

Australian Tidy Towns 2010 Program Report

Town/Community: ROCKHAMPTON Qld **Date judged:** 4 & 5 November 2009

Population: approx 65 000

Organisers: ROCKHAMPTON Regional Council (RRC) in partnership with the community

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COMMUNITY ACTION/ PARTNERSHIPS

ROCKHAMPTON is recognised as the Beef Capital of Australia and located on the Tropic of Capricorn. The city has numerous welcoming entries into the city with colourful treatments and signs, particularly focusing on the beef industry.

ROCKHAMPTON has a rich and varied history with a desire to retain its heritage, and a community that is friendly, enthusiastic and dedicated to caring for their unique environment while allowing business to develop and thrive.

ROCKHAMPTON Regional Council (RRC) works in partnership with the community to ensure that homes and private gardens are tidy and maintained. The RRC ensures that approaches to the city, including signs and features, public parks, gardens and sporting areas and median strips are well tendered.

Council takes pride in the beautification and presentation of community assets providing major benefits to residents and visitors.

ROCKHAMPTON is fortunate to have an extensive network of community groups including environmental, historical and sporting who cooperatively work with Council to ensure a sustainable lifestyle.

LITTER PREVENTION

Council's 'Don't Waste' program is an initiative delivered in conjunction with community groups to encourage residents to pick up litter in their streets. Actions used to reduce litter and educate residents include:

- Signs displayed in sections of the community advertising the 'Don't Waste' program with blackboards that allow the number of litter items collected to be displayed.
- Anti-litter education is part of Council's ongoing waste minimisation lectures in schools. Education is provided by Council's Waste Services and Cities for Climate Protection Officer and also by the Central Queensland Local Government Education Officer as part of the Regional Waste Strategy.
- Well positioned litter bins are provided for visitors and locals in every park, rest area and business centre within the area. Bins are user friendly and are placed in high traffic areas to maximise use and reduce the incidence of litter.

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION & PROTECTION

Numerous voluntary environmental community groups work in partnership with the City Council and effectively contribute to ROCKHAMPTON's well managed environment.

Capricorn Pest Management Group, in partnership with natural resource management bodies, works towards reducing the impacts of weeds and pest animals in the region.

Numerous groups engage with the community in restoring and enhancing local waterways through education and on ground activities. Initiatives are not just focused on the environment but are also focused on education, recreation, culture, health and history.

From culture to horticulture, the city's botanic gardens have been praised for containing some of the most extensive examples of indigenous flora in the nation.

WATER CONSERVATION & ENERGY INNOVATION

ROCKHAMPTON Regional Council recognises the need for sustainable water management throughout the community by using and encouraging a range of conservation initiatives to achieve this aim.

Council uses a host of water minimisation approaches in Council-owned facilities and land. The use of hardy, preferably local native species that do not rely on irrigation for survival also limits water use.

Fitzroy River Water (FRW) strongly supports Council's efforts to encourage environmental and business groups to participate in innovative water conservation and reuse initiatives.

FRW uses National Water Week campaigns and other projects to educate and promote sustainable water management, particularly within schools and community networks.

Sustainability, including low carbon development and energy conservation is a guiding theme for key initiatives such as Council's new Planning Scheme and Corporate Plan.

Council's participation in the Cities for Climate Protection Program motivates and assists Council in identifying and reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions. As part of this program, a draft Greenhouse Action Plan has been produced which includes actions Council can continue or implement in the future.

RESOURCE RECOVERY & WASTE MANAGEMENT

ROCKHAMPTON's recycling and resource recovery initiatives divert extensive tonnes of waste from landfill.

Separate collection areas at ROCKHAMPTON's Waste Transfer Station allow the deposit of additional recycleable materials. The site also recycles an extensive array of waste materials and the Landfill Shop also generates a funding source and a well managed facility for general community access.

Council's Waste Management Unit addresses schools and community groups on the importance of effective recycling methods and ways to reduce waste.

HERITAGE & CULTURE

An extensive network of heritage and historical society groups ensure that ROCKHAMPTON's rich culture and history is maintained for all to share.

Heritage restoration and preservation is on a large scale in ROCKHAMPTON with numerous buildings and sites carefully restored to their former glory. Various private and public buildings are wonderfully restored providing a welcoming ambience which is inviting to locals and visitors alike.

ROCKHAMPTON is made up of a broad range of architectural approaches, particularly throughout the city's Central Business District.

Founded in 1853, ROCKHAMPTON's historical buildings have captured visitors for decades. Many fine public and private buildings, including the Customs House, old Post Office, Cathedrals, banks and homes, are constant reminders of a city with an exciting history.

ROCKHAMPTON's Heritage Village is an active museum where visitors can experience the city's rich and colourful history. The Village is a national treasure with an extensive collection of machinery, buildings and restored vehicles. Over 200 community members volunteer their time to help interpret the region's heritage.

The Dreamtime Cultural Centre, set in natural bushland on ancient tribal sites expertly interprets the community's rich indigenous culture. Bob Blair is to be commended on his leadership and vision for the centre.

YOUNG LEGENDS

Environmental awareness and education programs are an integral part of education in ROCKHAMPTON with students actively involved in numerous community activities and partnerships, particularly in alliances with Council's environmental officers.

ROCKHAMPTON has a range of programs and strategies in place to support and promote youth initiative through environmental education programs.

Notable example is the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Reef Guardian Schools program which encourages schools to commit to protecting and conserving the World Heritage Listed asset.

Learning to live, work and play in a sustainable way helps protect local waterways and the Reef system. Reef Guardian Schools help protect this unique resource to encourage everyone to 'do their bit to look after it.'

The Reef Guardian program is recognised throughout Queensland as a leading environmental education initiative.

ROCKHAMPTON is the birth place of many fine artists, performers and musicians. It is through the city's appreciation of the arts that it has developed a nurturing approach to youth who choose the arts as their pathway in life.

SUGGESTIONS

ROCKHAMPTON's great success as being Queensland's Tidiest Town 2009 is able to be promoted on local business materials as well as Council correspondence to share the city's achievement and hopefully derive benefits from increased visitation and subsequent economic opportunities.

Council may consider establishing or facilitating an Australian Association of Environmental Education (AAEE) network through the current regional educational system. An AAEE initiative may complement a consistent approach to environmental education in the region.

Council's waste education officers may consider establishing a waste education centre at Council's resource recovery and landfill facility to educate children and the community regarding what can be recycled within ROCKHAMPTON's waste collection services.

If not already in place, 'Adopt-a-' programs are an effective method of encouraging schools, community groups or service organisations to take 'ownership' of public facilities or sites around the city. Examples could include looking after a verge or maintaining a park or cleaning part of a highway to provide long-standing benefits to the community and a saving in Council resources.

To complement ROCKHAMPTON's planned development approach, Council and the community may wish to introduce a consistent sign approach to promote the facilities/services available within the city

Congratulations to everyone involved in the ROCKHAMPTON's Tidy Towns and associated community action programs.

Good luck with future initiatives in helping to keep your part of Australia beautiful and sustainable.

*Dick Olesinski
National Tidy Towns judge*