

Australian Tidy Towns 2011 Program Report

Town/Community: WESTONIA WA ..**Date judged:** 30 Nov & 1 December 2010

Population: approx 250

Organisers: WESTONIA Tidy Towns Committee in partnership with the Shire of WESTONIA

Contact Names: Kara Hatch NRM Officer Shire of Westonia Phone: 0427 467077
Email: nrm@westonia.wa.gov.com

COMMUNITY ACTION/PARTNERSHIPS

Located on the edge of the Wheatbelt and the Goldfields regions, approximately 320 kms from Perth, WESTONIA is a vibrant and dynamic community.

WESTONIA's Tidy Towns committee plays an important role in preserving and enhancing the local environment through a range of projects and developed partnerships for a sustainable future. Various improvements are a feature of WESTONIA's welcoming and unique presentation and beautification approaches.

The Tidy Towns Committee plays a cooperative role in preserving and enhancing the environment for the benefit of residents and visitors.

The Shire of WESTONIA is supportive of all activities undertaken by the Tidy Towns Committee and other community organisations.

Notable partnership example is the Cement Street streetscape project which included the original Rabbit Proof Fence Gate. The project has created many benefits for existing businesses by fostering social links and interaction in the community.

Informal seating, shade and shelter are features for casual meetings amongst the community and visitors. The project has assisted in boosting community morale by creating an active and safe precinct, both day and night, for local residents as well as visitors to enjoy.

LITTER PREVENTION

WESTONIA Shire plays an important role in the promotion of achieving a litter free environment.

Signs are displayed throughout the community promoting litter reduction together with numerous litter bins situated throughout the town.

All local sporting venues and public facilities have special butt bins which the smoking community use. Those who choose to smoke are very conscientious with regards to disposing of their cigarette butts in the appropriate manner.

Community members are committed to keeping WESTONIA litter-free. Littering is seen as unacceptable and is not tolerated within the community. Participation in events such as Clean Up Australia Day reinforces this ethos and the community is more than happy to participate.

Catalpa Resources have a strict behaviour policy for their staff and this is inclusive of littering and respecting community facilities. Staff at the mine have been very supportive with no significant litter problems seen since commencement of mining adjacent to the town.

RESOURCE RECOVERY & WASTE MANAGEMENT

Resource recovery and recycling initiatives are a feature of WESTONIA's commitment to effective waste reduction.

A broad range of waste management initiatives are in place and accepted by the community with the outcome being a reduction of waste to landfill.

Farmers, Shire employees and local businesses take advantage of the Drum Muster facilities on offer within the Shire facilities. This ensures that containers which are used to store chemicals are recycled appropriately.

Oil is also reused or recycled. At WESTONIA's community refuse site, residents drop off drums of used vehicle oil and oil filters. Arrangements are then coordinated by the Shire to dispose of the oil appropriately through Wren Oil, a reputable oil recycling company.

Lion's club volunteers, in partnership with Shire staff, are to be commended for their commitment to coordinating the many tasks associated with recycling and recovering resources in the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION & PROTECTION

Combined with the appealing nature of the town, WESTONIA has a unique charm that is more than welcoming. The community works in numerous partnerships to achieve a secure future, agriculturally, commercially, environmentally and sustainably.

A joint project between Catalpa Resources Mine, Kings Park and Botanic Gardens, Shire of WESTONIA and community members has seen the successful translocation of the declared rare species, *Eremophila resinosa*. There are three sites around WESTONIA, which have had a very positive survival rate, particularly in this hot and arid environment.

The nearby Woodlands and Wildflowers Heritage Walk Trail is a 4km long walking trail that meanders through the woodland communities within WESTONIA.

Educational signs are positioned along the trail with tourists and local residents able to read about malleefowls, echidnas, birds, lichens, etc. It is a great educational and informational tool and is used frequently, particularly during spring when wildflowers are plentiful.

WATER CONSERVATION

WESTONIA is planning for its future water needs ensuring sustainability and efficient management. Water-efficient equipment is being widely sourced and utilised, as a joint project between WESTONIA Shire and Catalpa Resources.

The Wastewater Treatment Plant treats wastewater from the Edna May Mining Camp and new townhouse project. The water is to be used to reticulate the town's oval and various gardens around town.

This is an extremely complicated system and the community of WESTONIA are fortunate to have this kind of technology operating within their town.

The community is also very pleased that the treated water is able to be used to maintain public gardens as well as reduce the reliance on potable water.

The GroWestonia Community Nursery has a rainwater tank which waters the nursery's display gardens. Rainwater tanks are planned for the new Shire depot roof to fully water the Community Nursery.

ENERGY INNOVATION

WESTONIA's Townhouse project utilises renewable energy sources by way of solar hot water systems. This project is setting an example to the community that solar hot water systems are accessible and are an effective and economical way of heating water.

Many WESTONIA residents have installed solar hot water systems for their houses. This has been possible through various grant programs made available by funding bodies.

Students at the WESTONIA Primary School have been inspired after a solar panel was installed as part of the Solar Schools Program. Students learn about renewable energy and how energy is produced and stored.

HERITAGE & CULTURE

Maintaining WESTONIA's proud heritage is important to the community. Historic conservation approaches are a priority and managed by active volunteers.

WESTONIA Shire has implemented a town planning policy so that all new buildings follow the style of the town's Wolfram Street Façades project.

The project aims to recreate the facade of the main street during the early 1900's mining boom. The town facade has been effectively preserved to reflect its days as a booming gold mining town.

Old buildings have been restored and a new building constructed in a style that represents it's fascinating past, hence the town's catchphrase, 'WESTONIA more than a Façade.'

The Old Club Hotel Museum project has been an ongoing project for the last two years. The project began with the erection of the building and the installation of signs. The need for a museum has been identified for some time with many donations of significant historical items to the Shire for preservation. On completion, this museum will be world class and a wonderful example of preserving the community's rich history.

YOUNG LEGENDS

The education system within WESTONIA has an ongoing commitment to environmental care as well as visual improvement programs.

The Shire of WESTONIA and WESTONIA Community Resource Centre are very active in promoting and educating the youth of the community about the environment and the consequences if not cared for properly.

Great example is the promotion, raising awareness and education by visiting the Woodlands and Wildflowers Heritage Walk Trail for guided trail events.

Farming and mining are the main industries that sustain the WESTONIA community. The environment is a strong factor as to why families are still farming today and the revegetation that goes hand in hand with the mining and farming sectors educates the youth as to the need to revegetate unproductive or unused areas of farming and mining operations.

Living on farms, many young people have a hands-on education through their family. This includes planting suitable trees and pasture taking into account aspects of general farming challenges such as soil erosion, salinity, and biodiversity.

Being involved with the GroWestonia Community Nursery and with the Shire's Natural Resource Management Officer, youth have the opportunity to learn the impact the environment has on rural and remote communities.

SUGGESTIONS

If not already in place, WESTONIA's great achievement as being WA's Tidiest Town for 2010 could be promoted on Shire letterheads, envelopes, etc. Local businesses could also be encouraged to market the town's award.

WESTONIA's Tidy Towns Committee is an active coordinator of numerous projects around the town. If not already in place, perhaps projects initiated by the committee could be promoted through the use of an engraved plaque or sign. This may assist in encouraging further community support of the program.

The Packaging Stewardship Forum has programs that look to partner with communities and local government in providing funding support for litter and waste initiatives through the 'Do the right thing' program.

Resources from the Wastewater Treatment Plant may be able to be allocated to water the Primary School's oval and adjacent gardens. The town's water reuse project is ideal to be able to interpret and share with residents and visitors through well designed signs, etc.

Congratulations to everyone involved in the WESTONIA's Tidy Towns program and associated community action projects.

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

*Dick Olesinski
National Tidy Towns judge*