

Learning



Bryce Courtenay's legacy for Tasmania continues

The power of education

It has been an extraordinary year for the Bookend Trust, the charitable Tasmanian education program that seeks to build positive futures for students and the environment.

The program started as a supplementary scholarship for university students, but now runs projects for all ages.

Tasmanian students have had the opportunity to work with researchers on helicopter surveys in the Tasmanian wilderness, have visited researchers on Lord Howe Island, and have even flown to Antarctica.

Thousands of students joined adventurer Andrew Hughes on an intensive investigation of the Tasmanian coastline (blogged online by the *Mercury*), and upcoming projects will involve far-flung locations such as Thailand and Kenya.

Locally, Bookend has won notable awards from the EPA, the BOFA Film Festival and the UTAS Vice Chancellor.

But the innovative nature of Bookend projects, merging hands-on and online experiences, is also drawing national attention.

Eight major awards for the program this year include a World Environment Day Award from the United Nations Association of Australia, and a Banksia Award — the pinnacle of national environmental awards.

Last summer, *Australian Geographic* was so impressed with the calibre of Bookend projects that it increased the number of scholarships it was offering nationally from three to seven. Five of these were awarded in Tasmania.

Australian Geographic then followed up by naming Bookend its Conservationist of the Year for 2012.

Bookend education officer Andrew Hughes has also come in for specific attention for the Expedition Class and Skullbone projects that he created and runs for the Bookend Trust.

In April, he was awarded the \$50,000 Penguin Australia "Power of One" award, and last week Premier Lara Giddings announced that he was Tasmania's Australian of the Year.

Andrew will travel to Canberra for



ABOVE: Some of the students and teachers involved in Andrew Hughes' Coastwatchers program this year.

INSET: Bryce Courtenay receives a tribute from Niall Doran last month.

Pictures: BOOKEND TRUST



There was no reason for Bryce to listen to or help us, but he did, and he never expected anything in return

the Australian of the Year announcement in January.

Bookend Trust director Niall Doran attributes the success of the program to its positive and constructive approaches, and the generosity of its patrons and contributors.

He gives particular credit to best-selling author Bryce Courtenay, who died last week.

"We couldn't achieve this without individuals and businesses being prepared to help Tasmanian students," Dr Doran said. "But special thanks are due to Bryce, our founding patron, who helped us take an unformed idea and turn it into something successful and fun," he said.

"There was no reason for Bryce to listen to or help us, but he did, and he

never expected anything in return apart from us doing a good job."

Courtenay's support inspired Dr Doran so much that he left his job and founded Bookend on the equity of his own house. "I think my wife eventually forgave him for that," Dr Doran said.

Participating students certainly have, including 2012 summer scholar-

ship recipient Katie Mulder who said: "The best bits are all of it, there hasn't been one thing I haven't enjoyed or hasn't pushed me, I've met some amazing people, learnt lots and experienced things most people my age haven't and won't get to until they are much older!"

Bookend Trust will give a free public presentation on its work in 2012 at 7pm on December 4 at the Dechaineux Lecture Theatre, UTAS School of Arts, Hunter St, Hobart. For more information see www.bookendtrust.com. RSVP to Niall Doran by emailing nd@bookendtrust.com