



## Karcultaby Area School

4 May 2000

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** I move:

That this House congratulates the years 5, 6 and 7 students of the Karcultaby Area School on winning the National Landcare Garden Award.

It is with pleasure that I move this motion. The years 5, 6 and 7 students at Karcultaby Area School on Eyre Peninsula have won the National Landcare Competition Design and Landcare Garden Award and more than \$7 000 in prizes against entries from across Australia. This is an outstanding achievement made all the more so because of the isolation of the school. Karcultaby Area School is an R-12 school with only 103 students, located on upper Eyre Peninsula in a dryland farming region, about 283 kilometres from Port Lincoln on the Eyre Highway between Wudinna and Ceduna. It is one of two schools on Eyre Peninsula that are not part of a township of any kind. It is situated on almost 400 acres of land, much of which was cleared many years ago and is now mainly used for the agricultural courses offered at the school.

Class teacher Michelle McEvoy began the Landcare project in term 3 as part of the students' science and environment lessons, with the intention of establishing a Landcare garden in an unused area of the school grounds. When Mr John Hammet, a Landcare officer from Streaky Bay, visited the school to speak to the students about Landcare in general, he mentioned the competition run by Landcare Australia. It fitted in so well that Mrs McEvoy and the class decided to enter.

The class split into eight groups and began planning their own ideas and how their garden should look. They had to take into account the kind of environment the garden would be set in, what sort of soil they would be working with, which plants would grow and why. Also considered were the different kinds of animals and bird life that may be attracted. Along with the planning and production of their entries, the class was involved in field trips to the nearby Minnipa Research Centre to learn how to recognise native plants, how to collect seeds, and then how to propagate the plants for later use.

Throughout the term, the students worked with a variety of community members who were all willing to contribute in different ways. Special tribute must be paid to the groundsman, Peter Fleming, for his strong support and the contribution he has made already to the project. The eight completed Landcare garden projects were then submitted to the school's grounds committee where one selection was made. This was the entry submitted to the Landcare Australia competition. Martin Payne, a member of the years 5, 6 and 7 class, outlined some of the benefits of the project. It is worth quoting from his speech:

*Our winning entry in the national Landcare competition began in term 3 last year with the idea of turning an area of the school into an environmentally friendly native garden to bring birds and add character to the school.*

*We spotted the national landcare competition in the book club catalogue and jumped at the chance to enter. A lot of time and effort was put into eight class entries, with the final plan selected by the grounds committee. Our plans included bringing birds to the school by planting and growing trees, information signs, turning the old school house into an education centre, with information about the trees and birds you might see as well as seats for recreation and bird study.*

*Some of the things I have learnt from this project are team work, working together to design a garden for this competition, some planning and recording skills and also how to look after the environment, which I think is very important in today's expanding world. When we heard that we had won everyone was ecstatic. Now the hard*

*work begins. Throughout the year we will develop the garden as planned, with our dreams becoming reality. Our next challenge is finding a way to get water to our garden.*

For a number of watering points to be placed in the area an old tank situated a short distance from the garden will need to be repaired and pipe laid to the watering points.

While visiting the school for the presentation of the award I found it fascinating to see the historic tank used by the railway in years gone by and it still holds water. The repair of the tank and the provision of the new collection sources will provide precious rainwater. It is envisaged that reuse of runoff from the school grounds will provide part of the supply. In order for the garden to be established and carefully maintained, rainwater is essential, especially in this low rainfall area. Having a large catchment area will solve many of the problems with the establishment of the overall project.

The short-term objectives of the garden project are: to establish a water catchment area by repairing the existing tank and forming a run-off flume; to supply water to the fauna in the remnant bush area, where their range is restricted; to provide a suitable water source for the establishment of school nursery landcare garden that produces plants for linear corridors and shelter belts. The long-term objectives were identified as: for the students to try different career pathways in the area of landcare; for students to manage small business enterprises; for students to obtain training in the area of agriculture, horticulture and landcare; and, to have a landcare showpiece to show farmers and interested people that landcare really does work with agriculture.

I am exceedingly proud of that remote Karcultaby school on Eyre Peninsula and that it was acknowledged for its contribution to landcare when members of parliament, local industry and officials from Landcare Australia joined the school community for the presentation of the award. Obviously the Landcare Australia competition is not the finish of all the planning that the students, staff, parents and community members have done. It is only the beginning of what looks like being an interesting and valuable part of Karcultaby's future. Thanks to the landcare competition, it has been a very good beginning.

It will enhance the already considerable efforts that have been undertaken since 1991, when about 65 acres of natural vegetation was fenced off to protect the biodiversity through a Save the Bush grant. This area is mallee scrub grassland, typical of the locality before agricultural activities. It is a stage preserve and a valuable living educational tool that is used to teach the importance of saving remnant vegetation. A small area of half an acre within the larger preserve has been rabbit-proofed by further fencing. Students have been and are continuing to be involved in seed collection and propagation of the local trees and plants that have been planted by students, staff and parents. The school has established shelter belts and linear corridors to link the small pockets of remnant scrub together for the native birds and animals. As part of the year 10 construction course students and volunteers will dismantle the existing Minnipa nursery and transfer it to Karcultaby Area School.

The school nursery is another project to benefit from a bigger water catchment area that forms part of the landcare project. Pipe will need to be laid from the tank to the school nursery tank, which the school won through the competition. The school recently applied for seed funding from the National Heritage Trust as part of the cluster school regional on-ground project. Teacher Michelle McEvoy said the nursery will be used as an educational area to propagate more native trees and plants from the seed collection from remnant native scrubs in the area and from other locations, including the Minnipa Agricultural Centre, the Gawler Ranges and the national parks. Propagated trees will be used for the school and community projects and also for local farmers to grow corridors and shelter belts. This will help reduce wind speeds, thus reducing soil erosion and will provide protection for farm animals. It will also help increase awareness of the biodiversity in mallee scrub areas.

The Chief Executive of Landcare Australia, Mr Brian Scarsbrick, said it was inspiring to see how thoroughly students embraced the Landcare concepts in designing the garden. He said judges from Scholastic Australia and Landcare Australia were given the difficult task of finding one winner among many entries all highly commended for their excellent detail. Managing director of Team Poly, Mr Retallick, said Karcultaby students produced a well thought out, exciting plan to revegetate part of the school grounds to incorporate various habitats and an environmental facility.

The federal member for Grey, Barry Wakelin, presented class member Gareth Scholz, on behalf of Karcultaby Area School, with a \$5 000 cheque to establish the Landcare garden. Local Poly Team distributor Mr Raymond North of Agco presented the school with a 4 000 gallon water tank with pressure pump. The school also received a \$500 voucher from Scholastic Books and a \$500 voucher from Better Stores. The Landcare garden will have a focus on educational outcomes, allowing students to learn about the native species of their local area and to study

data supplied through the information centre to be located in the old school house. The garden will have special features such as a windmill, sundial, birdbath, seats and signs to mark the importance of the area.

Community awareness of the environment and the biodiversity of local floral and fauna will also be increased. Visiting the Landcare garden and information centre, taking bushwalks through the remnant bush area and the contacts that will be made in the wider community with Landcare offices, the soil board, the Minnipa research centre, TAFE and the Minnipa Progress Association will all help to raise awareness within the community. The school aims to become a focus school in Landcare for dryland agricultural areas. I am sure that the support of the school, staff, parents and the community will see that aim achieved. I have much pleasure in the moving the motion.

Motion carried.