

# 2014 SERVENTRY MEDAL

Dr Clive Williams, Vice President of the Society and Chairman of the Judging Panel, announced the winners of the Serventy Conservation Medal for 2014 to be Helen Bergen and Ray Mjadwesch of Bathurst. Not only have Helen and Ray been responsible for directly saving the lives of many injured animals, they have saved many more by educating the public on how to live harmoniously with wildlife. They have had many articles published in the press and given many radio interviews. They frequently speak to school and other community groups. Ray has worked hard and successfully to promote fauna friendly fences. As a result of his efforts, the Boundary Road Reserve Landcare group replaced its rural fencing with fauna-safe fences. Some local landholders have followed suit. Ray and Helen have persuaded Bathurst Council to move away from lethal culling of kangaroos during the Bathurst car race to more fauna friendly management procedures. The work of both Ray and Helen provides an excellent model to follow as, when they discover inappropriate actions affecting wildlife, they provide alternative actions to follow.

## Response from Helen Bergen and Ray Mjadwesch

It is a thrill to have been nominated for the Serventy Conservation Medal. The Serventy family and previous winners of the Medal have set the bar very high,



Helen with kangaroo joey.



Presentation of the Serventy Medal for 2014. L to R: Dr Dan Ramp, Ray Mjadwesch, Dr Clive Williams, Helen Bergen, Dr David Murray and Dr Peter Simmons.

and it's an honour to have our efforts recognised by the Society alongside their work. Thank you so much to Charles Sturt University's Dr Peter Simmons for nominating us and to UTS' Dr Dan Ramp and the Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council's Tonilee Scott for supporting it.

We are only two people out of many unsung individuals tirelessly working to advocate for and protect our precious and disappearing wildlife, and we are very lucky to be supported by our community and people like Dr Simmons and Dr Ramp, along with so many groups and individuals also working to the same end. We accept this Medal on behalf of those countless others.

## Our work

Our advocacy seeks to educate the wider community about our wildlife, their needs and habitats, and has been driven by the realisation that attitudes to, and management of, wildlife is often based on inaccurate information.

Our much maligned kangaroos are especially victim to this, and our

work is about engaging people and their networks with the science of kangaroos, and facilitating a robustly informed evidence-based practical approach to non-lethal wildlife care and management.

Our Kangaroos at Risk and Bathurst Kangaroo Project are important vehicles for educating communities and researchers that so many common premises about kangaroos are myth, and are not supported by the science which shows kangaroos are a slow-breeding slow-growing species with high juvenile mortality and crashes in populations during drought. The Bathurst Kangaroo Project has become a truly multi-partnered consultative effort and with our partners' vital input, is attracting international interest.

This is a big message that needs to cut through decades of unexamined notions of abundance, pest and plague. And we are hoping the Serventy Medal will help promote this aim. Thank you again.



Ray carrying a darted kangaroo.