



PRESS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Robert Pennicott named Tasmanian of the Year 2012

Robert Pennicott, entrepreneur, environmentalist, adventurer, philanthropist and multi-award-winning pioneer of Tasmania's eco-tourism industry has been named as Tasmania's 2012 Australian of the Year.

Responding to the announcement by Premier Hon Lara Giddings MHR in a ceremony at Meadowbank Estate on 21 November, Robert Pennicott made a brief and heartfelt speech, thanking his wife Michaye and children Georgina, Mia and Noah, who were all so excited that he has won this prestigious award. He now travels to Canberra to represent Tasmania in the national Australian of the Year awards, which are announced on 25 January, on the eve of Australia Day.

The award acknowledges Rob's achievements in a range of areas over a number of years, although 2010 and 2011 have been particular landmarks. During 2010, the Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund, which he founded with Wildcare in 2007, achieved a major goal, eradicating feral pests from Tasman Island. So far the Pennicott family's support for the Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund has topped \$100,000.

2011 also marked the establishment of The Pennicott Foundation, which he and Michaye have set up as the flagship organisation for the family's philanthropic initiatives. Through this new fund, Robert will contribute to his own nature

conservation projects well into the future and will also work for causes with a much wider focus. The first of these is his involvement in Rotary International's END POLIO NOW project, a global fund-raising effort in conjunction with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The aim of END POLIO NOW is breathtakingly simple – to eradicate completely the crippling disease of poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis) from the world, once and for all. Rob's approach to supporting this cause was typically bold and adventurous - during 2011, along with co-skipper Mick Souter and cinematographer Zorro Gamarnik, he made the first-ever outboard driven vessel circumnavigation of Australia choosing two 17 foot inflatable dinghies, building awareness of the disease and raising more than \$275,000 for the END POLIO NOW campaign (www.followtheyellowboatroad.com).

Not long after arriving home in Tasmania after the epic three-month voyage, Robert's eco-tourism businesses Pennicott Wilderness Journeys and Bruny Island Cruises both won their categories at the 2011 Tasmanian Tourism Awards, and Robert was named as the Minister's Tourism Champion for his outstanding contribution to the industry.

Robert Pennicott explains his motivation this way:

"I deeply believe that when I die I want to have made a substantial difference to the world - and I have dreams to give away a lot more money than I do now."

For more information on Pennicott Wilderness Journeys or Robert Pennicott please contact :

Trina Mangels
Marketing Manager
Pennicott Wilderness Journeys
Mobile: 0407 833 741
Email: marketing@pennicottjourneys.com.au

Or visit www.pennicottjourneys.com.au

Previously won Awards

Best Australian Ecotourism 2009 (Bruny Island Cruises)
Best Tasmanian Attraction 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010 & 2011 (Bruny Island Cruises)
Best Tasmanian Ecotourism 2006, 2009, 2010 & 2011 (Bruny Island Cruises)
Tasmanian Qantas Award for Excellence in Sustainability 2009 (Bruny Island Cruises)
Tasmanian Qantas Award for Excellence in Sustainability 2010 & 2011 (Pennicott Wilderness Journeys)
Best New Tasmanian Product Development 2008 (Tasman Island Cruises)
Telstra National MYOB Small Business of the Year 2008
Telstra National Sensis Social Responsibility Award 2008
Telstra Tasmanian Business of the Year 2008

Family Business Australia's National Small Business of the Year 2008