

The Serventy Conservation for 1998

Margaret Thorsborne of Caldwell in Queensland received the inaugural Serventy Conservation Medal for her work in the conservation of local fruit pigeons and cassowaries and environmental conservation at Mission Beach, Queensland. Margaret Thorsborne has a lifelong interest in nature conservation that included monitoring of Torresian imperial-pigeons that migrate to nest on local islands off the Queensland shores in summer of each year.

Margaret Thorsborne wrote "Hinchinbrook Island - The Land that Time Forgot". She was very active in the fight to stop development of Hinchinbrook Island by Keith Williams. When the bulldozers started work on a proposed marina development, opponents had a secret weapon, a 71-year-old woman named Margaret Thorsborne. She was convinced Williams was bulldozing some of the area's most beautiful coastline. And it seemed that every time the construction workers wanted to remove a tree, they had to remove her first. "I think it's time older people didn't leave it for the young," she says. "We aren't the last generation on Earth, but sometimes we act as if we are ...with no thought for the future."

Margaret Thorsborne believed governments have let down Australia. Other conservation organisations declared they would fight the project right to the bitter end, pointing out that authorising development in a World Heritage area makes governments an international "laughing stock".



Dr Vincent Serventy AM presenting Margaret Thorsborne with the Serventy Conservation Medal for 1998