



MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
MINISTER FOR ENERGY
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MEDIA RELEASE



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State's top oyster environmental champions announced

An environmentalist from the Shoalhaven and a group of oyster farmers from the Clyde River are the winners of the 2008 NSW Oyster Industry Environmental Champion Awards, Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald announced today.

Initiated by the NSW Farmers' Association and the NSW Government, the awards acknowledge innovative ways of coping with environmental challenges, such as improving water quality, minimising pollution and restoring estuary habitats.

Lyn Desoto-Southwell, a member of the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority Natural Resource Reference Group, took out the 2008 NSW Oyster Industry Environmental Champion Individual Award for her leadership in improving water quality in the Crookhaven/Shoalhaven estuaries.

A local environmental warrior for water quality issues, Lyn helped initiate the Dairy Oyster Partnership Project that has resulted in a new partnership with the local dairy industry to protect water quality.

She also rallied local growers and formed an incorporated association – Shoalhaven River Oysters Inc so that they could apply for funding and receive assistance.

Lyn organised the “Shoalhaven Clean Water, Healthy Community Forum” which brought the local industry together with everyone who had an interest in Shoalhaven water quality issues.

This led to the local council contributing \$15,000 to the local shellfish program for two years.

The Clyde River Environmental Management System (EMS) cluster group won the 2008 NSW Oyster Industry Environmental Champion Group Award for their role in the development and implementation of the Clyde River EMS.

An EMS is a tool to identify environmental impacts from production methods and other potential threats to the estuary.

It outlines solutions to combat these threats and is accompanied by actions, a timeline and audit of progress.

The EMS has been a vehicle for pulling the estuary together and for attracting funding and assistance to repair trouble spots.

NSW Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald and NSW Farmers' Association Oyster Committee Chairman Mark Bulley said the awards had attracted an outstanding range of applicants.

"This award highlights the sustainable and innovative practices our oyster growers are using and the outstanding level of environmental leadership being demonstrated in the oyster industry," Minister Macdonald said.

"The calibre of all the entrants was extremely high, and our congratulations go not only to Lyn Desoto-Southwell and the Clyde River EMS, but also all the highly commended and commended award winners in a very competitive field," Mr Bulley added.

Recipients of the Highly Commended Awards were:

- Brett Peterkin for the development and implementation of the Clearwater model in Wallis Lake; and
- The NSW Farmers' Association Hastings River Branch and Port Macquarie Council for acid sulphate soil and acid drainage remediation.

Commended Awards were presented to:

- Brian and Barry Allen of Shoalhaven Oyster Service for development of an environmentally friendly farming system;
- NSW Farmers' Association Hastings River Branch for Clean-up Australia Day activities;
- Farquhar Inlet Management group for fundraising and lobbying to have Farquhar Inlet opened in April 2008; and
- Rob Moxham for Hawkesbury River Clean-Up following the recent QX disease outbreak.

Additional awards presented at yesterday's Oyster Industry Field Day were the 'Most Beautiful Oyster' category awards, with the recipients as follows:

- John Stubbs of Broken Bay Oysters - Most Beautiful Single Seed Sydney Rock Oyster;
- Stefan Paschalidis of Pearly Oysters Clyde River - Most Beautiful Angasi (native) Oyster;
- Stefan Paschalidis of Pearly Oysters Clyde River - Most Beautiful Traditional Sydney Rock Oyster; and
- Lionel Richardson of Port Stephens - Most Beautiful Pacific Oyster Award.

"Water quality is the achilles' heel of the oyster industry - just as seagrass, mangroves and salt marsh are to fishes," OceanWatch Australia's Simon Rowe said.

"With oysters as NSW most valuable fishery, it is so important that we band together to protect harvest zones with others interested in environmental work."

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