

The Lakes Eco Skills Network, a regional environmental training program, was developed in response to the impact of prolonged drought, over-allocation and the subsequent low water flows to the Lower Murray, Lakes Alexandrina & Albert. The impact of which has been felt environmentally, economically and socially.

This project, with a focus on local solutions, has engaged with a wide group of people, including volunteers, landholders and people leaving the land, un and under employed people and those who may be on Centrelink support.

The project has empowered local people with training and qualifications in Conservation and Land Management and they have become an integral and important part of a sustainable future for the region.

Thirty five people have participated in the program as learners to date.

- At the end of 2010 fifteen people will have completed a Certificate III and ten a Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management.
- Ten other participants will have completed a number of competencies which they have found valuable for their existing work or volunteering.
- Three have applied their learnings to their own businesses.
- Six have been engaged in community planting contracts for wages.
- All have been volunteering in community projects.
- Three have secured one day per week positions in community nurseries
- Two have undertaken Cert IV in Training and Assessment, intending to provide local training in Conservation and Land Management in the region into the future.
- One participant is moving onto a Diploma of Natural Resource Management.
- Five have been employed to undertake Acid Sulfate Soil monitoring through the Goolwa to Wellington LAP community monitoring program

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Early in 2009 the Milang Progress Association Inc, Clayton Bay Community Association Inc and Langhorne Creek Progress Association surveyed local residents to gain a sense of where they felt the region was heading. Entitled "Looking to the Future" the survey established the insecurity people were feeling about their existing jobs in viticulture and agriculture, their interest in re skilling and their focus on learning about their environment. This survey provided the impetus to approach TAFE SA and funding bodies to develop this innovative program. TAFE SA's Debra Walkely says that the program had been successful because it is "Student centred, community focused active learning".

Key managers of the program have been Shirley Smith from MOSHCC and Debra Walkley from TAFE SA but many partnerships have been forged and support provided;

- Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning Association
- Hindmarsh Island Landcare
- Department of Environment and Natural Resource Management through the Lower Lakes Bioremediation and Revegetation Project
- Nurseries Association
- Rural Solutions SA
- Clayton Bay Community Nursery
- Finnis Catchment Group
- SA Murray Darling Basin NRM Board
- The Lakes Hub
- Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation