



ROTARY MURRAY-DARLING SCHOOL OF FRESHWATER RESEARCH

14th to 19th April, 2009

“The Living Murray – a sustainable future”

Report

Australia’s 23 District Governors has determined to establish a National Preserve Planet Earth initiative and adopted, as part of that initiative, the Rotary Murray Darling School of Freshwater Research. This Program as developed by the Rotary Club of Albury, is designed to involve Rotary in environmental issues in a positive manner. The School has received a number of awards, including a Citation from the President of Rotary International.

The School takes the form of a youth education program operated by the Rotary Club of Albury in conjunction with The Murray-Darling Freshwater Research Centre (MDFRC). It started in 1996 and in 2009 celebrated its 14th anniversary. It is held over six days and five nights during the New South Wales Easter vacation. It has an enrolment of no more than 50 Year 11 students from high schools and secondary colleges in and adjacent to the Murray-Darling Basin. The School gives students opportunity to learn, investigate and explore the environmental sciences and the possibility of a future career in this field.

During the School, MDFRC staff members are supported by staff of La Trobe University, Charles Sturt University and Norske Skog Albury.

The School Program

The five day Residential School is practice based. It gives students opportunities to work in the laboratories at the MDFRC and to experience practical fieldwork along the Murray River and its floodplain. It provides direct involvement with scientists and lecturers. Importantly, it provides an introduction to the university experience.

Students are accommodated at The Scots School Albury and are transported by bus to the various venues at which the School operates. During the School, students work in small groups with a Mentor assigned to each group. Mentors are usually undergraduate environmental science or education students currently attending university. They assist students to gain benefit from the activities of the School by guiding and assisting in the program.

School Administration

The School is administered by the Rotary Club of Albury but involves Rotary Clubs throughout the Murray-Darling Basin. These Clubs nominate and sponsor students to attend, working in collaboration with Principals, Staff and Parents. This year, selection criteria have been provided to both clubs and schools to ensure the selection of students who will benefit most from the School program.

Sponsorship payment of \$450 covers all on site costs including accommodation etc.



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Involvement of Rotary Clubs

The School brings together Rotary Clubs and the secondary colleges and high schools in their area. Principals and staff, together with members of the relevant Rotary Club, recommend students who meet the Selection Criteria and who will best benefit from the experience. Students will be expected to, on their return home, provide feedback on their experiences to fellow students and to their sponsoring Rotary Club.

A comprehensive nomination form is required and students provide (no more than) an A4 page of information relating to their reasons for attending, their current school experiences and their career aspirations. Rotarians need to be available to assist with this process. Rotarians and school staff are asked to ensure that the nomination form and other documentation arrives on or before the due date.

Clubs are requested to oversee student's transport to and from Albury. If necessary, members of the Rotary Club of Albury will provide transport to and from Albury bus and train stations and will billet students if required.

Selection of Students for 2010

The 2010 RMDSFR will operate from Tuesday 6 to Sunday 11 April. Once a student's nomination and sponsorship is received, a process of selection starts involving members of the Rotary Club of Albury and staff at the MDFRC. Students are notified of their final selection approximately two weeks after the closing date. Along with the letter of notification, a draft program/timetable; a checklist of items the student needs to bring; maps and other helpful details are provided. Finally, students will be welcomed to The Scots School Albury between 2:00 and 4:00 pm on Tuesday 6 April 2010.

In Summary

Attending the Rotary Murray-Darling School of Freshwater Research is a unique experience that will provide Year 11 students with opportunities for research and learning in the environmental sciences. It will give students the opportunity to work with scientists and lecturers in laboratories and in the field and to meet and work with students from three States and the ACT. It encourages liaison and cooperation between Rotary Clubs, high schools and secondary colleges. It provides a friendly considerate environment in which students are able to live, learn and gain experience.

For further information

Contact: The Murray-Darling Freshwater Research Centre (MDFRC)

Phone: 02 6024 9650

Email: info@mdfrc.org.au

Website: www.mdfrc.org.au

Rotary: Paul Gooding 0428 656 023
Bob Walker 0429 923 429

