



Statewide Mid-Year Report 2025



Marist College students exploring water bugs during a Bendigo Creek excursion

"Our school motto is Make a Difference and being involved in citizen science projects like this enables our year 5 students to make a difference locally. River Detectives forms an important part of our Maths, History, Geography and Science programs."

Cornish College educator, Melbourne Water region





Barapa Barapa Traditional Owner Laura Kirby

Acknowledgement

The River Detectives program acknowledges the Traditional Owners across the regions on which the program is delivered. We recognise their rich culture and spiritual connection to Country and the contribution and interest of Aboriginal people and organisations in land and natural resource management.

Program delivery

[River Detectives](#) is an engaging environmental education program that connects young people to nature by caring for their local waterway. Students participate in citizen science, learn about the importance of healthy waterways through water quality testing, and the benefits to land, plants, animals and people. Participating schools are provided with equipment, support, training, and teaching resources.

2025 River Detectives delivery partners offering the program to schools in their region

- North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA)
- Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA)
- North East Catchment Management Authority (CMA)
- Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (CMA)
- Melbourne Water

Environmental Education providers

Within some of the above regions, environmental education providers provide River Detectives content to a broader range of schools either as incursions or excursions.

- Serendip Sanctuary, Parks Victoria (Corangamite CMA region)
- Greater Western Water (Melbourne Water area)
- Healesville Sanctuary (Melbourne Water area)
- Environmental Education for Kids (Melbourne Water area)
- Yarra River Keepers Association (Melbourne Water area)
- TwistED Science (North Central CMA region)

ResourceSmart Schools

[ResourceSmart Schools](#) is a like-minded sustainability program. Many of their facilitators have received a River Detectives induction, are resourced with water quality and waterbug equipment and are available to deliver River Detectives content to schools involved in both programs. This aids schools and enhances capacity of each program.



Statewide engagement snapshot

Terms one and two, 2025



87

**Participating schools
via CMA's**

35 North Central CMA
20 Corangamite CMA
6 North East CMA
6 Wimmera CMA
20 Melbourne Water

11

**Participating schools
via Environmental
Education providers**

3 Serendip Sanctuary
3 Greater Western Water
2 Yarra River Keepers
3 Healesville Sanctuary

2

**Participating schools
via ResourceSmart
Schools**

2 Melbourne Water



Timboon P-12 School testing for water quality



Poowong Consolidated School sampling waterbugs

138

**Waterway monitoring
sites**

44 North Central CMA
27 Corangamite CMA
14 North East CMA
14 Wimmera CMA
39 Melbourne Water

79

Data Entries

29 North Central CMA
36 Corangamite CMA
6 North East CMA
na Wimmera CMA
8 Melbourne Water

Water Quality Testing
Waterbug Sampling
Habitat Surveys

113

Educators supported

48 North Central CMA

22 Corangamite CMA

10 North East CMA

9 Wimmera CMA

24 Melbourne Water

15

Training workshops delivered

Geelong River Detectives introductory PD session



Delving Into The Data:
with statewide WaterWatch facilitator Justine Holmes

1

Ask The Expert
webinar

4

Written and video
school stories



Children were introduced to the wetlands through photos and learnt about the shapes of they might

Wimmera CMA region Story of Change video

Minyip and Rupanyup Kinders

15

School sessions
delivered by CMA's

3

School sessions
delivered by
ResourceSmart
Schools

22

School sessions
delivered by
Environmental
Education Providers



Timboon P-12 School doing their monthly citizen-science tasks



Poowong Consolidated School sampling waterbugs



Victory Christian College Year 9/10's water quality testing



Marist College Grade 3's searching for waterbugs in school creek

Highlights

2025 ResourceSmart Schools Awards

Seven River Detectives schools were named as finalists across a variety of categories in this year's ResourceSmart Schools Awards, recognising their commitment to embedding sustainability, in part by using the River Detectives program.

- Siena Catholic Primary School
- St James' Parish School, Sebastopol
- Victory Christian College
- Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten
- Pleasant Street Primary School, Wendouree
- Marita Ryan, Albion Primary School
- Stephen McNeight, Wendouree Primary School

On June 5, World Environment Day, the Awards were held at the MCG. The River Detectives program were present, offering a showcase display and involving participants in waterbug sampling to learn about waterway health.

Congratulations to **Victory Christian College (Bendigo)** who won the Curriculum Leadership Secondary School of the Year.



RSS Awards showcase display



Winners!

"Students contribute to citizen science – tracking changes during dam repairs at Kennington Reservoir, collecting water samples, and entering data into the River Detectives database. Student efforts also include breeding native fish and planting aquatic plants to aid ecosystem restoration. Through hands-on methods such as dissecting fish to assess microplastic pollution, they discovered significant levels in species such as the Tench. Their findings on plastic pollution have been shared with local authorities, to raise broader awareness."

Ro Rimmer, Victory Christian College educator

ResourceSmart
Schools Awards 2025

Victory Christian College



Curriculum Leadership School
of the Year – Secondary

Congratulations to **Marita Ryan, Albion Primary School** who won Primary Teacher of the Year. Marita has been a passionate River Detectives educator since 2016!

Marita's work to embed sustainability as a cross-curriculum priority has inspired the school and resulted in an increase in community partnerships, including with Landcare, River Detectives, and Brimbank Council, and with local businesses, parents, and volunteers.

Her dedication and approachable leadership have ingrained a culture of sustainability within the school community – and has helped the school achieve so much more when working together with others.



Primary Teacher of the Year
Marita Ryan – Albion Primary

WORKING
Together

ResourceSmart
Schools Awards 2025

Winners announced

Broader events



Bendigo Sustainability Festival

Inspiring young Eco Club members from Castlemaine Steiner School sharing their passion



Arthur Rylah Institute, Barwon Water and the CCMA River Detectives program worked with two schools

Fish Scientist For A Day

Hundreds of children used native plants to create embossed clay tiles

NAIDOC Week Children's Day, Bendigo



Winning entries to name the turtle islands made to protect turtle eggs from predation



Gunbower PS learning about turtle islands

Students learnt traditional weaving techniques to make spherical habitat pods for wetlands



Gunbower PS working with Barapa and Yorta Traditional Owners

An event lead by the school to aid 2022 flood recovery along with Landcare and Skipton Angling Club

Skipton PS Clear the Carp fishing competition



"River Detectives is an invaluable part of our Duke of Edinburgh program, providing meaningful engagement in scientific and community service."

River Detectives is a recognised water surveillance program that students respect.

It motivates them to undertake testing with scientific rigor and gets students outdoors, participating in hands-on local environmental science throughout the year that they ordinarily would not have an opportunity to do.

Sirius College educator