

# Search for cleanest Oz beach

## Judges cast eye over Casuarina

By **NADJA HAINKE**

GRAINS of sand, counted. PH level, tested. And soldier crabs, polished.

Casuarina Beach was groomed before the arrival of Australian Clean Beaches judge Chris Tola.

Mr Tola flew to the Top End yesterday to assess if the long sandy stretch in Darwin's north was the nation's cleanest beach and he was pleased with what he saw.

"We were just sitting at the surf lifesaving club, looking at the beach

and listening to the birds. It was really hard to leave," he said.

Casuarina Beach is competing against six national beaches shortlisted for the 2009 Australian Clean Beach Awards.

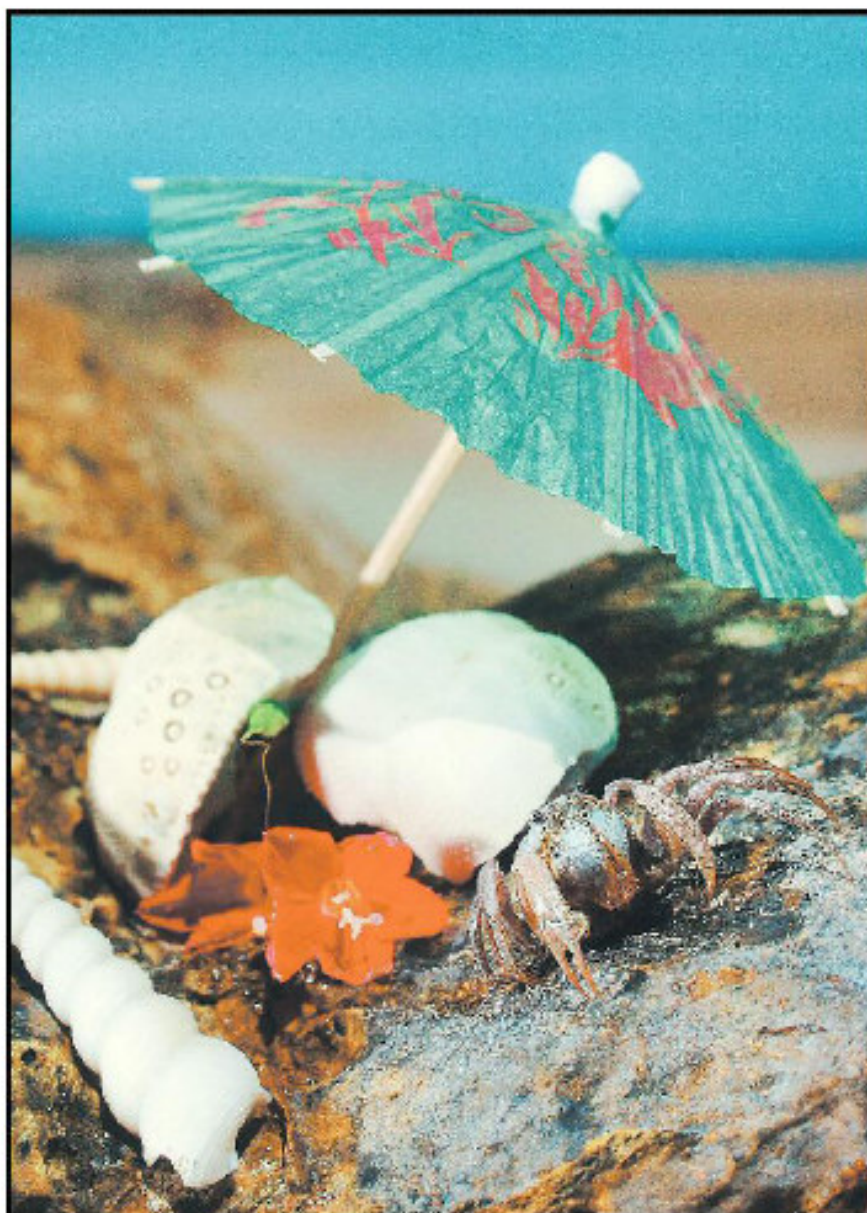
It is home to Darwin's Surf Life Saving Club — one of the first clubs to adopt the Ecosurf policy to stabilise beach areas, control erosion, and support educational activities.

But it is also known for yearly crocodile sightings and a nudist reserve — arguably two reasons why not much rubbish is left behind.

But Mr Tola said the beach had to be more than litter-free to take out the prestigious trophy.

"These awards take into account the whole spectrum of local community sustainability initiatives," he said.

The other beaches nominated include Cable Beach in WA, Loxton on the River Murray in South Australia, Tasmania's Mersey Bluff Beach, Capel Sound Foreshores in Victoria, North Steyne Beach in NSW and Queensland's White Haven Beach.



**EYES ON PRIZE:** A crab cools down on Casuarina Beach, the NT's hope in a search for the nation's cleanest beach. Picture: PATRINA MALONE