

Exploring **Biodiversity** for National Science Week

Jeanie Clark

Seven families from the Wimmera Home Educators Group met to celebrate National Science Week and the International Year of Biodiversity with activities based on my Otherways article from February.

Children from pre-school to mid-secondary age brought drawings of living things in their backyards (photo above) to share and explore the concepts of Science and Biodiversity. Later they presented a talk with photos of their local water places to show similarities and differences in the environments in their region. The families' came from Kaniva, Jeparit, Glenlee, Warracknabeal, Murtoa, Horsham and Natimuk.

In the afternoon, they made up spoken 'food web' stories from their drawings and set up a science experiment to test how seedlings – cabbages, strawberries, parsley and silver beets - would grow under different conditions. All are hoping for some successful conditions to plant into their gardens.

The day led on to an entry into the Murray Darling Basin's (MDB) education web project www.sourcetothesea.org.au. This is aimed at 'kids teaching kids' about their place in the MDB. To see our lovely range of water places and users, visit www.sourcetothesea.org.au and choose the Wimmera Home Educators Group from the left hand menu or from the map. You might like to visit some of the waterplaces of other groups (schools) in the Murray Darling Basin as well as the Wimmera. There is also a



PowerPoint show "Our Water Places" on the webpage with more photos and descriptions by each family. You might notice that there are prizes on offer for the 'best' contributions to this project. We haven't heard if we have been lucky enough to win one yet!

There are also some interesting older stories about places in the Murray Darling at <http://www.specialforever.org.au/> in the student work galleries. My favourite is a multi-media one about 'Sunset Strip' near Broken Hill.

The MDB website is worth exploring and keeping in mind for participation. Home educated students are welcome to contribute to their various activities. In Term 1 they run an art and story writing project for primary-aged children with a book being produced by mid-year. They also provide suggested lessons to use the book.

Photo: Jeanie Clark