

# Australian Tidy Towns 2010 Program Report

**Town/Community:** PORT HEDLAND WA ..... **Date judged:** 7 & 8 December 2009

**Population:** approx 18 000

**Organisers:** PORT HEDLAND community in partnership with the Shire of Manjimup

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## COMMUNITY ACTION/PARTNERSHIPS

HEDLAND's Tidy Towns Committee and extensive network of business, industry and community groups play an important role in preserving and enhancing the local environment through a range of projects and developed alliances for a sustainable future.

Various projects are a feature of PORT & SOUTH HEDLAND's welcoming presentation and beautification initiatives within an arid environment with numerous sculptures and artworks a feature throughout the community promoting extensive examples of community commitment, achievement and pride.

The community's sculptural program is part of BHP Billiton Iron Ore's generous contribution to enhancing cultural identity throughout PORT & SOUTH HEDLAND.

Positioned strategically throughout the community, sculptures of kangaroos, turtles, crocodiles and creative abstracts of marine activities provide a memorable experience.

Colourful and well designed signs are consistent and promote a thematic approach at highly utilised public facilities throughout the town.

Town of PORT HEDLAND Council leads by example and encourages the community to ensure that homes and private gardens are tidy and well maintained.

The community's Tidy Streets and Tidy Gardens Awards promote the importance of residents maintaining open space surrounding homes ensuring a healthy and attractive appearance. The awards provide an opportunity for keen gardeners to receive public recognition for their efforts and encourage others to get involved.

Mayor Kelly Howlett's personal commitment to improving PORT & SOUTH HEDLAND and encouraging the community to get involved in an extensive host of environmental improvement and beautification projects is to be commended.

## LITTER PREVENTION

Residents of HEDLAND view litter prevention as an important aspect of promoting respect for the environment and enhances not only the general appearance, but also increases community pride and well being.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken by the HEDLAND community to promote litter prevention, including the award winning '*Cash for Trash*' program, a school Anti-Litter poster competition and participation in Clean Up Australia Day activities.

The innovative '*Cash for Trash*' program was created in response to the issue of broken glass on streets, footpaths and in parks. It aimed at not only improving the appearance of public open space and promote responsible waste and litter management, but also increased physical safety of residents.

Captain Clean-Up's visit to HEDLAND's younger age groups promoted litter prevention activities and an anti-litter poster competition.

The visit consolidated anti-littering messages amongst school students which filtered throughout the community.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION & PROTECTION**

With over 170 volunteers, the local environment group Care For HEDLAND Environmental Association Inc, boasts one of the most active amongst not for profit community groups in the town.

The Care For HEDLAND volunteers' commitment to the Flatback sea turtle monitoring program aims at protecting natural habitat by raising awareness in and recording levels of activity during the nesting season.

Volunteers also conduct turtle-watching and hatchling emergence tours, speak at local schools, promote awareness of rising threats to sea turtles and educate members of the community on how they can assist in the Flatback sea turtle conservation efforts.

The Garden Club holds monthly meetings and enables individuals to receive advice and information from local gardeners about the most successful way to maintain a garden in the harsh Pilbara environment.

## **WATER CONSERVATION & ENERGY INNOVATION**

The HEDLAND Tidy Towns committee continues to foster community alliances which aim at ensuring the town has a sustainable future.

Community response is extremely positive to areas that have been enhanced through the use of native plants and trees. To significantly reduce watering requirements, instead of reducing the amount of greenery, Town of Port HEDLAND Council uses Pilbara native plant species where ever possible.

Energy conservation initiatives are currently being undertaken by Council, including a comprehensive lighting audit of public areas to determine current use in order to introduce strategies to reduce energy use.

Council has successfully implemented energy conservation initiatives in the past by providing residents with energy efficient globes.

## **RESOURCE RECOVERY & WASTE MANAGEMENT**

HEDLAND Town Council has introduced a range of initiatives that aim at increasing appropriate resource recovery approaches and responsible waste management.

One of the highlights has been the '*Cash for Trash*' program which was recognised in the *Resource and Waste Management* category at WA's 2009 Environment Awards.

This program is the first recycling program of its kind in Western Australia and has set a benchmark for innovative waste management in regional and remote communities throughout the state.

Other waste management initiative include the use of a shredder by the Town of Port HEDLAND Council to process tonnes of green waste including grass, weeds, tree loppings and wooden pallets. The mulch has been used over public open space areas, reducing water use and evaporation.

Cardboard and newspaper collections have also commenced and these items recycled with other organic materials.

Council has also introduced a whitegoods collection program to appropriately dispose of non recyclable electric goods.

## **HERITAGE & CULTURE**

Maintaining HEDLAND's proud heritage is an important part of the community's historic restoration and cultural programs.

Numerous examples of restored historic buildings are lasting examples of the pride evident within the community and the commitment to preserving PORT HEDLAND's colourful past.

Notable example is Dalgety House Museum, a turn of the century house. Displays within include an extensive collection of artefacts, photographs and documents that interpret HEDLAND's history over the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and pays tribute to the rich heritage of the town.

Various arts and cultural festivals regularly showcase the achievements of many community groups as well as Council initiatives.

The activities are highly successful in promoting to the wider community the many cultural activities being undertaken in HEDLAND.

## **YOUNG LEGENDS**

Extensive environmental education programs are a feature within PORT & SOUTH HEDLAND's education system.

All schools in HEDLAND have been highly supportive of student involvement in litter prevention, recycling, resource recovery and waste management, sport and recreation, creative arts and youth events.

The HEDLAND Youth Stakeholder Action Group, a group of stakeholders from local government, government agencies, industry, business and community groups coordinates youth initiatives and events with the aim of developing positive outcomes for young people.

The HEDLAND Youth Leadership Coalition (HYLC) is a group of youth who provide a voice in the community. HYLC is committed to raising the profile of youth in HEDLAND by ensuring ownership of all youth-related matters.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

If not already in place, PORT & SOUTH HEDLAND's great achievement as being WA's Tidiest Town for 2009 could be promoted on local business materials as well as Council correspondence to promote the town's award and hopefully derive benefits from increased visitation and subsequent economic opportunities.

Suggest watering facilities during the evening rather than during the middle of the day to reduce evaporation and water use.

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

An opportunity may be considered to promote community group(s) involvement in 'Adopt-a-site' projects by placing signs at sites to encourage others to participate in this worthwhile program.

*Congratulations to everyone involved in the PORT & SOUTH HEDLAND's 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*