



NATURE FOUNDATION SA END OF FINANCIAL YEAR APPEAL

“Support the Vital Work of the Foundation”

While the vast majority of funds that the Nature Foundation raises go directly to support local on-ground environmental causes, the Foundation itself also requires support.

Our 2005 End of Financial Year “Support the Vital Work of the Foundation” appeal will therefore raise funds to assist our day-to-day operations in order to ensure we can continue to save, protect and restore South Australia’s natural heritage.

Nature Foundation SA started out 24 years ago as a small, very ordinary group of nature lovers and now comprises over 1500 donors and 900 members. From an organisational point of view, the Foundation employs a part time Chief Executive Officer and a part time administrative assistant, but the rest of our “staff” are volunteers.

Over the years we have provided funds and assistance for a number of worthwhile environmental projects including.

Bushbank SA (a revolving fund to purchase, preserve and on-sell important vegetation remnants)

Para Woodlands rehabilitation project (a habitat rehabilitation project on a 118ha site with assistance from the Department for Environment and Heritage)

Roy and Marjory Edwards Postgraduate Scholarship Trust (a fund which supports field research into conservation biology)

Good Business Environment Awards (we devised these awards and now run them annually)

Joan Paton Memorial Fund (a fund for practical on-ground projects in the Glenshera Conservation Park)

Land Purchase Fund (a fund to purchase land for the National Reserve System)

In addition to these ongoing projects, NFSA supports many other community initiatives including Friends of Parks Awards, the Oliphant Science Awards, post graduate scholarship schemes and school education programs.

In order to continue this greatly needed work we also have to spend some funds on boring jobs like running our office (the old Manse down at Hindmarsh). As you will understand, it doesn’t all happen by ‘osmosis’ – so – **please will you help?**

A tax-deductible donation will help us to continue our vital work in saving, protecting and restoring South Australia’s unique flora and fauna.

For more information visit the Nature Foundation SA website at www.naturefoundationsa.asn.au or phone 1300 366 191.

Save protect restore





President's letter

*Some years ago I was asked to talk about local wildlife to some university students who were taking a course of study that had no environmental component. (A well-meaning lecturer thought that a dose of natural history would be good for them.) I thought that I would begin by showing them some beautiful photographs of local animals. The first was one of my better slides, I thought - the head of a particularly attractive gecko showing its extraordinarily patterned eye (I think the gecko was *Diplodactylus williamsi*).*

The response wasn't what I had expected. Several people said, "yuk!" One left the room, claiming loudly that she felt sick. Another, on observing that I had some suspicious looking cages, warned me that she might also have to leave if a nasty beast was revealed.

I was unprepared for this violent reaction: mostly I had spoken to young children or older adults (over 60's) who almost invariably loved my "show and tell". This active dislike for so much of the diversity of nature is actually fairly common, though rarely expressed so forcefully. Of course it's quite normal to loath some creatures. Who can admire a disease causing parasite, for example? But why would a harmless, colourful gecko evoke such dislike?

Over the years I have found that this antipathy, though not expressed by the majority of people, may also extend to many native plant and animal species. It's not really that surprising I suppose. Most Australians come from other lands or at least their parents do, most live in cities and few spend much time in natural areas or on farms. We rarely get exposed, directly, to nature for prolonged periods. The books

we read and the TV programs we watch often come from overseas and the plants, animals and landscapes depicted are very different from those in the Australian countryside. It's no wonder that many of us still act like aliens, ignorant of and often fearful of the strange antipodean biota.

The fact that many Australians are not in touch with nature presents a great challenge to conservation groups like ours. People will not want to preserve habitats and wildlife unless they know something about them and value them. This is why an important aim of NFSA is to promote education about nature. It is why we sponsor a prize in the Oliphant Science Awards; why we help fund interpretive signs in parks such as the geological signs in the Gawler Ranges National Park; why we help fund the publication of brochures, reports and books; why we talk to school groups, Friends groups; and, why we donate funds to educational facilities such as those at Cleland Conservation Park.

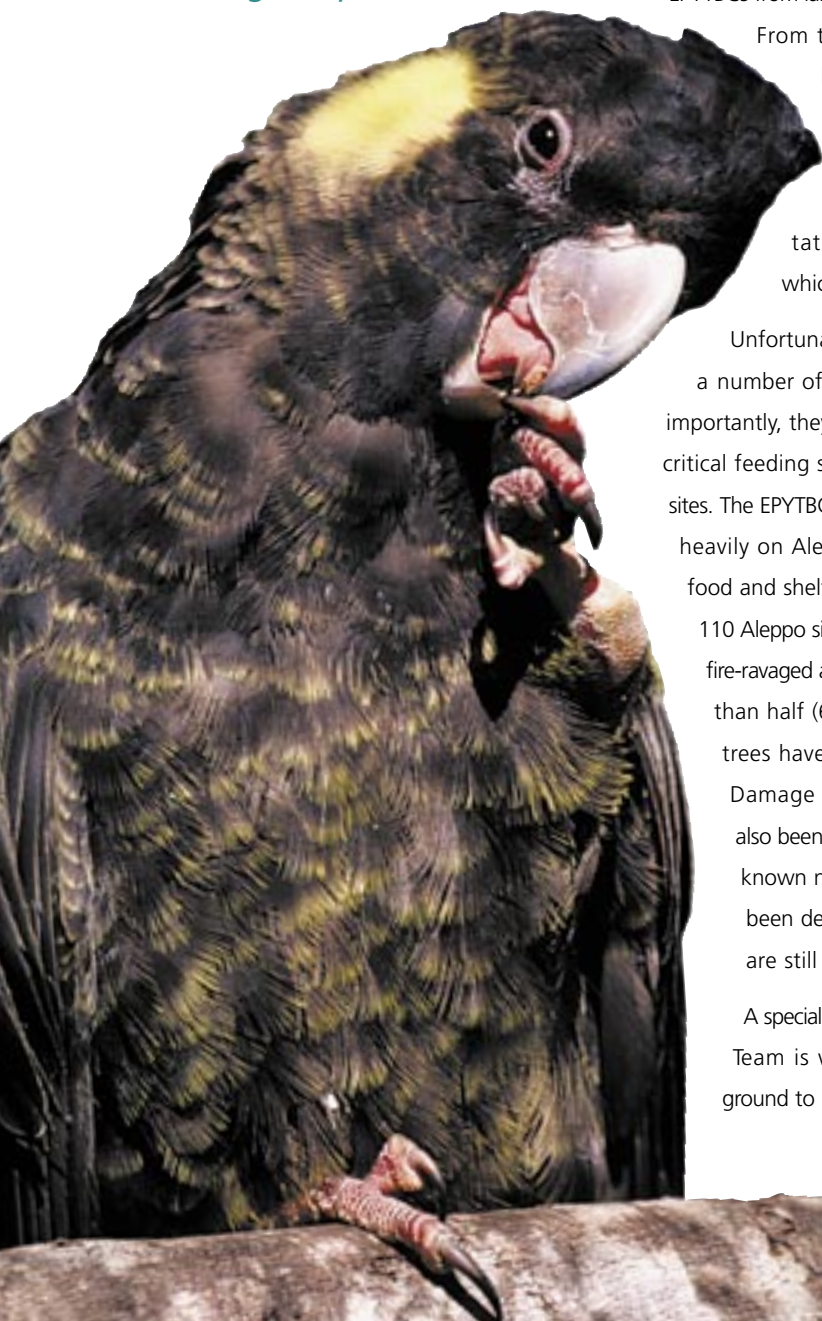
I must end on a positive note. I have been most impressed lately by some of the primary schools I have visited. We have some very fine teachers who work hard to teach environmental studies to the young. They involve themselves and their students in wonderful projects like Waterwatch, work with groups such as KESAB, establish gardens, have solar panels installed and take students on excursions. These people are our great hope for the future.

DR ROBERT SHARRAD



Eyre Peninsula Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoo Update

Thank you to the 400 concerned people who have donated more than \$25,000 to Nature Foundation SA's Eyre Peninsula Bushfire Rescue Appeal for the EP Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo and endangered plants.



We thought we would take this opportunity to explain how the Eyre Peninsula Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoo (EPYTBC) population is faring and where your funds are being spent.

To date, the Department for Heritage and Environment has received 28 sightings of EPYTBCs from landholders in the area.

From these observations biologists estimate that at least 20 of the birds have survived the devastating January fires, which is encouraging.

Unfortunately the birds face a number of challenges. Most importantly, they have lost several critical feeding stands and nesting sites. The EPYTBC population relies heavily on Aleppo pine trees for food and shelter and a study of 110 Aleppo sites across the bushfire-ravaged area indicates more than half (64 per cent) of the trees have been destroyed. Damage to nest trees has also been severe – of the 24 known nest trees, 16 have been destroyed and eight are still standing.

A specialist EPYTBC Recovery Team is working hard on-ground to protect and restore

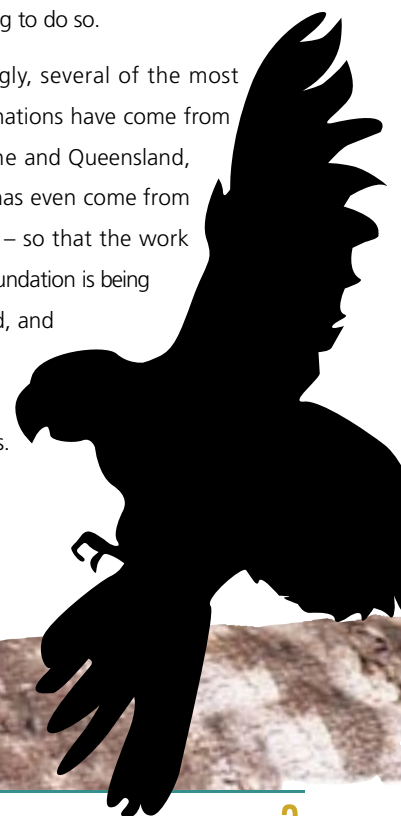
the bird population as well as the habitat it relies upon, with assistance from both Greening Australian and Nature Foundation SA.

A recovery plan has been devised. And now, with added assistance from local schools and community groups, the team is carrying out on-ground tasks including: the mapping of surviving Aleppo Pines, erection of new nesting boxes, and revegetation and fencing of key breeding and feeding sites.

The good news is that most revegetation sites are already showing signs of regeneration – some Yaccas have been spotted sprouting new flower spikes and new native grasses are also beginning to shoot.

The Foundation's financial contribution to this important work will be of great value – so, thanks once again to all those who have already donated, and to those who may still be planning to do so.

Interestingly, several of the most recent donations have come from Melbourne and Queensland, and one has even come from Indonesia – so that the work of the Foundation is being recognised, and supported from far-away places.





Foundation Chatter

BARBARA HARDY

A quick look at some of the Nature Foundation of SA's most recent projects and achievements

Our **membership numbers** have crept up to just over 900 which is very encouraging. Whilst donor numbers are well in excess of 1500, it is realised that many of those donors are also members.

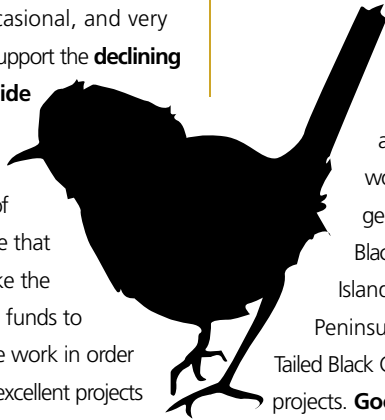
We are still receiving occasional, and very welcome contributions to support the **declining small birds of the Adelaide Hills**. We are also receiving quite a few **general donations** from members of the community who realise that non-profit organisations like the Nature Foundation require funds to finance their administrative work in order to initiate and operate the excellent projects which 'save, protect and restore' the precious natural environment. The **End-of-the-Financial Year Appeal** will be devoted to raising those very necessary administrative funds.

The Foundation has supported habitat regeneration and the placement of nest boxes for the **Glossy Black Red-tailed Cockatoo on Kangaroo Island** for a number of years. So it is very pleasing to hear that since the year 2000 there has been a steady increase in the use by the birds of artificial nesting hollows made from timber logs, some of which are placed by volunteers up to 20 metres or more above ground level.

Another pleasing achievement of the Foundation is its sponsorship of **geological interpretive signs, which are being placed at significant sites in the relatively new Gawler Ranges National Park**. This was made possible through a bequest by the late Honor Cameron Wilson,

a long-time donor who was very interested in geology. It is hoped that there will be a formal launch of those signs at the Park later in the year when members and friends may join us to help celebrate this important occasion, and Honor's generosity. The Foundation actually helped the State Government acquire the land for the Park some years ago by making two substantial financial contributions towards that purchase.

Frequent and generous donor, Gerard Corporation's managing director, **Mr Robert Gerard**, is soon to fly to Monte Carlo to represent Australia in the World Entrepreneur of the Year (EOY) Awards. Robert Gerard won the Australia EOY Award in 2004 and will be competing against more than 100 winners worldwide for this honour. He has generously supported the Glossy Black Cockatoo project on Kangaroo Island, as well as work on the Eyre Peninsula sub-species of the Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoo and other Foundation projects. **Good luck Robert Gerard!**



Barbara Hardy travelled up to the **Sandy Creek Conservation Park** on the 10th April to the official launch of **Barry Hutchins' book on the birds of the Park and the old Barossa Goldfields**. The Foundation previously funded the addition of land to this important Park: the area known as the Wilson Zone, and the **Mark Bonnin Walkway** which links two sections of the Park. Barry was an enormous help in our efforts to persuade Mr Filsell, then owner of land that separated two sections of the Park, to sell us a strip now known as the Mark Bonnin Walkway. The Walkway is now suffering from erosion, and the Foundation proposes to help the Sandy Creek Conservation Park Friends group to restore it.

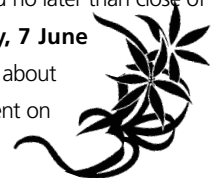
Council is planning to establish a **Friends of the Foundation**, and has been most fortunate to have the interest and the commitment of **Mr Alex Staritski** to help in doing this. Alex is the

recently retired Principal of Burnside Primary School, and formerly Principal of Ardtornish Primary School where he, plus teachers and students was very involved in Landcare. Any readers of this newsletter who may be interested in becoming a Friend of the Foundation can contact Barbara Hardy at the Foundation on 1300 366 191.

Our **Project Sub-committee** is tremendously important to the work of the Foundation because it decides which of the many potential projects offered will actually be able to be funded, as well as which scholarships can be awarded. We are most grateful to new member **Colin Harris** who has been willingly co-opted on to the committee. Colin's great experience in nature conservation over many years will be very valuable. It was he who initiated and supervised the preparation of the Report on the "Clearance of Native Vegetation in South Australia" from which grew the important Heritage Agreement with landholders. **Thank you Colin** for joining us.

Another most helpful addition to our Nature Foundation SA team is **Eleanor Miller**, who has joined the **Fund-raising and Marketing Sub-committee**, and who skillfully edits this newsletter. **Thank you Eleanor**.

At its May Council meeting a presentation was made by an officer of the SA Department for Environment and Heritage about the **Draft Zoning Plan** for the soon to be proclaimed **Encounter Marine Park** which will be part of the **South Australian Representative System of Marine Protected Areas**. There will be more information about that in future newsletters, but it is important for readers to know that written submissions by the public with their comments on the draft zoning plan must be received no later than close of business on **Tuesday, 7 June 2005**. For information about this ring the Department on 8124 4900.





Excitement in the Flinders Ranges National Park

*A WHOLE new geological period -- **Ediacaran Period** -- has been recognised by the International Geological Commission.*

BARBARA HARDY

The Ediacaran Period extends from 543 to 620 million years ago. It includes the time when the first animals were living on a sea floor. As sea levels changed and rocks were shifted by Earth movements, the sea floor became part of what we now know as the Flinders Ranges.

The name 'Ediacara' comes from an Aboriginal language expression meaning "veinlike spring of water" -- the spring perhaps from which complex animals have arisen.



EDIACARAN INTERPRETIVE SIGN DISPLAYED AT PARACHILNA IN THE FLINDERS RANGES

The Flinders Ranges contain Ediacara fossils which are famous for the earliest evidence of animal life, including possibly the oldest known ancestor of animals with backbones. This Ediacaran Period is the first new period to be declared for 120 years, and is the only one to be based on rocks in the Southern Hemisphere.

These fossils were discovered by well-remembered and respected geologist, the late Reg Sprigg (of Arkaroola fame), in 1946 when he was a young Mines Department

geologist. His discovery and subsequent research into Ediacaran fossils gave scientists a new understanding of the evolution of life on earth and the preservation of fossils.

The Ediacaran "**golden spike**", or Global Stratotype Section and Point, has been placed here in SA on the Brachina Gorge Geological Trail in the Flinders Ranges National Park.

The "golden spike" points to the base of the new Ediacaran Period and marks the time when the Earth emerged from the greatest ice age of all time. It is called the **Marinoan Ice Age** after rocks found near Marino Rocks on the coast south of Adelaide. Recently scientists began referring to the Marinoan Ice Age as "**snowball Earth**" because there is evidence in the Flinders Ranges that the Earth froze over, almost to the equator.

At this time, 630-620 million years ago, ancient Australia lay across the equator. We know this because there is a fossil record of the Earth's magnetic field from this time. On every continent there is a layer of limestone that formed as a cap to ice age deposits. This cap rock resulted from very rapid warming of the Earth immediately after this great ice age. Learning about the rate of change in climates from the past can help in understanding how quickly global warming may occur today.

So, local places such as the Flinders Ranges -- and even little Marino 15 kms south of Adelaide -- feature on the world scene.

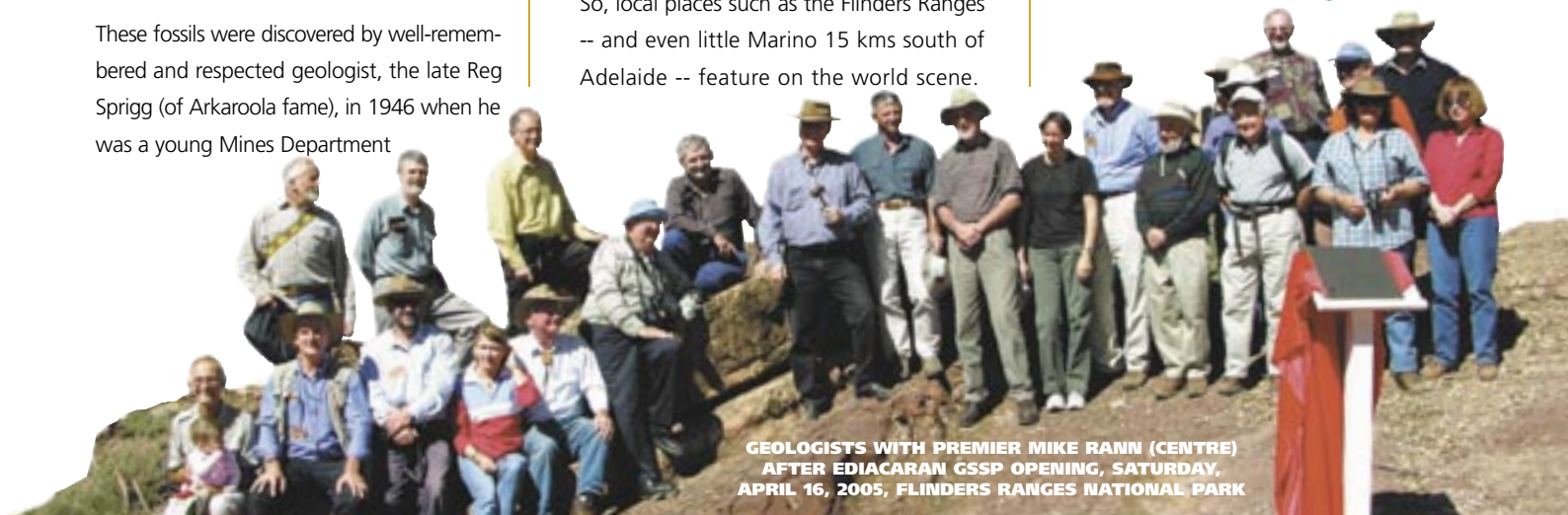


EDIACARAN GLOBAL STRATOTYPE SECTION AND POINT AT THE BASE OF THE NUCCALEENA FORMATION, ABOVE THE ELATINA FORMATION, ENORAMA CREEK, FLINDERS RANGES NATIONAL PARK

The placing of the golden spike was celebrated last month by Premier Mike Rann and Tourism Minister Jane Lomax-Smith when they unveiled an Ediacaran interpretive sign and fossil display at Parachilna in the Flinders Ranges.

Australia Post has produced a kit including stamps featuring six of the Ediacaran fossils plus postcards and a book for children. This is named by Australia Post as "Creatures of the Slime" There is also a short article and some pictures in the current SA Museum Newsletter, and Jim Gehling has written a longer article which will appear in the journal of the Geological Society of Australia "The Australian Geologist" (TAG).

[With thanks to Dr Jim Gehling (SA Museum)]



GEOLOGISTS WITH PREMIER MIKE RANN (CENTRE) AFTER EDIACARAN GSSP OPENING, SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2005, FLINDERS RANGES NATIONAL PARK



Bushbank Update

As BushbankSA Executive Officer, I have made a number of property inspections since the previous newsletter but only one new property purchase is currently under negotiation just at the moment. The quality is just not there in the bushland properties that are presently being offered for sale.

The property we are negotiating to buy is at Ironbank in the Adelaide Hills. It comprises a relatively large area of messmate woodland on a wetter south east facing aspect. The bushland is in very good condition for the Adelaide Hills but it is not without its weed and feral animal issues.

The area is already under a Heritage Agreement but the Bushbank Management Committee believes that without a solid, ongoing commitment to the conservation of the bushland, its biodiversity values will seriously decline. BushbankSA will prepare a management plan (to be incorporated into the Agreement) directed at dealing with the weed and feral animal issues.

The Bushbank Management Committee is also pursuing the possibility of establishing a site on the property for a residence. The success of on-ground conservation work can be greatly improved if the landowner is resident on the property.

Meanwhile, BushbankSA is processing two of its properties for resale: Lea Ridge and Padthaway.

The Lea Ridge property was divided into three separate allotments, all of which will be sold in early May. One allotment contains native vegetation for protection under Heritage Agreement, while the other two are to be sold for agricultural use.

Progress on the Padthaway property has been steady. We have sought and received advice on what should be done to best present the property for re-sale and are currently working on a management plan for the site.

The Foundation is indebted to the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation for the complementary provision of biological assessment reports on the properties we buy. Even before the Foundation enters into a purchase contract, we ask the Department to provide an assurance that the property is worthy of a Heritage Agreement. This enables us to close the deal.

Finally, I am delighted to announce the BushbankSA website is operational. You will find it at www.bushbanksa.org.au. I will be posting regular updates on the site throughout the year and would love to receive your feedback.



Jim McHugh
Executive Officer, BushbankSA
Contact: 8340 2880 or
email: bushbank@naturefoundationsa.asn.au



Birds in the UK

One of Nature Foundation's very keen Council members, Dr David Hansman, recently provided some interesting information about the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). This is a long-established UK charity that works to preserve birds and their habitat...

With more than a million members, 12,000 volunteers and 1300 staff, few organisations committed to nature conservation can match its scale and scope. South Australians visiting the UK, and especially those with an interest in birds, native plants and butterflies, may wish to see some of the 180 nature reserves which RSPB manages.

Of special relevance to supporters is Hope Farm in Cambridge. In recent years, there have been serious declines in farmland birds in Western Europe, including the UK. Skylarks are amongst the birds affected. On Hope Farm, areas of farmland have been left unsown to assist nesting skylarks. As a consequence, the number of skylarks has increased, as have several other species (linnets, reed buntings and yellowhammers). This 180 hectare farm shows that agriculture can be managed in an ecologically sensitive way yet remain profitable.

Perhaps, in the longer term, Nature Foundation's involvement with the Para Woodland Reserve near Gawler, could emulate these amazing achievements of the RSPB, on a much smaller scale. As mentioned in the Autumn newsletter, Mrs Elizabeth Law-Smith generously donated land and provided financial support so that the Para Woodlands property, while continuing to run sheep in some areas, will be replanted with indigenous vegetation to produce bird-friendly habitats. This could perhaps act as a role model for farms in South Australia.



Good Business Environment Awards 2004/05



GOOD BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AWARDS DINNER HELD ON FEBRUARY 24TH

The annual Nature Foundation Good Business Environment Awards (GBEAs) were presented at a most successful and well-attended dinner held on February 24th in the "The Works" Function Centre, at Park Terrace, at Bowden –sponsored by Mr Robert Gerard and Mistral.

The Awards recognise and encourage the important role that South Australian businesses play in helping to achieve a more ecologically sustainable future.



DAVE BARBER (LEFT) AND MARK DONVON (MIDDLE) FROM TRANSITIONS OPTICAL WERE WINNERS OF THE MERRIT AWARD PRESENTED BY MINISTER JOHN HILL (RIGHT)

We were very pleased that Minister for Environment and Conservation, Mr John Hill, was able to present the Awards. Also attending was Graz van Egmond, Director of the Banksia Environment Foundation, which runs the prestigious national Banksia Environmental Awards, due to be held in Adelaide this year on the 4th June, the eve of World Environment Day. The GBEA is now part of the 'feeder' Awards for South Australia, with winners of categories gaining automatic entry into the Banksia Awards.

(LEFT) MIKE CARTER FROM PENRIC SODA PRODUCTS AND SHAUN EMERY (RIGHT) OF MCMAHON SERVICES WINNERS OF THE PREMIER'S AWARD. PRESENTED BY MINISTER JOHN HILL (MIDDLE)

The main award, the **Premier's Award for Business Environmental Responsibility and Leadership**, was divided into two categories this year for small and larger businesses. The large business winners were **McMahon Services in association with Penrice Soda Products** for their challenging and ultimately successful bio-remediation of petroleum impacted soil, and the small business winner was **The Food Forest**, a sustainable biodynamic farm near Gawler. Both winners received a

stunning Bernd Stoecker mounted photograph and a wonderful glass sculpture created by Mark Thiele. A number of Awards of Merit were also presented.

In the other categories, joint winners for **Environmental Leadership in Infrastructure and Services** went to the **Aldinga Arts Eco Village** and **Desert Eco Systems**, and to **Finsbury Green Printing** for **Leadership in Sustainable Product Design**.

The evening was a great success with environmentally concerned and aware leaders of business mixing with Council members of the Foundation and representatives from our many sponsors: the EPA, DEH, DWLBC, KESAB, Zero Waste SA, SA Water, Mistral, Business SA, the Beverage Industry Environment Council, Custom Print, Prescott Consultants, FIVEaa and TCN Design.

Our thanks go to Mr Robert Gerard and Mistral for their generous support of the evening and to all our other sponsors who make the Awards possible. We also thank Pia Vogrin of evesolutions who expertly managed the Awards this year on behalf of the Foundation

David Moyle
Hon Secretary, NFSA





NATURE FOUNDATION SA

Greencard

Did you know you can help protect South Australia's native fauna and flora every time you shop?

Bank SA offers a special Greencard Mastercard, that you can use in the same way you would any other credit card – to purchase petrol or groceries, for dining out and other every day items.

There are no extra or hidden costs on your account but, based on your use of the card, Bank SA pays a contribution to your choice of one of three environmental groups, including Nature Foundation SA.

In the past year, the Foundation received more than \$15,000 through the Greencard program.

For further information please contact Nature Foundation SA on 1300 366 191.

Help us help Nature

I care about conservation in South Australia

My tax-deductible donation of \$ _____ is enclosed.

I would like to become a Member for the Foundation

- I am a renewing Member
- \$25 Single membership
- \$44 Couple membership
- \$55 Family membership

I would like information about

- Making a bequest
- GreenCard Mastercard
- Volunteering

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- cheque enclosed
- paying by credit card
- Bankcard
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- Diners

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Expiry date _____ Total amount: \$ _____

Signature _____

Pay by phone: 1300 366131

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Fax to: (08) 8340 2506



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