

# Bill and Cecile's Farm



St. Columba's Catholic School, Berrigan



## 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/](http://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](http://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 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)**

# Bill and Cecile's Farm

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**School:** St. Columba's Catholic School, Berrigan

**Teacher:** Damien Taylor

## Murray Wetland Carbon Storage Project

In 2017, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program participated in a field day at a local wetland as part of the Murray Wetland Carbon Storage project. Students spent time with community members who were involved in the project to find out about them and what makes their wetland special. They then developed these stories into a series of books aimed at teaching other kids about the importance of wetlands. This program is supported by Murray Local Land Services and the Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group Ltd. with funding from the Australian Government.

Creative Catchment Kids is part of Enviro-Stories, a PeeKdesigns education program.





Bill and Cecile live on a farm approximately 15 minutes drive from Berrigan in NSW. They have a very large farm and have lots of animals and crops. The farm is very unique because there is a wetland on a part of their farm. This wetland has become a protected area for the conservation of wildlife.



Bill has lived on the farm all of his life. Bill decided to stay on the farm when his parents moved into town. The house that they live in is a pisé building - meaning it is rammed earth made from local materials. Many old homesteads in the southern Riverina were made of this construction and are still standing today. The house is over 100 years old.





Bill has four sisters who he grew up with on the farm. They have all moved away from the farm now. Bill and Cecile have two sons Tom and Sam. Sam lives and works on the farm. They also have two dogs; one is a stay at home dog named Miley and the other is a working dog.



A typical wetland area is where water covers the soil. Wetlands are usually wet in the winter and dry in the summer. In winter the water makes the soil wet and damp so lots of frogs and birds go there. In the summer the land is dry and all of the dirt is cracked.

On Bill and Cecile's farm they have been given funding to look after and preserve the wetland.

Their family business has also contributed a lot of energy and time into saving and restoring the wetland. They have fenced off the area so that cattle can't damage the land. This has allowed many different animals to come and call the wetlands their home.



S. Dallinger





S. Dallinger





S. Dallinger

Generally it's the wildlife and vegetation that defines a wetland and characterises it from other forms of land. The types of vegetation commonly found in a wetland are:

- Sedges
- Rushes
- Spike-rushes (right)
- Water couch
- Common reed
- Water primrose
- Different herbs



D. Cook and E. Bayes



Eastern banjo frog, D. Michael



Peron's tree frog, D. Michael



Eastern sign-bearing froglet, D. Michael



Spotted marsh frog, D. Michael

There are many types of wildlife that live in a wetland including birds, reptiles and amphibians. Frogs are always very common in wetland areas. There are many frogs around the world that can be found in wetlands. In our area we have the Eastern banjo frog, Peron's tree frog, Eastern sign-bearing froglet and the Spotted marsh frog.

On Bill and Cecile's farm they have seen many different species of birds including brolgas and wood ducks.



Brolga, E. Dunens

The Brolga is a large bird, formerly known as the native companion and is part of the crane family. The Brolga is a tall bird with a large beak, long slender neck and stilt-like legs. The sexes are alike in appearance though the females are usually a little smaller. The Brolga is a large grey crane with a featherless red head and grey crown and fully grown can reach a height of 1.3 metres with a wingspan of up to 2.4 metres. They are omnivorous – meaning they can eat both plant and animal foods. Brolga's are very social and are usually seen as a pair or small family groups.

Australian wood ducks are a specific breed of duck. They are a medium sized duck and coloured light brown. They are found all over Australia and are often spotted on the farm. Wood ducks feed on herbs, grasses and small insects which are abundantly found in wetland areas. Wood ducks were named because they nest in hollows of gum trees. When the young are ready, the fledglings are pushed out of their nest where they fall and bounce on the ground. They will follow the parents until they are big enough to leave and survive on their own.



Wood duck, JJ. Harrison

Bill and Cecile have had support from conservation groups to look after the wetland on their farm. Cecile is pictured below with representatives from Murray Local Land Services and the Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group Ltd. They are dedicated to caring for our natural environment and continue to work closely with these environmental groups in ensuring these areas are around for a long time to come. We all hope to come and see the wetland flourish over the coming years.







Matthew Whelan, Sebastian Graham, Teagan Dart and Alyssa Denny  
with Bill and Cecile. Patrick Waugh - Absent.  
2017 Year 6, St. Columba's Catholic School, Berrigan

## Congratulations!

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and  
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the  
National 2016 Yates Junior Landcare Team Award.

