



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

2015 VICTORIAN LANDCARE AWARDS

Monday 31 August 2015

The Honourable Lisa Neville, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Mr Luke Wilson, Lead Deputy Secretary -Agriculture, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

Mr Adam Fennessy, Secretary, Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

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.

I also thank Uncle Colin Hunter for his warm welcome to country. This morning makes us especially reflect on the important role and contributions of our Indigenous community in caring for the land.

I am delighted to welcome you here for the 2015 Victorian Landcare Awards, some 29 years after the Landcare movement started. May I, as Governor of Victoria, be parochial enough to point out that although it is now national , Landcare did of course start right here in Victoria.

I wonder if, when a small group of farmers near St Arnaud formed the very first Landcare group, they could have anticipated the groundswell of support and participation that would see it grow into such a thriving movement.

As the nominees for these Landcare awards, you all contribute to that movement, which now has more than 600 active community groups, and as many as 60,000 volunteers across our state.

It is such a pleasure to participate in recognising Victorians who do such wonderful work for each other and for our State.

Today I am particularly pleased to do that from several perspectives close to my heart.

First, without volunteers, our community simply could not function in all sorts of spheres. I have always known that.

I saw it in the law courts, I saw it through football and via the arts, as well as in many other aspects of life, including in child care and in schools.

But just 8 weeks into my role as the Governor, and I have seen it many times more, in the city and in the regions, on a grand and organised scale and in many more modest ways too.

Landcare is a perfect case in point. It is important that these awards recognise those who volunteer to address the health of our land and water, and demonstrate leadership in sustainable environmental practices, including in farming and agriculture.

Another aspect of these awards that strikes a particular chord with me, is the recognition of young people's contributions via the Junior Landcare award. This investment in our youth is so important and I hope these awards serve as a valuable encouragement for our young people's ongoing interest and care of the natural environment around us.

And finally, how wonderful that there is a Travel and Study opportunity to be awarded this morning.

I was the lucky recipient of such an opportunity many years ago now, via the Churchill Fellowship Trust. The experience of travelling and studying abroad and meeting people working in the same field but in different places, broadens your knowledge and horizons in immeasurable ways. Sometimes, it's just to confirm that we are on the right track in Victoria, or even ahead.

And last, but definitely not least, I am also pleased that the first Landcare Awards I am hosting as Governor feature a new category to honour the late Honourable Joan Kirner, who, among many achievements, was the first, and thus far the only, female Premier of our State.

At the time of Landcare being formally recognised she was the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, and the Joan Kirner Award is a wonderful way to acknowledge her legacy, and to encourage others to follow in her footsteps.

As Patron-in-Chief, I want to commend Landcare in Victoria for this Awards program. The diversity of the awards is impressive. Thank you for the effort that goes into organising and judging them. I am sure it is no easy task.

I am aware that many of you have travelled from all across Victoria to this beautiful House this morning for the occasion and, like you, I look forward to the winners being announced.

And of course I wish all of our Victorian winners all the best in representing us at the national awards!

Now it is my pleasure to invite Minister Neville to address you.