



# MEDIA RELEASE

## Embargo

10 pm Tuesday 11 October 2005

## **BIRCHIP CROPPING GROUP CHIEF WINS NATIONAL EQUITY TRUSTEES' NOT FOR PROFIT CEO AWARD**

The CEO of the Birchip Cropping Group Inc has won an award for significant innovation in a Not For Profit organisation.

Alexandra Gartmann, CEO of the Birchip Cropping Group Inc (BCG), is the winner of the Equity Trustees' 2005 Significant Innovation Award for her efforts in putting the environment on the agenda for farmers and for building the BCG into one of Australia's leading farmer-driven agricultural organisations.

The Equity Trustees' Not For Profit CEO Awards recognise outstanding achievements of chief executives working in the Not For Profit and charitable sector.

There were close to 90 nominations for the awards this year from across Australia. The awards recognise excellence in delivering services, enhancing the organisation's image and for building strong and successful partnerships.

Alexandra Gartmann was appointed CEO of the Birchip Cropping Group in 2001 and since then has doubled BCG's budget and staff numbers and introduced an important new program for the group called 'Making Conservation Pay', which aims to bring economic, social and environmental benefits to Victoria's northwest.

The Birchip Cropping Group, based in the township of Birchip, on the border of Victoria's Mallee and Wimmera regions, conducts applied research and educational extension activities on the major crops grown in the area. The BCG's purpose is to investigate the critical success factors that ensure sustainable and profitable cropping productions in these farming districts.

Under Alexandra's leadership, BCG is making a big difference to the lives and prosperity of farmers in these regions. Through vision, enthusiasm and hard work, she has successfully built the capacity of local, regional communities by boosting moral and confidence and increasing knowledge.

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Launched in November 2004, the Making Conservation Pay program seeks to communicate with urban-based businesses, government and in particular, city consumers, that most farmers are conservation-wise and their farming activities are consistent with good environmental practice.

The challenge is to find ways that make conservation pay, not only in terms of profit but also in terms of living standards that result in happy, prosperous, sustainable communities. Australia is in a position, where it is becoming increasingly important to position its commodities so that consumers recognise their quality. Australian agricultural producers need to demonstrate that their operations are 'environmentally friendly' and that their outputs are 'clean and green'.

Alexandra successfully sought the support for this project from partners: key CSIRO Research and Development Corporations, the North Central Catchment Management Authority, the Mallee Catchment Management Authority and the Buloke Biolink Project, and 32 corporate sponsors.

BCG has also been recognised as a Victorian winner of a 2005 Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships for developing an enduring corporate sponsorship with J.J. O'Connor & Sons, the local CASE International Harvester dealer.

"CEOs of Not For Profit and charitable organisations receive precious little reward or recognition for their efforts, yet their jobs can be difficult, demanding and challenging," said Equity Trustees Chief Executive Officer, Peter Williams.

"They routinely face funding shortfalls and difficulties maintaining services, but nevertheless they roll up their sleeves and get on with the job as they take their organisation forward and leave it stronger. Equity Trustees is proud to be honouring Not For Profit CEOs and recognising their commitment, passion, drive and sacrifice."

The winners of the Equity Trustees' 2005 Not For Profit CEO Awards, announced at a gala dinner on Tuesday 11 October as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Philanthropy Conference, are:

**Equity Trustees' Not For Profit CEO of the Year:** Bella Irlicht, Principal of the Port Phillip Specialist School

**Equity Trustees' Significant Innovation Award:** Alexandra Gartmann, CEO, Birchip Cropping Group Inc

**Equity Trustees' First Year Achiever Award:** Dr Andrew Young, CEO, CanTeen Australia

**Equity Trustees' Long Term Achiever Award:** Rev. Dr Gordon Moyes, Superintendent, Wesley Mission, Sydney

**Equity Trustees' Judges' Award Joint winners:** Michael Traill, CEO Social Ventures Australia and Maud Clark, CEO and Artistic Director, Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company Inc

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The sponsors of the Equity Trustees' 2005 NFP CEO Awards are: Deloitte and Citigroup (gold sponsors), AON Australia and Foster's Group (silver sponsors), Bell Potter Securities, Grange Securities, Melbourne & Olympic Parks (bronze sponsors) and Equity Trustees.

The Awards recognise the true worth of those who lead not for profit and charitable organisations.

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**Photo Gallery**

Digital photos of the winners at the Awards presentation are available for downloading from Equity Trustees' website at: [www.eqt.com.au/ceoawards/gallery](http://www.eqt.com.au/ceoawards/gallery)

***Equity Trustees' CEO Awards – Recognising the true worth  
of those who lead not for profit organisations***