

Local Environment Award Winners

Earth First

Stephen Nugent, ECCO

A magnificent water-wise native garden and community campaigning on waste management are the notable achievements of the most recent ECCO Local Environment Award winners.

Presented recently with their certificates, Ross and Pam Montgomery won their ECCO Award for the wonderful native garden they have established at their home on Cargo Road. Christine McIntosh received her Award for Environmental Sustainability for her years of community campaigning for better waste management outcomes.

Water Wise Native Garden

The Montgomerys have established an extensive garden on their Cargo Road property, predominately made up of Australian native plants and trees. The garden uses little or no water once plants are established, apart from what falls from the sky.

The presence of a large variety of native plants has encouraged native wildlife to take up residence permanently in the garden, which now boasts a wide range of bird life, frogs, lizards, dragon flies, and butterflies. The Montgomerys hope that their garden will inspire others and will demonstrate that a sustainable garden with minimal water usage is easily achievable.

The enjoyment that the Montgomerys derive from sharing their garden with others was obvious when members of the ECCO Committee visited to see it for themselves. The garden has been open to the public several times over the past five years, as part of fundraising activities for charities.

Waste Management

Christine McIntosh has campaigned tirelessly for a number of years against the proposed establishment of a regional waste management facility near Molong. As a founding member and one of the driving forces behind the HUB Action Group, Ms McIntosh has been instrumental in raising community awareness about the proposal and questioning whether it is the best waste management outcome for the region.

The research undertaken by the HUB Action Group has been extensive, as has the exploration of alternatives to the establishment of the regional facility at the location proposed. This has meant that the community campaign driven by Ms McIntosh and the Acton Group has gone well beyond the work of many other local action groups, in terms of its scope, sophistication and duration.

Ms McIntosh sees the award as recognition of the hard work of the many members of the Action Group and the group as a whole. Regardless of the final decision on the regional facility at Molong, that hard work has certainly raised awareness of waste

management options and has helped drive a series of changes to plans for the proposed facility. It shows that community engagement and activism can make a difference and is an inspiration to other groups and individuals to get involved in the planning decisions that affect their lives.

Autumn 2010 Awards

If you're inspired by these worthy winners, and have a project, event or initiative that you would like to nominate, entries are open for the Autumn 2010 Awards. Community groups, schools and individuals in particular are encouraged to enter.

Information sheets and entry forms are available at one of the three businesses supporting the awards with prizes, Book City, Mitre 10 and Windyhill Nursery. They are also available from the Central Western Daily, Orange City Council and ECCO Committee members.

Sustainable tip for the week: Plant drought hardy Australian native plants and trees to establish a healthy garden with minimal water needs.

Green Dates for the Calendar

Wednesday 28 April – ECCO General Meeting at the ELF, Orange Showgrounds
730pm

Sunday 2 May – Green Drinks at the Union Bank.