

Taking steps towards more inclusive workshops

Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc



Targeting workshops to the specific needs of diverse participants

The issue

In recent years, Murrumbidgee Landcare have commenced a program of school holiday workshops, providing fun activities to connect local school-aged children with Landcare and nature. The workshops have been popular with kids and also with their parents, many of whom were keen for their kids to spend more time outdoors but didn't have the knowledge or confidence to do so.

While the workshops were a great success, I found myself lamenting the fact that they really did not provide the right environment for my autistic son. Being in a noisy and busy environment, with large numbers of unfamiliar children, would be a nightmare for my son, so he preferred not to attend.

The solution

Autistic children can greatly benefit from time in nature, but the conditions of our workshops were not providing them with a safe and positive way to do this. So we partnered with the Wagga Autism Support Group to develop suitable workshops together. We were able to make some relatively minor changes to our program, to be able to offer workshops which were targeted for the needs of the autistic community. These changes include reducing the group size, reducing the number of activities offered to allow for a more relaxed event, providing a carer to support anyone who may need some special attention, and holding the workshops in an enclosed garden space.

The impact

We now run two separate workshops each session - one which is open to all, and one which is specifically tailored to the needs of children with autism. Our workshops for autistic children are always run in partnership with the Wagga Autism Support Group, allowing us to build a strong relationship and ensure we meet the needs of the autistic community.

We have commenced discussions with other local groups, including those who support children with physical disabilities, and have plans to expand our workshops to cater for the needs of these and other children with diverse needs. Our aim is to provide opportunities for all children to connect with Landcare and nature in a safe and positive way.



Key facts

- 1 new partnership
- 2 successful workshops completed, with more planned
- 18 new young participants



This initiative is made possible by the NSW Landcare Enabling Program, a collaboration between Local Land Services and Landcare NSW supported by the NSW Government.