

Lower Blackwood Land Champions



KARRIDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL GRASSROOTS LANDCARE IN ACTION

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When you look through to the southwest side of Karridale Primary School grounds you would never know that the beautiful bushland you see today was once overridden by weeds and used as a local dumping ground. This area, transformed over time is still a work in progress that doubles as an invaluable holistic educational resource for all ages right in the school’s backyard.

Over the past twenty years the school, led by Principal Fiona Cormack, has taken up opportunities to be involved in nature conservation works around their local area. Collaborating with **Ribbons of Blue**, and **Nature Conservation Margaret River**, and inspired especially by Hayley Rolfe from Ribbons of Blue, Fiona remembers clearly when Hayley stated, “when you manage the weeds, the bush will be able to be successful, things lying dormant will sprout again”. Karridale Primary student’s ongoing environmental work has created connections within their community resulting in opportunities to bring what they have learned outside of their classrooms back into their school setting.

“Each year there are different projects, and projects within projects, so over time all the children are able to participate”, says Fiona. In February 2016, through Nature Conservation’s “*Adopt a Spot*” the children were taught by Jan White and Gudrun Thiele (previous LCDC land champions) how to take cuttings of Bain (aka Pigface) near the lighthouse in Augusta. Back at school the children were shown how to plant their cuttings in pots and nurtured them for a few months to then return the plants to their original site. During these sessions, Jan & Gudrun noticed the school’s kangaroo paws were ripe for harvesting seeds. Thanks to Jan and Gudrun’s expertise and enthusiasm for land care, the children then learnt how to propagate the kangaroo paw seeds. Using little tweezers they put them into tubes and eventually re-potted into bigger pots until the time was right to plant their plants back into their school yard bushland.

2018 was a busy year for the school, as they finished creating an “Indigenous Trail” and built themselves an outdoor classroom. Inviting cultural custodian Josh Whiteland to the area, they asked him to identify the indigenous plants and share his knowledge of them. “The kids loved those stories, because a lot of them live on rural properties, they’re connected to the land and they really get it” Fiona expressed. The school then invited local artist Elaine Clocherty to create a land art project with the children. Elaine explained land art, “it comes from the land and goes back to the land”. According to Fiona, this concept really hooked the children’s interest. Together, Elaine and the children created a nest-like classroom with materials from the bush and the whole school fits into the area.

The school’s revegetation program is ongoing, and as an educational resource used for Maths, Science, English, Art and Indigenous Studies. Fiona says, “the kids have seen that you have to go back and caretake your planting, tidying up and weeding around them. Ultimately I would like the kids when they’re adults to remember what they did at school and apply that to their own backyard. They will be caretakers of lands in this district, or wherever they may be, and they can think - I can do something about this and it’s not that hard.”

Story by Katrina Lombardo April 2019



Lower Blackwood Catchment

Land Conservation District Committee

A HEALTHY CATCHMENT STARTS WITH
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

