



**WESTERN PORT
BIOSPHERE**
RESERVE

*Growing connections
for sustainability*



MEDIA RELEASE
17 September 2015

Mission: Lifesearch.

Join us and record what birds, animals and plants are in the Biosphere!

Schools, community groups and individuals are invited to take part in Lifesearch, a Western Port Biosphere event, in which participants record what plants, birds, and other animals they observe within the Western Port Biosphere Reserve.

Lifesearch 2015 will run from Saturday 17 October to Sunday 25 October. There are prizes for the school, and individual or group who record the most observations during Lifesearch.

All Lifesearch participants, whether they are school-children, community groups or families will be making a valuable contribution to our understanding of life in the Western Port Biosphere, as well as a national database. Data will be collected as part of a citizen science project and will be uploaded to the *Atlas of Living Australia's* database.

Schools can participate in the program during school hours. Friends groups are invited to make observations at the reserves they look after. Members of the community are invited to participate by observing species on their own properties or at local parks and reserves.

Lifesearch is inspired by thirteen-year-old Harewood Lyall, who lived at Harewood Homestead, Tooradin in the early 1900s. In 1912 he carefully noted down his bird-watching observations in a notebook, which inspired the first Western Port Biosphere Birdsearch event, which was held in 2012. Schools participated in the program and competed for the Biosphere Birdsearch Shield. The Shield has been awarded each year since 2012 and Newhaven College currently hold the Shield.

In 2014 the Biosphere expanded this concept to Lifesearch, which aimed to document the whole span of biodiversity within the Western Port Biosphere.

This project is supported by the *Atlas of Living Australia*. The *Atlas of Living Australia* provides free, online access to a vast repository of information about Australia's biodiversity. Lifesearch participants will be adding to the richness of this information with their observations.

The Western Port Biosphere Foundation has the goal of connecting people to foster conservation and sustainable economic and social development.

Go to www.biosphere.org.au/get-involved/lifesearch to register.

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Prizes generously provided by:

