

Acceptance speech on behalf of 2019 Gerald Carnie Memorial Award Winner Robert Dulhunty

By Leigh McLaughlin, Landcare NSW

**2019 NSW Landcare Awards
23 October 2019, Broken Hill**

I am honoured to accept this award on Rob's behalf. He is currently in Weipa in Far North Queensland representing the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation at a graduation ceremony for Torres Strait Islander women.

Never one to miss an opportunity for a bit of fun, when I spoke to him this evening he was on a boat, travelling up the west coast of Cape York, to camp out tonight then head out tomorrow to fish for barramundi on the Dulhunty river, apparently named after one of his infamous ancestors.

He is incredibly disappointed not to be here to accept this award. When we told him he'd won he was deeply honoured. He said, and I quote:

"There is no greater compliment in any endeavour than to be recognised by your peers."

He sends his greetings, especially to his fellow nominees, and wishes he was here this evening.

He would like thank Lorraine, Ryan, Jarrod and Trevor for their continued support and involvement in this award and express his appreciation of Gerald whose actions continue to inspire Landcarers through this award.

He would also like to recognise David Walker who instigated this award and who himself has contributed a huge amount to Landcare over a long period.

Rob wanted me to say this award really belongs to all of you, because he couldn't have done what he did without your support.

He particularly wanted to acknowledge his Landcare friends from his home town of Glen Innes and his colleagues, past and present, at Landcare NSW, whom he said go above and beyond in the cause of Landcare. And he wanted to recognise the role of the many colleagues in Government who have supported the growth and development of Landcare in NSW.

The message Rob asked me to convey was that the need for Landcare is stronger than ever. The challenges are enormous, more so than 30 years ago.

For Landcare to survive and flourish, strong courageous leadership is needed, especially at the national level, because without it support for Landcare will be difficult to maintain.

On a personal note, I'd like to say, to borrow one of Paul Keating's lines, that Rob is one of the True Believers. A rusted on Landcarer. He has earned the mantle of Landcare Elder. Or perhaps we could call him a Landcare lifer!

I worked closely with Rob and can attest to his dedication and tenacity.

He was always on the side of the person on the ground – a value that is still central to all the work we do at Landcare NSW.

For those who accept leadership roles, and pour their hearts and souls into it, it's a tough gig.

And that applies whether they're volunteers or in paid positions.

To everyone here tonight, let's support our current and future generations of Landcare leaders. Let's not just keep the flame alive. Let's fan those flames so Landcare spreads like wildfire. Thank you.