

29 January 2019



## **Committed conservationist Elizabeth Law-Smith honoured with Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM)**

*EMBARGOED: SATURDAY 26 JANUARY 2019*

Elizabeth Law-Smith has today been recognised in the Australia Day 2019 Honours List with the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) (General Division). The award was granted in recognition of Mrs Law-Smith's nature restoration vision and donation of land to the Para Woodlands Nature Reserve, a woodland area 50km north east of Adelaide on the edge of the city's rapidly expanding northern suburbs.

A long-time resident of South Australia, Mrs Law-Smith donated the family property she lived on with her late husband, David Law-Smith, in 2003. The property, known as Yaringa, is situated just outside Gawler and had been in David Law-Smith's family for more than 80 years, run as a successful farm for grazing and cropping.

Following David's death in 2001, Elizabeth Law-Smith donated 118 hectares of land to Nature Foundation SA, a leading nature conservation not-for-profit, with a further 232 hectares sold to the South Australian Government. Managed together they created a nature reserve to ensure the land was rehabilitated to its natural habitat. Mrs Law-Smith also made a significant donation to Nature Foundation SA to create a capital fund to finance research, revegetation and ongoing conservation works on Para Woodlands.

Through further donations by Mrs Law-Smith, neighbouring land was acquired to bring the total area of Para Woodlands to 500 hectares.

That generous initial donation, as well as ongoing endowments over the next decade, led to years of considered nature restoration work. Since 2003, the South Australian Department for Environment and Water and Nature Foundation SA have worked hand in hand with local conservationists, universities, ecological experts and community volunteers to restore the land to its natural habitat.

More than 100,000 native plants and 1,000 kilograms of native grass seeds have been planted to help convert the woodlands from exotic to native species. The Para Woodlands has also hosted regular community planting events over the years, bringing together volunteers from the community to help restore natural vegetation such as the critically-endangered Peppermint Box grassy woodland. The work has supported the return of a wonderful diversity of Australian flora and fauna, including threatened woodland bird species such as the Diamond Firetail and Red-capped Robin.

**Nature Foundation SA CEO Hugo Hopton**, who was part of the group who nominated Elizabeth Law-Smith for the Order of Australia, praised Mrs Law-Smith for her generosity and ongoing commitment to conservation of the Mount Lofty Ranges.

"I don't know of any other project that exhibits such vision and such generosity in South Australia," said Mr Hopton. "You could look out from the house and look at the farm and say, 'There's the farm.' But to look out from the house and say, 'Maybe, just maybe, we could restore habitat here.' It takes a special way of seeing the world.

"It's an incredible vision and it is well on the way to being an incredible achievement for nature conservation and the local community. And it will be around for a very long time."

Reflecting on her recognition in the Australia Day Honours List, **Elizabeth Law-Smith** said she was "thrilled to bits."

"I'm quite flattered really," said Elizabeth Law-Smith. "When it happens, it's nice to be recognised.

"I've always been inclined to conservation. Not everyone is in a position to do something like this, so when you are given the opportunity, you feel obliged to do something."

Elizabeth Law-Smith will be presented with the insignia of the award at an investiture ceremony later in 2019.

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For media enquiries, please contact Nature Foundation SA Marketing and Communications Manager Gretta Koch on 0415 935 876 or [gretta.koch@nfsa.org.au](mailto:gretta.koch@nfsa.org.au).

## About Nature Foundation SA:

Over the past 38 years Nature Foundation SA has invested in conserving, restoring and protecting South Australian landscapes to ensure nature survives and thrives in our magnificent state. We do this by:

- restoring unique habitats and revitalising damaged ecosystems
- saving threatened species
- revitalising wetlands and floodplains along the River Murray with environmental watering
- working with local communities
- funding conservation research projects
- encouraging environmental education and citizen science
- nature-based tourism and geotourism on our Nature Reserves

## Fast facts:

- Nature Foundation SA has helped protect over 1.1 million hectares of South Australia and is currently working on protecting the next 1.1 million!
- Over 400 post-graduate student grants awarded by Nature Foundation SA continue to yield amazing work and attract wonderful, bright minds to nature science.
- Our Water For Nature Program has delivered more than 12,000 megalitres of environmental water to help revitalise nearly 90 River Murray wetland and floodplain sites.
- Nature Foundation SA manages six Nature Reserves with significant conservation value. This land protects threatened species, builds wildlife corridors and provides a base from which scientific studies can be undertaken.

For media information, high-res images or to arrange an interview, contact:

Gretta Koch, Marketing & Communications Manager Nature Foundation SA, [gretta.koch@nfsa.org.au](mailto:gretta.koch@nfsa.org.au), 08 8340 2880 or 0415 935 876. For further information about Nature Foundation SA please visit our website:

<https://naturefoundation.org.au/>

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