



**MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED AND NOT FOR USE PRIOR TO  
FRIDAY AUGUST 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2010**

**Keep Australia Beautiful says Darwin City Council is now 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\*) Darwin City Council is the Northern Territory finalist in the highly prestigious awards.**

**Keep Australia Beautiful's National Sustainable Cities judge, Sean Rooney, will fly specially to the Northern Territory on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> August to meet representatives and discuss their remarkable project.**

**Darwin City Council has worked tirelessly to undertake a wide range of projects that are focused on preserving culture and heritage, caring for the environment, waste management and community interaction.**

**Projects include having the first Renewable Energy Facility in Tropical Australia, enhancing Darwin's biodiversity, protecting natural icons, environmentally and humanely eradicating cane toads. They are also involved with energy innovation and work on revitalising Darwin's City Centre.**

The Northern Territory's Darwin City 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 fly specially into Darwin on Friday August 27th to closely inspect Darwin City Council's project before a final decision is made about whether Darwin City Council will win the national honour. The Council has already highlighted it is deeply concerned about protecting its precious environment and creating a sustainable city.

The Council is very proud of its sustainability policies which include extensive work with local environment and community groups. It has the first Renewable Energy Facility in Tropical Australia at the Council's Shoal Bay Waste Disposal Site, which was developed specifically to reduce landfill greenhouse emissions.

Other projects it has undertaken include two community initiatives that were both aimed at enhancing Darwin's biodiversity, protecting natural icons and improving the aesthetics at the two project areas. The projects are "Protecting the Primary Dunes of Mindil Beach" and "Zero Toads".

Keep Australia Beautiful Executive Officer Scott Lyall said, "Darwin City Council is remarkable. The Australian Conservation Foundation recently awarded Darwin top place in its Sustainable Cities Index of the 20 largest cities in Australia so it will be interesting to see how Darwin fares against the other seven state and territory finalists in the Australian Sustainable Cities Awards."

"These Awards are very prestigious and Darwin City Council is already the Northern Territory winner. They may now carry off the top honour too – and Sean's visit is all about getting an absolutely in-depth understanding of how Darwin City Council has pulled off such remarkable results."

"Two remarkable projects the Council has undertaken are "Protecting the Primary Dunes of Mindil Beach" and "Zero Toads". Both projects utilised the services of the Larrakia Rangers. The Larrakia people are the traditional owners of the land. These projects used traditional Indigenous values and practices plus also providing the Rangers with new training, skills and knowledge."

"Through the "Protecting the Primary Dunes of Mindil Beach" project, the work focused on protection of local iconic species, environmentally sustainable planning, design and construction leading to better outcomes in weed eradication, soil erosion control and open space and natural areas management and protection, as well as promoting the cultural values in areas of Indigenous significance."

"As part of this project, an environmentally friendly material called "Jettyplank" was used to re-plank the access walkways to the beach. Jettyplank is constructed of recycled planks. The project also utilised 'terracottem' when planting new native plants and runners – a water saving seed that expands when wet and draws in moisture – thereby supporting the Council's water efficiency strategies. Weeds were also removed in order to reduce fire fuel loads. The area of planting was fenced off and project signage was attached."

"In the case of "Zero Toads", new methods were utilised to environmentally and humanely eradicate cane toads whilst improving the visual of existing fence lines. The eradication of the toads protects the native flora and fauna which in turn enhances Darwin's environment for residents and visitors alike."

**Darwin City Council has also:**

- Established the first Renewable Energy Facility in Tropical Australia at the Council's Shoal Bay Waste Disposal Site. The Facility has been developed specifically to reduce landfill greenhouse emissions. The Darwin City Council and Land Management Services project reduces landfill greenhouse emissions by 97%.
- An annual Pre-Cyclone Season Clean-Up takes place around the Darwin municipality. The Clean-Up assists Darwin residents to clean up their yards in preparation for the cyclone season. All recyclable material was diverted and recycled by the Darwin Resource Recovery Centre.

- The Council has been working on the revitalisation of the Darwin City Centre including promoting greater pedestrian traffic - which increases customers for local traders - plus creating a platform to encourage businesses to offer diverse shopping and dining experiences; creating streets and public spaces capable of staging important cultural and civic events; defining the unique tropical character of the city and promoting Darwin as a walk-able city; building better less cluttered connections whilst establishing a framework for private sector investment in street level retail and promoting a safe environment for people.
- Darwin City Council operates a “hands on” approach and participates in a diverse range of community events throughout the year – such as World Environment Day, the NT Tropical Gardens and Sustainable Living Fair and Clean Up Australia Day.
- It operates special school tours to Shoal Bay Landfill. Students are taken through all the facets of the Shoal Bay Waste Disposal Site. Visitors leave with a strong understanding of the power of the philosophy behind Reduce/Reuse/Recycle as not just a slogan but as a daily practical environmental, social and economic priority of Darwin City Council’s commitment to being a sustainable city.
- The Council is undertaking the ‘Gardens Road Cemetery’ project where it is in the process of preserving and enhancing the heritage values associated with the cemetery. Now in the second year of a three year project, work includes drainage, fencing, records audit, memorial restoration, identification of unmarked graves, landscaping and signage.

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 Darwin City Council, key personnel will fly to Sydney for the prestigious National Awards ceremony to be held on November 1<sup>st</sup>. All states and territories will be competing for the national title.

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

\* Daily Telegraph – 14.12.09

Photo opp

27.8.10: 10.15a.m. Mindil Beach for the "Protecting the Primary Dunes of Mindil Beach" location.

## 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