



Working together to protect & enjoy the Yarra

MEDIA RELEASE (9/9/10)

Award for Yarra River Advocate

The *2010 Melbourne Award* for contribution to the environment by an individual has been given to Ian Penrose, Riverkeeper and spokesperson for the Yarra Riverkeeper Association.

It was amongst a number of awards given by the City of Melbourne at the Melbourne Town Hall on 28th August to individuals and organisations making significant contributions to Melbourne's profile, community and environment.

In congratulating Mr Penrose, Lord Mayor, Robert Doyle, said "with this award, we recognize [his] passion and commitment to making Melbourne a better city...and hope [his] achievements inspire and challenge others."

Mr Penrose said, "the award is a recognition of the important work of the Yarra Riverkeeper Association, and the contribution of its members and supporters. It is also an acknowledgment of the central role that the Yarra River plays in the life of Melbourne."

The Yarra provides most of Melbourne's clean and precious drinking water. It is the centrepiece of many city cultural events, and plays host to sporting and recreational activities. It provides city dwellers with opportunities to connect with the natural world, a key ingredient in our overall well-being.

But sadly our dependence on the Yarra has not been matched by our care for it. It is polluted with a cocktail of urban wastes. Its vegetated banks are being smothered by more and bigger buildings. And the river is shrinking dramatically because we take away most of its life-giving water. Pollution is now managed better but, on the other fronts, the situation is getting worse.

The Yarra Riverkeeper Association urges Melburnians to get involved in the public debate about urban development practices and water management, which critically affect the Yarra, and to go down to the river and enjoy its many wonders, because *people protect what they love*.

Mr Penrose says, "my hope is that all Melburnians come to appreciate fully our vital connection with the wonderful river, which literally flows in our veins, and that we all become, in effect, Yarra Riverkeepers."

For enquires, please contact us on 0409 510 766, info@yarrariver.org.au

(See overleaf for background information)



BACKGROUND

The Yarra Riverkeeper Association

Who We Are

We are a not-for-profit community organisation formed in 2004 by a group of citizens who love the Yarra River, and care for its future. Our aim is to protect and restore the Yarra River and its tributaries, from source to mouth, for current and future generations. We are a member of the growing and successful international Waterkeeper movement of community groups around the world caring for their local waterways.

What We Do

We tell the river's "story", highlighting its wonders and its challenges. We monitor its health and activities affecting it. We run educational events, river tours and give informative presentations to schools, community groups, the authorities and businesses. We work closely with numerous government bodies and NGO's and advocate directly and through the news media for river care.

What We've Achieved

- Established the first regular boat patrol of the Yarra
- Instrumental in the state government's decisions to cap the amount of water extracted from the river and provide it with environmental flows
- Provided on-water inspection tours to over 200 community and business leaders and politicians
- Delivered over 300 presentations and lectures
- Spoken up for the Yarra in over 200 TV, radio and print media articles
- Earned the reputation of being the pre-eminent voice of the Yarra River

Our Supporters

We are grateful for the funding and support of Melbourne Water, EPA, Parks Vic, Ruffin-Falkiner Trust, Environment Victoria, Waterkeeper Alliance, City of Yarra, Shire of Nillumbik, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, John Holland and, of course, our dedicated members.

Yarra Riverkeeper, Ian Penrose

Qualified in science, operations research and commercial management, Ian worked for 27 years with Shell in the coal mining, natural gas and shipping industries, based locally and overseas. Later he headed the Victorian Government's program to restore the Snowy River.

In 2004, Ian helped form the Yarra Riverkeeper Association and was later appointed the first Yarra Riverkeeper. In that role he acts as the association's spokesperson and dedicates his time and effort to speaking up for Melbourne's major waterway.

Ian thanks the Yarra River Business Association for nominating him for a Melbourne Award.