



# 2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

**Nominee: Mount Compass Area School Swamp Ambassadors, SA**

**Category: Woolworths Junior Landcare Team Award**

Mount Compass Area School's Swamp Ambassadors is a student-led environment program where students are the custodians of the school's critically endangered Fleurieu swamp. As custodians, the students work to increase the awareness, and value, of Fleurieu swamps in the local community. The students have worked hard to change the perception of the swamps, through partnerships with Fleurieu Swamps Recovery Program and have undertaken leadership and guide training to effectively share their knowledge and promote the importance of Fleurieu swamps in an engaging way.

The Swamp Abassadors group was born out of the school's involvement in the Fleurieu Swamps Recovery Program, run by Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin (NRSA) and the Goolwa-Wellington Local Action Planning Association (QWLAP). Prior to the program, the swamp was seen as unvalued land area that wasn't used, understood or promoted in any way. Over the last six years the Swamp Ambassadors have worked with the school, and surrounding local community, to change this.

Under the guidance of local Landcare professionals, the students have increased their knowledge of the flora, fauna, hydrology and history of Fleurieu swamps. They have then taken this knowledge and worked to change the perception of the swamps in the broader community by the hosting a number of educational forums and events. The students have also become caretakers of the swamp, revegetating and restoring sections of it. Students worked with the threatened flora project officer from NRSA to planting of a number of species in the area, most notably the planting of the endangered Mount Compass oak bush. The swamp is now home to 93 of these plants, which is significant as there is only just over 1000 left in existence.

Senior students who have been working on the project for the last six years have been mentoring the younger students and educating them on the history of the swamp recovery, its function and importance. One of the first challenges the students faced when restoring the swamp was the state of the boardwalk that ran through it. With the help of Fleurieu Swamps Recovery Program staff, students sourced funding for, and subsequent replacement, of the boardwalk. This meant that students once again had safe access to, and through, the swamp. Because of the boardwalk, Mount Compass School's swamp is the only publicly accessible Fleurieu swamp. This accessibility positions the swamp to be used as a key educational tool in the promotion of protecting Fleurieu swamps.

Working closely with GWLAP the group have undertaken a number of planting days at the swamp, hosted a guided walk along the boardwalk at GWLAP's Bat Night, and created a Fleurieu swamps plant identification guide. Students also worked with GWLAP staff to revegetate an area that was suffering from the removal of 70 blue gums, which led to the restoring of water to that section of swamp.

This program is supported by Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.





# 2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October  
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

One of the next projects identified for the swamp is the mapping of the flow of water into, and through it. This is so that any barriers to flows – such as a road through the adjoining paddock – can be identified, and modified. The students will be involved in working with a number of Landcare professionals in the research involved in this, and there will be exciting opportunities to incorporate more technology, such as drones, into the management of the swamp.

The students' passion and commitment to the school's swamp is epitomised in their willingness to give up their weekends and afternoons to take community groups on visits to the area. This dedication has been integral to the increasing awareness, and value, of Fleurieu swamps in the local community.

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

For further information, photographs or interviews contact:

Naomi Straw  
Landcare Australia  
[naomi.straw@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:naomi.straw@landcareaustralia.com.au)  
02 8440 8823

Jessica Sullivan  
Mount Compass Area School Swamp Ambassadors  
[jessica.sullivan434@schools.sa.edu.au](mailto:jessica.sullivan434@schools.sa.edu.au)  
08 8556 8219

## Web Summary

Mount Compass Area School's Swamp Ambassadors is a student-led environment program where students are the custodians of the school's critically endangered Fleurieu swamp. As custodians, the students work to increase the awareness, and value, of Fleurieu swamps in the local community. The students have worked hard to change the perception of the swamps, through partnerships with Fleurieu Swamps Recovery Program and have undertaken leadership and guide training to effectively share their knowledge and promote the importance of Fleurieu swamps in an engaging way. Prior to the program, the swamp was seen as unvalued land area that wasn't used, understood or promoted in any way.

This program is supported by Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

