



Designs on giving

Throughout her 35 years in the Australian fashion industry, Liz Davenport has lived by a simple motto: A business should have a purpose beyond profit.

Today she is being recognised for that reason.

Mrs Davenport, an icon of Australian fashion, has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the community and the industry she helped establish.

"It's humbling and something you never expect, but at the same time it's something that is really important," she said.

"After this long in the business you would think you wouldn't need recognition like this, but you do. It keeps you going and makes you try a little bit harder."

A country girl from Gnowangerup, Mrs Davenport was originally a teacher before jumping head first into the fashion world.

Her life has been defined by firsts, including being one of the

first Australian-based designers to crack the international market after opening a store in London's chic Bond Street during the 1980s.

But for Mrs Davenport, her career has been moulded by her business' ability to give back to the community. "I guess it (the business) has been used as a platform," she said.

"We donate to as many as 200 charities and support all sorts of programs."

Mrs Davenport said she has always relied on her "army of customers" to support charities she had endorsed.

She said that was one of the most satisfying aspects of her colourful career.

"I think that is what this recognition is about," she said. "That spirit of volunteering and donating is what Australians do, and it is what we should be celebrating on the day."

NICK SAS



Giving back: Liz Davenport relaxes at Lake Monger.

Picture: Astrid Volzke