



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

2017 VICTORIAN LANDCARE AWARDS

Friday 1 September, 2017

The Honourable Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Minister for Suburban Development.

Ms Christine Wyatt, Acting Secretary, Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

Mr Robert Nichloson, Board member, Landcare Australia Limited

Mr Perry Wandin, Wurrundjeri Elder

Distinguished Guests

Award winners

Ladies and Gentlemen

First, I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathering and pay my respects to their elders, past and present, and to any elders present with us this morning.

Never is that acknowledgement more pertinent than at a ceremony that centres on the care of our land, which has been cared for by the original owners across the millennia.

As the Patron in Chief of Landcare, I am delighted to welcome you to Government House to the 2017 Victorian Landcare Awards.

The last Landcare Awards here were held very shortly after I had started in the role. Although I had some fair understanding of the extraordinary work of our active Landcare community groups, I had not seen the fruits of that work in the detail and with the appreciation that I now have, as a result of more and more travel around Victoria.

It is a proud thought that Victoria has around 60,000 volunteers involved in activities including tree planting, controlling soil erosion, implementing sustainable agricultural practices, protecting Victoria's native wildlife and helping to eradicate weeds and pests.

I have seen first-hand magnificent results at, for example, Phillip Island Nature Park, Yellingbo Nature Reserve, the Buchan Caves and the land around Woodend Children's Park.

It is a particular pleasure to be presenting the Joan Kirner Award today, to honour Joan Kirner's initiative – with the then President of the Victorian Farmers' Federation, Heather Mitchell - 31 years' ago, when they launched 'Landcare' in central Victoria.

A few years' later, the rest of Australia followed Victoria, (if I might just emphasise that it is often the case!), when Rick Farley of the National Farmers' Federation and Phillip Toyne of the Australian Conservation Foundation lobbied until Landcare became a national program with bipartisan support.

They were the visionaries, but their vision was realised when they were joined by corporate partners and sponsors, farmers, business people, volunteers and schoolchildren, spread across 5400 local groups across the nation.

And they can take great pride that under the Landcare umbrella, we now see Coastcare, Bushcare, Rivercare, Dune care and indigenous ranger groups.

To me, Landcare represents what community is about.

Governments can and must help take care of our land and our resources, but no legislation or regulation can ever succeed to the full without the groundswell of local community commitment and hands on help.

These awards provide wonderful recognition of the great work that is being done and needs to be done to protect and promote our environmental assets.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Landcare Australia and the other sponsors for supporting these awards, DELWP for coordinating the nomination and judging processes, and the generosity of commitment from the independent assessment panels comprising representatives from farming, environmental, scientific, educational, business and government backgrounds.

But the most important thanks is the one I reserve until last. That is to all of you involved in Landcare. With or without trophies, you are all winners when it comes to caring for our environment and that is the ultimate reward.

Finally, good luck to this year's awardees soon to be announced. And we shall look forward to hearing of your national successes (no pressure).

Now it is my pleasure to invite the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Minister for Suburban Development, the Honourable Lily D'Ambrosio MP, to address us.