

13 December 2006

Coolum crowned Queensland's Cleanest Beach 2006

The Sunshine Coast's Coolum Beach has been named Queensland's Cleanest Beach 2006.

The popular swimming and surf beach outperformed 175 other entrants from along the Queensland coast and islands in Keep Australia Beautiful's Clean Beach Challenge.

Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland CEO Kylie Johnston said the Coolum community had banded together to care for the beach (see full details below).

"Coolum will now go on to represent Queensland in the Australian Clean Beach Challenge in March," she said.

As well as the title of Queensland's Cleanest Beach, eight Outstanding Accomplishment Awards have been announced (see judge comments attached):

1. *Tourism Queensland* Friendly Beach Award
1770 Foreshore and Endeavour Park (Central Queensland-Wide Bay)
2. Beach Spirit Award
Midge Point Beach (North Queensland)
3. *Australian Food & Grocery Council* Litter Prevention Award
Balgol Beach, (North Queensland)
4. Resource Conservation & Waste Management Award
Four Mile Beach (Far North Queensland)
5. *Three Plus* Community-Local Government Partnership Award
Redland Shire Council for Morwong Beach (Moreton Bay)
6. Protection of the Environment Award
Buckley's Hole Conservation Park (Moreton Bay)
7. *Outdoor Media Association* Young Legends Award
Southport Broadwater Events Parkland (Gold Coast)
8. Community Action Award
Moffat Beach (Sunshine Coast)

Ms Johnston congratulated all State winners and finalists for their achievements in the ninth year of the Clean Beach Challenge.

"Over the past 12 months, thousands of Queenslanders had been working on environmental and anti-litter activities at their favourite beaches," Ms Johnston said.

"The Clean Beach Challenge is a fun competition with fantastic environmental outcomes for Queensland beaches and the local residents and tourists who visit them."

"The Challenge is about building community spirit and enthusiasm for the environment.

"We had a record-breaking number of entries this year, which highlights the importance our communities place on protecting their favourite stretch of sand.

"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 natural assets.

“Keep Australia Beautiful’s 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.

“Special thanks to our sponsors, Tourism Queensland, the Australian Food & Grocery Council, Three Plus and the Outdoor Media Association for making this wonderful program possible.”

Coolum Beach, as Queensland’s Cleanest Beach 2006, and 1770 Foreshore and Endeavour Park, as Queensland’s Friendliest Beach 2006, will each receive a 12-month billboard marketing campaign to celebrate their wins.

The billboards are being designed by award-winning Brisbane agency MINT and will be displayed at sites around Queensland by members of the Outdoor Media Association, following a special unveiling ceremony in the New Year. Each billboard campaign has an estimated value of \$200,000.

Clean Beach Challenge 2006

Sunshine Coast’s Cleanest Beach – Coolum Beach

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 visitor friendliness and hospitality, resource conservation and waste management, community-local government partnerships, youth enterprise and activity, community action, litter prevention and management, and fauna and flora protection, including dune protection.

Coolum Beach has it all; clean, user-friendly facilities, beautiful beaches that range from rocky headlands to golden sands, and natural estuaries. Surf club patrols ensure swimmer safety while a network of pathways encourages exploration of the foreshore. Beachside shops and cafés cater for visitors and locals alike. There is a variety of environmental and interpretive signage. Well placed and serviced bins are provided for users of the beach and foreshore park. Gross pollutant traps have been fitted to the stormwater outlets to reduce litter flowing to the sea. Community groups have worked closely with Maroochy Shire Council to keep these assets beautiful. The Council has been very open to community ideas for the coastal boardwalk and the upgrade of facilities at Point Perry. Residents consulted with the local Councillor to amend the master plan and even assisted to construct seating. New beach showers with water saving fittings have been installed. Coolum Surf Life Saving Club and the Council lifeguards share their equipment and facilities. Groups from Coolum Coastcare, Nippers and local schools carry out regular beach clean ups, with students also studying the beach environment and learning about its care. Coolum State High School Year 10 Marine Science and Biology students are investigating water quality, landforms and the flora and fauna of the area. Following field trips and research, students intend to prepare a list of guidelines for local residents on how to maintain good water quality. A local artist has been working with Coolum State Primary School to develop a public artwork for the recently completed Coolum Cliffs Boardwalk. Other youth activity at Coolum has seen a community nursery set up by Greening Australia trainees. Coolum Coastcare volunteers meet weekly to weed and revegetate the dunes. Last year, the group won a high commendation in the Minister of Environment and Heritage’s Award for Coastal Custodians. It was the only group in Queensland and one of just three nationally to receive this honour. Coastcare and Greening Australia have recently submitted an application for an Envirofund grant to assess the health of the entire coastal strip within the Maroochy Shire. An incredible variety of groups has been active in the area over the past year and the beach’s Clean Beach Challenge entry was enthusiastically organised by the Chamber of Commerce. Famous for its annual kite festival, Coolum Beach is certainly flying high.

Tourism Queensland Friendly Beach Award – 1770 Foreshore and Endeavour Park

This award recognises a commitment to, and active promotion of, visitor friendliness.

1770 Foreshore and Endeavour Park are at the site of Captain Cook's second landing in Australia. Today's visitors find a picturesque beach with excellent visitor facilities. Miriam Vale Shire Council has enhanced the beach, estuary and parkland to provide an oasis for anglers and families. Signage features international symbols. The beach offers safe swimming, anchorage in the marina and a boat ramp so visitors can set off for Lady Musgrave Island. With the beach becoming increasingly popular, patrols are planned. The Council has protected the peaceful setting by restricting commercial ventures. The park provides clean barbeques, shaded picnic areas, a playground and toilets. There is also a shelter with picnic tables that can be removed to create a stage. Cigarette butt and general bins are close to all amenities. Large native trees enhance the foreshore. A boardwalk meandering through Moreton Bay Ash trees and mangroves provides access to the beach for those with special needs, including the visually impaired. The road to Agnes Water has a new walking and cycling track which will be extended to the 1770 foreshore. Each May during the 1770 festival, Endeavour Park hosts a re-enactment of Cook's landing. There is certainly much to celebrate and enjoy at 1770 Foreshore and Endeavour Park.

Beach Spirit Award – Midge Point Beach

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

Determination, optimism and teamwork have been the keys to success at Midge Point Beach. Members of the Progress Association have worked hard to save the beach from persistent wind and wave erosion. In the past, barriers such as rocks or sand bags were used to prevent foreshore loss, without success. This year the community adopted a creative solution using grass bales. The bales were buried in trenches along a 600 metre section of heavily eroded beach at the high water mark. Sand was then pushed on top to hold the bales in place and grass planted on the new area. The subsequent build up of sand from tidal action has been impressive. Members of the association are very proud of this outcome, which has been achieved with the help of residents and organisations such as Coastcare and Mackay City Council. If the technique continues to work well, it will be implemented on further sections of the beach. The Midge Point community has shown great dedication and determination to overcome nature's challenges – a shining example of beach spirit.

Australian Food & Grocery Council Litter Prevention Award – Balgal Beach

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

Balgal Beach caters well for the many residents and tourists who visit for fishing and social events. Thuringowa City Council maintains signage to a high standard and there are numerous dual rubbish and recycling bins available. Rollingstone State School has adopted Balgal Beach and the students conduct regular clean ups of the beach, foreshore and park. After studying the impact of visitors on the local creek, the students successfully requested further bins in the area to prevent litter from entering the waterway. Local fishing clubs also undertake clean ups in the area. The café near the car park and boat launch plays its part by providing cigarette butt containers to visitors. The main sign welcoming people to the beach reminds dog owners to be responsible when walking their pets. The attractive presentation of this shady beach and its modern facilities also promotes responsible litter disposal. A clever combination of local actions has kept Balgal Beach a litter-free environment.

Resource Conservation & Waste Management Award – Four Mile Beach

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

Douglas Shire Council has worked hard to minimise the environmental impacts of visitors at Four Mile Beach. The Council has recently invested in purpose-built dual bin systems to collect litter and recyclables such as bottles and cans. These bins integrate functionality with sleek design and high visibility. Showers and drinking fountains have been designed with water conservation, amenity and accessibility in mind. Lighting in picnic areas and along the foreshore is controlled by seasonally adjusted automatic switches. Prominent signage urging 'Don't Waste Our Esplanade' also promotes appropriate litter disposal and recycling. Notices include universal symbols to encourage all visitors to look after the beach. Four Mile Beach has a popular dog walking zone, fitted with easily accessed dog litter bag dispensers. Recycled plastic has been used for picnic tables and signage on the foreshore, and is further evidence of environmental sensitivity. Four Mile Beach is to be commended for its positive achievements in resource conservation and waste management.

Three Plus Community-Local Government Partnership Award – Redland Shire Council for Morwong Beach, Coochiemudlo Island

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

Morwong Beach on Coochiemudlo Island has recently been enhanced through the cooperative efforts of residents and Redland Shire Council. A key outcome of this partnership is the almost completed island sewage facility, which includes a pumping station opposite the beach. Intensive consultation between the Council and a residents' committee resulted in effective revegetation and changes to the sewer lines to address local concern for the foreshore. A track around the island is also being finalised as part of a Foreshores Management Plan that was developed by the Council with community input. This year the walkway was extended along the western part of Morwong Beach to link Victoria Parade with the mangrove fringe. The path features tastefully-designed boardwalks that employ interpretive signage. Teamwork by Bushcare volunteers and Council staff has improved weed management at Morwong Beach. Monthly working bees have helped to eradicate pest plants, which are a long-term issue in the area. Residents have replanted the beach with trees supplied by the Council. The Council has provided a tent and table at nearby Main Beach so that locals can run a regular market stall to educate visitors on environmental issues around the island. Open dialogue between Redland Shire Council and the community has ensured that Morwong Beach is an inviting place which everyone can enjoy.

Protection of the Environment Award – Buckley's Hole Conservation Park

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

Buckley's Hole Conservation Park is a very special place, listed as an internationally significant wetland. It is no wonder that its preservation has captured the imagination of many groups on Bribie Island, as well as Caboolture Shire Council. The park includes a large waterhole along the foreshore, which leads to a pristine beach. A key attraction is the bird-hide, where visitors can study migratory birds as they roost. Bird and other wildlife sightings are monitored regularly by the Council in partnership with the Wildlife Preservation Society, the Buckley's Hole Bushcare Group and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, among others. Signage, boardwalks and stairs have been carefully designed to minimise environmental impact and these elements of the built environment are well maintained. Weed eradication by the Council and community is a major activity. A vegetation rehabilitation plan implemented a year ago has yielded impressive results. So far locals have helped to remove 140 cubic metres of weeds over 5.9 hectares and established 10,000 native plants to provide habitat for wildlife and improve visual amenity. More than 2,455 hours of unpaid labour has been contributed in just 12 months, reflecting a truly remarkable effort to protect this unique environment.

Outdoor Media Association Young Legends Award – Southport Broadwater Events Parklands

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

The Year 5 students at Southport State School are to be congratulated for their efforts to care for the nearby Broadwater Events Parklands. This foreshore is a haven for families as it offers playgrounds, a swimming enclosure and wide paths perfect for bikes and prams. Due to the parklands' popularity, litter can be a problem. Southport State's Year 5 students noticed this issue and started visiting each week to clean up. After attending a CoastEd session by the Griffith Centre for Coastal Management, they began to gather data on the beach's facilities, environment and weather patterns. The students have collected and audited litter items, including nappies, batteries and thousands of cigarette butts. Reports are included in the weekly school newsletter and each student has produced a web page about their initiatives.

Community Action Award – Moffat Beach

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

Moffat Beach, including Tooway Lake, is a much-loved family destination kept vibrant by the community. Many local groups work together and individually to care for the area. Helpers come from the Tooway Lake Catchment Care Group, Malibu Club, Wildlife Preservation Society, Surf Life Saving Queensland and Rotary. Young people from Girl Guides, the local TAFE, primary and high schools also join in activities, which include regular community-based clean ups, water testing and revegetation activities. The community's friendly motto, 'Celebrating Tooway' is emblazoned on T-shirts worn by volunteers at working bees. All of these activities support the work of Caloundra City Council to preserve the environment, including open space. Ongoing litter management measures include the distribution of cigarette butt bins and litter surveys. In addition, an annual festival is held on the foreshore to celebrate the heritage, culture and environment of the Tooway Lake Catchment. The lively atmosphere and community action at Moffat Beach mean that there is more than one way to celebrate Tooway!