



media release

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Toowoong Bay wins Australian Clean Beach Challenge

Toowoong Bay on the NSW Central Coast has been named Australia's Cleanest Beach 2007 after winning Keep Australia Beautiful's prestigious Australian Clean Beach Challenge competition, which is proudly supported by the Packaging Stewardship Forum of the Australian Food and Grocery Council.

Toowoong Bay took out the coveted title ahead of Queensland's Coolum Beach, Tasmania's Boat Harbour and last year's winner, Victoria's Balnarring Beach.

As well as the top award, Toowoong also picked up the Friendliest Beach title for its commitment to visitor hospitality and safety.

This year's Australian Food and Grocery Council Australian Clean Beach Challenge saw the best beaches from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania vie for top honours in the fun environmental competition.

Keep Australia Beautiful New South Wales Chief Executive Matthew Taylor said Toowoong Bay Beach performed strongly across all the award criteria and was a deserving winner of the title, Australia's Cleanest Beach 2007.

"Toowoong Bay is a haven for families and offers outstanding beach facilities, including clean amenities, great parking, multilingual 'talking' signage, a modern and environmentally friendly surf club, playground, barbeque and picnic facilities and a designated dog exercise area," Mr Taylor said.

"Local residents, surf club members and Wyong Council staff keep the beach litter-free and the surf club Nippers remove weeds and plant suitable species provided by the Council to regenerate the foreshore.

"The surf club makes use of recycled water and seaweed collected during beach raking is dried and used as fertiliser on Council parks and reserves."

The announcement of the national winners follows Clean Beach Challenge state awards last year.

More than 300 beaches took part in the state competitions, culminating with today's announcement of the national winners.

The winners are:

Australia's Cleanest Beach 2007 Award

Outstanding Accomplishment Awards

Environmental Protection Award
Litter Prevention & Resource Management Award
Young Legends Award
Friendliest Beach Award
Community Partnerships & Action Award

Toowoong Bay Beach, New South Wales

Coolum Beach, Queensland
Balnarring Beach, Victoria
Coolum Beach, Queensland
Toowoong Bay Beach, New South Wales
Boat Harbour Beach, Tasmania

Packaging Stewardship Forum General Manager Jenny Pickles congratulated the winners on being judged the best in Australia.

"The Packaging Stewardship Forum is delighted to support the Australian Clean Beach Challenge," Ms Pickles said.

"Our members recognise a role in encouraging community initiative to reduce litter and care for the environment and we are very proud to partner with Keep Australia Beautiful," she said.

Keep Australia Beautiful New South Wales Chief Executive Officer Matthew Taylor said Australia's beach communities and the thousands of people who flock to the coast every summer were the big winners of the Clean Beach Challenge.

"We all reap the benefits of a 'clean and green' beach environment and the Clean Beach Challenge, now in its seventh year, is becoming a true Aussie institution," Mr Taylor said.

"The Challenge is all about caring for our beautiful beaches and foreshores.

"Every year, thousands of enthusiastic and dedicated Australians from the Torres Strait to the southern shores of Tasmania take the time to weed dunes, revegetate foreshores, collect litter and improve their stretch of coastline.

"It's a wonderful way to demonstrate a commitment to the environment and make a difference while having a lot of fun," Mr Taylor said.

For more details about the Clean Beach Challenge in New South Wales, visit www.kabnsw.org.au. Entries for the 2007 NSW Competition open on 1 June.

Editor's Note:

The Australian Clean Beach Challenge is proudly supported by the Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) Packaging Stewardship Forum.

The forum provides a vehicle for broader corporate support for Australia's efforts to improve resource recovery and reduce littering. In addition, it also assists in the delivery of national programs for the National Packaging Covenant and provides an opportunity for progressive businesses to re-engage with their stakeholders and partners in packaging stewardship.

About the winners

Australia's Cleanest Beach – Toowoomba Bay Beach on the New South Wales Central Coast

The Cleanest Beach Award takes into account a beach's geographic, environmental, cultural and economic circumstances, and assesses how efficiently and effectively the beach community uses the resources available to it against a range of criteria, including environmental protection, litter prevention, resource management, youth initiatives, visitor friendliness, community partnerships and action.

Toowoomba Bay Beach is nestled on the New South Wales Central Coast, just minutes from The Entrance and Tuggerah Lake. The beach is a haven for families and offers a superb range of facilities, including a reserve, great parking, multilingual and innovative 'talking' signage, clean amenities, picnic and barbeque areas, playground, surf club and dedicated dog exercise area. The beach is virtually litter-free thanks to the efforts of Wyong Council maintenance crews, Council lifeguards, Toowoomba Beach Surf Life Saving Club members and the local community. The surf club is a focus for beach activity and, in partnership with Wyong City Council, the club has installed a 'Talking Sign System' to increase visitor safety. With audible and multilingual visual messages, the sign disseminates information on known risks and hazards at Toowoomba Bay, promotes surf awareness and provides emergency information. The sign is solar powered, features UV and vandal resistant graphics and has a vandal alarm system. The surf club building itself includes green design features. A comprehensive double filtration storm water storage tank was installed during construction. When the tank drops to 10% capacity, the Council diverts recycled water to bring it up to 50%. This water is used to wash down equipment and flush toilets. All shower facilities have water saving heads fitted and tapware operates on spring-loaded valves. The club uses natural lighting and there is extensive use of natural heating and ventilation. The club is fully accessible by ramp and members work with the Disabled Surfers Association to stage a Surfers Day for people with disabilities. The club also offers a beach chair for people with disabilities to ensure access to the beach for all. The club has formulated a Beach Management Plan that is downloadable from its website. Together with the Council and local community members, the Club has undertaken an extensive landscaping project with endemic vegetation to attract wildlife. In addition to the normal Nippers' activities, the club has started educating youngsters about the surrounding rock platforms and native vegetation. Nippers are also involved in handing out personal ashtrays to smokers who use the beach. To encourage young people to give back to their community and develop new skills, the club this year initiated participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program. The beach itself is raked regularly and any seaweed collected is dried and reused as fertilizer on Council parks and reserves. Landcare groups care for foreshore vegetation, with Nippers also helping with weeding and planting. Toowoomba Bay Beach is obviously much loved by its community and is a deserving winner of the title, Australia's Cleanest Beach 2007.

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for more information visit our website | www.kabnsw.org.au**