

Australian Tidy Towns 2010 Program Report

Town/Community: GOOLWA SA **Date judged:** 21 December 2009

Population: approx 7 500

Organisers: GOOLWA Tidy Towns Committee (GTTC) in partnership with the Alexandrina Council

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COMMUNITY ACTION/ PARTNERSHIPS

GOOLWA's long tradition in the state and national Tidy Towns program continues with the community involved in numerous projects associated with ensuring the town's sustainability.

The community successfully initiates broad alliances to improve its environment and complements the Alexandrina Council's strategic approach to the principles of sustainability.

GOOLWA's entry statements are strong and welcome the many thousands of visitors and tourists who pass through and stay within this popular tourist region with numerous natural attractions.

Residents keenly maintain their gardens and surrounds demonstrating community spirit and pride.

An extensive number of community partnerships are evident and celebrate numerous projects that help make GOOLWA sustainable.

The Cittaslow movement has assisted in planning for a more sustainable community in regard to the establishment of a Community Garden, created initiatives for tourism and has provided an international profile.

Another notable example includes Alexandrina Council's leadership and encouragement that has provided great cooperation within all sections of the community in its endeavour to create a stronger environmentally sustainable community.

The whole GOOLWA community and Alexandrina Council are to be commended on their tremendous efforts in hosting the internationally-renowned Tour Down Under professional cycle race as well as community ride. Thousands of cyclists and spectators descended upon GOOLWA and were well catered for and hosted by a willing and embracing community.

LITTER PREVENTION

Positive litter control strategies and the community's commitment to keeping GOOLWA litter free is more than evident throughout the town with numerous bins in place and many residents picking up litter on their daily walking regimes.

GOOLWA's 'Adopt-a-Road' program involves not only members of the Tidy towns network but members of the general community who want to volunteer their time to ensure the area in and around GOOLWA is free from litter.

KESAB's (Keep SA Beautiful) support is more than evident in how the community of GOOLWA perceives litter and their commitment to the prevention of litter throughout the region.

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION & PROTECTION

Environmental innovation and sustainability are major elements of GOOLWA's commitment to their local environment.

Extensive environmental protection programs arranged through a broad network of partners are a feature in and around the community.

The commitment to a broad range of environmental care and restoration projects bears the testimony that GOOLWA's citizens more than care for their local environment.

Examples of innovative approaches to reducing impact on the local environment include energy efficiency initiatives in public and domestic buildings, renewable energy sources purchased to power street lighting together with partnerships in addressing local environmental sustainability issues including stormwater management and wastewater reuse.

Alexandrina Council, GOOLWA Coastcare group and other stakeholders work together to maintain and reduce human impacts on the busy coastal areas around GOOLWA.

Extensive fencing and signs have been introduced to protect the endangered Hooded Plovers together with sensitive coastal dunes and community plantings.

Well designed beautification initiatives provide a welcoming approach to this popular attraction for surfers, fishers and beach visitors.

WATER CONSERVATION & ENERGY INNOVATION

Water conservation is high on the community and Council's environmental agenda with various initiatives in place.

GOOLWA has a number of stormwater catchment basins constructed throughout the town to capture and reuse stormwater.

Alexandrina Council's irrigation efficiency program for its parks, reserves and gardens together with the use of local indigenous plants reduces water use by millions of litres per year.

The community's recently completed wastewater treatment plant treats effluent and stormwater with the treated water used by industries that previously used River Murray water.

Compulsory installation of rainwater tanks, dual flush toilets and aerating shower heads for new buildings and extensions will result in savings of thousands of litres of water per year per residence.

As a result of a partnership with Bendigo Bank and Zen Home Energy Systems, Council has provided the opportunity for residents to purchase renewable solar panels at bulk prices. Hundreds of applications have been received for installation in the GOOLWA region. A significant reduction in energy use is envisaged in the future.

As a part of its review of energy use, Council will be conducting an audit of its facilities. Energy reduction initiatives are to be identified and incorporated into future Council strategies for energy conservation.

RESOURCE RECOVERY & WASTE MANAGEMENT

Resource recovery initiatives are the key GOOLWA's commitment to reducing impact on their local environment, in particular landfill facilities.

Residents are committed to maximising the recovery of resources by encouraging community involvement, education, initiating recovery approaches and facility provision.

Recycling programs are a priority with well organised community recycling systems in place. Numerous collection and diversion systems are available to enable the community to maximise the numerous facilities to recover resources.

GOOLWA's Waste and Recovery Depot includes the South Coast Bottle and Can Co. for recycling containers and the Goolwa Salvage and Save yard which is operated by Finding Workable Solutions, which provides employment for people with disabilities.

Recycled materials include building products and general household items which are sold to the public.

Green waste is turned to mulch on site and used by the Council on public gardens or sold to the community.

An innovative sewage dewatering application is currently being introduced that has the ability for residue reuse as compost to further increase recovery of a unique resource.

Both Investigator College and GOOLWA Primary School have resource recovery and recycling programs in place with proceeds being used to support projects such as World Vision.

HERITAGE & CULTURE

Protecting and restoring GOOLWA's proud heritage is a priority within the community.

Active historical groups work in partnership with the National Trust and others in preserving the community's proud heritage, in particular their strong maritime history.

The historical significance of boats to the GOOLWA community can only be appreciated if they are in a usable condition after restoration.

Restoration is as close as possible to the original, which means that sourcing of fittings and timber have to be made from salvage and second hand outlets, as new originals are no longer available.

GOOLWA boasts the oldest Post Office in the state and oldest railway in the nation with restoration programs ensuring these icons are well preserved and interpreted.

GOOLWA's Wooden Boat Festival celebrates the region's rich maritime and port heritage. The event attracts visitors and participants from all around Australia.

YOUNG LEGENDS

Environmental education programs are a key element within GOOLWA's educational *system*.

Schools are strongly focused on environmental programs with innovative approaches to education and developed community partnerships for positive environmental outcomes.

Investigator College's mission is to provide a protected and sustainable fresh water sanctuary for long and short neck turtles. Students have been involved in the rescue of turtles affected by the scourge of tubeworms as a result of retreating water supply.

GOOLWA Primary School students and the Aboriginal community are working together to develop a sustainable 'bush tucker' garden.

SUGGESTIONS

As GOOLWA is fast becoming an internationally recognised sustainable community, Council may wish to consider a 'Welcome kit' for new residents to enable an understanding of environmental and social initiatives underway throughout the community.

To complement the GOOLWA's well planned development directions, Council and the community may wish to consider a consistent sign approach to promote the facilities/services available within the town.

Construction projects should be encouraged to comply with environmental considerations to limit impact on local waterways as a result of waste dispersion together with sediment drag off. KESAB's Clean Site program resources are able to assist in raising industry awareness.

As GOOLWA is a popular destination for large community events, eg, market days, etc, suggest the early removal of waste from public bins will assist in reducing litter being blown and deposited in adjacent waterways.

Congratulations to everyone involved in the GOOLWA Tidy Towns program and associated community action projects.

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

*Dick Olesinski
National Tidy Towns judge*