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Climate cause is second nature

JAYITRI SMILES

WILDLIFE warrior and climate change researcher Don Henry is being honoured today for his endless work in protecting Australia's native wildlife and environment.

Professor Henry has worked close to home and around the world as the executive director of the Australian Conservation Foundation and a director of the World Wildlife Fund.

He was an international board member of former US vice president Al Gore's

Climate Reality Project. Today his campaigning will be recognised with an AM as part of the Australia Day honours.

While the Melbourne University professor has worked extensively with major international organisations, he said his greatest achievements have occurred when working alongside the public.

"It's always fantastic to

volunteer time and work together with other people trying to look after the environment," he said.

"I think this is an award which goes to everyone that cares about the environment and I'm just in the privileged position of representing them."

Professor Henry said he hoped his years of advocacy had made Australians passionate about issues of climate change.

His current mission is to convince politicians that the Great Barrier Reef needs urgent protection.

"Politicians of all persuasions need to be doing much better at passing laws

which look after the environment, particularly the reef," he said.

Looking ahead, Professor Henry said it was important Australian children learned about the native environment and continue to preserve.

"Take your kids down to a

beautiful beach, go camping in one of our great national parks or simply sit down in the backyard and point out different species of birds.

"We have to get it in their hearts so they're passionate about looking after this country."



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Don Henry at
Melbourne Zoo with
a native red tree
kangaroo. Picture:
DAVID CAIRD