



# 2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

**Nominee: ACT Lake Tuggeranong College 'Sustainability Unit', ACT**  
**Category: Woolworths Junior Landcare Team Award**

In 2013, a Sustainability Unit was established at Lake Tuggeranong College, with an aim to educate students about the environment and encourage participation in environmentally sustainable projects. Set up under the guidance of teacher Nikey Mylordi, the unit gives students the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge about sustaining the environment for future generations to enjoy. Local ACT catchment group coordinators help students to discover what they are interested in and suggest potential projects to get involved in. One of the unit's major community contributions has been the involvement of students collecting data for Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch, Platypus Watch, and the ACT and Region Frogwatch Program. Programs such as these are long term, and the assistance with data collection is vital to their work.

All the unit's activities involve growing the students' knowledge and understanding of environmentally sustainable practices and developing skills to implement them. The school incorporates lessons and assessment into the curriculum that allow students to apply these skills. Involvement in the group has helped a number of students to establish networks and other contacts for future vocations and has inspired a few past students to take up university studies in the area of environmental science.

Part of the unit includes a mentor program, where Year 11 and 12 students are trained on how to mentor primary school students. Once trained, the students are able to help younger students with their sustainability projects, such as the Stephanie Alexander's Kitchen Garden Program – where primary school students grow vegetables in their school's grounds, which they harvest and cook. Mentors have also helped build structures such as ponds to attract local frogs in the school garden and assisted younger students in putting together their projects for the Youth Parliament on Sustainability competition. The assistance of these older students means that younger students can get involved in projects that they may not feel confident taking part in on their own, whilst learning about the importance of sustaining the environment.

Through their passion and dedication, the students are educating the whole college community about the importance of caring for the environment. The revamping of the school's recycling program and the cleaning up of its foreshore are two ways the unit are driving change and encouraging others to see the benefits of sustainability. The unit was also responsible for the installation of water stations around the school, where students can fill up their water bottles. Through their leadership, the Sustainability Unit students are inspiring change in their fellow students' habits and helping to build a more thoughtful and environmentally-conscious community.

In order to establish the unit, Nikey brought together community members in her mainstream classroom, met with heads faculty, and had numerous communications with the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) coordinator. The biggest challenge was getting the ACT BSSS to approve the unit. After 12 months of negotiations between the college and the ACT BSSS, the school got the green light for the unit. Implementation of the unit relies on the goodwill of the students and the college's support through time and resources.

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Some of the projects the unit has undertaken include; Waterwatch monitoring on Lake Tuggeranong, establishing a recycling bin initiative in the school, taking part in youth forums on sustainability and technology, rehabilitating ponds with ACT Frog Watch, and taking part in the River Smarts Floating Classroom trial. The unit has also built a pond at the college, which was obtained on eBay for free, and regularly appears on 2XX FM's Radio Landcare program, where community members can hear firsthand the efforts the students are making to save their environment, whilst inspiring others to do the same.

Landcare is a grassroots movement that harnesses individuals and groups to protect, restore and sustainably manage Australia's natural environment and its productivity. Groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella work on a diverse range of environmental projects and include farmers embracing sustainable farm management and any community group that partakes in volunteer environmental activities. To find out how you can become a Landcare volunteer and for full details on all 2016 National Landcare finalists, visit [www.landcareaustralia.org.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.org.au)

## Ends

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## Web Summary

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