

 **Wednesday, 13 March, 2019**

**New wetland classroom brings science to life**

A new classroom at Oaklands Wetland is bringing science to life for high school and university students with hands-on experience of stormwater testing and monitoring.

The Oaklands Education Centre is the first university-led laboratory in South Australia for schools, government agencies and environmental groups to conduct practical water experiments while learning how wetlands work.

The $200,000 partnership between the City of Marion and Flinders University will also see testing methods developed to monitor the quality of stormwater due to be fed to the nearby Tonsley Innovation District to irrigate plants, run air conditioning, and flush toilets.

The centre contains a classroom for up to 25 students, a field station with direct access to the wetland, and kitchen.

Marion Mayor Kris Hanna said the centre was a welcome addition to the site.

“Marion is the new home for education, research and studies into wetlands,” Mayor Hanna said.

“Students, environmental groups and researchers now have access to a new facility that will improve understanding of how to make the best use of our most precious resource.

“The Oaklands Education Centre combines with the adjacent skate park, rotunda, trike track and wetland to be a drawcard for the region. The site is bringing people of all ages close to nature to learn, relax and have fun.”

**The Oaklands Education Centre will be officially opened at a free community event on Wednesday, March 13 at 12pm.**

The event will include the opening of the new $640,000 rotunda and precinct which has been funded by the City of Marion and the State Government.

Flinders water expert Professor Howard Fallowfield says the new centre provides an opportunity for schools, community groups, and researchers to get a better understanding of how wetlands can reduce water pollution and offer benefits for nearby communities.

“These facilities are free to use and give our researchers practical opportunities to conduct research which ensures wetland water is safe for its intended use in the City of Marion,” says Professor Fallowfield.

“In an SA first, the new centre also offers the unique opportunity for high school classes to be led by our PHD students using modules designed for the SACE curriculum. They will have the ability to tailor packages to the educational needs of students in years 9 -12.

“Hopefully this positive first-hand experience in the field inspires more students to consider future tertiary education and career pathways in STEM sciences.”

**Oaklands Wetland is located at:** 237-265 Oaklands Road, Oaklands Park; adjacent to
the Warradale Army Barracks.

Completed in 2013, Oaklands Wetland is fully operational facility and treats up to 400 million litres of stormwater each year.

Stormwater treated at the wetland is used to irrigate more than 30 council reserves.

**Further information contact:**

**Name**: Yaz Dedovic

**Tel**: 8201 5920/ 0401095501

**Email**: yaz.dedovic@flinders.edu.au

**Name**: Craig Clarke, Communications Manager, City of Marion

**Tel**: 8375 6661/ 0434600637

**Email**: craig.clarke@marion.sa.gov.au