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S.R. Manson & B. Darlington  
Friends of (Living) Christie Creek  
c/o 19 Macdonald rd.  
Christie Downs  
S.A. 5164

The secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Environment and Heritage  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

### **Catchment Management.**

Dot point 5.

Planning , resourcing , implementation , coordination and **cooperation in water catchment management.**

Are catchment management plans supposed to integrate society with their environment ? People are truly the heart. The heart of the problem and the heart of the solution.

Any Catchment management plan which fails to address the **educational** needs of the water catchment community will ultimately stumble in the **coordination and cooperation areas**. The education strategy for the entire water catchment human community needs planning and adequate resourcing to compliment any on ground works.

Educating communities in **water catchment care** (best practice in land and water management by people) extends the communal understanding about the natural processes of that land and , thus, their ability to cooperate in the care for that land and water

If people living in a water catchment area (i.e.a geographic location) are unaware of how to care for their land and water , do not know how the drainage system works , then the job of catchment management in a sustainable sense is made much more difficult if not impossible. It requires public and universal education for its maintenance at an effective level in our society.

Reading and writing (i.e. literacy) has been practiced for many years. Reading the landscape (water catchment literacy) requires similar educative effort.

**Cooperation through Education is a key**

**An Investment in our future !**

## 1. COOPERATION THROUGH EDUCATION

So how is water catchment care facilitated in the human community ?

How do people become **water catchment literate**? (Communities living in a conscious positive relationship with their catchment)

Friends of (Living) Christie creek believe that the answer is:

**1.1 Sustaining education/marketing** The education/ marketing concept that forms the overview and ongoing base of water catchment literacy and care.

We , as a people, live in a consumer society that abounds with messages about what constitutes an agreeable way of life. To promote water catchment literacy and care so as to nourish the community's appetite to reconnect needs profound encouragement , because the message is profound .

Everyone lives in a water catchment place !

In Australia there is an enormous amount of sporting passion. An example of this is the 100,000 people that met our returning world cup cricket team. You do not see 100,000 people at a seminar for Catchment management , but their ultimate future depends on healthy catchments.

It seems logical to enlist a broad range of sporting and media personalities to sprukey the message of water catchment care through an innovative educational campaign. The message of cooperation through education could be obtained through enlisting the "passion of support".

Why the passion of support ? There are numerous endorsements from a range of sport and media identities promoting a vast range of goods and services. They obviously work because of the repetitive nature of such endorsements.

There are a number of ways of achieving this : The Testimonial.....Endorsement.....Actor.....Spokesman (Schiffman/Kanuk 1983)

The message must be ongoing, otherwise people start to forget and assume that the task has been completed. People are fickle and forgetful , they need to be reminded. through consistent messages to reconnect and respect their water catchment place.

Out of the 3 levels of government The Commonwealth Government of Australia is the level of government which could make an investment in our future by promoting water catchment literacy and care via "Cooperation through Education".

### 2.1 Local education through cooperation

The water catchment area must be defined for people to view through the use of Maps, 3D models, Computer simulations. (In fact anything that puts a visual image out in the community.) Then naming and highlighting major traffic networks , schools and shopping centres as well as the stream order or drainage lines enhances and expands people's perception of where they live.

As individuals or as a society ; people gain the sense of where they "fit in", where they have a sense of place or belonging and they are informed as to which stream ,creek or waterway is in their locality.

The familiarity of their surroundings , of where they live , becomes a template for the message of water catchment care.

Specific messages for local conditions further reinforces both a sense of belonging and the message of care for our environment.

## **2.2 Cooperation through education example**

The same transport corridors can be used to define the catchment with signs strategically placed on the side of the road or in a local people traffic/gathering area.

The signs used in Christie Creek (my) catchment area, (a coastal catchment south of Adelaide, 55% urban 45% rural) read quite simply *CHRISTIE CREEK CATCHMENT do your share for catchment care.*

There were 24 signs placed throughout the catchment in 1995/96 with the cooperation of the former Noarlunga Council. The majority have become collector's items for the community and are never defaced, only stolen

The only problem with any sign or billboard is that they lose their educative value and impact through quickly merging into the familiar landscape. They become part of the background.

Facilitation of local catchment care is obligatory for the human catchment community's survival as well as the water catchment areas survival.

The methods of defining the water catchment area to the human community described earlier are cheap and effective as well as being short term and temporary.

If people are the first priority, then it is imperative that we create the desire for catchment care through effective and positive community education, consultation, participation and celebration for their local environment.

The need to belong is a human motivation which can be tapped into through water catchment care education. Once a person knows that sense of place which develops through water catchment care, they become aware that they are part of a greater whole.

Human networks within a community represent the only true hope that Australia has of being sustained for the future. People can be drawn into the process of water catchment care to assist. A marketing/education program is an investment in our future.

## **3. COOPERATION THROUGH CELEBRATION**

Maslow's theory of human motivation consists of five basic levels. They start with **1.** physiological needs of food, water, air, shelter and sex. **2.** safety and security, needs of protection, order, stability. **3.** social needs of affection, friendship and belonging. (Maslow 1962)

FO(L)CC feels that the higher levels described by Maslow (egoistic need and the need for self actualisation) can be fulfilled by the celebration aspect of our community education program.

Human catchment community networks add value to each other's experiences and this only happens when people come together or communicate. A positive celebratory environment not only encourages people to get involved but that enjoyable communal experience opens the mind to learning.

In our experience as pioneers in education and facilitation of local catchment care, we have found that people need a very good reason to participate in their water catchment community activities and ethos.

Anyone who attempts to reach the heart of this problem (of sustainable catchment management) without adequately cooperating, educating and involving their human communities is bound to suffer major and avoidable setbacks.

### **3.1 Cooperation through Celebration example.**

By actually participating in a process that creatively explores an issues, the participant become better informed about the issue itself , and have fun along the way.(Williams 1993)

A “Catchment Fair” held at Morphett Vale West Primary School in late 1996 is an example of people coming together to celebrate their local environment.

The naming of the fair a “Catchment fair” was a deliberate choice. It was to reinforce that the familiarity of their local surroundings was indeed in a geographic location , a water catchment place because everyone lives in a water catchment place

The fair was attended by 1800 children and 300 adults over 2 days. The neighboring schools within the catchment were asked to send a number of classes and these were brought in by bus at no cost to the school or students.

Upon arrival the participants received a “Catchment carry bag”. This was an A4 size bag with a map of the catchment on one side and the location of the school highlighted. This carry bag further reinforced the message that we all live in a catchment.

There were class room displays which contained a range of art work , 3d models and information generated by the children about the current state of their creek. A huge blue marquee housed all the interactive displays and information about catchment care.

To strengthen the message of care , there was a deliberate mix of entertainment based around balance.The balance theme was supplied by an acrobatic troupe called “Cirkidz” (Contact Deputy Principal Peter Smytherman , Morphett Vale West Primary School, for further details)

## **OUTCOMES**

The outcome of the facilitation program which has been described can be divided into a number of components.

### **SOCIAL**

When preparing the catchment plan for Christie creek in 1995, B.C.Tonkin and associates acknowledged the level of awareness in the community of integrated catchment management which had come from the preceding education campaign run by FO(L)CC.(letter feb.1995) That is to say , the local water catchment human community at that time were noticeably more water catchment literate.

### **COMMUNITY**

Anecdotal evidence gathered through word of mouth (no market research was carried out due to the whole process being severely underfunded) suggested that the environmental education campaign and the signs were effective in increasing peoples awareness of their responsibility in water catchment care. Community reaction to the signage spread throughout the catchment on the roadside has been positive. When speaking at a Rotary club some of the members indicated that the street signs had given them a profound sense of place and belonging.

The catchment fair in 1996 also created a sense of belonging and greater awareness, which left many students wanting more knowledge and contact. Despite lack of funds and the amount of work involved , schoolchildren desire the excitement and sense of belonging engendered by these celebrations. The many activities of cleanups, festivals , street parades (Australia Day, Christmas pageants) with school children taking part , have all promoted the message of water catchment care

Many students have appreciated FO(L)CC’s innovative messages of care and knowledge for their local environment.This has ranged from an early play which featured the “Catchment Cat” (a polluting cat) who chooses to be belled. (i.e.change behaviour) in order to care and acknowledge his water catchment area , to a local weekly (Coast FM) Radio program which promoted water catchment knowledge since 1993

#### **Dot point 6**

Present mechanisms for monitoring , reporting and evaluation of water catchment management need to be expanded to take in the literacy of the human catchment community. While people's water catchment literacy is low or non existent , then it is probable that the state of the environment is going to decline even further.

As an added point do your relatives know which water catchment place they live in ? If they are unable to answer that question , then it is likely that their water catchment literacy is low. Why is that ? Why don't people know where they live geographically. We all seem to know our postcode that is used on letters and documents , because we have been trained and educated that their inclusion is vital. Not relevant you think but it is , because it's an example of Cooperation through Education

Currently , any methods for measuring people's water catchment literacy are invisible ( to the writers of this submission) or those methods do not exist. To effectively monitor and evaluate water catchment management , the literacy of the human catchment community must inevitably be included. People will continue having an adverse impact on their local environment if they are not educated in the ways of water catchment literacy and care

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

The question is, how to empower a community to manage their water catchment place ? The answer is to consistently educate people they live in a water catchment place and that care of that place has to be shared by all of us cooperatively.

Catchment management requires that a sense of balance be returned to waterways.The on ground physical works need the support of the human community.The support needs to come through a process of **“Cooperation through Education”** or those works may be abused through ignorance

Education is a life-long process. The marketing/education of water catchment care is imperative. People must have the desire to acknowledge their local surroundings then behaviour can start to change. Water catchment literacy is an investment in our collective future.

**There is a need in this country for a national strategy of water catchment care marketing/education.**

#### **REFERENCES**

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Bon Darlington. B.A.Hons Dip Ed. Dip. Pedagogical theory

End note :

An Investment in the future is required , due to the void in visible ongoing education , we have taken the initiative of adding an important component to this submission. It is a national , systematic , education campaign , based around the unusual and the passion of support , for water catchment care.

