



Media Release

[Please note - this program's correct title is:
EPA Clean Beach Challenge 2004]

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CURRIMUNDI BEACH IS QUEENSLAND'S CLEANEST BEACH 2004

Currimundi Beach on the Sunshine Coast has been named Queensland's Cleanest Beach for 2004.

The popular Caloundra beach out performed 121 other strong contenders from along the Queensland coastline and islands in the Keep Australia Beautiful Council's EPA Clean Beach Challenge.

Currimundi Beach received its award and trophy from EPA Executive Director of Environmental Operations, Mark Williamson at a State Awards event at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre tonight, and will now go on to represent Queensland in the Australian Clean Beach Challenge in the new year.

As well as the title of Queensland's Cleanest Beach, eight Outstanding Accomplishment Awards were presented:

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| 1. <i>Tourism Queensland</i> Friendly Beach Award | Bargara Beach (CQ-Wide Bay) |
| 2. <i>Collex</i> Resource Conservation & Waste Management Award | Green Island (FNQ) |
| 3. <i>Outdoor Advertising Association of Australia</i> Young Legends Award | Statue Bay (CQ-Wide Bay) |
| 4. <i>Bunnings Warehouse</i> Community-Local Government Partnership Award | Caloundra City Council for Dicky Beach (Sunshine Coast) |
| 5. <i>Kingfisher Bay Resort</i> Protection of the Environment Award | North Harbour Beach (North Qld) |
| 6. Litter Prevention Award | Suttons Beach (Moreton Bay) |
| 7. Community Action Award | Lucinda Beach (North Qld) |
| 8. Beach Spirit Award | Federation Walk Coastal Reserve (Gold Coast) |

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Keep Australia Beautiful Council (Qld) Inc Chief Executive Officer Kylie Johnston said that over the past few months, thousands of Queenslanders had been working on environmental, conservation and anti-litter activities at their favourite beaches.

"2004 is the seventh season of the EPA Clean Beach Challenge and it has become obvious that beach communities are learning from the successes of beaches in previous years - which means that the best beach management practices in Queensland are being emulated right along the coast, which is terrific," Ms Johnston said.

"The EPA Clean Beach Challenge is promoted as a fun competition, but the environmental outcomes are seriously good for Queensland beaches and the communities who enjoy them."

Ms Johnston said Currimundi Beach was assessed as best exemplifying all the elements of the EPA Clean Beach Challenge and was a deserving state winner.

"Our judge said with a strong performance across the entire EPA Clean Beach Challenge judging criteria, Currimundi well deserves the honour of being Queensland's Cleanest Beach for 2004 and the Queensland challenger for the title of Australia's Cleanest Beach 2005," she said.

Mr Williamson said the EPA Clean Beach Challenge was not solely about beautiful beaches but about building community spirit and enthusiasm for the environment.

"Again, this year's high number of entries has highlighted the importance our communities place on protecting their local environments," he said.

Mr Williamson said the EPA, as the major sponsor of the Clean Beach Challenge, was extremely pleased with the program's continual results for the environment.

"Across the state, more and more people are forming community groups to raise the standard of their beaches and to protect some of Queensland's most valued natural assets for the future," he said.

"Our coastline has an international reputation for its beauty and the EPA Clean Beach Challenge is a great way to recognise and reward motivated communities and organisations who take good care of their favourite beaches and surrounding areas.

"Congratulations to all entrants in this year's EPA Clean Beach Challenge."

***For further information, please contact:
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Queensland's Cleanest Beach – Currimundi Beach (Sunshine Coast)

The Cleanest Beach Award takes into account a beach's geographic, environmental and economic circumstances, and assesses how efficiently and effectively the community uses the resources available to it against a range of criteria, including tidiness and litter abatement, visitor friendliness and hospitality, fauna and flora management activities, community interaction, youth activities, resource conservation and waste management, and local government partnerships within a community.

Currimundi's unique ecosystem of beach, dunes, lake and coastal bushland offers something for everyone, from surfing and swimming, to canoeing and fishing, to bushwalking, as well as parks with picnic facilities, free barbecues, shaded playgrounds and well-maintained conveniences. The Friends of Currimundi Lake and the Currimundi Catchment Care Group have joined forces to initiate conservation work, inform the community about environmental issues, liaise with Caloundra City Council, the EPA and developers, and foster an environmental ethic in local youth. The two groups lead the community in an ongoing program to maintain Currimundi's fragile environment. In addition to daily litter removal, a working bee is held monthly to clean up, eradicate weeds and plant native species, followed with a celebratory barbecue. National Tree Day and Clean Up Australia Day are also popular events on the community calendar. To prevent litter entering the waterway, a stormwater quality improvement device has been installed, and over 400 drains have been stencilled with anti-litter messages. Personal cigarette butt bins are distributed via local businesses. The Wildlife Preservation Society conducts guided walks through Kathleen McArthur Conservation Park, which supports a valuable remnant of wallum heath. A major achievement this year was the removal of the sand plug that blocked the lake's mouth to improve the quality of the water for marine habitat and recreation. To ensure long-term health, water quality is regularly monitored throughout the catchment system, and the dunes have been stabilised with revegetation and fencing to prevent sand blowing back into the lake. With a strong performance across the entire range of Clean Beach Challenge judging criteria, Currimundi is a deserving winner of the title of Queensland's Cleanest Beach for 2004.

Tourism Queensland Friendly Beach Award - Bargara Beach (Central Qld-Wide Bay)

This award recognises the importance of visitor hospitality and safety, and instructive and easily understood local information facilities.

At Bargara Beach, Burnett Shire Council has managed to balance commercial, tourist-oriented development with the preservation of the ecology and natural beauty of the area. The beach is patrolled by surf lifesavers during the swimming season and, whilst signage is good, there has been a deliberate attempt to avoid excessive signage. The nearby Tourist Information Centre and numerous shops and cafes cater for the needs of visitors and beachgoers. The shaded "Turtle Tracks" play area is popular with families, along with the nearby shaded barbecues, picnic tables and spotlessly clean toilet facilities. The beach and facilities are maintained by Council, with assistance from members of the Nielson Park Beautification Advisory Group who remove litter on their daily walks. Beach access for the disabled and elderly is provided with a wide, sweeping boardwalk and low gradient pathways which lead through gardens down to the beach. Bargara Beach boasts all the elements of a friendly, welcoming beach community.

Collex Resource Conservation and Waste Management Award – Green Island (Far North Queensland)

This award recognises outstanding accomplishment in resource conservation and waste management.

Green Island has embraced a best-practice resource conservation and waste management ethos and the island's stakeholders have put into place appropriate strategies with great environmental benefit. Located in a World Heritage Area and being predominantly a National Park, and with a constant stream of overseas and local visitors, the island is committed to suitable management of waste, with all waste and recyclables returned to the mainland for appropriate disposal or recycling. Power, water and sewage are all handled on-site to best practice standards. A reverse osmosis desalination plant operates on the island, and treated effluent is used wherever possible for non-potable water. Recycling stations are well positioned throughout the island and international signage facilitates ease of use by visitors. All day-use facilities on the island and the resort accommodation boast flow restrictors on taps or automatic shut off taps, and signage reminds patrons to be water wise. A strong commitment to reducing, reusing and recycling is underscored by appropriate policies and management processes. Green Island is achieving real environmental benefits through the practical application of a philosophy to conserve our precious resources.

Outdoor Advertising Association of Australia Young Legends Award – Statue Bay (Central Qld-Wide Bay)

This award recognises outstanding accomplishment by youth and by a beach/community which encourages and promotes youth activity.

Statue Bay has borne the brunt of the effects of local development, with beach erosion due to the impact of the recently built harbour wall. In response, students from the Special Education Unit at Yeppoon State High School have implemented a comprehensive beach rehabilitation program. The students work tirelessly with the Friends of Statue Bay to remove weeds and revegetate the area to prevent further erosion, and have begun monitoring the water quality of nearby creeks that flow onto beaches in the area. Another project highlights the litter problems affecting the Capricorn Region as it deals with an explosion of residential development. Thanks to a grant from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, the students, with assistance from their teachers, have produced a film entitled "Sweetwater Dreaming". In this film, the students highlight the need for individuals, businesses, community groups and local councils to take responsibility for protecting the environment during these times of increased development. The students have displayed a willingness to roll up their sleeves and do the hard practical work, while using their creativity to educate the community about important regional issues. They are indeed young legends.

Bunnings Warehouse Community-Local Government Partnership Award – Caloundra City Council for Dicky Beach (Sunshine Coast)

This award recognises outstanding partnership achievements by a local government and its community.

Caloundra City Council has recently completed the Dicky Beach Streetscape Project, which has transformed the precinct with the redesign of car parking areas to reclaim parkland, and improved functionality, traffic management and pedestrian movement. Strong community input into this project has preserved the beach's village atmosphere. The natural environment has been enhanced with revegetation and buffer fencing. Stormwater management is a major focus, with work to improve water quality and to mitigate flooding. Council worked with the community to develop a management plan for Bunbubah Creek and surrounding areas. The creek is being restored with weed eradication and replanting of local native species, and a new footbridge will be installed soon to reduce flood levels and prevent erosion. The community is joined by Council staff and the Division Councillor for working bees, which provide a great opportunity for face-to-face communication about beach issues. Caloundra City Council and the community are working collaboratively to produce successful outcomes for Dicky Beach.

Kingfisher Bay Resort Protection of the Environment Award – North Harbour Beach (North Queensland)

This award recognises outstanding accomplishment in the protection of the local natural environment and, specifically, the preservation of fauna and flora.

North Harbour Beach and the associated Slade Point Reserve is a 73-hectare reserve comprising dunal grasslands, melaleuca swamps, littoral rainforest and open eucalypt forests. The sheer size of the area has not daunted the many groups involved in protecting North Harbour Beach, which includes Friends of the Reserve, the Natural Area Team, Mackay City Council, Turtle Watch, Green Corps and local youth groups. With a clear management plan, the Friends of the Reserve have carried out environmental protection work in a very focused manner for nine years. The group's considerable achievements include reduced litter, improved beach and reserve access, control of dunal erosion, eradication of weeds such as prickly pear and revegetation of native species. The group has a complete record of the area's native flora and fauna, which is an invaluable tool for their efforts to preserve the natural environment. A brochure produced by Friends of the Reserve is available at the main entrance of the beach, which provides information about the area's network of walking trails, and the seven different ecosystems through which the trails pass. The North Harbour Beach community has a strong commitment to protecting and enhancing the local natural environment.

Litter Prevention Award – Suttons Beach (Moreton Bay)

This award recognises outstanding accomplishment in litter prevention, management and education.

Redcliffe City Council has invested a lot of time in establishing litter management and abatement strategies at Suttons Beach. The introduction of new infrastructure, anti-litter education and awareness programs, and literature and signage all assist in making Suttons Beach a clean and pleasant environment. Litter prevention and management at this beach is the result of a partnership between Council, community and business. Council provides and manages the infrastructure, including the appropriate placement and daily collection of well-maintained litter, recycling and cigarette butt bins, which is essential to ensure the popular beach is kept clean and tidy. Council launched its 'Clean Beach No Butts' community education campaign in September this year, coinciding with the State Government release of smoking ban policy details. The 'Clean Beach No Butts' campaign encourages smokers to dispose of cigarette butts thoughtfully. The students of Mueller College, who make good use of Suttons Beach for their studies, undertake regular beach clean ups and local businesses take a keen interest, particularly the staff of the foreshore restaurant Sam's on Suttons, who manage litter in and around their business. This tremendous team effort ensures the extremely popular Suttons Beach always looks its best.

Community Action Award – Lucinda Beach (North Queensland)

This award recognises outstanding community organisation and pride – expressed through civic, cultural and environmental activities.

The commitment and enthusiasm of the small community of Lucinda Beach towards its coastal environment is outstanding. The community has worked in partnership with Hinchinbrook Shire Council to develop a comprehensive management plan that would be the envy of many other beach communities. Beach clean up days coordinated by the Lucinda Progress Association involve residents, Council, Ingham Scouts, Lucinda State School, Ports Corporation, and the local Coast Care Group. Coast Care and the Progress Association are addressing weed control, beach erosion and revegetation issues. The community undertakes fundraising efforts to finance beach improvements, with a "Monster Raffle" raising \$5,000 towards a new stinger net. The beach, with its superb foreshore and well-kept parks, is the focal point for community events, where this hard working community can deservedly celebrate their achievements.

Beach Spirit Award – Federation Walk Coastal Reserve (Gold Coast)

This award recognises coastal communities which are facing or have faced difficult times, but which show outstanding commitment to solving problems by turning them into opportunities.

The Friends of Federation Walk, other groups and individuals trying to preserve the exceptionally valuable piece of coastal scrub known as Federation Walk Coastal Reserve have faced multiple hardships in recent times. Two years ago, fire challenged its future. Following the fire, enormous efforts went in to recover and revegetate the area. Last year, drought threatened these efforts. With no rain, and water restrictions in place to preserve the Gold Coast's dwindling supply, seedlings and young plants were going to die. However, giving up is not part of the constitution of the Friends of Federation Walk. With typical creativity, the invaluable support of Council and a grant from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund, a project was launched to tap the treated effluent line that runs through the reserve. A small reservoir and simple irrigation lines were installed and volunteers rostered to "turn the taps on" several times a week. This spirited project, undertaken by spirited people, has helped save the replanted vegetation for another year.