



# NATURAL STATE

Conservation : Education : Revegetation

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## Welcome to the 6th edition of the Natural State Newsletter ' Autumn / Winter-07 '

This is our newsletter aimed at anyone interested in revegetation and nature in general.

Natural State is a private revegetation business started in 2002. We offer a range of services in the SA Murray Darling Basin, Adelaide Hills/Plains, Fleurieu Peninsula and the South East of SA. We don't just talk about it, we actually make things happen on ground!

This newsletter is intended for screen viewing, with links for email and web addresses, helping to reduce paper use.

### Natural State celebrates 5 years in business

On 2 June 2007 it will be the 5th birthday of my business Natural State. Over this period it has been an amazing learning curve which has made me stronger as a person and as a business man.

Recently I have had a few customers asking if Natural State is owned by a partnership or is even a government department.

The truth is I started the business in June 2002 on my own, after a small win of \$5,000 in Powerball. I have sacrificed much to get here. For example only a year and a half ago I moved out of my caravan which I had lived in for 4 years.

Over these 5 years, I have managed the business & developed it into what it is today. I have put over \$500,000 of earnings back into my business and produced and trademarked my brand - Natural State.

Anyone in business today knows that even without a drought or high interest rates there are many demands a small business owner needs to adapt to to be successful. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to say I survived 5 years in business, especially in this industry!!!



Above: From little things big things grow !!!



### A new direction for nursery service

Recently I have decided to make some changes to the current nursery service we offer.

The drought and water restrictions over the past year have made it pretty hard to make a profit from wholesale nursery production. The nursery will remain open only be appointment indefinitely.

The best way to buy plants from Natural State will be to contact us online via email and put in an order or to leave an order message on the nursery answering machine.

Please note: if you know what you want, there is always a stocklist available on the homepage at: <http://www.naturalstate.com.au/download/stocklist.pdf> This details exactly what species we have available, quantities and prices.



Left: Jake holding our Murray Darling Carpet Python

## El Shaddia Camp - Wellington

Since 2004 we have been working in partnership with Christian Youth Camps to deliver hands on environmental education workshops for students staying at the Wellington campsite.

The site has modern facilities including bunkhouse accommodation, canteen / food serving areas, stage and performing room, rock climbing wall, sports oval, and an above ground pool.

Across the road lies the Murrundi Wetland Reserve. This site is owned and under the control of The Rural City of Murray Bridge Council. The site is has a man made wetland area surrounded by a natural reedbed.

We normally deliver Aboriginal Education, Native Plants, Native Animals and Sustainable Recreation sessions for either half day or full days.

The highland revegetation project, started by Natural State in 2002, still continues with the regular help of the student participants who visit mostly from Adelaide or regional SA schools.

For prices for your school to stay at the camp call David Flood on 08 8572 7262 or for info / booking the Enviro Education call Matt on 0439 727 057.



Above: The Daintree Rainforest still being cleared in 2006

## Staff Profile - Apprentice Jake Coombe

In February this year we welcomed Jake Coombe as an apprentice. After doing work experience with us in December he made such a good impression that he was rewarded with this rare opportunity.

Jake will achieve a trade Certificate 3 in Horticulture in around 2 and a half years time.

Already he has proven to be a valuable asset to the team showing common sense, a willingness to learn and forward thinking - these skills are often lacking in employees these days, especially young ones.

There is no doubt that he will be a keen reptile handler in the near future with a growing interest in nature and conservation. Welcome aboard mate !!!



Above: 60 Students from Cedar College - Adelaide help out at Wellington

## Did you know ?

Have you ever thought that not enough is being done to conserve Australia's unique forests? I know I have.

Well there are a few organisations that are committed to conservation through buying back forests purely to save them forever. What we do is important, but even more so is stopping habitat loss in the first place.

One such group is called Rainforest Rescue. Check out the website at [www.rainforestrescue.org.au](http://www.rainforestrescue.org.au) and get involved in practical conservation. For as little as \$2 a week you can help buy back significant rainforest land.

Having just come back from Northern NSW and seeing the Daintree World Heritage area in September it needs to be saved NOW!

Australia has less than 1% of the original rainforests left that were there before European settlement.



Above: Karina Rose designing a water feature garden

## Karina Rose - Sustainable Recreation Officer

Karina does not actually work for Natural State, she is currently employed as the Sustainable Recreation Project Officer for the River Murray & Lower Lakes in SA. She moved to South Australia from Sydney in March 2004, for this position.

With a Master of Environmental Education and a Bachelor of Science under her belt, she has been able to develop many new skills in managing projects, seeking funding and delivering environmental education outcomes for Sustainable Recreation.

Karina has successfully brought in well-needed funds for projects within the Murraylands and Riverland areas, for the rehabilitation of popular river recreation areas, interactive touchscreens for Pomberuk Aboriginal Cultural Centre, an upgrade to the Younghusband boat ramp, plus many other projects!

So please remember to have fun with minimal impact on our precious River Murray & Lower Lakes environs!

## T & R Pastoral tree planting project

In March we put together a revegetation plan for T & R Pastoral in Murray Bridge. A new area will be planted with 1,000 trees and put on irrigation using automatic timers.

A rock breaker had to be used to break through the sheet limestone, then the holes filled with a local sandy loam to speed up establishment.

This plantation will mean that a total of 4 Hectares is now set aside for a native woodland. In total over 4,500 trees will have been planted since late 2004.

I would like to thank T & R Pastoral for their much valued support over the years and for giving us the opportunities.



Above: Rock Breaker working on holes in limestone



Above: Young participants keep an eye on Joanna

## CSIRO - Double Helix Science Club

Since August 2006, Karina and I have been involved in presenting several workshops with the Gifted and Talented Childrens Association at Annesley College in Adelaide.

Held once a month on a Saturday afternoon, this opportunity led me to meet Rhona Sakko from the CSIRO Double Helix Science Club.

On Sunday April 22nd we held workshops for the Science Club, at the Nursery for around 80 people - children and adults, mostly from Adelaide.

This was the third big group of paying customers that we have had at the nursery where they have travelled to Tailm Bend from Adelaide. I am really proud and honoured to work on this partnership with CSIRO's Double Helix Science Club.



Above: A recent example of our waterwise landscaping

### Scouts SA tree planting project - 2007

On the weekend of the 23rd & 24th of June we will be involved in a large tree planting project at Brinkley, where 20,000 trees are to be planted by hand.

The project is partly funded by the Goolwa - Wellington LAP group who have been involved with Scouts SA for several years now.

Scout groups from all over SA are invited to help plant the trees on this weekend. Free lunch / drinks are available as well as entertainment and shelter in case the weather gets rough.

Matt has helped to develop a revegetation / weed control plan, co ordinate the site preparation and the Natural State team will be assisting with planting as well.

If you want to help plant trees on this weekend, call Jem on 0427 364 551.



Above: Wayne Lynns seeding project, photo taken mid April 2007

### Joy Burgess' landscaping project

This Autumn we have undertaken several landscaping projects in Murray Bridge, Peake, Montieth & Tailem Bend.

One of these projects involved us designing and producing a dry creek effect in a suburban backyard.

The idea was from Murray Bridge resident Joy Burgess near the Riverglades Wetlands.

What started as a bare sandy backyard now looks like a natural dry creekbed with a mix of over 60 native plants - all waterwise, low maintenance and drought tolerant.

When we do landscaping it is like a backyard blitz but without the \$100,000 budget!



Above: Last years Scouts planting site near the Lake Alexandrina

### Direct seeding machine gets overhaul

Our disc seeder was recently upgraded with a few new features. The machine now uses a gear driven seed box setup which makes seed delivery a lot smoother and precise. So - with the watering in method that only we use, and the new modified seeder, our service becomes more professional.

The machine had copped a bit of punishment over the years especially around Big Bend and Tailem Bend on the limestone sites.

One of last year's seeding customers watered in his site every few weeks to maximise the germination rate. The seeding of around a hectare, now has an excellent success rate with over 90% of the site covered in small seedlings.

Wayne even placed shovel loads of small limestone rocks in the trench to hold more moisture & to slow the water run off when he watered the rows. Great job Wayne!

## Willow control work goes off

Since December our team has been involved in more than 25 days of willow control work.

Sites and trees varied from the Paris Creek giant Crack Willows to the smaller Weeping and Basket Willows on the River Murray.

This year we have tried a few new approaches which have improved the effectiveness and efficiency of the service dramatically. Each year Natural State's willow control service improves even more.

More equipment will be invested in before this Summer, allowing a wider range of control options and prices.

Later this year we will be releasing our own report detailing the experiences and knowledge gained over the past 5 years with Willow control.

I am determined to be the leading willow control contractor for the River Murray in South Australia.



Above: If you want willows killed like this, call Matt on 0439 727 057

## Plant profile - Spotted Emu Bush

The *Eremophila maculata* - Spotted Emu Bush is one of our favourite all rounder native shrubs. Not only is this plant extremely waterwise, drought tolerant, bird attracting and quick growing, it also has a beautiful red flower.

I have seen this species growing naturally in the River Murray floodplains around Mildura.

As the name suggests Emus do have a role to play here, as the natural seed distributors. They eat the seed capsule and the act of digestion aids germination when it is eventually passed out. Without the Emu in Southern Australia or the Cassowary in Northern Australia to do this service, many species of plants, and in turn animals, could be in serious strife.

The genus *Eremophila* are mostly known as the Emu Bushes & range in size from small trees, shrubs and groundcovers. They grow in Central Australia in most states.



Above: Spotted Emubush - *Eremophila maculata*

## The Big'un file

Following the spotted theme this edition's big'un is a:

Spotted Gum - *Corymbia maculata*.  
(It used to be *Eucalyptus maculata*)

These trees grow to well over 50 metres and occur naturally in Northern NSW.

This specimen is well over 30m tall and was growing as part of an open forest near Armidale in New South Wales.

The trunk has different coloured bark that looks like leopard spots from a distance.

An important tree for forestry, as it is quick growing and pretty adaptable to lower rainfall areas. It grows best in areas of rainfall higher than 600mm / year.



Above: Spotted Gum - *Corymbia maculata*



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