 **Landcare Broken Hill Inc**

***Greening the Hill Mk2***

ABC Radio interview No.56 – 17th June 2020

**Who are the Broken Hill environmental students?**

**Announcing today**

**The Broken Hill Student Environmental Award**

**Landcare Broken Hill sees the future of Broken Hill as one founded on community environmental projects and innovative new green economic generators.**

**In many parts of the world there is much promotion of the concept of a “new green deal” as part of the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. A new green deal in our terms embraces sustainable, innovative, usually high-tech industries which concurrently safeguard the environment. With Broken Hill being at the epicentre of major renewable energy production, there is every justification for this City to become a hub for new ‘green’ industries utilising the power produced on the City’s perimeter. This concept would entail “our” local renewable energy being disconnected from the national power grid and used to power major new green industries in Broken Hill, thereby avoiding the appalling restraints of the current AusGrid network which is unable to cope with renewable energy**

Over the last 14 months of our ***Greening the Hill Mk2*** Initiative, Landcare Broken Hill has welcomed many dozens of volunteers into our team. We’ve been encouraged by the great support gained from across the Broken Hill community, with partnerships formed with many businesses and clubs. This has been great.

**But I keep asking myself: where are the students? Where are the young people?**

We have a good relationship with some of the members of the Broken Hill Young Leaders Group, in fact last year we amended our constitution to set aside 2 seats on our Landcare Executive Committee for the Young Leaders Group. We greatly value that relationship. However, the Young Leaders are generally from the mid-secondary school years.

In addition to the Young Leaders, when we have had planting or plant growing projects, amongst those who volunteer are many younger kids. So we have seen the 3rd Broken Hill Sea Scouts and the Broken Hill Girl Guides becoming involved. Similarly, our **Green Schools Programme**, being a key part of ***Greening the Hill Mk2***, has been kicked off with primary schools in Broken Hill. Our relationship with **Sacred Heart Primary School** is well developed with many good gardening and landscaping works underway. Expressions of interest inviting Landcare’s assistance, such as to create school vegetable gardens and embark on tree planting, has come from a number of other schools, but to date they are all primary schools.

Landcare Broken Hill has decided to do something about this situation.

**Broken Hill Student Environmental Award**

With the wonderful support of Dr Helen Sykes AM, the founder of Future Leaders, we are launching this year a **Broken Hill Student Environmental Award**. This Award will be available only to Year 12 students. It will comprise a single **$1,000 prize** awarded to an individual Year 12 student. The prize will recognise “**outstanding commitment of a Broken Hill Year 12 student to environmental issues**”.

It is early days, so the parameters of this $1,000 Award are still to be determined. We hope to work with the two Broken Hill High Schools to determine the rules that will apply. The underlying concept is to encourage Broken Hill students to think about environmental issues and then demonstrate a genuine commitment to ‘make a difference’ to address one or more such environmental issues. The students might devise a project, they might volunteer, they might complete useful research, they might become an organiser, or a writer to raise issues in the public arena – all with respect to the environment. **We will look for a student that is demonstrating a commitment to be an environmental ‘change agent’.**

Over the next few weeks we will be formulating the details of the Award scheme and so will be announcing the details, most probably by late July, so that there are enough months of the year left for the interested Year 12 students to demonstrate their “outstanding commitment”.

**Western Landcare funding to stimulate our Green Schools Program.**

The second piece of good news today is to announce that Western Landcare has resolved to allocate some thousands of dollars to Landcare Broken Hill so that we can **expedite the roll out of our Greens Schools Program over the balance of 2020.**

Again, it is early days, so we are still working out the priorities and logistics as to how best we will allocate the funds. Our present inclination is to work with secondary students at the two Broken Hill High Schools, with a particular focus on vocational training, most probably highlighting sustainable agriculture, horticulture, bush regeneration and other related environmental managements opportunities associated with primary industry careers.

**Careers of the future**

One of the fastest growing areas of new careers globally and in Australia is in **environmental management** and **environmental engineering**. These careers may be in ecology, biodiversity, zoology, botany, horticulture, sustainable agriculture, to name just some of the exciting opportunities. There are numerous careers in the environmental engineering and environmental land management fields. There are numerous careers in the pollution control fields tackling air pollution, water pollution and noise pollution.

I was a founder and long-standing president, and am now a Fellow, of the EIANZ, the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand.

The EIANZ is the professional ‘home’ of all those people who work, research and study in the broad environment management field. Amongst its thousands of members one can see within the EIANZ examples of an extraordinarily broad range of career opportunities for young people to consider when they come to focus on their vocational school training.

In kick-starting Landcare’s Green Schools Program, in partnership with Broken Hill’s High Schools, utilising Western Landcare’s assistance funds, we will be determinedly demonstrating through our practical projects the myriad of environment-related careers available for students after they leave school.

**With these two initiatives: the Broken Hill Student Environment Award and the Western Landcare supported roll-out of our Landcare Green Schools Program so as to engage with more secondary school students in Broken Hill, I hope that in future months and years I’ll never again have to ask: Who are Broken Hill’s environmental students?**

**Landcare Broken Hill’s public meetings have been cancelled for the foreseeable future due to COVID-19.**

**All Landcare Broken Hill’s on-the-ground projects have been deferred until further notice, although ‘backroom’ planning and preparation continues.**

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