

Media Release

Embargoed until 10:00pm Saturday 8th April 2006

Australia's Tidiest Town Award Won by Collie, WA Singleton, NSW comes in a close second

Australia's premier community based environmental action program, the Australian Tidy Towns Awards 2006, has been won by Collie in Western Australia, making this the third win for WA in the past ten years.

The Collie Tidy Towns committee is a dynamic group of concerned residents of all ages who are committed to providing a sustainable future for Collie. Many of the major projects may not have been implemented in the town without Collie's strong community spirit and commitment derived from its tough mining heritage.

Singleton, NSW is also a community with links to mining and has been awarded a Highly Commended title. Maintaining Singleton's proud heritage is a major priority to the community and is managed on a large scale. Numerous fine examples of the preservation of cultural and historic features are scattered throughout the community.

Australian Minister for Transport and Regional Services, Hon Warren Truss MP, was guest of honour at the Australian Tidy Towns Awards presentation and had this to say:

"It was a great honour and privilege to present at the Australian National Tidy Towns. Each of the finalist towns has shown what can be accomplished through strong community partnerships and unwavering community dedication. The efforts and achievements of at least 1000 rural and regional communities who entered this year, with over 90,000 hardworking volunteers, are an inspiration to the whole of Australia."

Keep Australia Beautiful National Chairman, Cr Don Chambers, added:

"In all our finalists we saw a determination to achieve long term excellence in terms of environment, local economy and community spirit. That is why we acknowledge them all as sustainable communities. They are an example to rural, urban and coastal communities across Australia. Congratulations!"

This year's Australian Tidy Towns Achievement Awards winners are:

Program or Category	Award Winner
Australia's Tidiest Town	Collie, WA
Highly commended	Singleton, NSW
Community Action Award	Collie, WA
Spirit of Australia Award	Singleton, NSW
Environmental Innovation Award	Redcliffe, QLD
Litter and Waste Management Award	Yulara/Ayers Rock Resort, NT
Community-Local Government Partnership Award	Burnie, TAS
Protection of the Environment Award	Benalla, VIC
Young Legends Award Mount	Lucindale, SA
Dame Phyllis Frost Award for Outstanding Achievement	Ray Thomas, Benalla VIC

Further details can be found at www.kab.org.au

Media enquiries to Lara Shannon on 0415 076 015 or laras@bigpond.net.au

Editor's Notes:

About Keep Australia Beautiful

For over 30 years, Keep Australia Beautiful has been encouraging people all around Australia to care for their local environment. The not-for-profit organisation is made up of State, Territory and National branches who engage with their local communities, businesses, schools and individuals to help promote and care for Australia's environment.

Keep Australia Beautiful runs a range of awards programs such as Tidy Towns, Sustainable Cities and the Clean Beach Challenge to recognise the environmental achievements of local communities. Assistance is provided to schools to help young people understand litter reduction and recycling. Keep Australia Beautiful also works with the construction industry to reduce erosion and storm water pollution and with retailers to reduce single use plastic bags. These are just some of the activities that involve up to 3 million Australians each year.

About the Tidy Towns Awards 2006 Sponsors

Principal Sponsor - HUNGRY JACK's ®

Now in its fourth year as sponsor, Hungry Jack's is proud of its association with Keep Australia Beautiful and is using the link to improve business operations and motivate staff. A series of environmental audits of Hungry Jack's stores has uncovered opportunities for improvement and initiatives under way include:

- an anti-litter message being added to packaging
- natural board packaging for fries
- trailing of compacting units for food waste and for cardboard recycling
- trailing of a grease guardian which removes grease and oil from waste water.

This year one deserving staff member from each state was selected to attend the Australian Tidy Towns Awards. In future year's staff will be encouraged to take part in a 'Tidiest Store' competition to earn a trip to the awards.

Category Sponsors

Department of Transport and Regional Services - Minister Warren Truss was guest of honour and his department used the occasion to promote their 'Growing Regions' conference.

Best Western - Is an in kind sponsor by providing accommodation for the National Tidy Towns Judge and will soon extend this to State Tidy Towns Judges.

Veolia Environmental Services/Collex - Supports a number of Keep Australia Beautiful initiatives including the Plastic Bag Reduction Initiatives Award.

Australian Food and Grocery Council - Has just launched the Product Stewardship Forum. The Forum, formerly the Beverage Industry Environment Council, is the largest source of funding for the Keep Australia Beautiful network.

Bunnings Warehouse - The Plastic Bag Levy program, a joint initiative of Bunnings and Keep Australia Beautiful, has dramatically reduced plastic bag usage by Bunning' Customers.

Coca-Cola Amatil - Is a sponsor of Tidy Towns in Tasmania, a long term sponsor of Keep Australia Beautiful and a major contributor to the Packaging Stewardship Forum.

Lothian Books - Publishers of the biography of Dame Phyllis Frost, the founder of Keep Australia Beautiful.

A celebration for Tidy Towners:
the Keep Australia Beautiful
Australian Tidy Towns Awards
sponsored by HUNGRY JACK'S ®

Program or Category	Awarded to	Sponsored by
Australia's Tidiest Town	Collie, WA	Hungry Jack's
Highly commended	Singleton, NSW	Hungry Jack's
Community Action Award	Collie, WA	Department of Transport and Regional Services 'Growing Regions' conference
Spirit of Australia Award	Singleton, NSW	Best Western
Environmental Innovation Award	Redcliffe, QLD	Veolia Environmental Services / Collex
Litter and Waste Management Award	Yulara/Ayers Rock Resort, NT	Australian Food and Grocery Council, Packaging Stewardship Forum
Community-Local Government Partnership Award	Burnie, TAS	Bunnings Warehouse
Protection of the Environment Award	Benalla, VIC	
Young Legends Award Mount	Lucindale, SA	Coca-Cola Amatil
Dame Phyllis Frost Award for Outstanding Achievement	Ray Thomas, Benalla VIC	Lothian Books, publishers of the biography of the founder of Keep Australia Beautiful

Full details at www.kab.org.au

Australia's Tidiest Town 2006: Collie, WA

COLLIE's Tidy Towns committee plays an important role in preserving and enhancing the local environment through a broad range of projects and developed alliances for a sustainable future. The committee, made up of concerned and proud residents also including youth representatives, believes that the COLLIE community should minimise human impacts through responsible environmental management while respecting the rights of human endeavours.

The community has an impressive Tidy Towns record and a commitment to the program with numerous awards regularly achieved over almost 20 years. COLLIE Shire awarded the Tidy Towns Committee the 2005 Australia Day Award for 'Committee of the Year' to recognise the role the group has played in bringing together the numerous and varied community activities under the Tidy Towns 'umbrella'.

COLLIE's mine rehabilitation projects are progressing well beyond requirements in providing valuable community assets together with ecological diversity through effective community and business partnerships.

COLLIE's schools have an ongoing commitment to environmental care as well as visual improvement programs. From paper recycling programs in place, in partnership with local mining organisations, to litter reduction approaches and community planting programs as well as numerous beautification projects undertaken for overall community benefit. COLLIE's students continue to learn about innovative ways to lessen their impact on the environment.

COLLIE Shire identifies the importance of Cultural Heritage in its strategic plan highlighting the importance of recognising COLLIE's diverse and unique background. As a result, maintaining COLLIE's proud heritage is an important part of the community's historic restoration and cultural programs.

The Tidy Towns program has provided COLLIE with an opportunity to change past public perceptions of the town being a dirty mining to one that is more than proud of their heritage but also committed to actually doing something about changing its image to being an attractive and sustainable community.

Collie Tidy Towns Committee: Mr Peter Ashton, 08 9780 2145

Highly Commended 2006: Singleton, NSW

The 2006 Australian Tidy Towns Awards attracted an especially high standard of entries. The judging panel has decided to award the title of Highly Commended 2006 to Singleton, NSW.

Singleton Tidy Towns Committee: Ms Lyn MacBain, 02 6571 1168

This years Australian Tidy Towns Achievement Awards winners are:

Community Action: COLLIE, WA

COLLIE's Tidy Towns committee plays an important role in preserving and enhancing the local environment through a range of projects and developed alliances for a sustainable future. The community has an impressive Tidy Towns record with numerous awards achieved over many years, dating back to the early 80's.

The Tidy Towns committee is a dynamic group of concerned residents, some young, some not so young, who are committed to providing a sustainable future for COLLIE.

COLLIE's spirit is responsible for major projects that may possibly never had eventuated without the community's commitment derived from its tough mining heritage.

The community works in numerous partnerships to improve its environment. Tidy Towns objectives link with the Shire's Strategic Plan to ensure future developments and projects reflect principles of sustainability to establish social, economic and environmental outcomes for the overall benefit of COLLIE and its stakeholders.

The Tidy Towns program has provided COLLIE with an opportunity to change past public perceptions of the town being a dirty mining to one that is proud of their heritage but also committed to changing its image to being an attractive and sustainable community.

Collie Tidy Towns Committee: Mr Peter Ashton, 08 9780 2145

Spirit of Australia: SINGLETON, NSW

SINGLETON's slogan promotes the community's spirit and commitment to getting the job done - Heart of the Hunter. Jewel of the State. Spirit of the Nation.

Maintaining SINGLETON's proud heritage is important to the community. Heritage restoration is a major priority and managed on a large scale. Numerous fine examples of the preservation of cultural and historic features are scattered throughout the community.

SINGLETON's Rural Museum is a great example of a group of volunteers with the foresight to collect, restore and share the delights of times gone by. The Museum is home to an extensive collection of memorabilia from SINGLETON's proud rural, agricultural and urban heritage.

SINGLETON's Mercy Catholic Convent exemplifies the preservation of Catholic heritage within the region. Restoration initiatives within the Convent's chapel are leading examples of the dedication of all those involved. The Convent, Chapel and School are further jewels in SINGLETON's cultural crown.

Singleton Tidy Towns Committee: Ms Lyn MacBain, 02 6571 1168

Environmental Innovation: REDCLIFFE, QLD

REDCLIFFE is home to approx 50 000 residents and playground to a million due to its close proximity to Brisbane.

REDCLIFFE's Environment Advisory Group comprises of three environmentally qualified community members, two Councillors, together with two Council officers representing environment and developmental services.

Innovative approaches include water conservation, which is high on Council's environmental agenda with various initiatives in place including wastewater being used to irrigate the local golf course, a water loss survey conducted of Council's assets, a structured water meter replacement program initiated together with a reservoir leakage investigation to identify potential leaks and repair programs.

Council has also set a leading example in energy efficient building design through energy conservation initiatives required in new developments. This, together with a building designs to be according to sustainable building practices, complements a strong commitment to environmental innovation for REDCLIFFE's sustainable future.

Redcliffe Tidy Towns Committee: Mr Bob Holmes, 07 3283 0233

Litter & Waste Management: YULARA / AYERS ROCK RESORT, NT

AYERS ROCK RESORT is situated on the border of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park which is inscribed on the World Heritage listing for outstanding natural and cultural values. The resort caters for over 500 000 visitors per year in one of the most remote and fragile desert ecosystems on earth.

Due to the resort's remoteness, there is major focus on a broad range of recycling approaches within the business and general community. Various items including cardboard, bottles, cans, plastics, cooking oil, batteries, etc are collected, sorted and packaged and back loaded on trucks to Adelaide for recycling.

Thirteen separate recycling collection stations are positioned throughout the community as well as being located at the landfill site. Community response to recycling programs has been extensive with over 70% surveyed as utilising community recycling sites.

Numerous cigarette butt bins are in place throughout the resort as well as within the national park environs to reduce the incidence of unsightly butt litter within a pristine outback environment.

Yulara/Ayers Rock Resort Tidy Towns Committee: Mr Mark Lind, 08 89577398

Community-Local Government Partnership: BURNIE, TAS

BURNIE City Council continues to inspire and guide its community for a sustainable future. Its previous marketing slogan, City of Contrasts, builds on the vision for a city that has successfully transformed itself from a busy industrial community to now a City of Makers which celebrates its history and uniqueness in being the state's busiest container port, which is made up of a thriving arts community, with modern facilities and complemented by a range of wildlife experiences available within a semi urban environment.

Highlights include the development of the city's Waterfront Master Plan, the successful celebration of numerous festivals and community events as well as the implementation of the city's environmental improvement programs focusing on a new Waste Water Treatment Plant as well as the community's new Waste Management Centre.

Extensive community consultation approaches ensures BURNIE continues to effectively manage its unique position within Tasmania - a great partnership between its residents, Council, business and industry.

Burnie Tidy Towns Committee: Mr Clayton Hawkins, 03 6430 5787

Protection of the Environment: BENALLA, VIC

BENALLA has a strong commitment to broad environmental protection and innovation which aims at preserving the important natural values of the area and to encourage and promote sustainable use and development.

Major environmental protection initiatives include the habitat restoration of the endangered bird species, the Regent Honeyeater, where Ray Thomas and his network have made significant contributions to restoring its habitats together with other native fauna species, the challenges with removal of noxious weed, Cobomba from Lake BENALLA, Council's commitment to partnerships in protecting roadside vegetation, particularly native shrubs, grasses and trees, together with introducing roadside management plans and implementing biodiversity protection.

BENALLA's Rakali project, coordinated by the District Environment Group raises awareness of water contamination, bank erosion and weeds which reduce water quality, biodiversity issues, unsustainable water use, as well as the need for healthy habitats for the protection of native flora and fauna species.

Benalla Tidy Towns Committee: Ms Sharon Zimmerman, 03 5760 2600

Young Legends: LUCINDALE, SA

Environmental education programs are a key element within the education system in LUCINDALE.

In particular, LUCINDALE Area School is a major focus for the district's community with the school network of students, teachers and parents being great contributors to numerous community activities.

The school is strongly focused on environmental programs and selected as one of eight Environment Focus Schools in SA.

Agriculture, viticulture and aquaculture programs are innovative approaches to education and developed community partnerships for positive environmental outcomes.

The school's PACT program (Parents & Community Together) is responsible for extensive school facility and environmental improvements with many thousands of dollars raised and donated by volunteers each year.

Balharry Memorial Kindergarten introduces students to ways in which they can minimise their impact on the environment. From recycling to reuse to learning about natural processes, children develop an environmental ethic at an early age.

Lucindale Tidy Towns Committee: Mr Ern Foster, 08 8766 2140

**Dame Phyllis Frost Award for Outstanding Achievement:
RAY THOMAS, BENALLA VICTORIA**

The Regent Honeyeater is an endangered bird species, with numbers declining seriously over recent times in and around the BENALLA community.

As a result, Regent Honeyeater coordinator and Landcarer, Ray Thomas and his network have made significant contributions to restoring its habitats together with other native fauna species, also mostly endangered. Enormous support has been gained from a broad range of volunteers to plant and restore habitat in and around BENALLA.

With numerous landholders and schools involved in the project, Ray Thomas' dedication and commitment to the project for over 10 years is to be commended.

Besides other environmental benefits being realised, a major outcome to the conservation of native flora and fauna in the region has been achieved with over a quarter of a million seedlings being planted, and over 700 hectares of habitat restored during this period.

Almost 45,000 plants have been planted as a result of Ray's commitment and coordinating skills over the past 12 months. Further positive environmental outcomes have been achieved besides numerous presentations, farm visits, project tours, monitoring weekends, seed collection, plant propagation and planting days, environmental weeding and trials for new techniques.

As a further result of Ray Thomas' dedication:

- landholders are now seeking his opinion on how to put in their own independent proposal for Bush Tender schemes,
- more and more high fertility sites along creeks are being fenced and revegetated,
- an increasing number of large sites, rather than small patches are being restored,
- an increasing number of joint project between adjacent landholders are being achieved, and
- an increasing number of landholders are requesting for Ray Thomas and his great environmental action network to come and plant a site on their properties.

Ray Thomas is a great and truly worthy recipient of the Dame Phyllis Frost Award for Outstanding Achievement.

Mr Ray Thomas, Benalla, VIC, 03 5760 2600

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Business: a series of environmental audits of stores has uncovered opportunities for improvement. Initiatives under way include:

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