

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 7th December 2009

Sustainable Communities – Walking the Talk

Minister for Environment and Conservation Hon Jay Weatherill MP applauded the volunteer effort and tangible environmental outcomes achieved in the 2009 KESAB Sustainable Communities (*tidy towns*) program with winners announced today.

Over 300 category entries were judged by KESAB, embracing projects including a schools marine learning centre, restoring old bicycles, harvesting rain water, revegetation with thousands of trees and new waste and recycling systems fostering improved sustainable behaviour in local communities.

The overall Sustainable Communities (*tidy towns*) award winner was Goolwa, also judged Best Community Southern and Hills Region.

Goolwa demonstrated a great example of community working together with an intergenerational youth mentoring program restoring bikes, skills development through revegetation and rain water harvesting at Investigator College where 1 million litres of water was collected for every 100mm of rainfall. Also recognised was the community garden providing enough produce for a regular food barrow in the main street.

Minister Jay Weatherill was particularly impressed with regional school efforts in the Sustainable Communities (*tidy towns*) program.

“The number of school activities and level of innovation demonstrated by schools working with local councils and communities shows the value of engaging schools through programs such as Sustainable Communities and Wipe Out Waste supported by a strong Zero Waste SA and KESAB partnership” the Minister said.

“Schools have developed aquaculture facilities (Parndana KI), undertaken significant revegetation (Murray Bridge), implemented coastal monitoring (Pt Vincent), and reduced water and energy use through increased efficiencies (Goolwa)”, he said.

Regional winner Waikerie (Best Community Murray Region) demonstrated a 50% saving in water use over the past three years. This was achieved by a combination of water sensitive urban design, harvesting rainfall and better water use saving \$30 000 annual water costs.

Best Community Outback Region Marree was recognised for working with the Outback Areas Community Development Trust providing waste and recyclable collection utilising local indigenous job seekers. The “Roots and Shoots” program has developed a strong sense of community through a positive relationship with the environment.

Sustainable Communities (*tidy towns*) awards recognise a huge community volunteer effort estimated to contribute 700,000 hours valued at \$25 - \$30 million dollars each year in South Australia.

Other community efforts recognised by KESAB included;

- Mt Gambier council providing sustainability mentoring to community members
- Tumby Bay local skills centre acting as a hub for local crafts, culture and enterprise particularly for the local olive industry
- Whyalla setting a benchmark for rural waste and recycling systems and reducing waste to landfill by 40% in the past two years
- Eudunda transforming the old railway line and siding into a park and central town feature
- Murray Bridge schools, community and council planting over 3000 trees a year providing growth for habitat and vulnerable species.
- Goolwa total community effort in response to lower Murray Lakes water depletion by implementing a range of water reduction and rainfall harvesting initiatives.
- Port Vincent Primary School coastal research and monitoring through a very interactive marine learning centre.

Goolwa will represent South Australia in the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns National Awards to be announced early in 2010.

National State and Territory 2009 winners already announced include;

- NSW Lochhart
- Qld Rockhampton
- Vic Beechworth
- WA Port Hedland
- NT Barunga
- Tas Richmond

For further information contact;

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