

Speech by Greg Aplin, NSW Parliamentary Friends of Landcare

2017 New South Wales Landcare Awards and Gala Dinner

26 October 2017, Albury

I can honestly say, from my perspective as an inaugural member of the Parliamentary Friends of Landcare, that this is one of those jobs in politics where you can really get dirt on your hands.

There's nothing like getting outdoors on a beautiful sunny day – or a wild and rainy day – and working side by side with others to plant for the future. Earlier this year I was working with Richard Bull on the *Building Bridges to Boorowa* program as part of the wonderful link between Boorowa Community Landcare, Hilltops Council, North Sydney Council and all those volunteers.

Over the years tens of thousands of native trees, shrubs and groundcovers have been planted in specially prepared wildlife corridors, resulting in increased species diversity.

And that's a fantastic outcome, bringing those two communities together.

And New South Wales is richer for this grassroots effort that you all put in and is typified by that program.

I am here tonight in dual capacities: as a Parliamentary Friend of Landcare and a Member of Parliament for the NSW electorate of Albury, and also to represent the 'Friends' Chair, Kevin Anderson, Member for Tamworth, who could not be here and who sends his greetings and best wishes to the Landcare community.

When I get asked about the Parliamentary Friends of Landcare I am happy to speak from personal experience about its role as a conduit, a direct link for Landcare straight into the NSW Parliament.

This access promotes strong and clear communication of the needs and plans of Landcare into a place where decisions are made affecting the state's primary production and environmental responsibilities.

We help Landcare lobby, and assist its work and understanding within NSW Parliament.

I would like to thank Landcare NSW, especially the chair Rob Dulhunty, for all the time you put in to educating us and enabling us to be participants.

And, from the other perspective, we work within Parliament to encourage all MPs to visit their local Landcare or Bushcare group.

The Parliamentary Friends of Landcare recognise the commitment and hard work of landholders, volunteers, local coordinators, office holders in Landcare organisations.

I often work locally with people like Edwina Hayes who has been so integral to making this Conference happen.

The work you do as Landcarers is highly valued by Members from all political parties in the NSW Parliament.

I encourage you all to engage with your elected representatives at both the state and federal level.

So my message is, keep the Landcare flame alive, and thank you.