

Media release



FROM THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

DATE: Wednesday, September 7, 2005

VICTORIA'S TOP LANDCARERS ANNOUNCED TODAY

A Mildura-based irrigator and Shiraz grape grower who convinced fellow irrigators to donate water to save stressed River Red Gums has won the Victorian Murray Darling Basin Commission Rivercare Award, the Environment Minister John Thwaites, announced this afternoon.

Speaking at Government House in Melbourne, Mr Thwaites congratulated award winner Peter Ebner for setting a great example for the community.

Andrew "Stretch" McArthur from the Bairnsdale area has taken out the National Landcare Program Individual Landcarer Award. McArthur, a staunch believer in sustainable agriculture, has developed a whole farm plan incorporating habitat corridors, pasture trials, rotational grazing and rabbit and fox control.

Mr McArthur also chairs the East Gippsland Landcare Network, and coordinated large-scale projects across the region including the Red Gum Plains Recovery Project.

Other award winners include the Yarriamback Vegetation Enhancement Project, involving Greening Australia and the Yarriamback Landcare Network, (Bushcare Nature Conservation Award), the East Gippsland Landcare Network (Alcoa Community Group Award) which has reduced 80 per cent of the weed African Lovegrass four years ahead of target; and the Bangarang Community (Alcan Landcare Indigenous Community Award).

John Landy AC, MBE, Governor of Victoria, and Mrs Lynne Landy hosted the 2005 Victorian Landcare Awards at Government House today. The Governor and Mr Thwaites congratulated the winners and presented the prizes to the successful award recipients.

Mr Thwaites said all Landcarers should be congratulated for their work in shaping a sustainable future for all Victorians, and attributed the success of the Landcare ethos to their volunteer efforts over 19 years. "These Awards recognise the extraordinary efforts of Victorians who are inspiring others to take a greater role in caring for our environment. Every nominee is a winner because your actions are helping create a landscape that we can proudly pass on to future generations," he said.

“Nearly 20 years since it was launched in Victoria the Landcare ethos is recognised worldwide. This is a credit to each Victorian landcarer because it is your work that has helped create a Landcare ethic, culture and model that is transferable across the world.”

Landcare is a national, community-based movement that started in Victoria in the late 1980s.

The Award winners represent the wide cross-section of the community involved in Landcare: education, local government, catchment management authorities, indigenous communities, primary production and nature conservation, as well as individual Landcarers and Landcare groups.

“In Victoria alone there are more than 1300 volunteer Landcare community groups. Their efforts stretch across 12,000 properties, and account for over 50 per cent of regional Victoria’s agricultural land,” Mr Thwaites said.

In presenting the Awards, Mr Thwaites commended a range of groups and businesses which support Landcare in Victoria, including those who provided sponsorship for these awards.

The winners of the Victorian Landcare Awards will become the State’s representatives in the National Landcare Awards, in October 2006.

The winners of the 2005 Victorian Landcare Awards are listed below:

Category	Winner
National Landcare Program Individual Landcarer Award	Andrew McArthur, West of Bairnsdale
Murray-Darling Basin Commission Rivercare Award	Peter Ebner, Mildura
Bushcare Nature Conservation Award	Yarriambiack Vegetation Enhancement Project, Greening Australia and Yarriambiack Landcare Network
Natural Heritage Trust Coastcare Community Award	Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Group
Alcoa Landcare Community Group Award	East Gippsland Landcare Network
Landcare Australia Local Government Landcare Community Partnerships Award	Melton Shire Council

Australian Government Landcare Regional Award	Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
Rural Press Landcare Primary Producer Award	Bob and Anne Davie, Phillip Island
Westpac Landcare Education Award	Whitfield District Primary School
Alcan Landcare Indigenous Community Award	Bangerang Community
Dr Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award	Dr Stuart C Boucher, PIRVic, DPI, Central Victoria
Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship	Don McKenzie, Northern Wimmera
Sustainable Farming Award - Glenelg Hopkins	Gerard and Colleen Briody, Mount Emu, Lexton District
Sustainable Farming Award - Goulburn Broken	Allan and Sheila Stute, Sunday Creek, Goulburn Broken
Sustainable Farming Award - North Central	David and Jacinta Jolly, Lexton District
Sustainable Farming Award - East Gippsland	Allan, Helen and Andrew Sheridan, Bengworden, near Bairnsdale
Sustainable Farming Award - West Gippsland	Rosemary and Fergus Irving, Woodside
Sustainable Farming Award - Wimmera	Alan and Shelley Green, Great Western
Sustainable Farming Award - Port Phillip and Westernport	Bob and Anne Davie, Phillip Island

Category	Highly Commended
National Landcare Program Individual Landcarer Award	Kevin Heggen
Westpac Landcare Education Award	St Francis of the Fields Primary School
Rural Press Landcare Primary Producer Award	Alan and Shelley Green Bill, Faye, Brett & Jodie Loughridge