

Water crusader honoured

Paul Stephenson receives an OAM

By GERARD WALSH

THE man who made it his mission to secure Goulburn's water supply has been recognised for his service to local government and community in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Former Goulburn Mulwaree mayor Paul Stephenson, who now lives on the south coast, has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division.

He dedicated the honour to his wife Sue, his family and the many others who supported him during his 14-year career in local government, which included 10 years as mayor of Mulwaree Shire Council and another four as the inaugural mayor of Goulburn Mulwaree.

"I honestly could not have achieved what I achieved without the support of the many good people who helped me along the way, especially the staff," Mr Stephenson said.

"I've been lucky to have family very close to my side and really good staff. You can't do these things without having good people around you."

In early 2007 - with Goulburn in the grips of a record drought - Mr Stephenson's lobbying was the influential factor in securing funding for the Wingecarribee to Goulburn pipeline from the then State Labor and federal Coalition governments.

He was also instrumental in the setting up of the Veolia Mulwaree Trust, with the aim of dispersing funds generated from the storage of Sydney's waste in Tarago to communities in surrounding local government areas.

Mr Stephenson's Queen's Birthday honour also recognises his work with the Trust, as founder in 2005 and now chairman.

"The most enjoyable part of my role now is helping the smaller communities, the CWAs, the church groups, with their projects," he said.

"And often, the smaller they are, the bigger the thanks you get.

"That says something about the community spirit that exists in regional and rural communities in which the Trust works.

"People in the bush, they never lose sense of who they are."

He acknowledged the contribution and support of fellow Trust founder, and Veolia Environmental Services managing director, Doug Dean.

"You think about, think of all those quarrying companies in the Goulburn Mulwaree region now, and find out how much they put back into the community. You'll find it's not much," Mr Stephenson said.

"I'm please Veolia has been mentioned in the Honours citation because they are leading the way in supporting the communities in which they operate."



ACKNOWLEDGED: Former Goulburn Mulwaree mayor Paul Stephenson has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of his service to local government and the community.

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