

**GREAT SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION - MEDAL FOR EXCELLENCE IN NATURAL
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Statement

HON MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM (South West) [10.06 pm]: It was my pleasure last Wednesday, 7 June to attend in Albany the presentation of the Great Southern Development Commission's fifth annual Medal for Excellence in Natural Resource Management. Natural resource management is an issue very close to my heart. Back in the early 1980s I was part of the very first intake at Murdoch University to study natural resource management through a Master of Science degree. I have learnt a heck of a lot over time and I have continued that interest.

Part of the GSDC's strategic focus is the sustainable management of the regions and, indeed, of the world's natural resources. I will deviate for a moment or two and define for members what is "natural resource management". It is the management of the environment through the conservation and sustainable use of natural, terrestrial and marine resources. That is important for an environment as ancient as Western Australia's and it is particularly important for those who live in the south coast, which is where I live. Under Bruce Manning's guidance, the GSDC has been a trendsetter in the area of natural resource management. Bruce Manning and the GSDC are to be congratulated on the vision and initiative they have shown in supporting the natural resource management movement. The ceremony involved the presentation of a \$10 000 award and a sterling silver medal. The money is to be used in whatever way that the recipient chooses to support the nature of the project, be it through professional development, travel, research or work on new and existing projects.

The panel that adjudicates the award comprises many people who have significant experience in natural resource management. I refer to the chair, Mr Alex Campbell, a well-known Narrikup farmer; Mr John Simpson, the former chair of the South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team; Mr John Blake, from the Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food; Mr Ross Williams, the inaugural GSDC medal winner; and Ms Liz Bungey, a 2005 finalist. The presentation this year was made by the Minister for Goldfields-Esperance and Great Southern, Hon John Bowler. It is an exclusive regional award on the south coast and, as I indicated, it is in its fifth year. It has been given public recognition to the tune of \$10 000 and it is open to people living in and across the great southern, irrespective of whether they are involved in public or private enterprise.

This year the four finalists were Mark and Heather Adams, a farming couple from Woogenilup; Mr Rob Edkins from Albany; Mr Russell Thomson from Woodanilling; and Ms Louise Duxbury from Denmark. I will indicate the achievements of these people because they are significant. Mark and Heather Adams have focused on surface water management, perennials and agroforestry on their model farm and have achieved outstanding results in natural resource management. Rob Edkins is the chief executive officer of the South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team, which is a community-based organisation that has been successful in attracting funding in the order of \$75 million. That is not a bad effort. The funds that Rob Edkins has managed to attract have been used in a number of land care projects, ranging from marine futures to the establishment of tree cropping and native plants industries. He is an innovative and creative operator on the south coast. Mr Russell Thomson has been involved in trials on his farm to improve sustainability. He is particularly concerned about raised-bed farming and issues associated with water logging and saline land. Also, he is heavily involved in trialling tagasaste and maritime pine.

The winner this year is someone who is very well known to natural resource management people on the south coast, and I refer to Louise Duxbury. She was a finalist in 2002, the first year of the award. Louise is vitally concerned with the land care movement, particularly in the areas of ecotourism and integrated farm forestry. In 1989 she established Green Skills, a community-based organisation that provides environmental training and employment in land care work. The field was particularly strong and it has been strong over the five years of this award.

I commend to the house the efforts of all concerned and congratulate them on their efforts.

House adjourned at 10.12 pm
