



Cindy and Mick Robinson with their Innovation in Sustainable Agriculture award at the East Gippsland Regional Landcare Awards last Friday night. They will now go on to contest the state titles. (PS)



The Far East Victorian Landcare team has enjoyed a successful year of projects. K671-153

Dairy farmers win Landcare sustainability gong

Far East Victorian Landcare members and projects shone at the annual East Gippsland Regional Landcare Awards held at Lakes Entrance last Friday night.

A crowd of about 100 Landcarers were on hand at the Bellevue on the Lakes to celebrate the past year of Landcare across East Gippsland and celebrate some of the high achievers, with the four category winners to now go onto the state titles later this year.

And winning one of the gongs were Jarrahmond dairy farmers, Mick and Cindy Robinson, in the 'Innovation in Sustainable Agriculture' category.

The Robinsons are fourth generation farmers who have adopted innovative and environmentally sustainable farming practices. Over the last 14 years the Robinsons have planted 5000 native trees, installed 5010 metres of shelterbelt and land class fencing, and have moved from full tillage of soil to 100 per cent direct seeding.

A recent move to sustainable effluent management practices has resulted in water savings of 6000 litres per day and fertiliser savings of \$30,000 per annum. Their farm hosts field days for dairy and beef producers showcasing their leading practice in pasture management, pests and pest control, salinity management, effluent management and seasonal cropping techniques.

Highly commended in two other categories were Dawn Parker (Individual Landcarer) and the School of Student Leadership - Snowy River Campus (Junior Landcare Team).

For more than 20 years, Dawn has shown outstanding commitment to Landcare in East Gippsland. She has been the champion of innovative farming practices in East Gippsland and has been instrumental in bringing leading practitioners of regenerative farming to the area.

Dawn was the inaugural secretary of the Far East Victoria Landcare Network when it was formed in 2007, has been a member of its executive committee for nine years and is the current chairman.

Dawn helped establish the Snowy West Landcare Group and is one of the group representatives to Far East Victoria Landcare. She has been the Far East Victoria Landcare representative on the Victorian Landcare Council, the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce, the Far East Community Blackberry Action Group, the East Gippsland Regional Landcare Facilitator Steering Committee and the East Gippsland Top Soils Steering Committee.

Students from the School of Student Leadership - Snowy River Campus have for the past three years assisted Snowy West Landcare Group with planting at its Newmerella site.

The students have learned vital work skills such as teamwork and have developed confidence and self-esteem through their community service.

For its part, the Snowy West Landcare Group has had the pleasure of engaging with a group of energetic and enthusiastic students who have been able to plant a site that would otherwise be beyond the physical capacity of its members.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Innovation in Sustainable Agriculture:

Winner: Mick and Cindy Robinson, Jarrahmond. Highly commended: Ian and Barbara Perrin, Dargo.

Community Group: Winner: Eastwood Landcare Group. Highly commended: Tambo Bluff Landcare Coastcare.

Individual Landcarer: Ann Robson. Highly

commended: Phil Jones, Dawn Parker, Peter Johannsen.

Junior Landcare Team: Winner: Federation Training - VCAL. Highly commended: School for Student leadership - Snowy River Campus.

Indigenous Group or Individual: Winner: Gunkaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation.

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