

A true son of the soil

Gavin Young

Soil conservationist

Born: July 22, 1927; Adelaide

Died: April 18, 2009; Jamestown

GAVIN Young was well known to farmers in the Upper North and Upper Eyre Peninsula in his role as a soil conservation officer in the Department of Agriculture.

His work with primary producers encouraged many to adopt practices that restored eroded land and improved the condition of the soil, leading to better production.

The eldest son of John and Gwendolyn Young, Gavin won a scholarship to attend Queens College and after completing his education, he began work at a chartered accountants business as an office boy.

When servicemen returned from World War II looking for jobs, Gavin had to find employment elsewhere.

He worked on a poultry farm and as a welder with Chrysler Dodge to pay to attend Roseworthy Agricultural College. While at Roseworthy, he worked at Coca-Cola during vacations to support himself.

Gavin met Margaret in 1949 and they married at Croydon in 1952.

After graduating with a diploma in agriculture in 1952, Gavin worked for a fertiliser company in the South-East.

He joined the Department of Agriculture in 1954 as a weeds officer at Jamestown and became a soil conservation officer after a short time.

Gavin was appointed as a soil conservation



officer at Cleve in 1957 and was active in the local community, serving as charter president of the Cleve Apex club and then district governor. By 1960, the Youngs had two children, Andrew and Julie.

The family moved back to Jamestown in 1965 where Gavin continued his work in soil conservation. Gavin joined the Jamestown Lions Club and served as president.

In 1976-1977 Gavin worked in Libya for 12 months on a project demonstrating dryland farming techniques. On his return to Jamestown, he became senior district officer, re-

sponsible for managing the team in the Jamestown District Office. He retired from the Department of Agriculture in 1986.

During his time in the department, Gavin became well-respected and appreciated for his efforts in helping farmers deal with soil erosion on agricultural and pastoral land.

He was known to have an opinion on many matters and not be afraid to voice it.

He would often stimulate debate by making an outrageous or controversial statement and encourage people to argue the point with him to stimulate their thinking and learning.

While much of his work involved surveying contour banks to slow run-off from paddocks, Gavin would also advise farmers on farm planning, rotations, fertilisers, pasture species and soil fertility.

He was known to make comments such as "leave the harrows hanging on the fence" or "throw the matches away".

He was involved in instigating the first group catchment erosion control project at the state at Gladstone.

Gavin managed and trained young staff and helped them establish their careers in the department. He offered timely advice, encouraged initiative and always was willing to argue the point.

In retirement, Gavin converted a bus into a mobile home in which he and Margaret went touring.

He also spent more time on his woodworking and golf.

Gavin is survived by his wife Margaret, his children Andrew and Julie, seven grand children and seven great-grandchildren.