



MEDIA RELEASE

## WA Landcare champions triumph at National Landcare Awards

Five out of nine national categories taken out by Western Australian Landcarers

**23 September:** History was created last night at the 2016 National Landcare Awards where Western Australia dominated the evening, with locals Ella Maesepp, Rhonda Williams, Jill Richardson, Southampton Homestead, and Blackwood Basin Group winning a staggering five national category awards between them during the gala dinner held at the Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre.

Balingup's Southampton Homestead was victorious last night, winning the Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices category, as well as the coveted People's Choice Award. Jeff Pow was overjoyed to accept the award. "It's an affirmation that we're on the right track," he said. "Regenerative farming is the next level. We're rebooting degraded landscapes and producing food in the same breath. It's amazing way to restore the environment. This is my life's work. I'm going to be handing this planet on, and I need to be able to say that I wasn't happy with how things were being done and I drew a line in the sand I said that this is the way we should do it."

Rhonda Williams, who manages a sustainable farming enterprise in the south coast region, won the Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award, beating seven impressive finalists from across the country. "It means a lot to me to have won, and to the region that I come from," Rhonda said. "To be able to contribute in the community is incredible. We have to look after our environment for our children and our grandchildren, while we're on this earth I believe it's our responsibility."

Ella Maesepp from Katanning was announced as joint winner of the Manpower Young Landcare Leader Award, for her work delivering a host of Landcare projects by working with farmers, school children, and community volunteers. "I'm thrilled at the opportunity," Ella said. "These awards open doors and give opportunities to have new conversations and try different things. It allays fears that there aren't young people out there doing stuff for the environment, because there are! Landcare has been a vehicle where I can be empowered as an individual to do something for the greater good."

Katanning also won the Australian Government Landcare Facilitator or Coordinator Award, which was taken out by Jill Richardson, who has spent 25 years furthering Landcare in Western Australia. Jill said she was thrilled and delighted to have won. "It's huge! It's recognition that community-based Landcare and people have a huge amount of value across Australia," she said.

The Fairfax Media Landcare Community Group Award went to Blackwood Basin Community Group, which has been coordinating community-managed Landcare projects across the Blackwood Catchment for over two decades. Per Christensen thought it was a "fantastic" win. "I've been involved in Landcare for over 50 years," he said. "I think it will energize everybody in the group, not that they aren't already. I also hope it will lead us to get more funding to do more Landcare work, because it's so important."

Landcare Australia CEO, Tessa Jakszewicz, commended the National Landcare Award winners on their outstanding achievements.

This project is supported by Landcare Australia, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme and the Victorian Government.





“It’s an honour to witness this momentous occasion, seeing Western Australia take home these coveted awards,” Tessa says. “This biennial event allows us time to get together and celebrate all that we have achieved, and enables us to learn from each other’s successes and failures. The hard work of Landcarers all across Australia deserves recognition and praise. Special congratulations to WA on this great win.”

Winners across nine diverse categories from sustainable farm practices, to Junior Landcare, and Indigenous land management, were announced at the National Landcare Awards last night, which was hosted by ABC Gardening Australia’s Costa Georgiadis and attended by Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Luke Hartsuyker MP, who presented the prestigious Bob Hawke Landcare Award.

The Awards are a key part of the National Landcare Conference, which finishes today, 23 September, and hosted over 600 Landcarers from across the country in Melbourne as Victoria celebrated 30 years of Landcare.

All finalist case studies and photos by category are available at [nationallandcareconference.org.au/awards](http://nationallandcareconference.org.au/awards). The list of all the winners of the 2016 National Landcare Awards and highlights are on the next page.

*The National Landcare Awards are being delivered by Landcare Australia in partnership with the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program and the Victorian Government, and are sponsored by Fairfax Media, Indigenous Land Corporation, and ManpowerGroup Australia.*

#### **2016 National Landcare Award Winners - WA:**

##### **Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award - *Rhonda Williams* (Jerramungup, WA)**

Since 1976, Rhonda and her husband Ross have managed a profitable and sustainable farming enterprise in the south coast region. Rhonda has hosted 20 field days and 30 trials on her farms, and Rhonda’s significant and positive influence on the community has led her to represent Landcare at a local and regional level across 12 Landcare based organisations and local government. Rhonda has volunteered over 8,100 hours since joining Landcare in 2002, and is particularly known for her strength in planning, strategic direction, governance, and transparency

##### **Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award People’s Choice Award - *Southampton Homestead* (Balingup, WA)**

Southampton Farm’s philosophy recognises that everything is connected and interdependent. They raise grass-fed poultry using holistic management – a practice based on managed grazing to mimic the behaviour of wild herbivores in grassland ecosystems. Through this practice, the farm enhances animal welfare, controls manure deposits, and allows grazed pasture time to regenerate. The farm goes beyond organic as it regenerates the land by restoring the soil, reducing weeds, increasing pasture biodiversity and recycling organic material back to the land. Jeff and Melissa are part of a leading trend in farming – taking responsibility for the growing and the processing of all food on the farm, and selling their produce direct to their customers.

##### **Australian Government Landcare Facilitator or Coordinator Award - *Jill Richardson* (Katanning, WA)**

Jill has spent 25 years dedicated to furthering Landcare in Western Australia. Joining the Katanning Land Conservation District Committee since its foundation initially as a volunteer and then employee, Jill has led significant on-ground environmental works and behavioural change in sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation. Jill is a connector, mentor, devil’s advocate, do-er, friend and “Landcare Mum” for large networks of natural resource management people.

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Jill is passionate about community-driven Landcare, sitting as a member of the National Landcare Network for the past 5 years. As a volunteer, Jill drove the formation of the WA Landcare Network and is now serving as the inaugural Chairperson.

**Fairfax Media Landcare Community Group Award - *Blackwood Basin Group (Blackwood, WA)***

The Blackwood Basin Group (BBG) has been coordinating community-managed Landcare projects across the Blackwood Catchment for over two decades; working with 54 catchment groups, assisting over 500 farming families and delivering more than \$16million of Landcare activities throughout the iconic river basin. The Priority Bittern and Waterbird Biodiversity Enhancement Project (Waterbird Project), involves designing and establishing a mosaic of freshwater wetlands from historical mining pits across the Greenbushes region to provide habitat specific to the needs of endangered water birds and migratory species. The strength of this project comes from the partnerships forged with industry and government bodies, and the local community. These partnerships have led to the development of improved revegetation techniques, citizen science based volunteer programs, involvement with local schools to build and install black-cockatoo nest boxes, and landscape-scale invasive species control.

**Manpower Young Landcare Leader Award - *Ella Maesepp (Blackwood, WA)*  
(*Ella tied with Naomi Edwards of QLD for this award*)**

Ella has worked as a Landcare Officer in the Upper Blackwood area for 12 years, delivering millions of dollars' worth of projects to protect biodiversity, manage salinity, increase agricultural sustainability, and reduce individual carbon footprints. She works with farmers, children, townies, indigenous people, government agencies, and community volunteers. Ella is a former member of the Australian Landcare Council and lead author of "Engaging the 20-Somethings in Landcare", helping Landcare Groups across Australia better understand their connection with Generation Y. Ella has volunteered for environmental causes since her teens, including with Scouts and local Landcare groups.

Winners in diverse categories from sustainable farm practices, to Coastcare, young Landcare leader, and Indigenous land management, were announced at the National Landcare Awards on 22 September in Melbourne. The winners of the People's Choice Award and the prestigious Bob Hawke Landcare Award were also announced.

The Awards are a key part of the National Landcare Conference, which took place from 21-23 September. All finalist case studies and photos by category are available at [nationallandcareconference.org.au/awards](http://nationallandcareconference.org.au/awards).

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**About Landcare Australia**

Landcare Australia is a not-for-profit organisation with a vision of all Australians actively caring for the land and water that sustain us. For over 25 years, Landcare Australia has worked collaboratively with federal, state and local governments, corporate partners and sponsors, and individuals, to build capacity for the Landcare community to better manage Australia's crucial land and water assets.

Landcare Australia delivers hundreds of projects annually through the volunteer efforts of local community groups, indigenous groups, and the more than 5,400 Landcare and Coastcare groups that make up the Landcare movement.

[www.landcareaustralia.org.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.org.au)

<b>Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award</b>	<b>Rhonda Williams, WA</b>	<b>Rhonda Williams</b> sees Landcare and sustainable agriculture as being key to long term profitability and has hosted 20 field days and 30 trials on her farms.
<b>Australian Government Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award</b>	<b>Southampton Homestead WA</b>	<b>Jeff Pow and Michelle McManus</b> are part of a leading trend in farming, taking responsibility for the growing and the processing of all food on their farm Southampton Homestead, selling their produce directly to the community.
<b>Australian Government Landcare Facilitator or Coordinator Award</b>	<b>Jill Richardson, WA</b>	<b>Jill Richardson</b> has spent 25 years dedicated to furthering Landcare in WA, leading significant on-ground environmental works and behavioural change in sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation.
<b>Australian Government Partnerships with Landcare Award</b>	<b>Lake Macquarie Landcare NSW</b>	<b>Lake Macquarie Landcare</b> is a community-based organisation built on the successful working partnership between passionate, dedicated and hardworking local volunteers and the Lake Macquarie City Council. It is the largest network of Landcare groups in NSW.
<b>Coastcare Award</b>	<b>Coolum and District Coastcare, QLD</b>	Since 2001, Coolum District Coast Care Inc has consistently worked hard to galvanise energy and public interest in caring for the coastal environment on the Maroochy north shore of the Sunshine Coast and beyond.
<b>Fairfax Media Landcare Community Group Award</b>	<b>Blackwood Basin Group WA</b>	<b>The Blackwood Basin Group</b> has been coordinating community-managed Landcare projects across the Blackwood Catchment for over two decades; working with 54 catchment groups, assisting over 500 farming families and delivering more than \$16million of Landcare activities throughout the iconic river basin.
<b>Indigenous Land Management Award</b>	<b>Crocodile Islands Rangers NT</b>	<b>The Rangers</b> have received a wide range of land and sea management training, and they combine these new skills and

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<p><b>Junior Landcare Team Award</b></p>	<p><b>Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre, NSW</b></p>	<p>knowledge with their traditional Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, to manage and protect their unique area.</p> <p><b>The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre</b> – Creative Catchment Kids program has grown over the past five years to include 60 Murray and Riverina schools. Its mission is to engage the region’s students and schools to develop more resilient landscapes and communities through a change in attitude toward natural resource management.</p>
<p><b>Manpower Young Landcare Leader Award</b></p>	<p>(tie) <b>Naomi Edwards, QLD</b> and <b>Ella Maesepp, WA</b></p>	<p><b>Naomi Edwards</b> is an instigator of progressive change when it comes to addressing environmental issues and is passionate about intergenerational engagement in Landcare.</p> <p><b>Ella Maesepp</b> has worked as a Landcare Officer in the Upper Blackwood area for 12 years, delivering millions of dollars’ worth of projects to protect biodiversity, manage salinity, increase agricultural sustainability and reduce individual carbon footprints.</p>
<p><b>People’s Choice Award</b></p>	<p><b>Southampton Homestead WA</b></p>	<p><b>Jeff Pow and Michelle McManus</b> are part of a leading trend in farming, taking responsibility for the growing and the processing of all food on their farm Southampton Homestead, selling their produce directly to the community.</p>
<p><b>Bob Hawke Landcare Award</b></p>	<p><b>Stephen Burgess, QLD</b></p>	<p><b>Stephen Burgess</b> has run Wurraglen Nature Refuge in Dagon, Queensland for nearly 20 years, developing the property which combines sustainable market farming and light grazing. Stephen’s blend of biological and organic farming principles combined with holistic management practices demonstrate every aspect of the Landcare ethic.</p>

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