

**Keep Australia Beautiful
Australian Clean Beaches Awards 2009**

North Steyne NSW

Overall Winner – Australia’s Cleanest Beach 2009
Winner: Environmental Innovation category award
Winner: Energy Conservation category award
Winner: Young Legends category award
Joint Winner: Community Partnership category award

Introduction

North Steyne is located approximately midway between Manly and Queenscliff and is easily accessible by all forms of public and private transport. Being a reasonably short ferry ride from Sydney’s CBD and often referred to as the Gateway to the Northern Beaches, the area has an exceedingly high visitation rate (nearly 8 million per annum) for a relatively small local population. North Steyne lies within the Manly Council LGA, and benefits greatly from Councils proven commitment to the preservation of the environment.

The focus for the North Steyne Community is the North Steyne Surf Life Saving Club, which not only has a long and prestigious history, but is also undertaking innovative cutting edge environmentalism for the benefit of all, not just their members. The Club is open all year round, and the safety and environmental messages expressed by the Members through action and strategic alliances are commendable.

Community Partnerships

- Recognises achievement in community beautification, presentation and pride.
- Recognises communities which proudly preserve and value cultural history.
- Recognises partnership achievements by government and/or business with local communities.

North Steyne is a well known and often visited stretch of sand which may not be as heavily impacted as say Manly Beach and the area adjacent to the Corso, but still faces pressure from high usage. Council has undertaken a number of beautification programs along the foreshore, creating excellent recreational areas and visitor amenities along the stretch. These areas are exceedingly well maintained by a dedicated Council Team and Rangers patrol the area constantly.

High traffic areas are especially well maintained and the overall effect is that North Steyne is an area appreciated by locals and enjoyed by the many visitors to the area.

The North Steyne Surf Club has a long and active history and the Club’s focus is to preserve this history through the many publications, photographs and signage in and around the Club. Members young and not so young are encouraged to make the Club more than just a storage shed for rescue and training equipment, but a repository of surf lore and camaraderie.

The Club, working with Council, local businesses and organisations such as Surf Life Saving Australia, Energy for Eternity, and the Coastal Environment Centre have established themselves as the bastion for environmental activism in the area, and have become a great supporter and partner for the Manly Environment Centre.

Manly Council has been duly acknowledged through numerous programs and endeavours for their proactive approach to the environment and such issues as stormwater run off, sea level rise and enhancing cultural and historic events and personalities. This proud track record of Council’s assists greatly the initiatives undertaken by the North Steyne Surf Club through being able to call upon knowledge, materials and expertise. Council also stages a large number of environmentally focused events throughout the year (for example the Sustainability Fair, Penguin Aware program and the Wine and Food Festival which all have an strong environmental and educative message.

Environmental Innovation

-Recognises achievement through innovation by community, government and business under the principles and practical actions associated with environment protection and sustainability.

The Club has established an innovative and thought provoking Environmental Bronze Medallion program which takes inductees on an environmental journey around the local coastal zone. Based on many of the features of Surf Life Saving Australia's EcoSurf Policy, juniors are educated in the variety of sea life living literally on the doorstep and how to preserve and enhance local habitat. The overall aim of this program is similar to the Bronze Medallion for life saving, prevention is the key, and the process of learning is ongoing. The results have been that environmental messages, like risk minimisation messages, are learned, taken home and disseminated. In addition, as environmental training is ongoing through the variety of environmental messages exhibited around the Club and through Club publications, a commitment to environmental stewardship is engrained.

The Club is committed to the Coastal Ambassadors program which was developed by the Coastal Environment Centre at North Narrabeen. As detailed on their website, the program ... "aims to equip members of the Surf Life Saving Community ... to:

- Understand their working environment
- Promote environmental understanding and care for our coast within diverse membership sectors
- Showcase sustainability initiatives within their facilities
- As Coastal Ambassadors, share the conservation message with the wider beach going public."

The Club has also been a long term advocate of the Energy for Eternity initiative and Club members regularly liaise with this Tathra based organisation.

Resource Recovery

-Recognises achievement in community litter management and reduction including the undertaking of litter audits, and litter education programs.

-Recognises achievement in resource recovery and waste management including initiatives which conserve resources, water or energy minimisation practices; the recovery and reuse of materials including packaging, and the appropriate disposal of non-recyclable materials.

The Club, working with Council, local businesses and a range of community groups work diligently to encourage and foster litter abatement programs and initiatives. For example, Manly's commitment to reduce cigarette butt litter is well known, and the Club and North Steyne community work hard to support this project.

In addition, the Club is working to reduce the number of plastic bottles brought into the area by establishing water points. Along with this, the Club works with local cafes to reduce the number of Styrofoam cups and promote recycling.

The Club has undertaken an energy audit and is working with Council to achieve measured goals within a timetable of three years.

Protection of the Environment

-Recognises achievement in the protection of the natural environment and, specifically, the preservation of native flora and fauna.

Awareness raising activities for locals and visitors alike is a high priority for the North Steyne Club and community, and linked in with the commitment to support the ongoing work of the Coastal Ambassadors program and Council initiatives, beneficial outcomes have been achieved. These initiatives are fully supported by the near 1000 Club members, which has a positive effect on the broader Community.

This "broader Community" also includes the high proportion of international students and visitors to the area. Many Internationals have not experienced environmentalism to some degree, and the Club encourages greater awareness by promoting multi lingual messages, not only for surf safety but with environmental messages as well.

It is also of note that the Club is active in the area of Climate Change and associated sea level rise issues, and aware of the ramifications on the Club of associated phenomena.

Water Conservation

-Recognises sustainable water management within communities which has combined innovative water conservation and water re-use initiatives at the private, industrial and municipal levels, benefiting society and nature.

Along with Manly Council's much lauded stormwater program, the Surf Club is leading by example by using tank water and by installing timed showers. Rain water tanks have been installed, and these have been sunk into the sand. Water collected in the tanks is used to wash off surf equipment and hose down areas of the Club.

Water saving messages are prolific through the Club as well.

Energy Conservation

-Recognise sustainable energy management within communities which has combined innovative energy conservation initiatives at the private, industrial and municipal levels, benefiting society and nature.

Energy management systems are in place at the Surf Club, and there are plans to adopt many of the initiatives promoted by Manly Council and the Energy for Eternity group as well. Plans are underway for an increase in the use of solar power, and for this to be the primary source of power at the Club. Once again, these messages are taken home by the members which helps spread environmental messages.

Young Legends

-Recognises environmental achievement through youth initiative and/or by a community, which encourages and promotes youth initiative and environmental education.

The Club has identified the need to encourage a sustainable view to membership, striving for long term members not for a short lived rapid growth policy adopted by some organisations. This is reflected in the Club's commitment to youth and the Nippers program, along with the EcoSurf process. In addition, the range of activities includes environmental rock pool rambles, snorkelling activities and 'Recycling Olympic' challenge.

All these events are backed up with environmental messages which encourage locals and visitors alike to become aware of their environment and to protect it.

Special Thanks

A special thanks to Jo Cooper for her enthusiasm (and patience). Jo's appointment as Environmental Officer, ably assisted by the Club's Coastal Ambassadors, provides the Club and North Steyne in general a level of expertise and energy not generally experienced.

Appreciation to Clr Jean Hay for taking time out of her busy schedule to participate in the Judging.

... and to the North Steyne Crew who actively participated in the day and who went through the Bronze Medallion with me, Melita Khawly, Tracey Hare-Boyd, Ellis Cooper-Frater - Junior Coastal Ambassador and willing 'swimmer in difficulty', Damian O'Shannassy - President North Steyne, and, Michelle Sas - who arranged a fine spread for morning tea.

What is ECOSURF?

Ecosurf is about affirmative, local action in the face of the consequences of climate change, with the objective of promoting protection of coastal biodiversity and our beaches. It is a program which encourages surf lifesavers to work together with corporate and government partners and other community groups to positively impact on the environment. Through this program, our members will make a greater contribution to Australia's safety, sustainability and well-being.

Our playground – the Australian coastline – means Surf Life Saving will be among the first to confront the forecast effects of climate change including rising sea levels. We need to be among the first to act.

The Ecosurf program perfectly aligns with SLSA's mandate to provide protection and education about and on Australian beaches.

Our members work in sensitive eco-systems and it is expected, and in the future will be demanded, that Ecosurf be a part of everything we do.

ECOSURF operations

Surf Life Saving Australia has 306 clubs and 140,000 members volunteering time to saving lives.

Our members are uniquely placed to lead by example in their own communities by implementing practices that will lighten the ecological footprint of individual clubs.

At the same time we can work to increase awareness of the actions people in the broader community can take that will make a positive difference to the environment.

ECOSURF education

SLSA has the potential to motivate communities and facilitate change through our clubs, members and the people we influence (beachgoers and supporters).

By example, we will demonstrate practical and highly visible ways in which we can all have a positive impact on the environment. We will position ourselves as leaders for good environmental practice.

Programs are currently being driven at a 'grass roots' level through a variety of club initiatives including renewable energy, recycling, water consumption programs, education, green clubhouses and marine and coastal care.

Ecosurf offers simple approaches to complex environmental issues by showcasing achievements and building community morale.

http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=north+steyne&sll=-25.335448,135.745076&sspn=34.931274,39.726563&ie=UTF8&ll=-33.790588,151.287596&spn=0.003968,0.004849&t=k&z=17

