



## About Revive

Revive our Wetlands is the largest national wetlands revival program in Australia and it was established by Conservation Volunteers Australia and BHP Billiton. More than \$1.8 million is being invested over three years in the coordination of volunteers, school education, project management and monitoring of Revive sites, bringing the total contribution by BHP Billiton since 2001 to 5 million. BHP Billiton and CVA are also sharing their professional expertise and resources and engaging BHP Billiton employees in the program.

Five key wetlands sites receive significant help: Upper Spencer Gulf, Desert Coasts Wetlands in SA; Townsville Town Common QLD; Southern Rivers Wetlands NSW; Beelie Regional Parks Wetlands WA; and Point Cook Coastal Park, Cheetham Wetlands VIC. In addition, 50 other wetlands will receive hands-on conservation assistance, 100 schools will be engaged and more than 10,000 volunteer days contributed.

## Measuring Up

Cumulative statistics from Jan 2001 – Dec 2008

Community Volunteer days	29 414
Project days at wetlands	3858
Seed collected	992 kg
Stems/trees planted	579 999
Weed removed	803 091 m <sup>2</sup>
Plants propagated	33 654
Flora/fauna surveys	269
Rubbish removed	22 982 kg
Fence built	70.65 km
Fence repaired	18 588 m

If you are interested in getting involved or would like more information on projects, wetlands and related activities, contact [www.reviveourwetlands.net](http://www.reviveourwetlands.net) or [revive@conservationvolunteers.com.au](mailto:revive@conservationvolunteers.com.au) or call Sarah Brittle on (02) 6247 7770



A volunteer removing weeds from Townsville Town Common

## A word from the project manager

Welcome. In this edition we feature three schools working to improve wetland environments; we learn from Ray's story that Revive's 'health' benefits are not limited to the environment; and we look at the successful work carried out over the past five years at Point Cook, Victoria.

I am excited to announce that in late 2008, Revive was officially recognised by the United Nations for its good practice in Education for Sustainable Development.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) put in place a United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), spanning from 2005 to 2014, and designated UNESCO to lead the Decade.

This resolution seeks to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning, in order to address the social, economic, cultural and environmental problems we face in the 21st century.

2009 sees our tenth year reviving Australia's wetlands!

Enjoy this edition,

**Sarah Brittle**  
Revive our Wetlands Coordinator



Pelican's enjoying a quiet swim in the Townsville Town Common



## What's Inside

SCHOOL WETLAND LEARNING SPACES

LOOKING BACK

WETLAND WARRIOR

MEASURING UP

## Wetland Learning Spaces from country to city

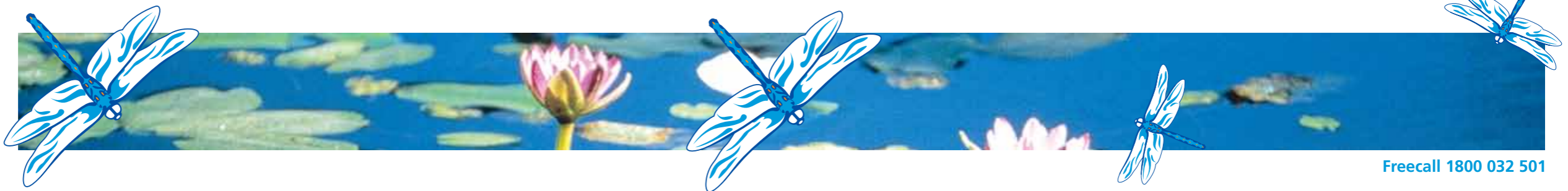
Last year, 22 schools and over 1000 students across Australia participated in the 'Wetland Learning Spaces' program, receiving support from Revive volunteers on wetland projects in or near their schools. The construction of frog ponds, revegetation of wetlands, transformation of school grounds and education and involvement of students were achievements over the year. Three of the schools that benefited were Little Yarra Steiner School in Yarra Junction near Melbourne and Illawarra Grammar School and Russell Vale Public School in Wollongong, NSW.

Little Yarra Steiner School is located in a rural setting along the Little Yarra River and it has been improving the wetland area around the school for three years. Last November, Conservation Volunteers supported the school's ongoing program by providing Revive volunteers who assisted with weed removal and planting of native trees and grasses over two days. [continued page 2](#)



PO Box 423  
Ballarat VIC 3353

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA



## Wetland Learning Spaces from country to city continued...

The wetland area around the school is of local significance as it is a remnant of a swampy riparian woodland vegetation community. The long-term aim of Little Yarra's conservation project is to reduce erosion, improve water quality, increase biodiversity and provide habitat for native species.



Revive volunteers plant trees and remove weeds at Little Yarra Steiner School



Illawarra Grammar School is located in the city of Wollongong and despite it's city surrounds, students have been able to create a beautiful habitat for possums, frogs and other native species on the school grounds.

The primary aim of the project was to construct and install frog ponds and create native habitat for local wildlife.

Revive volunteers, under the guidance of staff from Habitat Ponds, spent 5 days creating five separate frog ponds in various sizes descending the slope and culminating in a base pond at the bottom. The first three of these ponds were linked by underground tubing and the water recycled with a solar-powered pump. The lower ponds were installed with water refreshed by overflow from the higher ponds.

The volunteers and students also planted and relocated a variety of native shrubs, grasses and groundcovers across the slope and around the frog ponds and mulched extensively. They constructed seating made from old car tyres and timber planks and erected bird and possum boxes.

*"This project was an absolute delight to work on, was thoroughly enjoyed by those participating, and greatly appreciated by the children and staff of the school", said Robert Dowd, Conservation Volunteers Australia Team Leader.*



Students from Illawarra Grammar planting native garden



Proud volunteers in front of their series of frog ponds

In October 2008 the creek-line behind Russell Vale Public School in Wollongong was a no-go area. It was a tangle of weeds, harbouring 25 years of accumulated rubbish. Over 4 days between October 2008 and February 2009, Revive teams assisted the school community to develop a Creek walk-through area.

During the project the creek's banks were cleared of weeds (Lantana, Madiera Vine, Moth Vine, Ochna, Privet, Camphourlaurel and Asparagus) and six kilograms of rubbish was collected.

*"Thank you very much for the work that was done - it has been catalytic in getting us focused on that creek-line space. Several parents have encouraged me to run a regular (once a term) event there. I hope to do a few hours each week by myself to chip away at it slowly", said Patsy Ross, parent.*

Since the completion of the creek-line project the school has sourced additional resources to establish a No-Dig Garden. Years 1-4 and parent helpers have developed 4 small vegetable garden beds. The rain gauge, sun-dial and watering fittings allow the project to be linked to the school's Science & Technology and Human Society & its Environment key learning areas and help to raise students' awareness of the bigger environment beyond the school.

With assistance from Wollongong City Council, Years 5 and 6 are creating a wetland in a small park over the road. Students, staff and parents are waiting for the summer dryness to subside to weed and enrich the plantings.

Conservation Volunteers Regional Manager, Michael Andrews says that the Russell Vale project has been a spectacular example of the long-term educational and environmental benefits that can be achieved by providing just a little assistance.

### Some of the outcomes from the school projects across Australia:

2007 - 2008	
Number of schools	36
Number of project days	100
Number of Revive volunteers	674
Number of students	> 1000
Trees/stems planted	2089
Plants propagated	200
Weeds removed	22 178 ha
Rubbish collected	303 kg
Fence constructed	1048 m
Track constructed	850 m
Frog ponds constructed	10

In 2009, 22 school projects will commence around Australia in second term.

## Looking Back

Point Cook Coastal Park and the Cheetham Wetlands are located 20km southwest of Melbourne and cover an area of 863 hectares. An important Ramsar site, over 250 fauna species have been recorded, including the endangered Orange-bellied Parrot. Each year, the Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands host thousands of migratory birds from as far around the world as Siberia and Japan. The park also boasts a rich European history, making the area a wonderful blend of historical value and natural significance. It attracts approximately 200,000 visitors each year.

Restoration of the wetland is an ongoing task, particularly the removal of Boxthorn weeds. Every week Revive volunteers enthusiastically combat this prolific shrub, carefully hand-pulling, cutting and dabbing to overcome this noxious

weed, whilst enjoying the tangy salt air and sweeping views of Melbourne.

Over the past 5 years, volunteers have carried out 1,173 days at the Point Cook Wetlands site and removed more than 100,000 square metres of Boxthorn.

Ranger Bernie McCarrick of Point Cook Coastal Park, Parks Victoria recognises the impact of Revive. "If the Revive teams had not been involved in this program, the improvement to the wetland would not have been possible. Without the removal of the African Boxthorn weed, the regeneration of all the native grasses and salt marsh vegetation would not have been possible. What would have taken 30 - 40 years to achieve under normal circumstances has been done by Revive volunteers in 5 years", he said.



Volunteers removing Boxthorn at Point Cook Coastal Park with the city of Melbourne as their backdrop

## Wetland Warrior

*"I went home that night and thought, I'm better. After 20 years, I'm better."*

Volunteering isn't just about improving the health of the environment, it can also improve the mental health of the individual, as wetland warrior and Revive volunteer Ray discovered

Ray began volunteering with Revive over a year ago at wetlands around Wollongong, NSW. After 20 years of battling with depression, stress and anxiety, Ray followed up a psychologist's suggestion to look for outdoor physical work.

For Ray, volunteering at these wetlands proved to be a new beginning. "As soon as I got there, and by the end of the first day I knew that this was going to be good. My life just changed. Physically I was OK but mentally I wasn't."

Ray volunteers four days a week with CVA. "Some of the stuff is hard going, like pulling out Madiera - it's unending. Weeding Lantana's OK because you can see an end to the tunnel, and weeding is generally OK. But planting trees, and digging holes with the Hamilton hole digger, I just love it. We can do 280 holes a day sometimes if we push it. Give me that job and I will stay with it all day long."

We would like to acknowledge Ray's valuable contribution over the past year.



Volunteers planting trees at Werri Creek