



2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Nominee: BirdLife Australia Gluepot Reserve, SA

Category: Fairfax Landcare Community Group Award

BirdLife Australia Gluepot Reserve is Australia's largest community managed and operated conservation reserve. Situated 64 km from the River Murray in South Australia's Riverland, the reserve is managed and operated entirely by volunteers. Some 54,000 hectares in size, it is home to 22 nationally threatened species of birds, 53 species of reptiles and 12 species of bats, some of which are nationally threatened.

By successfully combining the elements of biodiversity conservation and enhancement through land management, scientific research and monitoring, environmental education, and sustainable ecotourism, Gluepot Reserve has taken conservation management into a new era. The Reserve is providing an international model to show that sustainable use of the landscape is both feasible and desirable.

Volunteers are the life-blood of the Reserve and come from all states of Australia and overseas. From July 1997 – when the Reserve was purchased – to the end of 2015, volunteers had donated 433,233 hours and 2,616,320 km of mileage that equates to an overall donation of time and mileage of \$11,745,613 million. The Reserve is the recipient of 42 national and international awards in the fields of science, conservation, environment, ecotourism, health, and the built environment.

The Reserve's overall management philosophy is to effectively manage a large, internationally significant protected area for biodiversity conservation as an addition to Australia's National Reserve System and to develop a successful, financially independent program that will be a model for other community groups with small operating budgets.

Gluepot Reserve, which is carbon neutral, is part of the largest block of intact Mallee left in Australia and so the viability of threatened bird populations and other flora and fauna is high. Prior to the November 2006 fire, where 8,000 hectares were burnt, the last major fire on Gluepot was over half a century ago in December 1950. Importantly, some whole areas were not burnt at all during these widespread fires. A diversity of fire impacts, together with a diversity of understoreys within the Mallee and other woodland communities, has given rise to a wide variety of niches for birds and other animals.

The Reserve works closely with a wide variety of individuals and organisations, including governments, businesses, and the education system. These include; local community members, service clubs, Riverland Biosphere, a number of tourism offices, and various boards and planning associations.

Within the Reserve, a superb infrastructure has been developed, including; 14 marked walking trails situated in strategic areas of the Reserve; a world class Visitor Information Centre; four magnificent camping grounds set in prime birding areas; research quarters including a new five-bedroom accommodation block; a shearing shed converted into an Environmental Education Centre; a large steel 19m long storage shed; the Riverland's largest self-contained solar power system; five elevated bird watering troughs overlooked by large bird hides; and a 6x9 metre library/science centre building that was completed in early 2015.

This program is supported by Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.





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Gluepot has always seen 'challenges' as a means to increase the resilience and viability of the Reserve – being able to ensure the long-term financial stability of Gluepot has been the largest challenge.

The Reserve must raise \$90,000 per annum to cover the operating budget that includes at least \$23,000 per year for a Capital Replacement Fund. Thanks to wise stewardship, the Reserve has always ended each year with a surplus. However, to ensure the long-term financial position of Gluepot, the Reserve set about raising \$1 million for the Gluepot Reserve Foundation. The total raised to date, stands at \$2 million, with the additional funds raised as a 'hedge' against further global financial crises. Gluepot Reserve is proud to report that the funding for future operating budgets is now ensured in perpetuity.

Landcare is a grassroots movement that harnesses individuals and groups to protect, restore and sustainably manage Australia's natural environment and its productivity. Groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella work on a diverse range of environmental projects and include farmers embracing sustainable farm management and any community group that partakes in volunteer environmental activities. To find out how you can become a Landcare volunteer and for full details on all 2018 National Landcare finalists, visit www.landcareaustralia.org.au

Ends

For further information, photographs or interviews, please contact:

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Web Summary

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