

INDUSTRY AND CREEKWATCH

Working with industry

One of the Oxley Creek Catchment Association's (OCCA) strengths is its ability to form and maintain partnerships with the community, businesses, private landholders and all three levels of government.

One of OCCA's earliest partnerships was with **Whitco Pty Ltd** situated on the banks of Oxley Creek at Sherwood. Over 100 workers from Whitco Pty Ltd participated in a Weedbuster Day planting along the banks of Oxley Creek. Whitco was one of the first industrial bushland care groups in Brisbane and successfully rehabilitated 300m of the riparian zone adjacent to the factory. Unfortunately, the company moved from the site and it has lain vacant for much of the time since then.

OCCA worked with the **Motorway Business Park Pty Ltd** on an old sand mining site at Larapinta which forms part of a wildlife corridor between the Greenbank Military Training Area, Karawatha Forest Park and adjacent lands. OCCA carried out water quality and fish monitoring of the lakes, fauna monitoring of nest boxes, and monitoring of vegetation in the riparian sections and in the environment protection area which provides an important link to the Glider Forest. Reshaping of the lake banks was completed but revegetation was slow as Johnson Grass was inadvertently brought to the site and required sustained control efforts. Fencing was successful in protecting the area from damaging recreational vehicles.



B&R Enclosures, one of the businesses situated in the Brisbane South Industrial Park at Heathwood participated in a Business Clean Up Day that OCCA organised in March 2009. B&R volunteers collected rubbish along the roads in the Business Park and the cleared land along Blunder Creek.

OCCA worked with the **Construction and Training Centre (CTC)** in Salisbury to improve the riparian habitat along Rocky Water Holes. With OCCA support, Conservation Volunteers Australia and CTC staff cleared lantana, treated Broad-leaved Pepper Trees and Chinese Elms, dug out grasses and Caster Oil plants and planted over 1000 native plants.

CTC was a finalist in the Industry Award Category of the 2010 Healthy Waterways Awards acknowledging industries contributing to the improvement of waterway management and health, for their ongoing efforts to rehabilitate their site on Rocky Water Holes, a tributary of Oxley Creek.

CTC management committed to continuing the revegetation work on Rocky Water Holes and took part in National Tree Day in July where the members of CTC's *Get Set for Work* Program planted over 600 stems. OCCA's partnership with CTC was further strengthened in 2010 with the relocation of the Biodiversity Services storage facility to CTC grounds.

In 2012 **BMI Resource Recovery**, which has a construction and demolition waste recycling plant on Bowhill Road, linked with the Watson Road State School to help the school and community to restore the banks of the Oxley Creek tributary that flows through the school. Weeds such as Camphor Laurel, Broad-leaved Pepper Tree, Chinese Elm, Mother of Millions, Singapore Daisy, and Cats Claw Creeper were removed by BMI Resource Recovery staff. A number of community planting days involved students, OCCA Biodiversity Services, BMI Resource Recovery and Sims Metal Management staff, Telstra volunteers, local Councillors and Members of Parliament and other locals to plant about 2ha of the site with 1500 native plants. In 2016 OCCA Biodiversity Services partnered with the Acacia Ridge Community Support Inc to undertake further weeding and planting of native species along a tributary of Blunder Creek which flows through the school grounds. The work is funded through a *Skilling Queenslanders for Work Program*.



CreekWATCH Program

In July 2006, BlueScope Steel contacted OCCA expressing concern over a series of pollution incidents in Stable Swamp Creek around Gay Street, Acacia Ridge. In April 2007 a business breakfast held with over 15 concerned businesses in the Acacia Ridge/Coopers Plains industrial area supported the establishment of an industry-based program to address local waterway health issues - and CreekWATCH was born.



The CreekWATCH Program was officially launched on World Environment Day, 5 June 2007. Through CreekWATCH, OCCA partners with local businesses to help them to minimise the impacts of their activities on waterways of the Oxley Creek catchment, improve water quality, protect and enhance riparian ecosystems, prevent pollution, reduce litter and build a culture of businesses caring for their local environment. The benefits of the program are that it:

- serves as an education/awareness campaign for staff to help them actively care for their local environment
- provides background about the history of the creek and how it is linked to other nearby waterways
- helps to formalise the process of reporting environmental incidents promptly to the relevant authority, and
- proactively engages with the local community/businesses in the area to monitor and care for the creek
- demonstrates corporate social responsibility and commitment by the company to caring for the environment.

In 2007 the first 50 metres of Stable Swamp Creek underwent restoration at Gay Street, Coopers Plains and a training program addressing spill management and reporting was developed. Industry also undertook activities with Acacia Ridge State School students who adopted the site.



CreekWATCH Acacia Ridge was made possible through the dedicated support and efforts of staff from BlueScope Steel, CSR Gyprock Fibre Cement, Queensland Rail, Brisbane City Council, the Queensland Government, SkillsTECH and the Acacia Ridge Ward Councillor, Kevin Bianchi.

Local businesses Brisbane Warehousing and Distribution, Stoddart Metal Fabricators and MJP Smash Repairs as well as the local community through the

Friends of Stable Swamp Creek also participated in the program.

CreekWATCH identified three core components to preventing pollution and delivered programs to address:

- Reporting and Training: Who to call and what to do in the case of a spill.
- Education: Why our waterways are worth looking after and who looks after them.
- Creek Rehabilitation: If our waterways look like drains, then they'll be treated like drains - how to restore creek banks.

In 2008, CreekWATCH, the industry pollution prevention and environmental management program, was the recipient of not one, but two awards, namely the Healthy Waterways 2008 Community Award and the Channel 10/Telstra Environment Award.





Celebrating the first anniversary of CreekWATCH on World Environment Day, Acacia Ridge State School students returned to the site and interacted with industry and council partners to question them on their commitment and actions to improve creek health.

The Acacia Ridge CreekWATCH program initially ran for two years but was so successful that it

was extended to other industrial areas in the catchment.

A number of free training courses were held in 2009 for Acacia Ridge/Coopers Plains businesses to increase awareness of pollution issues and management options. Absorb Environmental Solutions, ran its course *"Follow Environmental Work Practices"* with added local content as to 'Why preventing pollution is important'. These were followed by a Business Breakfast, again focussing on waterways and stormwater pollution prevention.

In 2009 CreekWATCH grew significantly with partners BlueScope Steel, CSR Gyprock Fibre Cement, Queensland Rail, SkillsTECH, Brisbane City Council, (then) Department of Environment and Resource Management, and Acacia Ridge State School joined by RACQ Insurance and OneSteel. Following a pollution incident in March 2009 downstream from the original CreekWATCH target area, the program expanded its boundaries north and south.



Also in 2009 the CreekWATCH Program was a runner up in the Healthy Waterways Community Award

As part of their national corporate volunteering initiative Taylors Wines, which had an office in the CreekWATCH target area, came along to Gay Street and planted over 150 new plants among other activities. These plantings were then added to by Acacia Ridge State School students who contributed another 60 plants as part of activities preparing them for their Catchment Kids performance in October.

Both the rehabilitation sites at Gay Street and CSR have had good plant growth resulting in an increase in little birds such as the Superb Blue Wren, Red Backed Wren, Double-Barred Finch and Pardalote species.

2010 saw the departure of CreekWATCH Officer Anna Bourke, who had worked hard to grow the program. CreekWATCH duties were then shared by Phil Gunasekara and Miriam Nyrene with

assistance from the Brisbane City Council Creek Ranger. When funding became available Miriam Nyrene took on the role of OCCA's Partnerships Manager with responsibility for the CreekWATCH program.

There were a series of minor spills in Stable Swamp Creek in March and April 2010 however the prompt containment actions of local businesses minimised the damage and supported the value of the CreekWATCH program. These events led to the production of a booklet outlining how to report such events and what procedures Council and State Government departments follow after the lodgement of such reports.

The 3rd Anniversary of the CreekWATCH Program was celebrated in April 2010 with our industry partners – BlueScope Steel, CSR Gyprock Fibre Cement, Queensland Rail, SkillsTech, Brisbane City Council, (then) Department of Environment and Resource Management, Acacia Ridge State School, RACQ Insurance and OneSteel. Over 40 volunteers took part to plant 300 trees and shrubs. This event was followed up with a successful Clean Up Australia Day event at Gay St with assistance from CreekWATCH partners and the Friends of Stable Swamp Creek.



CreekWATCH site, Gay Street, Coopers Plains, progress from June 2007 to January 2009

In 2010 CreekWATCH partners participated in Business Clean up Australia Day along Gay Street, Coopers Plains. Some 12 bags of rubbish weighing about 84 kg was removed in the space of two hours thanks to staff from OneSteel Australian Tube Mills, Queensland Rail, Bluescope Steel, (then) Department of Environment and Resource Management and CreekWATCH.

2011 saw the launch of the official CreekWATCH promotional brochure. The brochure and a survey of local businesses conducting Environmentally Relevant Activities under the *Environmental Protection Act 1974* were the spearhead for a CreekWATCH awareness and recruitment campaign. However, the unfortunate combination of the flood in January, both on businesses in the CreekWATCH target area and on OCCA, and the ongoing economic downturn led to a slow year for CreekWATCH.

Despite the impacts of the floods, CreekWATCH partners remained committed with several activities throughout the year. Volunteers removed over 10 bags of litter from Gay Street at a Business Clean Up Australia Day event. A Business breakfast was held at SkillsTECH, Acacia Ridge, with 15 partners and local businesses participating in a discussion on water sensitive urban design presented by Alan Hoban, followed by a visit to the SkillsTECH site to discuss ideas for rehabilitation of the bio-retention facilities and the riparian zone on Stable Swamp Creek.



The 2012 CreekWATCH year began with a Business Clean Up Day on Gay Street with staff from CreekWATCH partners removing a full skip load of rubbish from the CreekWATCH rehabilitation site on Stable Swamp Creek, and from the length of Gay St. Since the inaugural Clean Up event in 2008, less rubbish has been collected each year. In between events, BlueScope Steel employees have undertaken their own clean ups of the site.

In September 2012, as part of the Peaks to Points Festival, over 50 people attended a CreekWATCH Business Breakfast focussed on flood resilience. Representatives from Dulux, Brisbane City Council, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, and an Acacia Ridge and District Community Centre talked of their experiences in the 2011 flood, the importance of planning, and how businesses, government and the community can work together to increase resilience and better manage a potential future event.

The CreekWATCH program expanded further in 2013 with the addition of new CreekWATCH partners and supporters including Absorb Environmental Solutions, BMI Resource Recovery, BOC (A Member of the Linde Group), Brisbane Markets Ltd, Dulux Rocklea, The Construction and Training Centre, and Sims Metal Management.

2013 was a busy year for the CreekWATCH Program as Miriam Nyrene, supported by Carol Nouens organised a series of events. CreekWATCH began 2013 with a Business Clean-up Event in February for Clean Up Australia Day, which was well-supported by our industry partners. In recognition of the long term support of the program by CSR Gyprock Fibre Cement the clean-up took place along a stretch of Stable Swamp Creek in Coopers Plains adjacent to CSR. Although it was a wet day, participants ventured along the waterway with enthusiasm, collecting lots of rubbish, and enjoyed the refreshments afterwards.



In 2013 committee meetings took place at the premises of our partners to enable members to visit the different sites and discuss issues relevant to those sites which included CSR Gyprock in Coopers Plains, BOC (A member of the Linde Group) in Rocklea and OCCA at Sherwood.

Two Flood Planning Sessions were held in 2013 to provide some support to industries on the catchment floodplain on how to develop a Flood Management Plan. The first was held in March at Dulux Rocklea with an inspiring introduction from the Site Manager, Peter Holden. Similarly, in July, Warren Knight BOC's Safety, Health, Environment and Quality Manager outlined their flood planning

process, before participants discussed their own management plans and the larger facilities offered to help those without a plan.



In September 2013 a breakfast was again held at the Croatian Community and Cultural Centre in Rocklea. About 40 representatives from industry, community and government heard Adrian Volders, environmental consultant, speak on *'Beyond Corporate Social Responsibility – The Rise of the Ecopreneur'*. Adrian detailed links between innovative solutions to environmental issues and positive

economic outcomes for challenges faced by resource managers.

Stable Swamp Creek, adjacent to the Croatian Community and Cultural Centre was the site for a Keep Australia Beautiful Event in August 2013 which was well attended by community volunteers, mainly our very own Creekcure team and corporate volunteers from Sims Metal Management.

About 20 CSR, Dulux and OCCA staff braved the prospect of bad weather to clean up a stretch of Stable Swamp Creek in Coopers Plains.

In mid-2014 Miriam Nyrene left OCCA and the CreekWATCH program and was replaced by Larissa Mar Fan.

In 2014 CreekWATCH events included a Business Clean Up Day at Dunn Road, a Business Breakfast held in collaboration with the South-West Chamber of Commerce, and a restoration day at Kookaburra Park, Rocklea in conjunction with Energex.

A review of the CreekWATCH program was held in September 2014 to help maximise the effectiveness of the program and ensure CreekWatch meets partner expectations.

In 2014 the CreekWATCH Program logo was rebranded to align with the well-known OCCA logo and became CreekWatch. In February 2015 CreekWatch partners took part in a Business Clean Up Day in Dunn Road and a seminar on waste management and recycling in business. Staff from Sims Metal Management, Decmil and Wayne's World joined OCCA staff and volunteers to remove almost 2 skips of litter and illegally dumped items. The Clean Up Day was the start of a focus on litter and illegal dumping in the area of Dunn and Donaldson Roads, Rocklea. OCCA obtained funding to undertake audits to determine the types and sources of items that are being littered to provide the basis for a targeted behaviour change campaign.



A *'Less to Landfill for Better Business Outcomes'* seminar discussed case studies of local businesses that had increased waste diversion rates and reduced costs. Waste industry leaders discussed how

to turn waste challenges into opportunities, and ideas were presented on how to get staff committed to managing waste.

In 2015 CreekWatch Partners Dulux, Sims Metal Management and BMI Resource Recovery generously assisted OCCA to move to Macdevitt Street by providing paint to spruce up our new offices, trucks to transport our belongings, and gravel for the nursery foundations respectively. During the year Absorb Environmental Solutions also donated two spills kits to Biodiversity Services to support its on-ground activities.

In late 2015, the Partnerships Manager, Larissa Mar Fan, left OCCA and was replaced in February 2016 by Karen Toms, supported by Amelia Mack.



In 2015 CreekWatch welcomed new a new Gold Partner, rockPRESS (Rocklea Pressed Metal) who generously provided CreekWatch signs for partners to display on their premises.

The CreekWatch program continued its annual tradition of holding a Business Clean Up Day to support Clean Up Australia. In 2016 it was held on 1 March where staff from Sims Metal Management and ALS joined OCCA to help clean up Dunn Road, Rocklea. Paul, Isabel, Brendan, Anne, Phil, Lynn, Karen and Amelia cleaned up 6 tyres, signs, cardboard, carpet pieces and mesh fencing, and about 20 bags of general rubbish.

In June CreekWatch held a Business Breakfast sponsored by NRMA which discussed flood preparedness to increase the resilience of local businesses. Peter Holden from Dulux showed a video of the rise and impacts of the 2011 flood on the Dulux premises on Ipswich Road, Rocklea and then talked about the lessons learnt and the changes made to the premises and their manufacturing and storage practices to better prepare them for another flooding incident and reduce downtime.

The CreekWatch program is made possible through the generosity of our business partners. Gold partners are BOC, CSR and rockPRESS. BMI Group is a silver partner. Dulux and Sims Metal Management are bronze partners. Many other businesses and organisations provide in-kind support to the CreekWatch program including the Queensland Government, Brisbane City Council, the Construction Training Centre and Absorb Environmental Solutions.

