

2012 COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AWARD

The award for 2012 was made to the NSW Nature Conservation Working Group (NCWG) based in the Murray catchment area of NSW. The group is made up of dedicated local landholders who have achieved wonders since the group's formation in 1994. They have managed the rehabilitation to almost 10,000 hectares of remnant native bushland and have focused on the preservation of threatened Grassy Box Woodlands and supported the captive breeding and release of the bush stone-curlew, classified as Endangered under the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*. Curlew conservation is now the key focus of the group.

Apart from conserving habitat for curlews the NCWG has worked at raising awareness of the curlew's plight among local landholders and has undertaken an active fox-baiting program covering over 18,000 hectares of private land. The captive breeding program has led to the release of 55 young curlews over the past seven years. NCWG has also developed a comprehensive educational program, *Curlewing the Landscape*, which they have presented to schools and other groups in other parts of NSW including Sydney and the Central Coast as well as the ACT and Victoria. They also support graduate students from Charles Sturt University conducting research into curlews. They have also written several articles published in Australian magazines.

The NCWG is an excellent example of a community working together for the



Neville Lubke and a bush stone-curlew at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary

benefit of endangered Australian wildlife and is a worthy winner of our Award.

Neville and Jan Lubke accepted the award for NCWG.

Acceptance speech by Neville Lubke
President Medway, Board and Members of the Society.

It is with much fear and trepidation that we stand here today. As we crossed Castlereagh Street to get here, I couldn't help but think how far we were from the Barham - Moulamein Road, which is adjacent to the 3,000 hectare property where we release our captive bred bush stone-curlews. It isn't nearly as hard to cross.

Although we are such a long way from home, we are very honoured to be here today to receive the Wildlife

Preservation Society's 2012 Community Conservation Award.

Thirteen years ago when we birthed the idea of captive breeding and releasing curlews, we could never have imagined the journey we would be taken on. There have been many highs and lows over this time and, although we have been tempted to give up several times, it is support such as this that encourages us to carry on. Together we can make a difference, so that future generations will inherit a better world.

On behalf of the Nature Conservation Working Group and the endangered bush stone-curlew, our heartfelt thanks to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia for presenting us with this award.