

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LANDCARE COMMITTEE DECADE REPORT 1989-2000

INTRODUCTION

The Landcare ethic evolved in the early 1980s from voluntary farmer groups, notably in Western Australia and Victoria, tackling salinity, wind erosion, pest plants and animals problems at a district scale. Pilot schemes were then funded by the Victorian Government in the mid 1980s, with many projects often limited to a single farm and a single farming family. In 1988, the National Farmers' Federation and the Australian Conservation Foundation jointly proposed a National Land Management Program. The Australian Government acted on this initiative, and announced the 1990s would be the Decade of Landcare, with a \$340 million ten year program.

During the decade the landcare movement metamorphosed into a national program involving thousands of community groups and organisations acting cooperatively in repairing land degradation. There is now a large network of coordinators and facilitators assisting community landcare groups with projects, that are integrated into strategies designed to restore the ecologies of whole regions (Robert W. Fitzgerald, 1997).

The Decade of Landcare saw the formation of over 4,500 landcare groups nationally. In South Australia, Landcare groups have expanded steadily and now stands at some 320 groups following amalgamations, whilst another 150 coastcare groups have also been registered. Thus, taking the total number of groups in South Australia to 470. Within the general community, public awareness of landcare in this state is now over 80%.

We should be proud of our achievements in landcare. Australia is the most successful environmental action movement. Dr Brian Roberts AM (1999) stated that 'while it has been useful for government to use landcare as a means of spreading public environmental awareness, expanding school programs, and holding Australia up as a world leader in grassroots community action, we have made only slow progress in improving the condition of the majority of our lands, notably our rangelands.'

At the end of the decade, John Claringbould (Chairperson Landcare Australia, 1999) stated that '...all of us working in landcare are convinced more strongly than ever that it will take many years, if not lifetimes, to arrest and reverse land degradation in Australia. The magnitude of some land degradation issues, such as salinity in the Murray Darling Basin, is still perhaps not fully realised, even now.' However, Rick Farley (1999) states '...that we have made a significant start, with a much wider recognition and acceptance that land management practices have to change. The ethos of land management has shifted forever towards sustainable resource use.'

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LANDCARE COMMITTEE (SALC)

In response to a Federal Government's initiative to set up a programme for Landcare, the State Government formed a State Management Committee (SMC) for the Year of Landcare. South Australia was the first Management Committee in Australia to formally establish. In August 1989, the committee met for the first time and adopted a mission statement *"to develop a landcare ethic amongst all Australians and to raise consciousness of the fact that only careful management of the land and all its resources will maintain our present way of life and that of future generations"*.

The Year of Landcare – 1990, was launched by the Hon. Lynn Arnold, Minister of Agriculture, on Monday 26th February 1990, at Cobbler Creek Recreation Park, Adelaide. The park has some severe erosion problems which clearly illustrated the need for a landcare program.

The SMC did not attempt to manage any of the planned projects, but simply to co-ordinate activities through monthly newsletters, calender of events, guidelines for participation of people and groups, registration forms, and a personal action guide. Nine Landcare Officers were appointed by the Dept. of Agriculture to assist landholders across SA. The Landcare Officers also helped to organise an Environmental Trail at the Royal Adelaide Show. Seed money was requested by SMC to help community groups start up projects. The Minister of Agriculture gave a \$30,000 grant to SMC, and this enabled groups to access up to \$200 of seed money, to help with their establishment.

In 1991, South Australia's Governor Her Excellency, Dame Roma Mitchell AC DBE, accepted the invitation to be Patron of Landcare in SA. Her successor, His Excellency Sir Eric Neal, became patron on (date) and has been of considerable assistance in promoting the landcare ethic in this state.

During 1994 the State Management Committee (SMC) was renamed 'The South Australian Landcare Committee' (SALC), with the aim "to encourage community wide networks to increase awareness, understanding and involvement in Landcare".

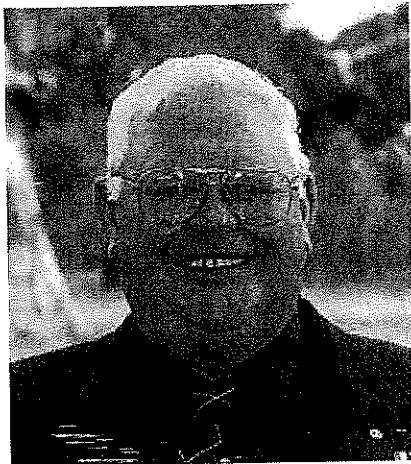
Barbara Hardy was the inaugural chair of the SMC and served in that role from 1989-97. Mr Hume Macdonald was appointed by Cabinet as the new Chairperson on the 3rd March 1997. He had been a member of the SMC since 1992.

In July 1998 the South Australian Landcare Committee underwent a review of its objectives and developed a new strategic plan. The major goals identified in the Strategic Plan are as follows:

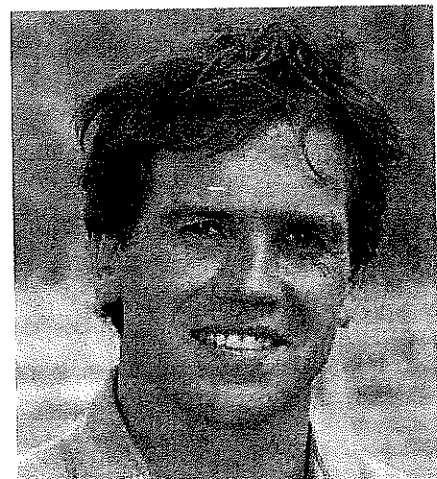
1. Effective administration of the community landcare group network facilitated.
2. Policy and direction affecting the effective function of Landcare influenced.
3. Community support for Landcare achieved.



His Excellency, Sir Eric Neal , Governor of SA, Dr Barbara Hardy AO, Inaugural Chair, SA Landcare Committee, Hume Macdonald, Chair, SA Landcare Committee.



Hume Macdonald
Chair, SA Landcare Committee



Leigh Radford,
Media Representative

Another significant Foundation activity revolved around the "Olympic Landcare Project". SOCOG identified the following sites for tree planting and direct seeding in 1999.

- Nairne
 - 17,000 trees planted by 70 volunteers and 330 school students
 - 15,000 trees direct seeded
- Rowland Flat, near Tanunda
 - 5,000 trees planted by 220 volunteers
- Port Noarlunga
 - 3,000 trees planted by 110 volunteers and 400 school students



Olympic Landcare Team, Tanunda

During the decade, many landcare activities and projects in South Australia have been sponsored and/or supported from various companies and individuals. SALC would like to acknowledge the following major sponsors:

- **BRL Hardy**

The BRL Hardy wine company (Banrock Station wines) continues to demonstrate its commitment to landcare with the restoration of degraded lands and wetlands on Banrock Station. The cause-marketing campaign, where a portion of Banrock Station bottle and cask wine sales revenue is donated to Landcare Australia and distributed to wetlands restoration projects throughout Australia. The bottles carry neck tags describing the projects while the brown cardboard 'landcare style' casks incorporate a push-out panel impregnated with native seeds and information about landcare. The company continued to show its stylish cinema and television commercial showing the wetlands on the station. In 2000, Banrock Station won a Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in the Business and Community Partnership category for its partnership with Landcare Australia. BRL Hardy continues its support for the revegetation of Willalooka Wetlands in South Australia, and other wetland projects in Australia.

LANDCARE MONTH - MARCH (1990-2000)

In 1990 the SMC made a decision that March would be designated 'Landcare Month', during the Decade of Landcare. Landcare Month highlights activities, projects and issues connected to a theme.

In **1991**, the Landcare Month theme was 'Every Little Bit Helps'.

- The month of March received high media coverage with 42 printed articles, 13 radio segments and 7 television news items. The Advertiser also carried a full page article on Landcare, as its contribution to Landcare Month. In addition, displays were used at 7 field days or conferences.
- A Landcare Tour for 15 journalists was arranged by one Community Landcare Group.
- A Soil Conservation Teaching Centre was also opened at Urrbrae Agricultural High School.

The theme for Landcare Month in March **1992** was 'Landcare In Your Own Backyard'.

- It was launched by Jane Doyle of television Channel 7 at an Urban Field Day, at the State Tree Centre. The celebrity challenge was a highlight, involving a number of high profile guests sorting seeds, spotting weeds and identifying endangered species.

Landcare Month in **1993** involved:

- The first ABC Car Park Caper, organised by ABC Rural Radio (Ian Doyle) and Talk Back Gardening presenter. Hundreds of keen gardeners hired sites in the ABC car park to swap, sell and buy plants. Funds raised from the event go to the Landcare Foundation.
- A Show and Taste event was held at the Brookway Park School of Horticulture, in conjunction with the Regency Park School of Catering. The Landcare marquee exhibited a most successful display, with the 3-day event attracting 25,000 people.



The popular ABC Car Park Caper

Landcare Month in **1998** started with a launch for both Landcare Month and the Mount Lofty Ranges Catchment Program, by the Premier John Olsen at David and Sandra Kerber's dairy farm at Woodside in the Adelaide Hills.

Other events for Landcare Month included:

- The well-established ABC Car Park caper, was again a successful promotion. The Jon Lamb ABC Gardening program had an outside broadcast, and Minister Dorothy Kotz was interviewed during the program promoting landcare.
- Landcare in the Mall, taking landcare to the people. A group of arts and focus school students designed and created a map of South Australia, using sand, clay and native plant seedlings to depict the vegetation type and coverage across the state. This event was pictured in Saturday's 'Advertiser'.



Sand, clay and native seedlings was used to create a map of South Australia, which was displayed in Rundle Mall.

Landcare Month in **1999** was kicked off by Port Power Specialist Coach, Brenton Phillips with a launch for both Landcare Month and the Landcare Awards, by the Deputy Premier, Hon Rob Kerin MP at McElligotts Reserve, Mitcham.

Other events for Landcare Month included:

- Landcare display in Rundle Mall capitalising on the theme of 'Landcare the bigger backyard'. Various environmental groups including Landcare SA, KESAB Clean Waters, the Environment Protection Authority, the City of Adelaide and the National Dryland Salinity Program contributed to the display which provided information to the urban community on caring for their land.
- "Best Landcare Tip" competition. This competition was run on 5AD Radio utilising radio personality Keith Martyn as the Patron for Landcare Month. In conjunction with this competition coupons were also printed in the Mount Barker Courier and Victor Harbour Times. Team Poly provided a rainwater tank as the first prize and landcare jumpers were presented to the runners up.

In 2000, teachers in the Cluster Schools' Program were trained in workshops to use the Best Practice Manual. As a result, Onground Projects involving schools and their communities are currently running and will continue through 2001, with a Landcare Schools' Best Practice Convention being held and an ongoing networking strategy being developed.

The program is coordinated by PIRSA with input from the Australian Association for Environmental Education, the Department of Education, Training and Employment and other organisations.

ELEN

The Environment and Landcare Education Network (ELEN), has evolved from schools that have participated in the Landcare Focus Schools' Program. The group formed as a result of a Networking Strategy Day in 1998. The networking group developed a strategic plan that has set the direction that the ELEN group of schools will take in the future.

The schools have formed regional groups with coordinators to act as a contact in each area. From there they intend to liaise and carry out activities focusing mainly in their regions, but also at a state wide level, both to support each other and to encourage involvement of other schools in Landcare based environmental education. A number of ELEN schools are having input in the new Cluster Schools' Program for Regional Onground Projects. The group has affiliated membership with the Australian Association for Environmental Education.



Urrbrae Agricultural High School students learning about river ecology.



School students tree planting along the waterway at the Kids For Landcare Outdoor Classroom, Golden Grove.

Year 1998

The Seventh State Community Landcare Conference held in the Barossa in July 1998, and was a great success according to many of the 300 participants. The conference was organised by community landcare people over the State, and therefore reflected the grassroots perspective. The "Why I love the land" testimonials inspired delegates of the conference.

Year 1999

South Australia's Eighth Community Landcare Conference was held at Victor Harbour in July 1999. The theme of the conference was 'Grass Roots Influencing Landcare Into The Future'. The highlights of the conference were four presentations that introduced the theme 'the future of landcare is our challenge', and the group discussions that followed. A school 'Paint for Landcare' competition was held in conjunction with the conference. The winning schools (Salt Creek Primary School & Cowell Area School) were announced at the conference and were presented with digital cameras by the Hon Rob Kerin MP, Deputy Premier on the steps of Parliament House at a later date.



Landcare Conference field tour.

INTERNATIONAL LANDCARE CONFERENCE – 2000

The International Landcare Conference was held in Melbourne in 2000, and attracted over 1,200 delegates from Australia and overseas.- 'landcarers' from all over Australia, plus 17 other countries. The conference theme was 'Changing Landscapes – Shaping Futures', and began with the National Landcare Awards gala dinner.

David Suzuki (renowned Canadian bioethicist and leader in sustainable ecology) set the scene for the conference with his graphical description of the detrimental impacts humans have had on our Earth, particularly over the last 100 years. His message was 'if we continue as we are today, you ask yourself, what will we be leaving for our children and grandchildren. We have to deliberately put the brakes on our activities, and to put nature above our own interests'.

The conference themes included sustainable agriculture and greenhouse; community participation; structures partnerships and planning; managing for biodiversity; and scientific, technical and educational approaches to natural resource management. Each topic was addressed on three levels – global, catchment or regional, and on the farm or local level.

Other conference presentations included Eva Cox, co-founder of the Women's Economic Think Tank, who showed how landcare has an increasing importance in community development. Eva described social capital as a kind of 'human care'. It's about 'creating the types of communities that can deal with change, that becomes tolerant, that are outward bridging, turn their hands outwards – not introverted', she said. 'We should use landcare to create the sort of social mix we want ... it's about creating an environment which we want to live in.' The result is an appreciation of the need to nurture the human aspect of landcare and to recognise its potential in building stronger communities.

Whereas Dr Flannery, director of the SA Museum, attempted to show that as newcomers we understand very little about the continent we live in. He urged us to be willing to learn along the way and to see landcare as 'addressing the interior landscape', the one in the mind and the heart.

Conference attendees also enjoyed presentations from down-to-earth landcarers that gave examples of applied and successful landcare works.

The International Landcare 2000 conference gave people who share a concern for our environment, from across the world, an opportunity to gather and learn from each other, and to work towards changing landscapes and shaping futures.

THE NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS WINNERS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The National Landcare Awards recognises individuals, schools, and companies who have made outstanding achievements in Landcare. A major Australian company or organisation nationally sponsors each category. Over the Decade of Landcare, the category winners in South Australia are:

Primary Producer Award

- 1991 Barry and Lyn Stirling, of Tumby Bay

Roundup Primary Producer Award

- 1993 Jamie and Josie Jackson, of Willalooka, South East
- 1995 The Nield Family, Cleve, Eyre Peninsula

Cotton Australia Landcare Primary Producer Award

- 1997 Brian and Kym Denver, Goolwa
- 1999 John and Jan Berger, Murray Mallee

Community Group Award

- 1991 Central Flinders Soil Conservation Board

CRT Landcare Community Group Award

- 1993 Operation Run-off, Bordertown and District Landcare Group
- 1995 Willunga Basin Almond Producers

Landcare Community Group Award

- 1997 Clare Valley Viticultural

ALCOA Landcare Community Group Award

- 1999 Murray Mallee Local Action Plan Association Inc.

Telstra Landcare Education Award

- 1991 Aldgate Primary School
- 1993 Ardtornish Primary School
- 1995 Murray Bridge High School
- 1997 Elliston Area School

North Limited Landcare Education Award

- 1999 Urrbrae Agricultural High School

NLP Individual Landcarer Award

- 1991 Brian Powell, of Quorn
- 1993 Andy Sutherland
- 1995 Bruce Munday, of Tungkillo
- 1997 Mary Crawford, of Yankalilla
- 1999 Wolford and Mary Parsons- Port Vincent

Ansett Landcare Business Award

- 1991 WMC (Olympic Dam Operations) Roxby Downs
- 1993 Quarry Industries Limited
- 1995 The Tyremag Group of Companies

BHP Landcare Research Award

LANDCARE AUSTRALIA AWARDS

These awards are the flagship of Landcare Australia's operations, and recognise the efforts of the growing numbers of landholders in various fields of landcare-related activity throughout Australia.

Award winners from each State and Territory are nominated/presented to Landcare Australia for National judging. South Australia has won the Australia-wide award in a number of the categories. These award winners were:

BHP Landcare Research Award

- 1991 Dr Brian Cooke

Telecom Landcare Education Award

- 1992 Aldgate Primary School

Roundup Landcare Primary Producer Award

- 1992 Barry and Lyn Stirling, Tumby Bay

Ansett Landcare Business Award

- 1993 Quarry Industries Ltd

NLP Individual Landcarer Award

- 1993 Andy Sutherland

Cotton Australia Landcare Primary Producer Award

- 1998 Kym and Brian Denver, Hindmarsh Island

Bushcare Landcare Nature Conservation Award

- 1998 Bushland Conservation Pty Ltd

BP Landcare Catchment Award

- 2000 Coorong District Local Action Plan Committee

Cotton Australia Landcare Primary Producers Award

- 2000 John and Jan Berger, Murray Mallee Region



Coorong District Local Action Plan Committee, SA
Winner of the BP Landcare Catchment Award

The Coorong District Local Action Plan Committee released a Local Action Plan for the Upper South-East and Lower Murraylands of South Australia in 1997. This was the first Local Action Plan to be developed so there were no models to follow. The Plan's success is based on the commitment and hard work of both the committee and the local community. The Plan provides relevant background information, identification and prioritisation of major environmental threats, and sets out realistic and achievable strategies for overcoming these.

The issues addressed by the plan pose a major threat to both the environment and community of the Coorong District. The economy of the area is based on primary production and the value of rural produce in 1993-4 was \$98m. The potential large-scale loss of productive land from dryland salinity would be devastating to this community. By combating this and other issues, the Local Action plan committee is not only working to protect the district's environmental health, but also the health and well being of the entire community.

Implementation of the Coorong District Local Action Plan began in 1997, with funding from the Murray Darling Basin's Natural Resource Management Strategy Program. The community has embraced the plan. An increasing number of landholders are participating. Forecasts level of on-ground works have been exceeded and as a result, the committee is also looking at new and innovative projects such as:

- Inland aquaculture using saline groundwater to produce saltwater fish, brine shrimp, beta carotene and table salt while at the same time lowering the ground water table.
- Improving the biodiversity value of farm forestry by planting multiple species, introducing understorey and improving management practices.

The Coorong District Local Action Plan Committee is a progressive group at the fore-front of Local Action Planning in Australia, and is a fine example of how motivation, dedication and commitment by a group of like-minded people can achieve significant results.

World Environment Day on June 5th 2000, provided an excellent opportunity for Adelaide to showcase to the World the Landcare movements contributions to protecting and caring for the environment in a cooperative manner.

Landcare Australia, PIRSA, the Rotary Club of Walkerville, the Corporation of the Town of Walkerville and students from the Wilderness, Vale Park, St Andrews, St Monica's and Walkerville schools planted 2000 local native trees and shrubs, at a significant site on Adelaide's famous River Torrens Linear Park, as part of Olympic Landcare 2000.

Olympic Landcare 2000 was the only community environment project endorsed by the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG), and is aimed at leaving a 'Green Games' legacy of regenerated land, improved water quality and trees for greenhouse.

This planting represented the next stage in the rehabilitation of an old quarry site, now known as Scales' Reserve and will contribute to biodiversity, greenhouse gas reduction and protection of water quality.

Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mr Shafqat Kakakhel and four-time Olympian & Coach of the Adelaide 36ers, Phil Smyth launched the community tree planting along with other UNEP officials and the Global 500 laureates by joining in with tree planting activities.



Holding the Olympic Torch - Hon Dorothy Kotz, Minister for Local Government; Dennis Mutton, DE PIRSA; Phil Smyth, Olympian; Dr Shafqat Kakakhel, Deputy Chief Exec of United Nations Environment Program.

- Australia Geographic magazine ran a large feature on landcare.
- 'Landcare Feedback' newsletter was published.
- National Landcare Conference held in Adelaide
- Telestra Communications Kit for Landcarers, empowers landcare groups to carry out their own publicity and fundraising activities.
- The Mission Australia CD-ROM.
- Landcare Schools Garden Competition
- Australian Landcare magazine
- Trees with Love Program
- Coastcare Program - marketing and awareness raising activities
- BP Landcare Project
- Landcare Australia website
- Olympic Landcare
- Landcare Australia and Scholastic Australia poster series
- International Landcare 2000 Conference and National Landcare Awards
- Change to Landcare Month to Landcare Week (5-11 August)

The basic administrative costs of LAL are met by the Commonwealth Government as a fee for services provided by this very hard-working and relatively small organisation in generating valuable and substantial support for the landcare movement right across Australia.

The total revenue and media support generated by Landcare Australia for the landcare movement during 1999/2000 was \$15.5 million. Moneys were received from sponsorship, contributions to the Landcare Foundation, licensing fees for logo use and from investment income.

Landcare Australia Ltd is very much aware of how heavily it depends on the States and Territories for cooperation in landcare awareness raising, and implementation of landcare projects. Staff of the respective agencies, and the hundreds of people working in community landcare groups, tree-planting projects, landcare and environmental education in schools and tertiary institutions, and many other landcare activities, are the lifeblood of the landcare movement in Australia. LAL depends greatly on liaison with them, and their support of its initiatives. The success of landcare in Australia depends on this cooperation.

Future Directions

The national goals of the Decade of Landcare Plan are to have:

- the whole community aware of the problem of land degradation and the benefits of sustainable land use;
- continuing development and implementation of sustainable land use principles and practices;
- all public and private landusers and managers understanding the principles of sustainable land use and applying them in their use and management decisions;
- all Australians working together in partnership for sustainable land use; and effective and appropriate economic, legislative and policy mechanisms in place to facilitate the achievement of sustainable land use.

LANDCARE GROUPS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

During 1997 to 2000, landcare groups throughout the state continued to work on natural resource management and protection. Activities were many and varied and included significant work addressing the areas of conservation tillage, pasture production and non-wetting sands. In various areas of the state, groups have also been involved in both catchment and district planning.

South Australia's registered landcare groups are recorded on a database to allow for greater flexibility in the management of their records. This database has provides fast sorting and selection facilities including searches by names, regions, towns or projects

In 1997, there were 310 registered community Landcare groups in South Australia. Of these, 15 community Landcare groups are located in urban areas, and 50 in the Mt Lofty Ranges.

The end of 1998 saw some far-reaching changes to the structure of landcare and natural resource management in South Australia. As a result of these changes, Primary Industries and Resources SA no longer employ landcare officers. There are now 11 community managed landcare officers managed and employed by a range of regional and district committees. These Landcare Officers work to support the effective operation of landcare groups and others involved in landcare.

In addition there are also 5 Regional Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) Coordinators who provide a regional infrastructure for a coordinated, regional approach to natural resource management. They also provide support for the community managed landcare officers and coordinate the regional NHT assessment process.

By June 2000 the majority of the 9 NHT regions in SA established integrated NRM committees to provide a regional, coordinated perspective on integrated natural resource management issues.

At the end of the Decade of Landcare, there were 345 **OR** 350 registered community Landcare groups in South Australia. Of these, 17 community Landcare groups are located in urban areas, and 85 in the Mount Lofty Ranges.

The aim of the NRC as the peak body providing advice on natural resources, is to assist the Government in developing natural resources policies, through a planned and coordinated approach, (including economic conditions) which will secure resources for current and future generations.

- sustainable development that ensures minimal impact on ecological processes and systems.
- an equitable distribution of the cost and benefits of natural resources development and use.
- a sustained quality of life and prosperity for individuals and the community.

The main functions of the NRC are:

- to seek and coordinate information.
- to identify and clarify issues.
- to provide the Government with advice.
- to develop and recommend coordinated policies.
- to consult with relevant government and community sectors on natural resources issues.

In addition to the above, we now have the **National Landcare Advisory Committee** (NLAC) established in July 1993. NLAC's goal is, "To advise the Minister and the Government (Federal) on all matters relevant to Landcare ie. The management of the use, development and conservation of Australia's natural resources, and to work with all sectors of the community to encourage ecological sustainable use of resources and practices which achieve this."

which can learn from each other about best, most accepted practices in relation to ecologically sustainable land management (ESLM), and to establish links between country and city school clusters and their communities.

The outcomes of this are to:

- utilise schools as a resource for onground Landcare action
- develop landcare environmental education networks
 - between rural and urban school clusters
 - with rural landcare groups
 - with urban ESLM groups
- overcome urban/rural barriers to the acceptance and uptake of ESLM practices through interaction on collaborative projects between urban and rural schools and associated communities
- have schools working in clusters to maximise the uptake of ESLM based Environmental Education