



OVERALL WINNER 2011 Australian Tidy Towns LITHGOW NSW

LITHGOW's community demonstrated a strong sense of commitment and pride through their involvement in numerous initiatives to ensure a sustainable future for their city.

Along with LITHGOW's longstanding Tidy Towns committee and LITHGOW City Council, the community is committed to the principles of sustainability.

The community has a strong understanding that even though important, clean and tidy streets are not just what the Tidy Towns program recognises and encourages.

They have demonstrated that with dedication, pride and a sense of community spirit, LITHGOW's cultural, social as well as built and natural environments can be preserved, restored and enhanced for positive environmental benefits.

Extensive environmental improvements and sustainability approaches are evident throughout the community as they proactively care for their unique local environment.

Besides community commitment to Tidy Towns-related projects, it was evident that the extensive number of partnerships in activities for the sustainable benefit of LITHGOW enabled them to be selected for this year's Australian Tidy Towns award.

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION & PROTECTION AWARD LITHGOW NSW

A major attraction for LITHGOW is the surrounding escarpment and its native vegetation. In the past, the adjacent hills were denuded by chemical fallout from smelters, belching heavy industry chimney stacks and coal burning from home heating appliances. These polluting industries gradually closed and the last coal mine within the urban area closed in the late 1980's.

Extensive areas were replanted under Tidy Towns programs with trees propagated from the LITHGOW Community Nursery, a Tidy Towns initiative, which still operates under the watchful eye of Tidy Towns volunteers.

The bush swamps in and around LITHGOW, in particular the Newnes Plateau Shrub, are a unique vegetation community and are protected as they are listed as endangered. As a result, extensive community and government coordinated efforts

cooperatively manage the threats of human and feral animal intervention. Vast areas are being restored and the active Swampwatch network engages the community in monitoring any damage, etc within the swamp system.

LITHGOW's environmental improvement projects are diverse and innovative. Many raise awareness of the importance of the town's heritage and its place as a tourist destination together with balancing the need to protect the environment.

WATER CONSERVATION COMMENDATION LITHGOW NSW

The LITHGOW Community Nursery, a Tidy Towns initiative, is a voluntary organisation with a part time horticulturist, and a group of volunteers. They have collected local seed, raised and sold over 600 000 plants over the past ten years.

Extensive water conservation initiatives are in place including the collection of rainwater and reuse. Nursery staff invented a unique pot washing machine which washes numerous pots at a time and recycles its own wash water.

Numerous businesses, churches and community facilities throughout LITHGOW have installed rain and stormwater collection systems for watering gardens, etc, with excess runoff flowing to natural wetlands.

These approaches are increasing as the community sees the benefits of conserving water through partnerships with local and state government water conservation joint funding initiatives.

HERITAGE & CULTURE AWARD COMMENDATION LITHGOW NSW

Numerous community groups are involved in historic restoration and interpretive programs within LITHGOW.

LITHGOW City Council has worked closely with their community and generated exceptional interest in a new heritage trail entitled, 'Furnace Fire & Forge'. The trail reinforces LITHGOW's importance as a focus for coal mining, minerals processing, manufacturing and railway heritage. The trail's educational initiatives effectively connect the community with its rich history.

Important national historic events took place in LITHGOW with the iron industry being established in 1875 to manufacture pig iron, together with LITHGOW producing the [first steel manufactured in Australia](#) in 1900.

Numerous historic facilities recently celebrated their centenaries, and many heritage buildings have been restored including the world famous Zig Zag Railway which operates daily and carries approx 75 000 passengers each year.