

Serventy Conservation Medal for 2009

Dr Clive Williams, Vice President, announced the Serventy Medal for 2009 has been awarded to **Mrs June Butcher** of Western Australia. Mrs Butcher has been active in promoting the welfare of native animals for over 40 years. She founded the Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in 1986 and through dedicated effort has developed this refuge beyond a purely rehabilitative function. The centre now runs a recognised captive breeding program for endangered species including the bilby, woylie and others. June works closely with the Department of Environment and Conservation and is active in educating the public as well as professionals, including students from local universities as well as from overseas countries.

June Butcher was recognised by the Western Australian Government with the award of WA Senior Australian of the Year for 2009. It is with pleasure that Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia welcomes her to the list of worthy recipients of the Serventy Medal.

Response by June Butcher

My late husband, Lloyd, and I started our married life on a three acre property in Gooseberry Hill in the 1960s. My lifelong passion for animals led to an injured galah being our first rescued animal. Lloyd was an Aeronautical engineer and my background was in nursing which made an ideal combination to start Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre.

In 1986 we built a small hospital, large enough for my daughter Fleur and me to work in. That year we admitted seventy animals. We now care for 2,000 animals a year. For this, we need 140 volunteers as we are also now involved in the breeding of endangered species of bilby, western barred bandicoot and betongs (woylies).

Our education team presented to 40,000 children and adults in the last twelve months.

The life of a Wildlife Rehabilitator is very demanding of time and commitment and is a 24 hour a day involvement. Night feeding of mammals and emergency phone calls and admissions happen 24 hours a day. This is all pro bono work of course and has been my life for 25 years.

Kanyana has become a powerhouse of energy and passion in caring for our wildlife, but is not **only** all about wildlife. It is about people too. Working with animals is a very healing activity, and one of the privileges is seeing volunteers blossom in this environment. We are building a state-of-the-art wildlife hospital and education centre at Paxwold – the former Girl Guides' Centre in Lesmurdie. It is a mammoth project made possible by Lotterywest. This project is a dream come true as it will be able to look after wildlife well into the future.

Over the last twenty years, the evolution of societies' values and interest in the environment and wildlife has been remarkable. Consider all the wildlife programmes on TV. Kanyana has played its part here by participating in "Aussie Animal Rescue" and the "Return to Eden film". Both these programmes highlighted our unique Australian animals.

I accept the Serventy Conservation Medal on behalf of all wildlife rehabilitators and hope it will raise their profile in the community.



June Butcher