



Mark Speakman
Minister for the Environment
Minister for Heritage
Assistant Minister for Planning

MEDIA ALERT

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SEEDING 'GREEN' COMMUNITIES - WESTERN SYDNEY AWARDED \$198,000 IN ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTS

Environment Minister Mark Speakman has announced \$198,000 in grants have been awarded to five community groups in Sydney's west and south-west, as part of the Our Place Program.

"Funded by the NSW Environmental Trust, the 2015 Our Place Program supports new and existing activities in local communities in Auburn, Blacktown, Liverpool, Mount Druitt and Bankstown," Mr Speakman said.

"Delivered by community organisations, the program provides environmental education and practical sustainability skills to culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including migrant and refugee groups," he said.

"The grants encourage local community organisations, councils and volunteer networks to engage their communities in environmental issues, but more importantly, help nurture vital social connections.

"As part of the small grants, a learning program is offered to provide one-on-one support and mentoring to help with the design and evaluation of the environmental projects.

"It's great to see Greater Western Sydney multicultural community groups encouraged to look after their local environments, through the Our Place Program."

Initiatives supported by the Our Place grants in 2015 include: stormwater pollution education excursions for many Bankstown school children; environmental education workshops and hands-on energy and water conservation and waste management activities for Blacktown residents by SydWest Multicultural Services; and integration programs for new migrants including food gardens that strengthen community participation and multicultural harmony.

First started in 2012, the Our Place Program has supported community programs in Western Sydney, the Hunter, Illawarra and the Riverina. In 2015, the Our Place Program was extended to Greater Western Sydney.

Projects chosen to receive award funds were evaluated by a panel of judges which included an independent member plus staff from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

Keep up-to-date with the ongoing progress of the 2015 Our Place Programs here:
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/communities/our-place.htm>