

Landcare beefs up awards

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By MATILDA ABEY

RICK Farley's partner, Linda Burney, gave a moving speech honouring Rick's passion and commitment to Landcare at the International Landcare Awards last week.

She presented the inaugural International Landcare award in memory of Rick, who died earlier this year, to a Landcare group from the Philippines.

Eleven awards were handed out by the Governor-General, Major General Michael Jeffery, during the evening.

While no Victorian took home an award this year, something Victorian on everyone's lips — literally — was the beef supplied for the main course at the gala dinner.

The beef was the Environment brand, which comes from 25 properties in Gippsland that have gained Environmental Management System accreditation.

One of those producers, Bob and Anne Davie, were also nominated to represent Victoria in the Landcare primary producer award.

"To be representing the state... it was just wonderful; such a privilege," Anne said.

And the beef also elicited favourable comments from the chef.

"The chef liked the meat so much he wanted to use it again," Anne said.

The Environment brand was established in 2004 by eight farmers, with 25 producers now involved.

"In the past six months, the brand has really grown," Anne said.

The Davies run a herd of about 200 Brangus breeders at their Phillip Island property but have adjusted numbers because of the season.



High achievers: the happy winners at the international Landcare awards last week.

"They are five-eighths Angus and three-eighths Brahman. The Brahman just makes them that bit more resilient," Anne said.

While Bob and Anne did not win the individual primary producers' award, South Australians Marie and Wolford Parsons were given the award for the work on their property, controlling salinity.

The Parsons run a 630ha property near Port Vincent that

had been cleared extensively.

A flood during 1979 left 80ha salt damaged.

This prompted them to map out a plan for the property and, in subsequent years, 150,000 saltbush plants were planted.

In the past five years, the Parsons have been working with the University of Adelaide to examine the value to livestock of salt-affected pastures and saltbush.

Over the border, on the south-west slopes of NSW, a group that has worked hard to control salinity across 3300ha and 240 farming families, was rewarded for its efforts with the Landcare regional award last week.

The NSW South West Slopes Landcare and Local Government project, which ran for a year, was a collaboration of four local Landcare groups with 40 families who had never had any involvement with Landcare.

Landcare chief executive Brian Scarsbrick congratulated the 75-plus finalists, saying they had all done extraordinary work for Landcare and the Australian environment.

"The national Landcare awards are vital because it's a chance to stop and salute incredible individuals and groups making an environmental difference," Mr Scarsbrick said.

"Landcare is all about action, and all about people making a

difference (to the environment)," he said.

And the Rick Farley international Landcare award went to the Claveria group, who formed a decade ago with 25 members.

Now, across the Philippines, almost 300 people are involved with 144 village-based Landcare groups.

It proves the Landcare message is still spreading around the world.