

Bluff shines by the light of the moon

By BEN WILD

IT WAS a solitary walk at night rather than the official tour that most impressed the man who will decide if Devonport's Bluff Beach is the country's cleanest.

Chris Tola was in the North-West this week to judge Tasmania's entry in the Keep Australia Beautiful Clean Beaches Award and he liked what he saw at the Bluff.

"(The award) is really about how the community relates to the beach and with the sports fields right there, the aged care home, a great playground, the skatepark and the history, that relationship is really strong," Mr Tola said.

"But also, it's just a beautiful beach. I came up a day early and walked along the beach last night by myself.

"The moon was out, there was a kayaker out on the water, kids were using the skatepark and a couple was out walking the dog. It was wonderful."

The award acknowledges and promotes community programs that improve coastal environments. The Bluff is up against some stiff competition such as Western Australia's Cable Beach near Broome and Queensland's White Haven Beach on the Whitsunday Islands.

Barry Muir, the judge who picked the Bluff as Tasmania's winner, thinks his pick can match it with the best.

"Just look at the beach and, in the space of one kilometre, what you can see and what you can do — it's fantastic," Mr Muir said.

Devonport Mayor Lynn Laycock said to win the State title was

reward enough but she expected to do well in the national finals.

Bluff Beach would be even better when various plans came to fruition, she said, such as the redevelopment of the Surf Life Saving Club to include new rooms and a cafe and fine dining restaurant.

"Already it (the Bluff) is the jewel in the city's crown, imagine it even better.

"If we can win like this, look out world."

Mr Tola is halfway through his

tour of Australia's cleanest beaches and will report back to an expert Keep Australia Beautiful panel.

He said the award brought international recognition and was a positive for the region at a time when news so often meant job cuts and financial difficulties.

"The news today, 280 jobs lost at Caterpillar, is not good but at the same time you have an icon of the region being recognised nationally."

The winner will be announced on May 25 in Townsville, home of the last winner, The Strand Beach.



Walking along Tasmania's entry in the Keep Australia Beautiful Clean Beach Award, Devonport's Bluff Beach, are Devonport City Council bushland coordinator Phil Murray, national judge Chris Tola, Devonport Mayor Lynn Laycock, State judge Barry Muir and KAB State chairman and national vice-chairman Ken Stewart.

Picture: BEN WILD