

STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 10:30PM ON MONDAY 30 AUGUST 2010

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Stanthorpe claims victory in Ergon Energy Tidy Towns 2010

Editors please note: Correct name of the competition is Ergon Energy Tidy Towns

Stanthorpe has been named the Queensland Ergon Energy Tidiest Town for 2010.

Taking out the State title in this year's prestigious Keep Australia Beautiful competition, the Darling Downs community out-performed 103 other entrants.

The announcement was made by Keep Australia Beautiful Queensland CEO, Mr Rick Burnett at a gala awards ceremony in Mackay tonight (Monday August 30).

Presenting the award, Ergon Energy's Chief Executive, Mr Ian McLeod, praised all the entrants and winners for their dedication and commitment to caring for the environment.

He said Ergon Energy's continued commitment after twelve years as a sponsor of Tidy Towns was a tribute to the way the program had remained relevant to regional Queensland for such a long time.

"The Tidy Towns competition started because of a desire to foster sustainable communities, environmental awareness and regional development in Queensland.

"While that focus remains, the spectacular growth experienced in much of regional Queensland during the life of the program has placed enormous pressure on Ergon Energy to expand its network to meet the demand for electricity", Mr McLeod said.

"The billions of dollars we've spent to meet that demand also puts pressure on prices, so I believe the Tidy Towns program is now also about promoting energy efficiency to reduce some of that demand - it is fitting then, that along with being naming rights sponsor, Ergon Energy is also the sponsor of an additional award – **the Energy Conservation Champion Award. (won by Tieri)**

"And as an added bonus, this year, for the first time, Ergon Energy will sponsor, for the winning town a community event, to be determined in consultation with the winner and designed to foster the sort of community spirit that has marked this program since its inception."

Mr Burnett said “the coolest town in Queensland is now officially the tidiest as well.”

“Stanthorpe has always been a great Granite Belt destination, in Queensland's premier wine region, and boasting more than 45 wineries.”

Stanthorpe is rightly proud of its interesting past and is keeping it alive for future generations. Stanthorpe has preserved 10 local historical buildings and has a very comprehensive collection of memorabilia displayed in their Historical Village.

A strong local family research facility funded by the Federal Government has over 16 000 photographs housed in the Jean Harslett Research Centre on the historical site.

Stanthorpe has overcome drought and economic downturns to continue to grow in tourism with an emphasis on the magnificent natural environment, and even the cold weather is a drawcard for people wishing to witness a 'real' winter.

Stanthorpe residents are heading for a cleaner, greener future.

Stanthorpe is embracing sustainability with the ClimateSmart Living Communities Program, the new state of the art Resource Recovery and Transfer Station and Stanthorpe's Water Treatment Works recycling water for beneficial use.

The impressive new street-scaping and the efforts of local litter patrol volunteers have resulted in a beautifully clean city to be proud of.

Stanthorpe's Young Delegates take an active role in representing the views of young people to inform council on a number of topics relevant to the needs of the youth.

They are actively involved in workshopping with councillors, senior management and youth workers to develop an annual youth plan with strategies for action.

Projects included a '*Break The Silence*' & '*Play Back*' Drug and Alcohol Free Youth Concert; a talent quest to find young performers for the Apple and Grape Festival; a Youth Art display in partnership with local businesses to display and sell young artists work; a sports day to raise awareness of the need for a healthy body and a healthy lifestyle and a Community Trivia Night to raise awareness of youth issues.

A progressive community such as Stanthorpe makes its many projects and events possible by the number of partnerships it has to achieve the best outcomes for the initiatives.

Stanthorpe - 'A fresh approach to country living!'

As well as Queensland's Ergon Energy Tidiest Town, 10 outstanding STATE achievement awards were announced:

1. Environmental Protection Award: - Queensland State Winner
Whitsunday Regional Council | Whitsunday Isaac Mackay
2. Young Legends Award: - Queensland State Winners
Redcliffe's Youth Space Program | South East Queensland
3. Paradise & Bishopp Outdoor Advertising Heritage Award: - Queensland State Winner

- Childers | Wide Bay Burnett
4. Australia Post Bush Spirit Award: - Queensland State Winner
Chillagoe | Far North Queensland
 5. RACQ Litter Prevention Award: - Queensland State Winner
Dysart | Whitsunday Isaac Mackay
 6. Resource Recovery Award: -Queensland State Winner
Rockhampton | Central Queensland
 7. Partnerships Award: - Queensland State Winner
Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre | North Queensland
 8. Grundfos Pumps Water Conservation Award: - Queensland State Winners
Hervey Bay | Wide Bay Burnett
 9. Friendliest Town Award: - Queensland State Winners
Normanton | Far North Queensland
 10. Ergon Energy's Energy Conservation Champions Award - Queensland State Winner
Tieri | Central Queensland

Ergon Energy Tidy Towns 2010 State Outstanding Achievers

Environmental Protection Award: Whitsunday Regional Council (Whitsunday Isaac Mackay)

This award recognises the commitment to protecting and managing the environment

In the heart of the Queensland tropics, Whitsundays operate across a landscape of beautiful coastline where 3 catchments and 74 offshore Great Barrier Reef islands host a richness of biodiversity in aquatic, marine and land environments.

Whitsunday Regional Council takes a whole of catchment approach to environmental management which supports strategic projects and sustainable outcomes. The Council has been very busy over the last year and some of the highlights are Adoption of the new Pest Management Plan, Adoption of the Litter Management Strategy, continuing work on the development of the Botanic Gardens at Cannonvale, Commissioning Beach erosion studies for 5 beaches around Bowen, Developing a Draft Natural Resource Management Strategy, A project to manage Weeds of national Significance, in partnership with Dry Tropics NRM Group, Significant upgrade of Bowen Landfill, Adopting foreshore Management plans for a number of beaches and Working with Ergon to produce a Plant Smart Brochure.

Along with these are the ongoing partnerships that significantly boost Council's delivery of environmental outcomes. The support Council gives to Whitsunday Catchment Landcare ensures a partnership that brings substantial extra investment into community based natural resource management in the region. Council has recently become a Reef Guardian Council and continues to support programs in the Reef Guardian Schools in the region. Council's support of Eco Barge Services has allowed this organisation to continue this outstanding work with volunteers cleaning up marine debris from the coastal and island foreshores.

Queensland's Young Legends Award: Redcliffe's Youth Space Program (South East Queensland)

Nominated by Moreton Bay Regional Council

This award recognises the demonstrated accomplishment in youth initiated or led activities.

The 'Our Future' program has employed 15 'at risk' young people who are passionate about the environment and passionate about teaching the community to care for their future, and the future of the generations to come.

The focus of 'Our Future' is about young people expressing their fears over Australia becoming unliveable if the current generation doesn't act now. The participants undertake training in a number of areas including landscaping, recycling, environmental awareness, business, and environmental planning and workplace readiness skills.

The participants have produced a children's book and game that educates about recycling and has been piloted at a local childcare facility. The group have also established a drought resistant, native garden and cascade forest in Humpybong Park as a gift to the community. The garden was created using only organic and recyclable materials and includes education plaques and artworks created from 100% recyclable products.

Paradise & Bishopp Outdoor Advertising Heritage Award: Childers (Wide Bay Burnett)

Nominated by Bundaberg Regional Council

This award recognises the commitment to the preservation, conservation and celebration of history, heritage and culture.

Situated at the juncture of the Bruce and Isis Highways, Childers is approximately 320 kilometres north-west from Brisbane.

One of the most picturesque towns on the Bruce Highway, the main street of Childers is lined with leopard trees and a number of beautifully preserved historic buildings.

Bakers Military Memorabilia Museum is unquestionably one of the best displays of military memorabilia outside the Canberra war memorial as is the 'wrap' that has been placed on the collections at Bakers Museum. The collection also includes countless items associated with various emergency services including police, ambulance, and nurses. The museum also showcases appliances from bygone eras making the collection tally over 27,000 items.

The War Memorial Precinct has been a true "team effort", with many people, organisations and local and State Government involved in its development. The original aim of the project was to build a Memorial Garden and Remembrance Precinct adjacent to the existing Soldiers Room Memorial. The precinct honours the region's soldiers of war. The poppy inspired granite designed walls features inscribed quotations from veterans

and widows that tell personal stories of their life during the war. A refurbished Krups Cannon/Howitzer sits outside the Memorial.

Australia Post Bush Spirit Award: Chillagoe (Far North Queensland)
Nominated by Tablelands Regional Council

This award recognises the commitment to solving problems faced during difficult times.

On the outer edge of the Tableland Regional Council, situated some hours drive from main town services and conveniences, the people of Chillagoe show typical bush spirit.

In early May, you'll probably see people in Lycra pounding along some lonely road with an empty wheelbarrow. Don't be alarmed. They are athletes and their training for the pinnacle event of their sport. The Great Wheelbarrow Race is a three day competition that sees hundreds of runners set out from Mareeba for Chillagoe – a distance of 149km – with a standard 22.5kg Kelso wheelbarrow, all in the name of charity.

Through the Benefitted Rate scheme, The Hub, Private museums, local business and industry, cooperation and collaboration with neighbouring communities along the Wheelbarrow Way and individuals, the Chillagoe Alliance, brings the community together to raise the community's living standard and assists community groups and individuals in practical ways. These selfless individuals contribute their own skills to benefit the needs of the town.

Chillagoe and its citizens epitomise true Aussie Bush Spirit.

RACQ Litter Prevention Award: Dysart (Whitsunday Isaac Mackay)
Nominated by Isaac Regional Council

This award recognises the litter management and abatement within the community.

BMA (*Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance*) and Dysart State High School have taken the meaning of "rubbish duty" to a new level, launching the Clean-Up Dysart program to clean up litter in the Central Queensland town.

There was an excessive amount of litter around town so the Dysart community decided to become proactive and start taking pride in the town.

The successful relationship between the mines and the local high school diversified and focus on an issue that has become so important for today's society and the environment, litter! The 'Clean-Up Dysart program involves a fortnightly clean-up, involving BMA employees and Dysart State High School students and teachers, and has resulted in clean streets in Dysart. So far 800kgs of rubbish has been collected with approximately 80 people involved in the "emu parades".

An education program around rubbish and recycling, promotes positive behaviour change in Dysart around littering. The school and BMA will review and evaluate the programs' effectiveness and look at bringing in additional partners to ensure its longevity.

Dysart has become proactive and got their hands dirty to overcome the problem, both by prevention and rubbish clean ups.

Resource Recovery Award: Rockhampton (Central Queensland)
Nominated by Rockhampton Regional Council

This award recognises the conservation of natural resources, through recovery, reuse and appropriate waste management.

Long heralded as the Beef Capital of Australia, Rockhampton also proudly wears the banner of being the capital of Central Queensland's Capricorn Region and 2009's Tidiest Town.

Striving to be a leader in sustainability within the waste industry, Rockhampton Regional Council Waste and Recycling Services uses the most effective technologies and methods available with the aim of providing services and facilities that best serve the community's public and environmental health needs.

Waste minimisation programs implemented include; Festive Season Green Guide, Waste Education Trailer, CQ Calendar Competition, Castaway Art Competition, Trendy Trash Shop, Low Carbon Diet, Community Mulch Program, Waste Education Trailer, National Recycling Week - CQ Recycling Campaign, CQ Recycling Website, School Battery Recycling Competition, Public Place Recycling and the CQ Recycling Hero Campaign includes:

Resource Recovery in Rockhampton has redirected huge amounts of material into the recycling stream.

Partnerships Award: Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre (North Queensland)

This award recognises the partnering to motivate, educate, involve and enhance the school community.

Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre Inc (CTNC Inc) is a non-profit organisation that is managed by a committee of enthusiastic, community minded people.

The organisation endeavours to identify, promote and develop the interests and needs of the Charters Towers Community.

CTNC Inc's service hub is the Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre, which provides an attractive, comfortable, non-judgmental environment where anyone can come to obtain information, referral services, resources and support.

Strong partnerships are embedded in the successful operation of the Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre. The City Country Day; The Healthy Lifestyle Program which promotes and enhances community well being; the Seedlings to Salad School Garden and Triple G projects on worm farming and planting workshops; Sizzlin' Sistas is a partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health; Walk Around the World is partnered with Charters Towers Regional Council and this year had over 500 participants. Planning has begun on future activities with the Dalrymple Landcare Committee Inc, Crop Circle where over 80 families are now involved with sharing home grown produce and Dalflin Employment Alliance on a community garden.

Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre excels at initiating and implementing partnerships.

Grundfos Pumps Water Conservation Award: Hervey Bay
Nominated by Fraser Coast Regional Council

This award recognises the outstanding accomplishment in water conservation.

WetSide Water Education Park is not just the biggest attraction to hit Hervey Bay since migrating humpback whales were 'discovered' – it is also a monument to the water conservation and recycling carried out by Wide Bay Water Corporation across the city.

WetSide is a fun, free, eco-friendly public space designed around water 'infotainment' – which means water information delivered in a fun, activity-based way. This kind of learning is both popular and effective.

As you walk around the timber boardwalks of WetSide Water Education Park you will literally encounter hundreds of water messages! They're easy to read and designed in a 'drip-feed' fashion. In fact learning about water at WetSide is a bit like osmosis. You'll absorb information without having to put in much effort at all!

A key feature of Wetside is the recycled rainwater that flows through it. It is harvested from the stormwater network and treated on site using the latest microfiltration techniques. Visitors can follow this process on one of the decks where the Microfiltration Unit can be seen in operation.

The "WetSide" message is reinforced within the community by practical and effective strategies. The Wastewater Reuse Program, supports sporting bodies, farmers and Wide Bay Waters Hardwood Plantations, to effectively manage their water use.

Queensland's Friendliest Town: Normanton
Nominated by Carpentaria Shire Council

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

Aptly referred to as the 'Outback by the sea', Normanton is a small cattle town, just south of the Gulf of Carpentaria, on the Norman River.

Life here revolves around the river. Yours will too when you start pulling in the scrumptious barramundi. The Norman River is famous for its barra fishing and the salmon swimming along in big beautiful schools!

The township is one of the historic towns of northwest Queensland and is the headquarters of the famous Gulflander Rail Service and one of Normanton's most notable features is a statue of an 8.64 m long salt water crocodile, named Kris. It is surrounded by fascinating wetlands where the bird population has to be seen to be believed.

Normanton has wide streets, lots of services and its population of 1700 is made up of Indigenous and caucasian Australians. The people of Normanton are warm and friendly and they love to chat, these are great people with a down to earth approach to life that is catchy!

Normanton's very strong and close knit community is working hard to improve their community. The highly active Interagency Network which works closely with the shire council and numerous other state and federal departments, environmental, sporting and community groups with the emphasis being on resident and youth participation.

The Normanton Youth Rural Skills Program, a partnership between council, Zinifex mines, police, Morr Morr Pastoral Company and all aboriginal groups, teaches horsemanship skills, to create future work opportunities within the pastoral industry.

'Domestic Violence—it's not our game' campaign is a joint initiative of the Normanton Building Safer Communities Action Team (BSCAT) and the Normanton Stingers Rugby League Club has resulting a drop in incidences of domestic violence.

Ergon Energy's Energy Conservation Champions Award: Tieri (Central Queensland)
Nominated by Oaky Creek Coal

This award recognises the accomplishment in the conservation of energy.

Tieri was built to become home for the Oaky Creek Coal mine employees and their families. Tieri residents, both old and new, are proud of the vibrant and strong community they have developed and continue to develop.

Utilising the latest energy minimisation processes and smart building designs, houses and other buildings throughout Tieri are equipped with an extensive range of energy saving devices. Tieri is currently conducting a residential solar panel trial.

Oakey Creek Coal has taken on a leadership role in energy conservation in Tieri, offering Climate Home Smart Rebates, energy saving light bulbs and water saving shower heads

to tenants at no cost and a implementing a Community Education Program which informs and motivates the community.

ENDS

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