

Australian Tidy Towns 2010 Program Report

Community: RICHMOND Tasmania **Date judged:** 17 & 18 November 2009
Population: approx 880
Organisers: RICHMOND Tidy Towns Sub-Committee, the community in partnership with Clarence City Council (CCC)
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COMMUNITY ACTION/ PARTNERSHIPS

RICHMOND, one of Tasmania's hidden secrets, is situated only 25kms from Hobart and is an integral part of Tasmania's Convict Trail program.

The community works in broad partnerships to effectively manage the protection of its colonial, convict and agricultural heritage with the needs of today's modern society and heritage tourist.

RICHMOND's Advisory Committee coordinates a host of projects and activities together with the extremely active Tidy Towns Sub-Committee.

A successful partnership between the active community and Clarence City Council is a testament to the numerous Tidy Towns-related tasks evident throughout the town. The alliance plays a coordinating role for numerous projects within the community.

Council works with the community through the RICHMOND Advisory Committee and Tidy Towns Sub-Committee to ensure that homes and private gardens are well maintained. It also ensures that approaches to town, including signs, public parks, gardens, footpaths and verges are well looked after.

Protection of the heritage significance of the town, its bridge and its buildings, and increasing awareness of the importance of its history are fundamental to how the community works together for the overall benefit of RICHMOND.

Notable example of one community group's commitment to the town is the RICHMOND Volunteer Fire Brigade. This extremely active group fund raises for projects, participates and contributes to community care projects and organises activities and functions that provide major benefits to the residents of RICHMOND.

LITTER PREVENTION

As a popular tourist destination, litter prevention and reduction is crucial to RICHMOND's reputation as a major tourist attraction.

Local school education programs highlight the need for a broad-based approach to the challenges of reducing litter.

Community action by groups and dedicated individual volunteers on a regular basis extends to roadside cleanups as well as along the banks of the Coal River.

Particular attention is directed to RICHMOND's three historic cemeteries and in particular, for caring for the river near RICHMOND's bridge, to prevent damage to the major historic attraction to the town.

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION & PROTECTION

The preservation of the environment is important to RICHMOND for the benefit of its residents and the numerous tourists who visit and pass through each year.

RICHMOND's environmental improvement projects are diverse and innovative.

Many raise awareness of the importance of the town's history and built heritage and its place as a busy tourist destination together with the need to protect the environment.

Numerous projects focus on the beautification of the town, maintaining and improving the environment with projects including Rivercare, recycling, weeding and tree planting and coordinated by the RICHMOND Advisory Committee, in partnership with government, business, community groups and local schools.

The town's determined Sustainable Living Group is taking the lead role in encouraging residents to live sustainably.

WATER CONSERVATION & ENERGY INNOVATION

Having recently emerged from a devastating drought, which emptied dams and threatened agriculture and primary industry, the RICHMOND community is more than aware of the need to conserve water.

RICHMOND's noted private gardens have moved towards being sustainable and water friendly, without losing their heritage charm.

The Coal River Valley recycled water scheme is a multi-million dollar project that recycles wastewater from all of Clarence for use in irrigating the Coal River Valley.

Recycled water is used in agriculture, on golf courses and a plant nursery. The system continues to expand with the RICHMOND wastewater reuse scheme together with an irrigation upgrade at the town's Municipal Park.

RICHMOND's community's awareness of the need for sustainable energy management is developing through the work of community groups, in particular the Sustainable Living group through partnerships with local and state government on energy conservation approaches.

RESOURCE RECOVERY & WASTE MANAGEMENT

Resource recovery initiatives are a feature of RICHMOND's commitment to waste reduction.

RICHMOND's waste management strategy aims at sustainable practices in waste reuse, avoidance and resource recovery.

RICHMOND's community, Clarence City Council, local businesses and schools, focus on the conservation of resources, the recovery and reuse of materials and the appropriate disposal of non-recyclable materials.

Historically, RICHMOND has a tradition of recycling its building materials. Some of its nineteenth century heritage buildings were built from recycled stone with enterprising local builders using windows and doors from derelict properties throughout the nineteenth century.

HERITAGE & CULTURE

A host of initiatives and projects are underway to share the rich historic secrets that make RICHMOND a heritage town.

Heritage restoration programs are a major priority within the community with many fine examples of the preservation of cultural, retail and historic features.

Notable example is the protection of the nationally-listed RICHMOND Bridge, Australia's oldest bridge, built in 1823.

Other projects include Convict Trail signs, an extensive History Interpretation Sign project, Conservation Management Plans for the RICHMOND Bridge as well as the former Council Chambers, an upgrade by National Parks of the RICHMOND Gaol, Australia's oldest gaol, built in 1825, and numerous preservation and interpretative works throughout the town.

Other examples include the restoration of St Luke's Church and healing garden together with the reformation of the Honourable Order of Clockwinders, restoration of St John's Church stained glass window and restoration of RICHMOND Primary School's original school house building.

RICHMOND and the Coal River Valley Historical Societies are involved in research and the production of an extensive collection of historic publications.

New developments within the town link with the unique historic architecture within the township to complement the warm and welcoming atmosphere within RICHMOND.

Great support has been gained from local residents to ensure the town maintains its unique ambience based on a memorable heritage experience.

YOUNG LEGENDS

For many years, RICHMOND's youth have made significant and practical contributions for the overall benefit of their town.

Increasingly, local schools are working more closely together on community projects as well as continuing to develop partnerships throughout the community.

Local young resident, Sophie Hofto's concern for the river and its ducks led to improvements in the Rivercare program and local businesses replacing 'duck-bread' with duck-food pellets.

SUGGESTIONS

If not already in place, RICHMOND's great achievement as Tasmania's Tidiest Town for 2009 could be promoted on Council materials, together with local businesses to market the town's award on promotional brochures, etc.

New construction sites can have major negative environmental impacts, particularly regarding sediment loads on local waterways. Keep Australia Beautiful's (SA) Clean Site program resources available to assist with educating contractors to be more environmentally aware.

An opportunity may be considered to promote community group(s) involvement in RAC Roadwatch program to encourage others to participate in this worthwhile program.

Congratulations to everyone involved in the RICHMOND 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*