



2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Nominee: Rob Boase, WA

Category: Australian Government Individual Landcarer

When Rob and Beth Boase purchased their farm in 1973 they set out to enhance and protect the property's surviving native bushland. Realising the value of a unique wetland surrounded by 250 hectares of Banksia woodland, Rob began revegetating land that had turned saline because of historical over clearing, and he fenced areas containing rare and endangered plants. Rob and Beth's property at Dowerin is now seen as an outstanding example of how to conserve fragmented vegetation in the Central Wheatbelt. In 2010 Rob and Beth agreed to protect all of the bushland on the property with a Conservation Covenant, securing it in perpetuity.

Rob and Beth have supported many revegetation projects across the Wheatbelt by successfully propagating difficult species at their commercial nursery, Arinya Plants. The nursery opened in 1996, growing local Wheatbelt plants and filling it to a capacity of 250,000 seedlings. Customers initially requested many species unsuitable for local areas however Rob educated clients about purchasing the correct local provenance species instead of introducing plants from outside the area. He advised them about the density of vegetation required, and set about collecting seeds with the most appropriate provenance from the surrounding area. Rob has been combatting the salinity problem by planting salt-resistant vegetation propagated from seed collected from plants already adapted to a saline environment.

Operating a commercial nursery in an agricultural environment did pose some risks. One year, Rob lost 10,000 seedlings in the nursery due to a neighbouring farmer's herbicidal spray drift. Also Rob found the scheme water used in the nursery often contained chlorine levels that were detrimental to the plants, so settling tanks were installed to evaporate the chlorine and daily testing was required.

With little knowledge available on propagating bushfood species, Rob was approached by Wheatbelt NRM in 2016 to assist in the Bushtucker Project, and has been successful in growing some traditional local bush food species with potential commercial prospects. The goal has been to educate and develop alternative industries for the Indigenous community, utilising cultural knowledge. In 2002 Rob also initiated a local project to protect roadside vegetation from being unnecessarily cleared often from fence-line to fence-line. This led to the formation of a local Roadside Conservation Committee. He was also an active member of the Avon Working Group which eventually evolved into what is now the Wheatbelt NRM.

Rob has also assisted in training various groups including Dowerin District High School and a number of TAFE colleges throughout the Wheatbelt. Educational tours have also been provided at the nursery and he has provided advice to other nurseries and individuals interested in growing native plants. Rob and his wife often visit planned revegetation sites to advise on suitable species for the particular area. At Konnongorring, he spoke to the Gabby Quoi Quoi Catchment Group about revegetation and the commercial growing potential of various species of brushwood. Rob also spoke about Landcare at a meeting of The University of the Third Age in Midland. This resulted in Rob being asked to lead a bus tour to view and explain salinity problems and the role of Landcare in tackling the issue.

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





2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

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 contact:

Naomi Straw
Landcare Australia
naomi.straw@landcareaustralia.com.au
02 8440 8823

Rob Boase
rcboase@hotmail.com
0428 033 075

Web Summary

When Rob and Beth Boase purchased their farm in 1973 they set out to rejuvenate the property's surviving native bushland. Rob revegetated land that had turned saline because of historical over clearing and also fenced areas containing rare and endangered plants. Rob and Beth's property at Dowerin is now seen as an outstanding example of how to conserve fragmented vegetation in the Central Wheatbelt. Rob and Beth have also supported revegetation by cultivating difficult species at their commercial nursery, Arinya Plants, for Landcare projects across the Wheatbelt. The nursery opened in 1996, with customers initially requesting species unsuitable for the local area. Rob educated clients about purchasing local native seedlings instead of introducing species from outside the area and advising them about the density of vegetation required and best planting methods.

Pull-out quote:

With little knowledge available on propagating bushfood species, Rob was approached by Wheatbelt NRM in 2016 to assist in the Bushtucker Project, and has been successful in growing some traditional local bush food species with potential commercial prospects.

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

