

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

**Loxton on the River Murray SA  
Winner: Water Conservation category award**

**Introduction**

Loxton is located 3 ½ hours North East of Adelaide and is on the Murray River and is known as the "Garden Town of the Riverland" region of South Australia.

Loxton Beach is an area approximately 3.5 kilometres in length and takes in a series of parks (Lions and Apex), a Caravan Park, two excellent boat launching facilities, ablutions blocks and rehabilitated wetland areas.

This is a small and extremely proud community doing it tough like so many inland areas across Australia. Long years of drought and reduced flow through the Murray could have easily decimated this township, but the Community, ably supported by Council and a dedicated commitment to keeping their town in the best shape possible, has kept Loxton a busy and welcoming location.

The first thing I saw when brought into Council's Administrative Building was a fine display of a range of awards, many from Keep Australia Beautiful – always a great sight to see. This enhanced my perception of this Town as I'd stopped at the Information Area at the Entrance to Loxton and was impressed by the number of awards received and activities staged displayed at the facility.

The beach is well served by the Loxton Riverfront Development Masterplan developed by the Loxton Waikerie Council, and the area has a long and successful history with Keep Australia Beautiful dating back to 1978.

All of these features, added to the fact that this is the first nomination for a non-coastal beach, bodes well for a strong application for acknowledgment in Keep Australia Beautiful's Awards programs.

Loxton's nomination highlights and further reinforces Australia's passion for beach activities where ever they occur, and reflects the strength and potential of the Clean Beach Awards.

### **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.

Loxton Beach is a welcoming area for locals and visitors alike. During my visit I noticed a number of local business people had come to the park adjacent to the river to enjoy their lunch and take in the cool breeze coming off the water. The area, while well served by Council, also has a number of other active stakeholders ensuring this remains a well maintained and sustainable series of facilities.

An outstanding aspect of the beach is the work invested in ensuring the area has plenty of shaded areas with good BBQ facilities, along with maintaining a close proximity to nature. This is achieved by linking the beach to a well planned and executed wetland area, which also serves as a storm water runoff pooling area, along with excess flow storage. Sadly though, both these facilities are rarely used, and despite the Community's best endeavours, the drought has done much to delay/destroy some of the possible outcomes.

Another highlight near the beach is the creation of the historic recreation of the Loxton riverside village, planned and maintained by Council and the Friends of the Village.

In addition to the Village, the Loxton Aquatic and Swimming Clubs are active in the area and maintain facilities which host events throughout mostly the Summer months.

### **Environmental Innovation**

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

As a historic agricultural township, salt and stormwater run off had been identified as a real issue in the area. A great deal of work has been undertaken to install salt dam and gross pollutant traps in the riverbank around the town to help alleviate this phenomena. Much of the work entailed extensive modifications to the riverbank, which has been turned into enhancing the visitor experience by facilitating boat launching and fishing areas.

### **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.

South Australia has a deposit system for cans and bottles. This form of litter was not evident at Loxton.

The Wetland system has the potential to divert 30 000 mega litres of water per day, and aren't the locals keen to give the system the test!

Loxton is also one of the few townships on the Riverland that has a recycling facility nearby, which makes it easier for residents and visitors to recycle materials, and recycling clothing and furniture is supported through a number of outlets in town, including the Loxton Rotary Opportunity Shop and LoxCare.

### **Protection of the Environment**

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

The salt and stormwater mitigation works carried out along the riverbanks are commendable and have enhanced the accessibility of the area.

The Wetland area is an excellent initiative designed to not only pool water and take excess run off from the river and stormwater, but to re-establish locally provenanced plants. Planting has been assisted by local schools and community groups. The area has excellent interpretive signage and this, coupled with a holistic approach has encouraged a sense of shared ownership in the area. This can be evidenced by no graffiti and well maintained facilities.

The Council maintains a pump out facility for river craft which reduces pollution into the water, along with maintaining a frequent and regular rubbish collection regime.

### **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.

As in no other area, water conservation and awareness is a focus of the Loxton community. Extensive works have been undertaken with the construction of the wetland area, along with diverting 7 stormwater run-off drains into the wetland area.

Sadly though, despite all best intentions, these systems are rarely used due to the Drought and reduced flow down the Murray. There is an irony for many of these projects, as the shade from the "Tree of Knowledge" demarking years of extreme flood, falls across parched earth nearby.

### **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.

Power saving initiatives such as push button BBQ's are used. In addition, Council is committed to increasing their purchasing of 'green power' and is an active supporter of Earth Hour initiatives.

### **Young Legends**

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

From an environmental, social and educational perspective Loxton's beach becomes the focal point for many school and scout related activities throughout the year. Students have been involved in numerous tree plantings, weed eradication, maintenance of public gardens and of course recreational activities, along the foreshores.

### **Special Thanks**

My thanks to Jan, Des, Tom and David for their patience, and for showing me around their beach and township.

My appreciation to Brittany Dupree from the Loxton News for her Media acumen and assistance. Thanks also to The Bakery for catering for my visit.

<[http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=q&source=s\\_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=loxton+south+aust+ralia&sl=-38.363607,144.875658&ssp=0.008244,0.010214&ie=UTF8&ll=-34.44891,140.565283&spn=0.00867,0.010214&t=h&z=16](http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=loxton+south+aust+ralia&sl=-38.363607,144.875658&ssp=0.008244,0.010214&ie=UTF8&ll=-34.44891,140.565283&spn=0.00867,0.010214&t=h&z=16)>.