



## Judy Clements earns OAM

*WHITTLESEA, VIC. — Judy Clements has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community of Whittlesea, a testament to her 50 years of serving the Whittlesea Agricultural Society, as well as advocating for farming in the area, including the post-Black Saturday recovery, which devastated the township.*

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**WHITTLESEA, VIC. — Judy Clements has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community of Whittlesea, a testament to her 50 years of serving the Whittlesea Agricultural Society, as well as advocating for farming in the area, including the post-Black Saturday recovery, which devastated the township.**

Ms Clements has an extensive history in farming, serving the Whittlesea Agricultural Society in several roles, including as president from 1991 to 1992, sitting on the executive council since 1982, as chief steward of the Whittlesea Show from 1992 to 1998 and as a life member inducted in 1999.

She also served as the president of the Whittlesea branch of the Victorian Farmers Federation from 2002 to 2010, sits as vice-chairperson of the Yan Yean Cemetery Trust, serves as a committee member at the Whittlesea Historical Society and has won Citizen of the Year for the City of Whittlesea Community Awards twice, in 2000 and 2023.

Ms Clements said it was hard to put into words what the award meant.

“I’m overwhelmed. I think it’s the best way to describe it, and very humbled, because there are so many people we come across in our life that do so many great things, so to be selected for such an honour is so humbling when I’m surrounded by good people who make great contributions in their own right as well. It’s extraordinary. It’s almost difficult to put into words and it causes me to reflect greatly on the lessons of life and how these things might come about,” she said.

“You go into these things hoping that you can contribute something positive to the process, there are things there that are just pure joy of participating with others in various community activities, and there are things

there about advocating for a better outcome to areas that resonate to me, such as agriculture, history, our environment and recovery from natural disaster. There are things that represent the high and low elements of life.”



Through her work at the Whittlesea Agricultural Society as a fifth-generation farmer, Ms Clements has learnt the values of working together as a volunteer.

“The Whittlesea Agricultural Society has been a family tradition for me, and it’s been a pleasure to continue that involvement and the good work it does for bringing forward the message of farmers, their role and their significant to the life of everybody in the nation, and presenting it in a way that helps understand what those messages are, right through to some of the land management work with the Victorian Farmers Federation, with the serious side of issues that farmers confront,” she said.

“Being involved with community and being a volunteer is never just about one thing; it’s about the collaboration of people collectively having a vision and helping to see it through to fruition. What comes from that is a great deal of learning through those experiences. It’s also about friendships and the experiences that we have jointly in achieving an outcome.

***“THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS A GREAT GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO DO WHAT THEY CAN TO PRESERVE OUR LOCAL HISTORY, TO DEVELOP A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THAT AND TO ADVOCATE FOR THE FUTURE.***

“It’s about a collective process so often, but for me, motivation has come from a family I’ve grown up in, and being fortunate to grow up in a family from an early age, we were taught the lessons of contributing back to the community, it’s continued from my parents and going back across the generations, playing an active role in the local district.”

Ms Clements’ work included playing an instrumental role in the town’s recovery from the devastating Black Saturday bushfires in 2009, which approached Whittlesea’s doorstep.

“Black Saturday, in 2009, led to something for all of the extraordinary hardship for so many people with the works that I’m involved, with a handful of local people helping to develop a greater understanding of the process of recovery and to put into action what that looks like, and that’s been a work in progress,” she said.

Through 50 years of serving the community, Ms Clements has seen plenty of challenges and opportunities.

***“THERE ARE ENORMOUS CHANGES THROUGHOUT THE REGION, MOVING FROM PREDOMINANTLY FARMING-BASED TO URBAN CENTRES ON OUR DOORSTEP,” SHE SAID.***

“I think what it does is create challenges and opportunities – in terms of challenges, for a farming community, some of what I’ve been involved with is advocating for farmers to continue to do what they do well, the right to farm, the opportunities or impediments that might come along to produce food or fibre in the locations we do.

“In regard to opportunities, what it does is provide the Whittlesea Agricultural Society to reach out further into a new community and a different community, to embrace new people who may never have experienced any connection with agriculture.”

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