

The Serventy Conservation Medal for 1999

Bernie Clarke OAM of Oyster Bay, Sydney received the second nomination and Medal. A strong Botany Bay conservationist and environmentalist, he received the Award for his lifetime devotion as a local environmentalist and long-time Towra/Botany Bay campaigner.

Bernie also became Patron of the George's River Keeper program in 1997, which aims to keep the river and bay free from pollution.

Clarke has been working and fighting to protect the Kurnell peninsula for decades. "My first time in a police paddy wagon was after I set up a roadblock in the 1950s to try and stop the oil refinery being built" he said. While campaigning to improve the Kurnell Peninsula, Bernie became President of the Botany Bay Planning and Protection Council, a residents' action group. Bernie stated "Countries around the world revere their birthplace [while] Australia has buried it's under a local oil refinery!"

Bernie Clarke is quick to point out the special character of Towra Point, which hosts some 34 species of migratory wading birds each year. "The International Wetlands Body, RAMSAR, has listed Towra Point as an internationally significant site. Australia is a signatory to three international ornithological agreements to preserve and look after these sites in perpetuity.

"More needs to be done to protect these special areas." Said Bernie Clarke OAM.

He was recognised and awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to conservation on 12 June 1989.



Bernie Clarke on Towra Beach, Towra Point Nature Reserve, Sydney