



## **Birdlife Shoalhaven Media Release**

### **Prestigious Birdlife Australia Award presented to Culburra Beach resident Frances Bray**

Frances Bray, a resident of Culburra Beach on the NSW South Coast, was recently awarded the Birdlife Australia Distinguished Service Award by Rob Dunn, BirdLife Australia Board Member and President of Birdlife Shoalhaven. Over 130 Shoalhaven environment supporters gave Frances a standing ovation at the award presentation at the Nowra-Culburra Surf Club.

Rob Dunn said the award recognised Frances's leadership in successful campaigns to protect the environmental and Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Lake Wollumboola and its catchment and to advocate for the conservation of its birdlife over more than 25 years.

Rob Dunn explained how the lake is renowned for its abundant and diverse birdlife. It is recognised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, as a Key Biodiversity Area for Black Swan and Chestnut Teal, as habitat for migratory bird species, as an East Asian Australasian Flyway site, and as nesting habitat for threatened bird species, migratory Little Terns and local Pied Oyster Catchers.

In 1993, Frances and friends established what became the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc, which was successful in 2000 in preventing major urban development in the lake catchment and in 2002 the lake's inclusion in Jervis Bay National Park. By lobbying at all three levels of government, they also successfully opposed further urban expansion, with NSW Independent Planning Commission refusing two major developments in 2018.

Frances is also the lake's Key Biodiversity Area co-ordinator, a long-term contributor to Shorebird 2020 surveys and the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Shorebird Recovery Program and an active Bushcare volunteer.

Rob said "Frances's tireless work at a local level has effectively saved a globally significant hot-spot for our birds, other animals and plants. Frances is a most worthy recipient of this major national conservation award."

Rob Pallin, former member of NSW NPWS Advisory Council, also praised Frances's long-term commitment and tenacity in protecting the lake and its birdlife.

Frances expressed her appreciation saying "I am honoured to receive such a prestigious award for doing what I love most - that is spending time at Lake Wollumboola, observing the subtle changes in the lake's physical and ecological character, particularly its birdlife." She thanked Birdlife Shoalhaven for organising the celebration of the lake and recognising the people who care for the lake and its birds.

She went on to say that she hoped that, through enhanced community awareness of the Lake's international significance as birdlife habitat, Local, State and Australian Government agencies would act to ensure that the lake is protected into the future.

Earlier Jerrinja elder, Delia Lowe, gave a moving welcome to country explaining the cultural significance of the lake and the surrounding spiritual landscape to Jerrinja people and expressed her thanks to Frances, whilst coastal estuaries expert Kerryn Stephens enlightened everyone with her presentation, "What do you know about Lake Wollumboola?"

The announcement of the Distinguished Service Award to Frances underlines that BirdLife Australia and BirdLife Shoalhaven will continue to work with her, the Protection Association and their many supporters to lobby for the inclusion of Lake Wollumboola and its catchment in Jervis Bay National Park and the listing of the lake as a Wetland of International Significance under the Ramsar Convention.

**Media Release on behalf of:**

**Rob Dunn President Birdlife Shoalhaven - 0438 250 600**

**Frances Bray PSM President Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc - 444 72185 & 0429 104 812.**