



A plan to capitalise on the Goulburn - Broken River system in the heart of our city

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AWARDS! AWARDS! AWARDS!

VCAL Partner Achievement Award

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) Awards recognise the outstanding achievements of young people who participated in the VCAL.

The awards also recognise the contribution and achievement of VCAL teachers and partner organisations that have contributed to the development and delivery of innovative VCAL programs.

The VCAL Achievement Awards are presented in three categories:

- Student Achievement Award
- Teacher Achievement Award
- Partner Achievement Award.

VCAL Partner Achievement Award winners: Dept. Primary Industries, Goulburn Broken CMA, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, Goulburn Valley Water, the Greater Shepparton City Council, Notre Dame College, Parks Victoria.

26 VCAL students and two teachers worked closely with RiverConnect partners to develop an innovative VCAL Personal Development Skills unit in 2007.

The VCAL students undertook audits and surveys at Reedy Swamp. These were undertaken using global positioning system technology and were used to assess the infestation of noxious weeds such as arrowhead and willows, the growth of Red Gum seedlings in the swamp and the giant rush this is used by water birds for breeding. The students were also involved in rubbish clean ups, poisoning willows and the planting of native trees in culturally significant areas of the sand dunes at Reedy Swamp.

The project has been an outstanding success due to the commitment of all parties involved. The project has also enabled the students to have a better appreciation of the Goulburn Broken River System and its environs and how to better care for this precious asset in the community.



Raechel Spokes (GBCMA), Cindy Doherty GSCC, Neville Atkinson (GBCMA), Bruce Wehner (Parks Victoria), Dani Beischern (GMLN) and Julie Hodgkins (Notre Dame) attended the Awards Ceremony in May.



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In partnership with: Department of Sustainability and Environment, Department of Primary Industries,
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Shepparton Network,
Yorta Yorta Joint Body, Yorta Yorta Nations, Rumbalara Cooperative,
Word and Mouth, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, Parks Victoria, Sir Andrew and Lady Fairley Foundation.



Notre Dame College and the VCAL RiverConnect Project 2008 Global Best Award

After receiving the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority's VCAL Partner Achievement Award in 2007 for our involvement in the RiverConnect project, Notre Dame College and our community partners were nominated for a 2008 Global Best Award. The 2008 Global Best Awards are part of the 9th International Education Business Partnership Conference organized by the International Partnership Network in collaboration with the Conference Board of Canada.

We are very pleased to announce that Notre Dame College together with our community partners have received a Global Best Award Honourable Mention in the category of "Building Learning Communities" and that Gary O'Brien and Julie Hodgkins are currently in Finland attending the conference and to accept the Award in September. Also, Gary and Julie have been invited to conduct a workshop at the conference on the RiverConnect/VCAL project.

- The Global Best Awards celebrate outstanding and effective business, education and community organisation partnerships that have a significant impact on the communities in which they operate. The invitation to present means that our project has been recognised as a highly regarded model at a global level. It is expected that there will be 500 international participants at the conference and the main themes of the conference are:
Building Learning Communities
- Developing skills for the future workforce
- Enabling economic development through enterprise and livelihoods
- Promoting health and well-being in children in education.
- Visits to schools/business partnership projects in Finland.

The Notre Dame VCAL students have been involved in the RiverConnect project in 2007 and 2008 as part of their Religious Education (Community Awareness/VCAL Personal Development Skills Units).



The students and teaching staff have worked closely with the following government/ community agencies – our community partners:

- Department of Primary Industries
- Goulburn Broken Management Authority
- Goulburn Murray Landcare Network
- Goulburn Valley Water
- Parks Victoria
- The Greater Shepparton City Council

Garry O'Brien at work on site at the Reedy Swamp with the Notre Dame students .Photo supplied by Julie Hodgkins

Notre Dame College VCAL students were allocated the area known as Reedy Swamp - a significant wetland which provides a habitat for a large number of birds and other wildlife - and is managed by Parks Victoria. Using GPS technology, the students have carried out audits and surveys to assess the level of noxious weeds and the amount of re-growth of native trees and grasses in the area. The students have also been involved in planting trees, poisoning willows and rubbish clean ups in the Reedy Swamp area. The VCAL students have built nesting boxes for the squirrel glider and are currently building picnic tables to be installed at Reedy Swamp at the end of 2008.

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Notre Dame College has established important partnerships and effective working relationships with all the community groups involved in the RiverConnect project which has now been recognised internationally. All parties involved have given outstanding support to our students and teaching staff in relation to environmental issues and habitat enhancement of the Reedy Swamp area. The project has included the involvement of our local indigenous community in relation to culturally sensitive areas in Reedy Swamp and also lessons conducted by two of Parks Victoria Rangers (Greta Morgan and Hilda Stewart) on the topic of "bush tucker".

Special thanks to Dianne Hanna (RiverConnect), Bruce Wehner (Parks Victoria) and Danielle Beischer (Landcare Network) for their untiring efforts over the last two years with our VCAL students.

The project has enabled the objectives of the RiverConnect program and the outcomes for our VCAL students to be simultaneously met. It has also enabled our students to take ownership of part of their living environment and to be motivated to continue to protect it for future generations.

Julie Hodgkins

Student Pathways Co-ordinator , Notre Dame Secondary College

Banksia Awards 2008

On Friday 18 July 2008 the Banksia Environmental Foundation Awards with the Chairs and CEOs from the Goulburn Broken CMA, Goulburn Murray Water and other key committee members and staff in attendance. The Hon Julia Gillard MP Deputy Prime Minister, The Hon Peter Garret AM MP and the Hon. Gavin Jennings State Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Innovation, attended the event.

The Goulburn Broken CMA entered their project, "Vision for the Broken River Basin" into the Water Category – for the "protection, conservation or enhancement of freshwater resources and marine environments".

The "Vision for the Broken River Basin" encompasses a raft of many projects to provide an ecologically sustainable future for the Broken River Valley by increasing flows,

improving water quality, revegetating riparian zones/floodplains and improving habitat and fish passage. Cindy Doherty appeared on the DVD entry to the Award speaking about the RiverConnect project.

The GBCMA entry won their category and the Award was presented to Huw Davies, Chair of the Goulburn Broken CMA, by The Hon Gavin Jennings.



National Tree Day – Planting at Gowrie Street reach



Dani Beischer took a group of Gowrie Street students to a their Adopt-a-reach patch to teach the students about the natural wonders about a 10 minute walk away from their school.

The group planted a variety of locally indigenous trees (mainly silver wattle) supplied by the Council and the GBCMA.

The students were taught about providing a habitat for the local species of flora and fauna and got to spend some quality time by the Goulburn, while learning about its significance to our local community.

Adopt-a-reach Launch

Thursday 5 June was not only World Environment Day, but it was a very special day for the Adopt-a-reach project. After many hours of careful planning and liaison work with the 19 schools and groups involved, the Adopt-a-reach project was officially launched at the amphitheatre at SPC Ardmona KidsTown.

The event was well attended by members of the RiverConnect Community Advisory Committee, Working Groups and Elders Reference group, all of whom were very pleased to see the high level of interest and enthusiasm expressed by the students and teachers in attendance.



KidsTown Amphitheatre - Picture provided by Cindy Doherty



Anne McCamish, Neville Atkinson and Dianne Hanna at the Launch. Picture provided by Ann Fagan

Each school was presented with a kit which consisted of a RiverConnect handbook and a framed aerial photo of their individual reach. Wanganui Park Secondary College VCAL students gave a short presentation on what they have learned from the works they have been carrying out at Jordan's Bend and St Luke's Primary School students spoke about what the river means to them. At the end of the launch, each school read out an affirmation to further commit to the project as per written below.

Thanks must go to Dianne Hanna for the many hours put in to the project.

The Education Working Group is continually developing Adopt-a-reach so watch this space!

"As members of the Shepparton Mooroopna community we look forward to working together so this community can understand and appreciate the importance of our river environment. It is our hope that this community will feel really connected to the river and to each other".

Adopt-a-reach Launch affirmation, 5 June 2008.

RiverConnect Coordinator

Some of you may or may not have heard that I have resigned from the RiverConnect Coordinator role to take up a position at Goulburn-Murray Water.

It is difficult to leave the RiverConnect as I am really passionate about the objectives and ideals behind it; however the position I am going to is a great opportunity and am looking forward the new challenges it will bring.

The RiverConnect Coordinator position will be advertised at the end of September with the aim of filling the role by the end of October/early November. Should you be aware of anyone who would be interested in the position please let them know it is coming up! Thank you for your input to the project and wish you all the best. *Cindy*

Upcoming Events

- Biodiversity Month – September
 - **Water Week 19 – 26 October**
 - Reedy Swamp Walk 21 Oct
 - Gemmill's Swamp Walk – 23 Oct
 - Water/wattle cycle – 26 Oct
- (keep a look out for the water week brochure!)

"Ideas, just like rivers, never have just one source."
Willy Leahy