



MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE USE

Hornsby Shire Council is a strong contender to carry off top honours in the massive 2010 Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities Awards.

As pressures continue on all cities (cities now make up 2% of the earth's surface and produce 80% of the world's emissions*) Hornsby Shire Council is the New South Wales finalist in the prestigious awards.

Keep Australia Beautiful's National Sustainable Cities judge, Sean Rooney, will visit the Hornsby area on Friday 3rd September to meet representatives and discuss their remarkable project.

Hornsby Shire Council is working tirelessly to conserve the unique character of the bushland shire whilst meeting the needs of over 157,000 residents now and into the future.

Initiatives being implemented include Hornsby being the first local government organisation to implement a Business Energy Savings Program focused on small and medium sized businesses; installation of rainwater tanks, irrigation systems and water quality treatment for irritating ovals within the Epping locality, to minimise dependency on potable water, and the installation of a wind turbine in Berowra.

New South Wales' Hornsby Shire Council is a strong contender to win top honours in the massive 2010 Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities Awards.

The awards recognise cities around the nation making a big difference to our pressurised environment.

Keep Australia Beautiful's Sustainable Cities Awards judge, Sean Rooney, will visit Hornsby on Friday 3rd September to closely inspect the Council's project before a final decision is made about whether Hornsby Shire Council will win the national honour.

Hornsby Shire Council has already highlighted it is deeply concerned about protecting its precious environment and creating a sustainable city now and for the future.

The Council has developed 'Hornsby Shire 2020: A Framework for a Sustainable Future' (the 'Framework'). The Framework encompasses all of the Council's strategies and directions for achieving a sustainable Hornsby Shire into one overall document. It covers many different areas the Council is working on including biodiversity, air, water and soil quality, waste management, energy conservation, businesses strategies and issues of heritage and culture.

Keep Australia Beautiful Executive Officer Scott Lyall said, "Hornsby Shire Council is remarkable. Sustainability is a critical issue for all cities as the world becomes more and more urbanised. We all know there are massive pressures on our cities. Cities make up just 2% of the earth's surface but now actually account for 80% of greenhouse gas emissions."

"The Framework the Council has developed is extremely comprehensive. The aims are to protect and enhance the natural environment in the Hornsby area; encourage a vibrant local economy and sustainable resource use; enhance social and cultural wellbeing; provide quality community infrastructure and services and guide the local community towards a sustainable future."

"These Awards are very prestigious and Hornsby Shire Council is already the New South Wales winner. It may now carry off the top honour too. Sean's visit is all about getting an absolutely in-depth understanding of how the Council has pulled off such remarkable results."

"The Council's approach to sustainability has been comprehensive and multi-pronged. It has achieved so much including a 29% reduction of corporate CO2 emissions from 1995/96 asset levels; over 5,700 native plants given away to residents... the plants were propagated by staff and volunteers at a nursery open day; over 1,500 community members engaged in sustainability activities; running workshops on worm farming, composting and green cleaning and operating chipping days for green waste disposal."

Hornsby Shire Council has also:

- Conducted summer recreational water quality monitoring.
- Introduced a sustainable water strategy which has already resulted in an 18% reduction.
- Installed a 15kwh, 25m high wind turbine in Berowra and solar panels to generate 30% of electricity for the new rural fire station. The Council says the wind turbine will play an important role in educating the community about alternative energy sources.
- Downsized Council vehicles from 6 cylinders to 4 cylinders and installed bicycle racks at the Council's buildings to encourage cycling.
- Been operating a Clothing Exchange where participants can bring up to six new, lightly worn items of clothing or accessories to swap and also Second Hand Saturdays where residents are encouraged to reuse and recycle household items.
- Conserved and maintained a number of historic gardens and parks including Fagan Park, Crosslands Reserve and Lillian Fraser Gardens.
- Undertaken bushland and riparian restoration works in endangered ecological communities and wetlands and celebrated Hornsby Bushcare's 20 years of regenerating bushland. There are currently 850 Hornsby Bushcare volunteers.

Sean Rooney – who is the Sustainability Program Manager at Sinclair Knight Merz (a leading international engineering, sciences and project management firm) and is also an Adjunct Associate Professor at Griffith University in Queensland – said, “A huge range of massive reports all point to one place. The cities we need for the future have to be sustainable. The twenty-first century is already a century of cities. This big awards program from Keep Australia Beautiful is simply designed to recognise huge efforts from people, community groups, businesses and government agencies that are doing something hugely meaningful about sustainability.”

A range of top organisations is supporting the Keep Australia Beautiful Australian Sustainable Cities Awards including Packaging Stewardship Forum; Sinclair Knight Merz; Grundfos Pumps and ToysRUs.

Once this final visit takes place to Hornsby Shire Council, key personnel will attend the prestigious National Awards ceremony to be held in Sydney on November 1st. All states and territories will be competing for the national title.

Sean Rooney said, “The power of this project is that everyone’s a winner. Hornsby Shire Council is a state winner, residents benefit from the actions taken and the future benefits. At a local level this project has made a mammoth difference for future generations. The Council has taken real action. It is a very impressive contender.”

“Hornsby Shire Council has put countless hours into activity. They can see the big picture. Generations ahead of us deserve nothing less than sustainable cities and as the debate rages about what kind of Australia we all want for the future, we all know that we simply have to reduce the enormous environmental pressures being placed on our cities.”

“Sustainability is about everything from good air quality, dealing with waste, food and water supplies, housing issues, transport issues and making sure vulnerable people don’t fall through the cracks. It’s about safety, jobs and the environment.”

“These Awards all focus on saluting heroes. People who are doing something to facilitate change. This is a great project, a state winner and a very impressive contender. We are always hearing stories about how liveable Australia’s cities are. We’ve got to be hearing more about why all our cities should be sustainable.”

There will be a photo opportunity held at 12:30pm, Community Nursery, 28 Britannia St, Pennant Hills, NSW.

**Media enquiries to: Ross Woodward or Homira Samadi on 03 9769 6488
Sean Rooney and Scott Lyall are available for media interviews**

* Daily Telegraph – 14.12.09

EXTRA BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

About the Judge - Sean Rooney:

Sean Rooney is a thought and practice leader working at the forefront of the 'cross-sector partnering' and 'sustainability' agendas in Australia.

Currently the Sustainability Program Manager at leading international engineering, sciences and project management firm, Sinclair Knight Merz, Sean is also an Adjunct Associate Professor at Griffith Business School (QLD), focusing on sustainability and organisational strategy. Sean's previous roles include Founder and Director of CSIRO's Sustainable Communities Initiative and a faculty member of Cambridge University's World Bank Sustainable Development Leadership Program.

In addition, Sean regularly contributes articles to national publications and is frequently invited to speak at both domestic and international conferences. Sean is also an active participant in several influential bodies supporting debate and action regarding sustainability issues in Australia.

In recognition of his expertise and impact in sustainability thought and practice leadership Sean was awarded a 2007 CSIRO Achievement Award and was a recipient in 2006 of a Future Summit Leadership Award for leadership in the sustainable development domain in Australia.

About the Australian Sustainable Cities Awards:

The Australian Sustainable Cities Awards recognise efforts by residents, community groups, businesses and government agencies to protect and enhance their local urban environment to ensure its long term sustainability at all levels.

The program is part of the Keep Australia Beautiful 'Australian Sustainable Communities' Awards, which also includes the Australian Tidy Towns and Australian Clean Beaches Awards. The Australian Sustainable Cities Awards are sponsored by the Packaging Stewardship Forum of the Australian Food and Grocery Council, Grundfos Pumps, Sinclair Knight Merz and ToysRUs.

About the Supporters

The Australian Sustainable Cities Awards are sponsored by:

'Do the Right Thing' Program of the Packaging Stewardship Forum, Australian Food and Grocery Council

The Packaging Stewardship Forum of the Australian Food and Grocery Council, works with partners to deliver industry recycling, litter reduction and education programs on behalf of its members, who consist of Australia's major beverage companies and their packaging suppliers. The Forum's highly successful *Do the Right Thing* anti-litter campaign has proven to be a strong litter prevention message, with more than 80% of people recognising that *Do the Right Thing* means put your waste in the bin and more than 300 towns and cities around Australia taking the *Do the Right Thing* message to their communities
Contact: Jenny Pickles 0418 558 311

Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM)

SKM is a leading engineering, sciences and project delivery firm. Its purpose is to deliver a positive and enduring impact on the world. They work in close partnership with key clients in the public and private sectors, providing independent technical, strategic and commercial advice to deliver a wide range of projects globally.

Contact: Jessica Hyams, 03 9248 3036

Grundfos Pumps

As a world leading pump and pumping systems manufacturer, Grundfos Pumps has joined with Keep Australia Beautiful to help all Australians achieve improvements in water conservation.

Contact Anna Thyssen, 08 8461 4611

ToysRUs

A leading retailer of toys and educational items for young Australians. They recognise the need to reduce their environmental footprint and are taking steps to reduce plastic bag usage by customers. They have chosen to partner with the Young Legends category of the Sustainable Cities Awards to help acknowledge the environmental achievements of young Australians and to use these case studies as an inspiration to others.

Contact Katarina Wos or Kristen Pelletier, 02 9794 8999