



Balnarring makes a splash

Victoria is green with envy over Balnarring Beach's triumph at the second annual Victorian Thies Clean Beach Challenge.

The Westernport beach outperformed a number of strong contenders from around Victoria to take home the Clean Beach title for the second year, and even snared the Litter Prevention Award and Friendly Beach Award.

KABV chief executive officer Cr Andrew McLorinan said thousands of Victorians had been working on environmental, conservation and anti-litter activities at their local and favourite beaches.

"The Clean Beach Challenge is not a beauty contest – we are far more interested in assessing how a community cares for and manages its beach," Cr McLorinan said.

Judges were impressed with the natural feel that Balnarring had maintained, despite modifications for visitor access.

Local wildlife was in abundance including regular visits from dolphins. The community cultivates native plants for Balnarring, Merricks and Somers. Up to 11,000 trees and shrubs are planted annu-

ally over the three townships. The light at the Rotunda in the camping area is energy efficient, coming on automatically at dusk and turning off at 8pm.

At the Clean Beach Challenge awards luncheon, Outstanding Achievement Awards were also presented to:

Bonbeach - Community Action Award.

Rosebud - Young Legends Award,

Bells Beach - Resource Conservation and Waste Management Award,

City of Kingston - Local Government Leadership Award.

Aspendale Beach - Beach Spirit Award

Mentone Beach - Natural Heritage Award.

All Victorian award winners have been entered in the Australian Clean Beach Challenge and will compete against winners from Tasmania, NSW and Queensland.

"The Clean Beach Challenge recognises communities that are going beyond standard practices to look after their beaches," assistant



Above, Balnarring Beach's campsite. Above right, revegetation at Mentone Beach and, above left, Northcliffe Lodge residents at Bonbeach.

project manager Steven Reddington said. "With the 2006 competition approaching quickly, coastal communities are raising the bar in order to clinch the title from Balnarring."

Thies Services, the Department of Sustainability and Environment and

Chambers Rosewood Vineyards sponsor the competition, which opens for nominations again at the start of June.

- To register your interest for the 2006 awards, phone (03) 9484 2399 or email cleanbeach@kabv.org.au

Visitors respect spotless reputation of Clean Beach



Balnarring's secret is well and truly out. The once quiet peninsula village has been inundated with visitors and tourists in the past year since taking home the coveted Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria Clean Beach Award.

Balnarring Foreshore Committee spokesman Terry Mulcahy said there had been a strong increase in the number of day visitors to the beach over the holiday

period and the three campsites had been packed with 1400 campers.

But the increase in numbers has done little to impact on the beach's cleanliness and beauty, with Balnarring taking out the prize for the second year running.

"We're over the moon about the award. We're very pleased to see the results of the hard work that has been put in. I'm very one-eyed about the beach but it has an unspoiled beauty that people find so appealing," Mr Mulcahy said.

"Some people down here have had mixed reactions about the awards. It is definitely changing down here, but there's nothing we can do to stop it."

Mr Mulcahy said the media coverage of

the beach's win had actually made visitors more conscious of their rubbish.

"People were either taking it home with them or putting it in the bins provided," he said. "On New Year's Eve we had hundreds of people celebrating on the beach that night and the next morning a group of teenagers approached the ranger and asked if they could pick up all the bottles that had been left behind."

In the past year the foreshore committee has focused on strengthening recycling litter from the beach and campsites.

"We've also been working with DSE Victoria on the Koala Coast project. We've been replanting gums in the area for koalas."