



2019 VICTORIAN LANDCARE AWARDS

WINNERS



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FROM THE MINISTER

It is a great honour for me to be involved in the 2019 Victorian Landcare Awards ceremony at Government House. The awards celebrate the incredible efforts and valuable contributions of esteemed individuals, community groups, schools and organisations across Victoria that protect and enhance the natural environment and improve sustainable agriculture.

Thank you to all the nominators for putting in the time and effort to submit nominations and thanks to the nominees for their inspiring stories and ongoing contribution to improving our land, soils, water and biodiversity.

As we are aware, the judging panel plays a vital role in the awards process. Thank you to each panel member for giving their time to assess all the entries and undertake the difficult task of choosing winners.

As we approach Landcare Week and Biodiversity Month and celebrate the 30th anniversary of Landcare as a national program, I would like to reflect on the words of the late Hon. Bob Hawke MP:

"The degradation of our environment is not simply a local problem, nor a problem for one state or another, nor for the Commonwealth alone. Rather, the damage being done to our environment is a problem for us all – and not just government – but for all of us individually and together".

By building on the Landcare ethic and its successful history as an environmental volunteering movement, together we can achieve great outcomes for our natural environment – now and into the future.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change

Minister for Solar Homes



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

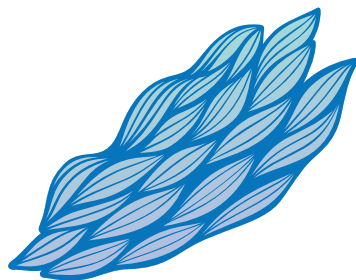
VICTORIAN LANDCARE AWARDS

Every two years, the State and Territory Landcare Awards are held to acknowledge the success and achievements of community landcarers, groups, networks and organisations who have been working to protect and restore our environment and improve agricultural productivity.

In 2019, 73 nominations were received from across Victoria in the 15 award categories. The winners of the nine national award categories will go on to represent Victoria at the 2020 National Landcare Awards. The Victorian Landcare Awards include six state-specific awards: Joan Kirner Landcare Award, Landcare Network Award, VFF/Landcare Victoria Inc. Heather Mitchell Memorial Fellowship Award, Dr. Sidney Plowman Travel and Study Award, the Urban Landcare Award and the new 2019 category – the Environmental Volunteer Award.

A panel of judges from community, government and sponsor representatives were invited to participate in the award judging process. Judges were chosen based on their experience and knowledge of the category areas. The many high calibre award nominations received are testament to the hard work and commitment of Victorian landcarers.

We congratulate the winners for their outstanding achievements and commend all nominees for their efforts and commitment to Landcare.





JOAN KIRNER LANDCARE AWARD

Lanie Pearce

Lanie Pearce has been involved in Landcare for around 20 years and is the Community Education Coordinator for the Goulburn Murray Landcare Network (GMLN). Her talent for delivering quality environmental education to both children and adults is well-recognised across the region.

She has designed numerous games for children based on the value of using stories to engage and educate. The water quality dilemmas faced by 'Murray the fish' as it travels down the local waterways are now part of the minds and imaginations of hundreds of Goulburn Valley children.

Lanie consistently finds innovative ways to spread Landcare's messages, whether it is working with multicultural arts projects or the local running club.

Lanie was deeply involved in the Trees for Mum campaign, which saw the GMLN and the Shepparton Running Club provide trees for planting in memory of, or respect for, mums after the Mothers' Day Classic Triathlon in Shepparton.



Through her commitment to environmental education she is building the skills and capacity of our next generation of land managers.

Highly Commended: Martin Stone



VFF/LANDCARE VICTORIA INC. HEATHER MITCHELL MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Belinda Brennan

Belinda Brennan's Landcare journey has seen her active at local, regional, state, national and international levels.

She has been part of the Landcare community for nearly 30 years, working in both Western Australia and Victoria. She is currently the Partnerships and Engagement Team Leader at West Gippsland CMA.

In 2011, Belinda won the Australian Government Local Landcare Facilitator/Coordinator Award at the Victorian Landcare Awards. Her work on raising awareness about the habitat needs of koalas in the Strzelecki Ranges was praised for its creativity and commitment to community participation.

While in Victoria she established the first Landcare Network Fund that has deductible gift recipient status, and since provided support to several other Landcare Networks to establish their own funds. She also developed and marketed Australia's first Landcare number plates.

This award will allow Belinda to once again travel to Uganda in November 2019 to take part in the National Landcare Conference.



There she will present a paper on Landcare in Victoria and explore new avenues to spread the Landcare message on an international scale.



DR. SIDNEY PLOWMAN TRAVEL AND STUDY AWARD

Tony Gardner

Tony Gardner lives and breathes sustainable agriculture. His career has seen him running workshops on composting and building community gardens in Central America, working with the Green Corps and teaching conservation and land management. He is currently the Partnerships and Engagement Programs Coordinator for the West Gippsland CMA.

He believes in measuring the impact of project activities and using these findings to inform future projects.

"We need to build a meaningful picture of what we are doing. I'm committed to rigorous evaluation. Landholder and funding agencies respond to quantitative evidence. It's the basis for breaking down the barriers to change," Tony said.

Tony spent four years with the South Gippsland Landcare Network helping farmers to fence and revegetate eroded gullies and landslips in the steep Strzelecki Hills. He then moved into roles addressing soil acidification and carbon, and in 2012 headed up the region's Healthy Soils Sustainable Farms Project (HSSFP).



The HSSFP engaged over 30 per cent of farm businesses over five years, built the capacity of farmers and increased the uptake of sustainable farming practices. Tony's leadership has left a positive legacy that will benefit agricultural production and natural resources in West Gippsland for years to come.



URBAN LANDCARE AWARD

Wodonga Urban Landcare Network Inc

Formed in 2012, the Wodonga Urban Landcare Network (WULN) supports, inspires and brings together stewardship groups to achieve a bio-diverse, connected and sustainable landscape.

WULN generates greater awareness and understanding of environmental stewardship in the community through supporting new forms of Landcare with a broader reach, including the local rail trail, Bhutanese community farm, native nursery and turtle protection.

The network has also developed resources to assist the community to access environmental information, understand the issues and how to act. This includes a monthly bulletin which is distributed to over 550 people.

One way that WULN is helping facilitate community involvement is providing community environment groups with a fully equipped trailer (BBQ and all), which is consistently in use during planting season.



WULN's Friends of the Nest Box Network program also allows community members to help protect squirrel gliders, a threatened species in Victoria. More than 600 nest boxes, equipped with monitoring equipment for arboreal animals, have been registered on WULN's system. These boxes are distributed via the nest box network to volunteers. This is a unique method to generate community interest and engagement with habitat protection and restoration in an urban setting, as well as citizen science.



LANDCARE NETWORK AWARD

Bass Coast Landcare Network

The Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN) was formed in 2003 as an affiliation of 10 Landcare groups in South Gippsland. BCLN has grown into a strong and creative network that drives innovation.

BCLN sees itself as an effective 'community of practice' with more than 80 per cent of landholders in the region involved in group or network activities. BCLN is proud of how its members are evolving into land stewards that understand their contribution to a sustainable, productive landscape and how that supports healthy communities.

Over the past 10 years BCLN and its member groups have planted more than two million indigenous plants. Staggering statistics are compiled each year on the number of individual landholder projects, the hectares of remnant vegetation protected and the hectares of weed control on private land and roadsides.

BCLN holds a series of sustainable agriculture field days each year and many training workshops and courses, as well as, supporting four farmer discussion groups that meet bi-monthly.



BCLN Executive Officer and Landcare Facilitator, David Bateman, believes that communication and planning have been the cornerstones of the network's success.



ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEER AWARD

Jallukar Landcare Group

The Jallukar Landcare Group (JLG) is an active and enthusiastic collective that has been operating for 24 years.

Revegetation has been a priority for the group, with a major project undertaken to plant corridors of trees that link the Grampians to the Pyrenees. The group has also tackled rabbit baiting, weed control and advocacy for their local landscape.

Recently, the group has undertaken an inspiring new project, the Jallukar Native Grasslands Project, which aims to save areas of native grasslands. Indigenous seed is grown in the group's nursery with targeted plant species. The aim is to grow the seedlings in seed production areas and harvest the seed for native grasslands projects.

The restoration of native grasslands through building community capacity has rejuvenated the group and galvanised its members. There is a deep commitment to the value of local flora and fauna within the group, which is dynamic, social and increasing in membership.

Glenda Lewin, JLG's Chair, says the project has really brought people together.



"It's such a positive story. The project is all about doing something active for the environment and it sparks joy for all involved".

JLG's native grassland restoration project is a true example of an outstanding Victorian volunteer success story.

Highly Commended: Gippsland Intrepid Landcare and Samantha Mac Cuaig

Commended: Lily Irwin



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INDIVIDUAL LANDCARER AWARD

John Pye

John Pye has supported Landcare and the wider rural community for over 36 years and does not appear to be slowing down.

He demonstrates a passionate, positive and inclusive approach in all he has achieved, whether it be in improving Landcare governance and strategic matters or delivering on-ground works.

Particularly notable is John's involvement with the Project Platypus Landcare Network. The network has tackled issues that threaten the natural environment and has worked to build the social fabric of local communities.

Project Platypus supports 11 Landcare groups in the Upper Wimmera catchment area. Since 1994, the crowning achievements of the network include the planting of 1.1 million trees, 20,000 hectares treated for invasive plants and animals and the protection of 1,200 hectares of remnant vegetation.

Between May 2017 and November 2018, John volunteered for over 50 hours per week. His tireless efforts and commitment secured hundreds of thousands of



dollars in grant funding to implement Landcare activities for Project Platypus. The organisation is now in a secure financial position to deliver Landcare's projects into the future.

Highly Commended: Ian Grenda and Dr. Kaye Rodden



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS FOR LANDCARE AWARD

Australian Landcare International

For over a decade, Australian Landcare International (ALI) has promoted Landcare's philosophy overseas – a tough arena, with surprising results and great satisfaction.

ALI was launched in 2008 to promote Landcare's philosophy and to support Landcare projects and networks that now operate in around 25 nations.

The growth of Landcare overseas has been due to a combination of government initiative, global NGO support and ALI working with existing community workers. Networking and the exchange of information has been key.

While in a meeting leading up to the G8 Summit in Italy in 2009, Hon. Tony Burke MP sat next to the Environment Minister for South Africa. She noticed that Mr. Burke was the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister for Australia and said – 'Oh, you would be involved in Landcare.' She went on to say that Landcare is one of the best forms of foreign aid that Australia has ever provided South Africa. An extraordinary statement and testament to the work of ALI and of the local landcarers driving Landcare in South Africa.



**Commended: Strathallan Family Landcare
and Mitta to Murray Blackberry Action
Group**



National
Landcare
Program



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT LANDCARE FARMING AWARD

Fraser Pogue

Irrigated cropper Fraser Pogue demonstrates excellence and leadership in sustainable farm practices on his Ardmona farm. He believes that a sound basis for solving our farming problems is “doing what’s best for you, your soils and your farming future”.

Fraser is continually reading, investigating and trialling different farming techniques on his property. His approach is to pull apart what doesn’t work and develop systems that meet the needs of his property.

Fraser’s current farming system involves growing irrigated corn, wheat and legume-cereal mixes in rotation with multi-species cover crops and zero-tillage to maintain ground cover all year. This strategy increases the diversity of plants and soil biology on his paddocks.

Fraser is always trying something new. He has recently re-introduced cattle onto his property to help manage high stubble loads.

He is determined to learn as much as he can about soil biology and the natural systems at work. This approach has helped him to secure a healthy and productive landscape.



Commended: Dick Simonson



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURE LAND MANAGEMENT AWARD

Cundare Duverney Landcare Group

In 2019, Cundare Duverney Landcare Group is celebrating 25 years of Landcare. Since 1994, the group has addressed an array of Landcare issues, including revegetation, weed control and waterway protection.

The group is part of the Corangamite Lakes Landcare (CLL) area, which includes 180 members who farm over 200,000 hectares. With an increase in continuous cropping in the CLL area, there has been concern about the long-term health of the soil.

To improve soil health, the Cundare Duverney Landcare Group trialled the practice of stubble incorporation in 2017. This involved incorporating stubbles into the soil, with added nutrients, thereby improving the condition of the soil and mitigating greenhouse gases.

The Cundare Duverney Landcare Group is a trailblazer in stubble incorporation having the first successful demonstration in the Western District of Victoria. The initial project in 2017 has since inspired 14 more landowners across the CLL area to trial the



practice, with several others implementing it on a paddock level. The group has also shared its research via field walks and discussions, newsletters and an article in the Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine.

The future of the group is bright following a recent spike in young membership. They are all eager to take part in sustainable farming practices and revegetation plantings for shade, shelter and biodiversity.



AUSTCOVER YOUNG LANDCARE LEADERSHIP AWARD

Gippsland Intrepid Landcare

Gippsland Intrepid Landcare is inspiring the next generation of Landcare leaders, attracting over 300 young volunteers.

Nearly all its members had no experience with Landcare prior to joining the group. However, in two years, members have planted more than 10,000 trees, removed 34 kilograms of marine debris off a Phillip Island Beach and removed Sea Spurge and Dolichos Pea Vine from the Sandy Point dune system.

Gippsland Intrepid Landcare's events allow young people to connect with one another, creating friendships and a well-connected group. Members have taken part in a 'plant and dance' event, which included tree planting, camping and music, as well as an environmental film night.

By changing how it communicates, and developing activities that appeal to young people, Gippsland Intrepid Landcare has raised awareness of environmental issues through a range of 'new' mediums. The group has broadcast Landcare's messages to their 1,400 followers via Facebook and Instagram, hosted a photo competition and has had over 20 features in various magazines, street press, radio and local papers.



Gippsland Intrepid Landcare has found that the best way to be impactful is to also be fun. Their events are adventurous, outdoors and help to protect the environment. A winning formula.

Highly Commended: Mirinda Thorpe



WOOLWORTHS JUNIOR LANDCARE TEAM AWARD

Newham Primary School

With just 140 students and eight staff, Newham Primary School is achieving great results with its environmental and sustainability programs.

Russel Dyer, a science teacher at the school, believes that a 13-year partnership with the Newham and District Landcare Group and a commitment to student-led projects have been critical to the school's success.

The school's western boundary is a tributary of Deep Creek where students have planted indigenous vegetation, creating a significant nature corridor for local wildlife that connects with the Cobaw Biolink.

The students decide on the projects they will undertake based on the specific environmental needs of the area and their own passions and interests. A biodiversity-auditing tool is used to set biodiversity goals and measure progress of on-ground activities.

Environmental science is integrated into the classroom curriculum, as well as, practical sessions where students receive specialist training in seed propagation,



revegetation, environmental monitoring using species tallies and transects, collecting and identifying scats and tracks, and composting and worm farming in the school's kitchen garden.

A recent project has been the design and construction of a wetland to provide an alternative breeding ground for frogs. Funded by the Newham and District Landcare Group, the frog bog is maintained by students who were delighted to discover that 10 southern brown tree frogs now call the wetland their home.



VIRGIN COASTCARE AWARD

Victorian Wader Study Group

The Victorian Wader Study Group's (VWSG) volunteers have devoted decades to collecting vital data that contributes to international efforts to conserve migratory waders. They demonstrate citizen science at its best.

For over two decades the VWSG has conducted an extensive program of field work capturing migrant and resident waders through cannon-netting. The logistics surrounding the field work are demanding. Despite the difficulties, the VWSG has continued to meet its annual field work targets for both migrant and resident species.

The group has been instrumental in building up the database of knowledge about migratory waders who spend a large part of their lives in Australia. For example, their research revealed that there is a severe decline in migratory bird populations travelling to South Korea due to habitat loss. Using the acquired data and bio-metrics of the species and subpopulations, VWSG can paint a picture about the waders' need for protection. This information helps to build a case study for



the protection of wader habitat both in Australia and internationally.



AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY MEDIA LANDCARE COMMUNITY GROUP AWARD

Malmsbury District Landcare Group

The Malmsbury District Landcare Group (MDLG) believes there is no better way to encourage others to participate in Landcare than to lead by example.

Since 2009, over 26,000 indigenous trees and shrubs have been planted and \$200,000 raised in grant funding by MDLG.

By ensuring the group always has active projects that are open to the community, the Landcare principles are kept alive in the public eye.

MDLG has received coverage of its Channel Reserve project on WIN News and has had numerous activities promoted in the local newspaper. A social media campaign is also in development, starring the wildlife MDLG photographed during its project survey work.

MDLG also hosts regular community awareness events and information sessions that promote its projects and Landcare's principles. A recent activity was the greater glider spotlighting night as part of its Kangaroo Creek project, which is protecting the habitat of vulnerable greater gliders and brushtail phascogales.



Public meetings are also held regularly and cover a range of topics including local flora, fauna, fungi, geology and Aboriginal history.

**Highly Commended: Swifts Creek Ensay
Landcare Group and Harcourt Valley
Landcare**



INDIGENOUS LAND MANAGEMENT AWARD

Woka Walla Land Management Crew

Woka Walla Land Management Crew (Woka Walla) is an Indigenous business owned by the Yorta Yorta Nation. Woka Walla consists of five Indigenous members who are motivated by: working on Country and for their people; looking after the land; and undertaking training as the opportunity arises.

Woka Walla members have an unbroken link to the land. The crew works on both private and public land, serving as advocates for Indigenous people working 'on Country' to protect and maintain Country. The crew's inspiring, positive attitude and strong work ethic has helped to build relationships between the Indigenous and broader community.

One of the most significant projects Woka Walla has been involved in is Building the Resilience of the Barmah Forest Ramsar Site – which protects the character of the Barmah Forest. The crew's involvement included pest plant and animal control, ecological surveying and leaf litter assessments.



The Woka Walla operation has inspired young people to pursue careers in natural resource management, including 12 Yorta Yorta people applying for Green Army positions in 2016 and 10 former crew members having moved onto further employment.

Woka Walla is an example of Indigenous people practising spiritual connection to Country and providing a path for future generations.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 STATE & TERRITORY AWARDS SPONSORS



Visit the Victorian Landcare Gateway, an interactive and informative website where you can find information about volunteering events and activities, project information and contacts for Victorian Landcare groups and networks.

Please visit www.landcarevic.org.au