

MEDIA RELEASE



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VICTORIANS RECOGNISED FOR EXCELLENCE IN COASTAL PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Representatives from local government, environment and conservation bodies, coastal committees of management ports and waterways authorities and tourism, gathered to honour Victorians who have made significant contribution to coastal and marine environmental protection and management at the prestigious Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence 2004.

Minister for the Environment, John Thwaites presented the Awards with Victorian Coastal Council (VCC) Chair, Diane James, in Port Melbourne, recognising commitment to protecting and restoring our local coastal and marine environments and the vitally important efforts of volunteers.

The Awards, a joint initiative of the VCC and the Coast Action / Coastcare Program, recognise outstanding contributions to the protection and sustainable use of the Victorian coast.

Fourteen recipients received awards and commendations for their individual or collective contributions to protecting and enhancing Victoria's coast.

The VCC estimates approximately 70 million visits are made to the Victorian coast each year, placing enormous pressure on this fragile eco-system.

Minister Thwaites said, "These Awards recognise the real outcomes that can be achieved through effective partnerships, leadership, and commitment. This 'partnership' approach is so important. It shows how communities, agencies and levels of government can do their bit together as 'stewards' for the coast."

Diane James praised the role of volunteers committed to smarter, environmentally sustainable outcomes. "Many of tonight's recipients are groups made up of, or significantly supported by, volunteers. Their role is invaluable to the Victorian community".

"The list of nominations for this years' awards also shows how far the private sector has come towards embracing the values of environmental sustainability in the management of coastal areas. It is important that we recognise this tonight, and as well as recognising recipients, learn from them and their work".

"We hope this recognition will inspire other Victorians to become involved in contributing to sustainable outcomes for our coast and marine environment."

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The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Ms Tehree Gordon. Tehree has been operating the Jirrahlinga Koala and Wildlife Sanctuary for over 30 years. The Sanctuary relies on volunteers to run animal rescue and rehabilitation programs, particularly for coastal wildlife, including whales, penguins, seals and seabirds, in south-west Victoria.

The VCC is the peak body for strategic planning and management of the Victorian coast.

For further comment please contact Diane James on 0419 368 551.

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AWARD RECIPIENTS

Category: Life Time Achievement

Recipient: Tehree Gordon

Tehree has been operating the Jirrahlinga Koala and Wildlife Sanctuary for over 30 years. The Sanctuary relies on volunteers to run animal rescue and rehabilitation programs, particularly for coastal wildlife, including whales, penguins, seals and sea birds, in south-west Victoria.

Category: Outstanding Individual Achievement

Recipient: Rick Vanderburgh

Rick is a founding member of the Inverloch Coast Action Umbrella Group and has been a key motivator for the diverse group.

Category: Coastal Conservation & Protection by a Community Group

Recipient: Balcombe Estuary Rehabilitation Group Inc

Since its formation in 1997 the Balcombe Estuary Rehabilitation Group has grown to 165 members, contributing over 2000 on-ground volunteer hours a year. The Group has been instrumental in establishing community links to conserve and protect the local environment.

Category: Coastal Conservation & Protection by an Appointed Manager

Recipient: Fairhaven Foreshore Committee of Management

Fairhaven Foreshore Committee of Management was established more than thirty years ago. It has established strong links with the local community and managed the high-use foreshore area to maintain access for the public while protecting the fragile dune environment.

Category: Education

Recipient: Gould League

The Gould League has been delivering quality marine education resources, programs and activities since 1909. The Gould League's work focuses on awareness of impact on the coastal and marine environment, and developing a sense of "ownership" for it.

Category: Species Protection

Recipient: Portland Aluminium

Portland Aluminium's ongoing Fox Abatement Program has significantly reduced the effect of foxes on the local native wildlife population in the Point Danger area, most notably a colony of Australian Gannets, the Southern Brown Bandicoot and the Southern Emu Wren.

Category: Building and Design

Recipient: Bird de La Coeur Architects Pty Ltd

Bird de La Coeur's residence at Mt Eliza blends seamlessly into the coastal landscape and has been designed to have a minimal impact on the environment. Features include solar energy, use of recyclable materials and low energy use appliances.

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Category: Innovation

Recipient: Parks Victoria, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, Kirrae Whurrung Native Title Working Group, Framlingham Aboriginal Trust, Aire Valley Landowners

These groups have negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding for the management of the mouth of the Aire River, which is effected by a sandbar, causing flooding. Protection of environmental values is the primary consideration of the MoU.

Category: Cultural Achievement

Recipient: Mallacoota Coast Action Group

The Mallacoota Coast Action Group has undertaken the design and construction of a Cultural Walk and Heritage Trail. The trail protects significant aboriginal and European sites as well as rehabilitation sites of the area flora and fauna.

Category: Media

Recipient: Radio Marninara

Radio Marinara has been recognised for raising awareness of coastal and marine issues to the general community. Broadcasting since 1997, the program has covered issues such as heritage, indigenous culture and protection of the coastal environment.

Category: Water Quality

Recipient: Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA)

The EPA is successfully undertaking the 'Victorian Stormwater Action Program'. The program has directly improved the quality of stormwater entering Victoria's bays and oceans and brings together local government, schools, community groups and many other stakeholders with the EPA.

HIGH COMMENDATIONS

- Moyne Shire Council – King George Square and Wharf redevelopment project at Port Fairy
- Victorian Bays and Inlets Fisheries Association – Development of and Environmental Management System for the bays and inlets fisheries industry
- 'Out of the Blue' – 3CR Radio Program