

## SCHOOLS EDUCATION PROGRAM

OCCA has developed an education program for primary and secondary schools which allows students and teachers to experience Oxley Creek catchment, its beauty and the issues it faces.

OCCA can tailor the learning experiences to suit students' needs and learning areas. Alternatively, teachers can design and run their own catchment care or bushcare activities with OCCA's support. OCCA provides the following activities which are all aligned to the national curriculum:

- **Exploring the catchment** - Beginning in the upper reaches of the catchment follow the creek line of Oxley Creek and its tributaries visiting significant and diverse sites from wetlands to bushland, industrial sites and sites of natural regeneration and ecological restoration. The Catchment Tour focuses on land use and catchment management issues for the Oxley Creek Catchment and can include opportunities for water quality testing and dip netting for macroinvertebrates.
- **Assessing waterway health** - Visit and assess the health of your local waterway. Carry out simple tests (temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, salinity/conductivity, turbidity, phosphates and nitrates) to assess the water quality, observe and record information about the vegetation and land use of the riparian zone to evaluate its health, and enjoy setting fish traps and dip netting for macroinvertebrates to identify wildlife living in the waterway.
- **Learning about plants and soils** - Choose a natural setting in local bushland, at your nearest waterway or in your school grounds to learn about plants and their structure and function. Learn basic skills in identifying Australian native plants and beginning a plant herbarium. Alternatively, this activity could focus on environmental weeds, their impact, identification and careful removal.
- **Restoring bushland** - Learn about and participate in ecological restoration at a site within Oxley Creek Catchment. This experience can include as many steps in the process as you choose from weeding, site preparation, an understanding of how species are chosen for a particular site, digging holes, planting, watering, mulching and caring for new plants. Learn about the importance of creating wildlife corridors and connectivity. Your actions will also be contributing to enhancing the natural resource values of the catchment.
- **Assisting in the Community Nursery** - Learn basic nursery skills including the collection and identification of native seed, cleaning and preparing seed, the propagation of plants from seed or cuttings and how to care for young seedlings.

Over the last 20 years OCCA has worked with primary and secondary schools including:

Acacia Ridge State School  
Australian International Islamic  
College  
Brisbane Boys College  
Brisbane State High School  
Calamvale Community College  
Corinda State School  
Corinda State High School  
Durack State School  
Forest Lake College

Inala West Special School  
Indooroopilly State High  
School  
Nyanda State High School  
Our Lady of the Sacred  
Heart, Darra  
Pallara State School  
Richlands East State School  
Robertson State School  
Rocklea State School

St Margaret's Girls School  
St Marks Catholic School,  
Inala  
St Peters Lutheran College  
St Pius X, Salisbury  
St Stephens School,  
Algester  
St Thomas More College  
The Murri School, Acacia  
Ridge



Forest Lake High School  
Forest Lake State School  
Graceville State School  
Grand Avenue State School  
Greenbank State School  
Inala West State School

Sherwood State School  
Southside Christian College  
St Aidan's Anglican Girls  
School  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary  
School, Corinda

Watson Road State School  
Wellers Hill State School  
Woodridge State High  
School  
Yeronga State School  
Yeronga State High School

OCCA has also hosted activities for tertiary students from:

- Yokkaichi University, Japan
- Nihon University, Japan
- South Bank Institute of Technology
- Griffith University

The first educational program run by OCCA was '**Kids, Companies and Creeks**'. This was established in 1996 by the Oxley Creek Environment Group to bring together school students and industry to raise awareness of

local creeks and cleaner production, waste minimisation practices among businesses, industry and schools. Schools including Watson Road State School, Sherwood State School, Salisbury State High School, Nyanda State High School and Corinda State High School were involved in the program with some being shown around Wattyl paint factory, The Spray Shop Smash Repairers, Lockwood Whitco, and Sureway Smash Repairs. These companies and others including CSR, and Simmonds and Bristow, helped students in their research into the environment and the role of industries in the catchment.

In 2002-3 OCCA was funded to engage students in a project using music to raise awareness of the issues affecting Oxley Creek. The Oxley Creek Theatre Project developed song writing, performance and recording activities that celebrated the rehabilitation of the creek and its natural areas and resulted in a CD of 9 original songs developed, sung and performed by Corinda State School and Inala West State School.



The songs examined the indigenous and non-indigenous cultural significance of Oxley Creek prior to the post World War 2 era. The Project team of Meg Kanowski – Writer, and Katrina Davery – Director helped the schools to develop songs that celebrate a sense of place and community cultural identity and gave the children an opportunity to express their ideas for the future management of the catchment's natural resources. The themes included weeds, fire ants, threatened species, and water quality and pollution. In April 2004,

the Oxley Songs project *"Molly's Dream"* was announced as the winner of the Schools section of the Healthy Waterways Awards 2003.

In 2004 OCCA worked with Durack State School year 5 classes to discuss the connections from their backyards to Moreton Bay and its marine species. On Moolabin Creek, OCCA worked with Yeronga State High School and Sanitarium Foods Factory in Moorooka to learn more about the workings of the factory and what they are doing to reduce their impact on the surrounding environment.



In 2005 OCCA launched the *'Waterwatchers for the Future'* project, encouraging schools and other groups to conduct water quality testing and macroinvertebrate and fish sampling in their local creeks. This resulted in Greenbank State School and Corinda State School collaborating to share and compare the data on-line.

In 2006 OCCA worked with Sherwood State School where Year 7 students went to the Oxley Creek Common to learn from OCCA members about the ecosystems of the Common. Students were then tasked with developing models to complement the existing natural environment and land uses. The models were displayed at the Oxley Creek Water Festival Family Fun Day - it was great to see rainwater tanks, solar panels, low impact activities and lots of trees incorporated into their designs!

Year 4 Corinda State School Students became scientists for a day when they visited Oxley Creek at Cliveden Avenue to undertake water quality tests. They were there to see "if you were a fish, would you be happy to live here?" The answer was a resounding yes, but all agreed there was a lot we could do to make the creek a healthier place in which to live.

Greenbank State School celebrated World Environment Day in 2006 by planting trees around their school grounds, then did more planting on National Tree Day in July.

In 2007 OCCA worked with Graceville State School, Sherwood State School, Corinda State School, Corinda State High School, St Aidan's Anglican Girls School, Forest Lake, Acacia Ridge and Rocklea State Schools and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School undertaking activities including water quality testing, dip netting for macroinvertebrates, tree planting and catchment tours.

Acacia Ridge State School took part in the BCC Catchment Kids activities culminating in a performance at South Bank Piazza in front of 450 students from all over Brisbane. As part of these Catchment Kids activities, the students also participated in tree plantings, a Schools Clean Up Australia Day activity at Norma Croker Park, and a catchment tour finishing at Whites Hill with a range of wildlife, environmental and cultural activities,

Activities with Corinda State High School have included talks on the weeds of the Oxley Creek Riparian corridor and weed identification. The students also developed a picture herbarium of the weeds found on the school grounds.

OCCA members also talked to students of Corinda State School about the characteristics of plants, and the Birds of the lower Oxley Creek catchment.

OCCA members helped Sherwood State School students to develop a plant identification sheet and showed the students how to press plant specimens and talked about the plants found in the Nature Area of their school.

OCCA helped Yeronga State High School students to develop a BHP Billiton Science Award project on the effects of tree guards and mulch on the growth of plants

In 2008 the Education Working Group focused on establishing support for Year 10 Corinda State High School students to research weed control, water quality monitoring, land use planning, and vegetation rehabilitation. The school made extensive use of a comprehensive weed control study project developed by David Sparks and Anne Clarke supported Geography Students from Year 11 and 12 with a Catchment Tour.



Other schools education activities undertaken by OCCA in 2008 included:

- development of a Scenario-based Learning Unit on weed management assisted by David Sparks, Rod Goldsworthy and Phil Gunasekara
- Rocklea State School students planting in the Granard Wetlands
- tree-planting by three schools Sherwood and Corinda State Schools, and Corinda State High School as part of the Western Corridor Recycled Water Pipeline rehabilitation

In conjunction with a Powerlink Project, 'Spring Mountain to Greenbank', students at Greenbank State School were involved in various environmental educational activities. Presentations and support for water quality testing and other activities were provided to Graceville State School and Forest Lake State High School.

In 2009 the OCCA Water Group developed a monitoring guide and field monitoring kits for macro-invertebrate sampling and revised educational kits for schools.



OCCA coordinated about 20 environmental education activities in 2009 with schools including Graceville, Sherwood, Corinda, Forest Lake, Acacia Ridge and Rocklea State Schools, Corinda State High School, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and St Aidan's Anglican Girls School. Activities included water quality testing, dip-netting for macroinvertebrates, planting, catchment tours, providing resources to teachers, and organising events for National Tree Day.



In 2009, with the assistance of a grant related to the Western Corridor Recycled Water Pipeline Project, OCCA partnered with Forest Lake State School to educate students about the importance of clean water. Year 4 classes ventured to Forest Lake where they carried out water quality testing, and



dip-netting for macroinvertebrates. They also learnt about the importance of creeks and riparian zones as wildlife corridors. OCCA staff treated some areas of infestations of Elephant Grass and Lantana prior to the planting of 100 native plants in the wildlife corridor by students. OCCA also talked to the students about gliders and four rear entry nest boxes were erected in large trees on the edge of the school grounds which were known glider food trees or where glider scratchings had been found.

To celebrate World Environment Day 2009, Acacia Ridge State School participated in a Catchment Kids event organised by Brisbane City Council's Creek Ranger Program. The day involved a morning tour of Stable Swamp Creek catchment on which students participated in

native plant and weed identification; and water testing at important sites along the way. Students then visited Whites Hill Reserve for some workshops on wildlife, Aboriginal culture, and habitat and catchments. On another day, students visited Stable Swamp Creek at Gay Street where they played the catchment story to learn about the impacts of land use on the catchment, planted over 60 native plants, tested water quality and cleaned up litter.





2010 began with two weeks of water quality activities with Forest Lake State High School Year 9 Geography students on a tributary of Blunder Creek at the rear of their school. Water quality activities were also conducted during the year with Year 6 students from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Darra, at Greenwood Lakes and Forest Lake State School Year 4 students at Forest Lake.

Graceville State School Year 6 students, Corinda State High School and St Peter Claver College, Riverview Year 11 Geography students undertook tours of the catchment, exploring issues of catchment management, with opportunities for water quality testing and dip-netting.



OCCA conducted water quality activities for Year 6 students from Moorooka State School who participated in this year's Energex Junior Landcare Project at Spring Mountain Reserve.

OCCA visited St Aidan's Anglican Girls School to speak to Year 11 girls about the catchment. Year 3 students from St Aidan's visited Oxley Creek Common to learn about Oxley Creek, its history and wildlife and participate in the Catchment Story game. Corinda State High School students worked with OCCA on a Community Service Day and helped remove weeds and tidy an area of the Oxley Creek Common.

OCCA also visited Yeronga Park Kindy and four classes of 4 to 5 year olds excitedly participated in a simplified version of the Catchment Story, which we called the Oxley Creek Story.

Students from the Murri School visited OCCA's CreekWATCH site to learn about bush regeneration and to do some planting on the creek bank. Students from Acacia Ridge State School joined OCCA for the 3rd Anniversary CreekWATCH planting on Stable Swamp Creek.

Rocklea State School students helped to plant native trees at the Granard Wetlands as part of the Brisbane City Council Two Million Trees Project.

In 2011 OCCA visited Forest Lake State High School four times. OCCA gave a presentation on the Oxley Creek catchment to nine Year 8 classes. This was followed in March with 'hands on' water quality testing activities with three Year 8 classes from Forest Lake State High School in their local Blunder Creek. Students also planted some trees in their school grounds.

Also in February Year 9-10 Geography students from the Southside Christian College, Salisbury, met in Beryl Roberts Park, Coopers Plains to check the water quality of Stable Swamp Creek and investigate the issues of urban encroachment on the natural habitat.

Four classes of Year 10 Geography students from St Thomas More College were taken by Pat Toohey, Beryl Roberts and Anna Shera to the Gaddes Park area of Stable Swamp Creek where they undertook water quality testing and assessed the human impact on this local creek.

Later in the year, again in Stable Swamp Creek but further downstream at Kookaburra Park, students from Southbank TAFE tested the waters and amazingly discovered a couple of mayflies.

Year 11-12 Geography students from Corinda State High School appreciated a tour of the catchment beginning at Spring Mountain and finishing at the Oxley Creek Common where they helped with some weeding. Along the way they undertook water quality monitoring and examined the neighbouring land uses.

A presentation on the impacts of the January 2011 floods on Oxley Creek catchment was used to raise awareness amongst Year 4 students at Wellers Hill State School.

Year 4 students from Salisbury State School visited Nyanda State High School in June where they undertook a range of activities including water quality testing and dip-netting in Rocky Water Holes Creek, propagating and pricking out plants in the OCCA Nyanda Community Nursery as well as a tour of Nyanda State High School.

In November students from Woodridge State High School were taken on a tour of flood-affected businesses in the lower Oxley Creek catchment. They visited the Brisbane Golf Course, IGA Fresh at the Brisbane Markets, and Wattyl Paints to examine these sites which had been badly impacted by the January 2011 floodwaters and assess their post-flood recovery. Along the way the students conducted water quality testing in Moolabin, Rocky Water Holes and Oxley Creeks.

In October OCCA also undertook activities with 20 students from Nihon University at the Oxley Creek Common. This international connection was facilitated with Extension Studies International at the University of Queensland.

Creek Ranger Leah Hattendorf also worked with Watson Road State School, Algester State School, Corinda State High School, Acacia Ridge State School, Calamvale Community College, and Nyanda



State High School on activities addressing the issues facing sugar gliders, the importance of water, rehabilitation and water testing and macro-invertebrate sampling activities.

In 2012 both the OCCA - Nyanda Community Nursery and the adjacent Nyanda Community Garden provided opportunities for education to the community and enabling them to turn their aspirations into reality. Worm farming, 'no dig' gardens, pricking out, seed sorting, vegetable gardening and bush tucker trails were all workshop topics of great interest. Groups which have appreciated and benefitted from this exposure include the Australian Islamic School at Durack, the Brookside Retirement Village at Robertson, the Moorooka Garden Group and the Acacia Ridge Garden Group, as well as Mount Gravatt Lions, Yeronga Creche and Kindergarten plus visitors from Albury (Victoria) and Bellingen (NSW).



In 2012 OCCA linked Watson Road State School with one of their neighbours, BMI Resource Recovery, which has a construction and demolition waste recycling plant on Bowhill Road. Together they worked with students and the community to restore the banks of the Oxley Creek tributary that flows through the school. OCCA staff talked to students about the value of the creek and the local environment and the problems created by weed infestations and poor water quality.

Weeds were removed by a BMI Resource Recovery team, donating their time and equipment. Planting was then undertaken by students, OCCA Biodiversity Services, BMI Resource Recovery and Sims Metal Management staff, Telstra volunteers, local Councillors and Members of Parliament and other locals at a number of community planting events. 2ha of the site has been rehabilitated with weed species including Camphor Laurel, Broad-leaved Pepper Tree, Chinese Elm, Mother of Millions, Singapore Daisy, and Cats Claw Creeper have been removed and 1500 native plants planted.

In 2013 the focus at the Watsons Road site was on maintenance undertaken by OCCA's Biodiversity Services, and educating the school community about continuing the work.

Australian Islamic School students and teachers were taken on a tour of three sites in the catchment to discuss issues including flooding and water quality. History excursions led by noted local historian, Beryl Roberts, through the industrial Coopers Plains and Stable Swamp Creek area, as well as through the Sunnybank area were popular with schools.

Pat Toohey, of Gaddes Park Bushcare Group demonstrated bushcare activities to Year 11 students from St Thomas More College while other students enjoyed dip-netting and water quality testing.

St Joseph's School students from Year 7 helped replant at Nosworthy Park and undertook a leaf litter activity and were amazed by the diversity of creatures revealed.



Seed sorting, pricking out and bush revegetation along Rocky Water Holes was undertaken by Year 9 students from Corinda State High School and Year 8 and 9 students from Nyanda State High School. Grand Avenue State School Year 7 classes were given experience with vegetable seeds, propagation, seedling planting and vegetable gardening.

Murri School students joined OCCA's Partnerships Manager, Miriam Nyrene, and Biodiversity Services Manager, Chris Jensen, in July at the Gay Street rehabilitation site in Acacia Ridge for a first-hand experience of bush regeneration to complement their school studies. The students were interested in the stages in restoring a degraded site, and how this compared with natural regeneration in an undisturbed area of bushland.



Students from Yokkaichi and Nihon Universities in Japan accompanied by their university professors visited Stable Swamp Creek in Sunnybank to participate in riparian assessment, plant identification, water quality testing and dip netting for macro-invertebrates. The students reflected on the beauty and cleanliness of our creeklines in comparison to places they have seen in Asia. They particularly enjoyed the diversity of plant life in the park and were thrilled to see 'gum trees' up close!

South Bank Institute of Technology students also visited Jock Hing Park at Sunnybank to experience riparian and water quality assessment with Miriam Nyrene. Dip-netting was the highlight for these students which included one student stripping off and having a dip himself in the creek! It was a particularly hot day!

In December 2012 and February and March 2013 a number of activities and meetings were undertaken with teachers from Algester State School and St Stephen's Catholic Primary School, with a view to helping to get their Sheep Station Gully Environment Centre operational. Councillor Angela Owen was also involved with some of these discussions. This beautiful little centre is perfectly placed on Sheep Station Creek between these two Algester schools and it has so much potential to really develop a wide range of environmental and catchment activities within this community.

Also in 2013 St Thomas More College students took part in a number of water quality testing events with OCCA and bushcare sessions with Pat Toohey in Gaddes Park, Sunnybank.

OCCA does not neglect our littlest community members and Beryl Roberts went a number of times to Chelmer Station Community Kindergarten to talk with youngsters, staff and parents - about catchment issues and the planting of their kindy site with suitable native plants.

Term 2 saw lots of great creek-related educational activities undertaken with St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Corinda. The Year 4 teachers, led by Sue-Ellen Hazelman, planned and undertook a day of outdoor activities in Nosworthy Park, Corinda.

OCCA staff and volunteers worked with the Australian International Islamic College, Durack in April and May and in November, took a half day bus tour to three Oxley Creek catchment sites to conduct water quality testing activities.

In July, Beryl gave a presentation to Pamphlett Venturers on the Oxley Creek Catchment and how to get involved in helping our waterway. The resulting three-hour discussion identified a number of partnership opportunities with the Pamphlett Scouts and Venturers and OCCA which have since taken place.

Beryl met with students from St Aidan's Anglican Girl's School, Corinda, at the Oxley Creek Common in September to talk about the flood plain and the importance of growing native plants back into this area to encourage native habitat and corridors.

Schools that OCCA has worked with in 2014 have included: Brisbane Boys College, St Pius X Salisbury, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Darra, Australian International Islamic College, TAFE Brisbane, St Joseph's Primary Corinda, The Murri School in Acacia Ridge, and Corinda State High School. Activities have ranged from short classroom visits through to full-day tours of the catchments and have included water quality testing, macro-invertebrate sampling, leaf litter surveys, planting, weeding, and litter collection.





In 2015 OCCA worked with St Joseph's Catholic School, Corinda; St Aidan's Anglican Girls School, Corinda; St Thomas More College, Sunnybank; Brisbane Boys College St Margaret's, Ascot; and Australian International Islamic College.

Activities included water quality testing, planting, weeding, litter collection and rubbish removal, macro-invertebrate sampling, and leaf litter surveys. Topics covered included storm water, erosion, weeds, litter, water quality, nutrients, active citizenship, bush rehabilitation, catchments, and awareness of local waterways. Students were also taken on tours of some sites in the catchment.

A Caring for Our Community grant enabled OCCA to purchase new water quality testing kits for the Schools Education Program. The first field test was with students from St Thomas More College who sampled water from Stable Swamp Creek at Gaddes Park, Sunnybank.

In March 2016, OCCA once again worked with the Murri School. This time the students undertook water quality testing, macroinvertebrate identification and a vegetation survey along the creek next to Watson Road. The students sampled both the abiotic and biotic factors and then used the data to create a report on the overall health of the area.

OCCA would like to acknowledge and thank the leaders of the Schools Education Program over the years – Beryl Roberts who founded the program and has contributed so much of her time, knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm to the program's activities over the last 20 years, Leah Hattendorf, Miriam Nyrene, Larissa Mar Fan, and now Karen Toms and Amelia Mack.

OCCA would like to think that the Schools Education Program has helped to make the children who have participated over the years more aware and knowledgeable about their local creeks and natural areas and the things they can do to improve those environments for us all to enjoy.





***Beryl  
Roberts***



***Miriam  
Nyrene***



***Larissa Mar Fan***



***Karen Toms***



***Amelia Mack***