

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Our Ref: T15:0032

25 March 2015

Attention: News Editor

### **Wetland studies for medal finalist**

GSDC Medal finalist Basil Schur has flown across the globe to gain new perspectives about Great Southern waterways.

Mr Schur undertook a five-week study tour in Asia in November and December 2014, visiting China, South Korea and Thailand to study wetland conservation.

His trip was supported by the \$2000 grant he received as a finalist in the 2014 GSDC Medal, which celebrates innovation and leadership in the management of natural resources.

In China, Mr Schur attended the Living Lakes conference in Nanchang, a six-day event that included a tour of a village and wetland centre at Poyang Lake, China's largest freshwater lake.

He said the conference helped to strengthen his commitment to wetland conservation work in the Great Southern.

"I found it both informative and disturbing to gain some confirmation of the scale of the challenges afflicting China's environment," Mr Schur said.

"These challenges cover loss of biodiversity, pollution of water, air and soil resources, and the state of the country's wetlands and waterways.

"I came away with a greater sense of urgency of how China's resource demands will increasingly impact on both its own and broader global environments."

In South Korea, Mr Schur visited coastal sites linked to migratory shorebirds that visit Australia each year.

He said the coast of the Great Southern is part of the East Asian-Australian migration routes used by many remarkable but threatened wader species.

Reduced bird numbers in Great Southern wetland and shore areas have been linked to loss of habitat along these migratory routes.

In Thailand, Mr Schur took part in a five-day mangrove and wetland conservation tour in the provinces of Trang and Krabi.



*Building partnerships for regional prosperity*

Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) Chairman Peter Rundle said the GSDC Medal encouraged excellence in natural resource management in the Great Southern.

“Mr Schur is a respected contributor to conservation in the region,” Mr Rundle said.

“Knowledge gained through study tours, such as that Mr Schur undertook, can enhance local understanding of the impact of broader environmental patterns on our part of the world and can facilitate international partnerships.

“Such endeavours help to improve management of the Great Southern’s natural environment,” Mr Rundle said.

The GSDC Medal is a biennial award and will next be presented in 2016. Nominations will open in October of this year.

In addition, the GSDC Medal luncheon will be held on 14 September 2015 to showcase the work of former Medallist Gary Muir.

**Media contact: Bruce Manning, ph. 9842 4888**