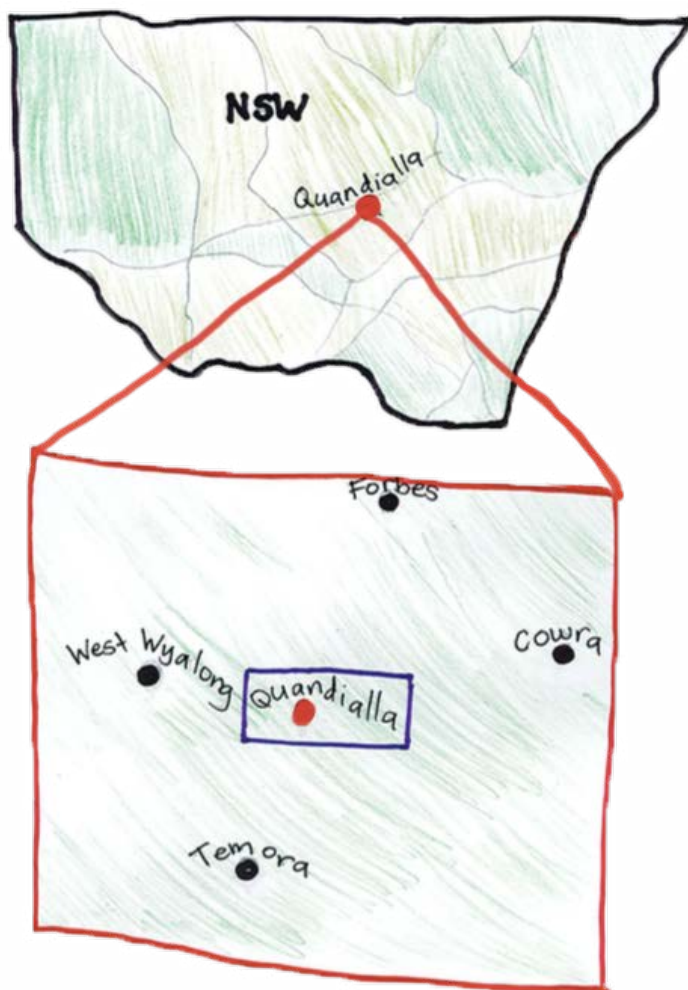
Local Land
Services

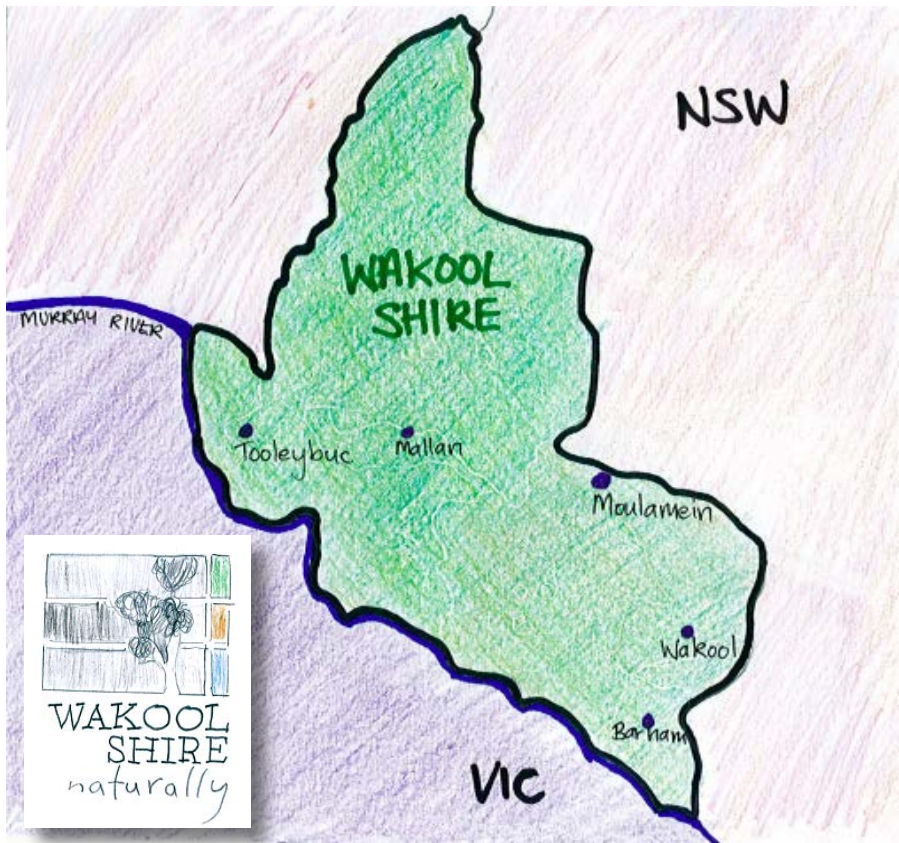


Australian Government



Stephen Battenally was born in the Central Western NSW town of Grenfell and lived in Quandialla. He left school in Year 10 and worked as a farm hand and then a shearer. Stephen travelled to Moulamein for a two week shearing job nearly 30 years ago and has never left. He married a local girl Lynnemaree and they have four children: Benjamin, Michael, Matthew and Lisa.





Stephen started working at the Wakool Shire Council in Moulamein doing general maintenance. In 1996, weed control became part of his job. Stephen's job title is now 'Noxious Weeds and Roadside Environmental Officer'. Working to eradicate weeds is more than a job for Stephen, he now considers it a hobby.

When Stephen began the job, the Weed Inspector was not very popular with farmers. Stephen has worked hard to improve this relationship and farmers now recognise that he is there to help and work with them.

Weeds are a very big problem in Australia. They often compete with local native species and are known as invasive plants. Weeds often produce large numbers of seeds, which makes it easier for the plant to spread. Seeds can be spread by being caught on sheep's wool, eaten by a bird or even stuck in machinery.

Throughout the Riverina weeds are spreading faster than they can be controlled. Climate change also poses an additional challenge to our ability to manage the weeds.



Drawing: Alligator weed flowers

There are many different weeds in the Riverina. Some of them include: Spiny burr grass, Bathurst Burr, Sagittaria, Khaki weed, Horehound, Boxthorn, Coolatai Grass, Patterson Curse, Gazania, Bridal Creeper, Scotch Thistle, Alligator weed and Feather Grass.

ALLIGATOR WEED grows up to 10 metres long in summer. It is green with white flowers. These weeds form a thick ground cover, competing with other organisms. It is very hard to control and threatens wetlands, low lands and irrigated areas.



Photo Source: NSW Department of Primary Industries



AFRICAN BOXTHORN is a big problem all over Australia. It came from South Africa and was used as a fence due to its thickness and height. It was used to keep animals in their paddocks but it has now spread to crops. The plant can grow 3 to 6 metres tall and has thorns that can be as long as 15 centimetres. The Boxthorn's flowers are 12 millimetres in diameter and are white in colour.

Ways you can control African Boxthorn:

1. Herbicide - sprayed or cut stump
2. Mechanical removal - digging it out
3. Revegetating - planting lots of native plants so the Boxthorn can't take hold

HOREHOUND is a bushy plant that looks a lot like garden mint. It has soft leaves and small white flowers when in seed and can grow 30 centimetres to 80 centimetres tall. It has become a big problem all over Australia. It was introduced from Europe and has been used to make beer.





HOREHOUND MOTHS are little white moths that can be used to eradicate the weed. The moths lay their eggs on the under-side of the leaves of the Horehound plant. When the eggs hatch and become caterpillars they eat the leaves and cause the plant to die.

It is more efficient to use moths than poison because it is better for the environment including native animals and plants. It is also less expensive to use the moths as they breed and look for other plants to lay their eggs on.

There are different ways to control weeds: biological control, poisons or mechanically removing them.

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

Some weeds can be controlled using a particular animal which will eat and destroy the plant

- Horehound - can be controlled by a moth
- Patterson's Curse - can be controlled by a flea beetle and weevils
- Bridal Creeper - can be controlled by leaf hopper

POISONS

Some weed exterminators prefer to use poisons to kill weeds. These do not kill all weeds and can affect native plants and animals.

MECHANICAL REMOVAL

The most efficient way to remove weeds is by digging them out by hand, mattock or bulldozer. You must ensure to remove all the roots.



Stephen runs a program called Weed Warriors with local primary schools. In the past he has worked with six schools: Wakool, Burraboi, Tooleybuc, Barham, Mallan and Moulamein. He now works with the four remaining schools in the district.

The program involves showing the students how to identify different weeds, how to breed the Horehound Moth and raise the caterpillars. Stephen also shows students how to transfer the moth from weed to weed.





Stephen's Weed Warrior program is part of the Wakool Shire Council's 5 year Weed Actions Program. He is at the beginning of the next five-year cycle. During this cycle he hopes to continue working with these schools.



Stephen is doing a fantastic job controlling all the different weeds in our area. He is now working with other local groups to prevent the introduction of new weed species to the Wakool Shire.

His years of hard work and dedication are the reason we've chosen Stephen as our local land hero.





Felicity Macauley, Stephen Battenally, Ellie Disher
and Lauren Gleeson

2015 Year 7, Barham High 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

