

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

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

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

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	Yulara/Ayers Rock Resort,	Australian Food and

Management Award	NT	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

HUNGRY JACK'S Australian Tidy Towns 2006 Program Report

Town/Community: SINGLETON NSW.. ***Date judged:*** 24 & 25 Dec 2005

Population: approx 21 000

Organising Group/s: SINGLETON Tidy Towns Committee
in conjunction with SINGLETON Council (SC)

Contact Names: Cr Lyn McBain (SC) Phone: (02) 6572 2235

COMMUNITY ACTION LOCAL GOVERNMENT/ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

SINGLETON is situated in the geographic heart of the Hunter Valley region and is one of Australia's oldest regional towns. Located on the Hunter River, it features a host of historic homes and buildings, land devoted to agriculture and grazing together with a more than active Tidy Towns community.

SINGLETON's Tidy Towns Committee is a well established group that has gained a high profile due to the dedication and hard work of its members which gets duly recognised. The committee, a sub-committee of Council, plays a coordinating role for numerous other voluntary groups within the community. It also plays a cooperative role in preserving and enhancing the environment for the benefit of residents and the many thousands of tourists who visit and pass through each year.

The Tidy Towns Committee is keen to recognise community contributions in keeping SINGLETON neat and tidy. As a result, appreciation certificates are presented to residents who maintain and keep their property tidy. A host of other awards are also presented to recognise business, environmental and rural community contributions.

SINGLETON Council leads by example and encourages the community to ensure that homes and private gardens are well maintained. It also ensures that approaches to town, including signs, public parks, gardens and sporting areas, footpaths, verges and median strips are well looked after. Significantly, the town's major arterial road, the New England Highway is maintained by various community Adopt-a-road groups.

With 26 mines in and around SINGLETON, a unique partnership has been developed through Community Consultative Committees which sees mining staff, the community and Council working together on various projects, including Adopt-a-road programs.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & INNOVATION

Col Fisher Park is a great example of thoughtful planning with numerous reserve systems situated throughout SINGLETON's urban areas. Besides being used as open space for the community to enjoy, these reserves also are important areas for Council's stormwater retention initiatives. Stormwater is effectively collected, stored and then used to tender local reserves, parks and public facilities during drought periods.

The Hunterview Gully Restoration project involves broad cross sections of the community, local Landcare groups and Council working together to install river bed structures to prevent erosion as well as establishing riparian vegetation to further prevent riverbank erosion. The project has become a model for others to follow.

Local schools, Landcare and community groups, catchment management committees and the Tidy Towns group have undertaken a broad range of projects that target specific sites or environmental problems. Examples include weed control, planting programs, water wise initiatives as well as recycling programs.

As in many communities around Australia, the need for conserving water is a major priority in SINGLETON. The recent drought has heightened the need to be water wise and the community has positively reacted. From schools being involved in Streamwatch programs to residents utilising Council's free green organic mulch on gardens to reduce water use to Council initiating water tank requirements in all houses built since 2002, water continues to be a well managed commodity.

LITTER & WASTE MANAGEMENT

Resource recovery initiatives are a feature of SINGLETON's commitment to effective waste management. A broad range of waste minimisation initiatives are in place and accepted by the community and a reduction of waste to landfill achieved.

SINGLETON Council conducts waste and recycling services for both urban and rural areas within the community. The service provides opportunities to recycle all materials that can be recovered within NSW. Council, in partnership with the community is dedicated to continuing current waste treatment practices as well as introducing new practices to further reduce environmental impact. It aims to provide an efficient, cost effective and environmentally acceptable system of waste collection, disposal and recycling for the community.

Education and awareness approaches are continuous with regular updates being distributed to the community through Council newsletters, together with over 600 school children taking part in the Waste Watchers program each year.

The community also takes part in regular surveys and comments on Council's management programs. As a result, the recent expansion of Council's rural waste and recycling system was initiated by members of the community.

As a result of working closely with the Tidy Towns committee, Council appointed a full time caretaker and street sweeper for the CBD area. Their role is to concentrate on maintaining the streetscape as well as removing litter from the town centre.

SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

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, situated in Burdekin Park 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 houses an extensive collection of memorabilia from SINGLETON's proud rural, agricultural and urban heritage.

The Mechanic's Institute is also another great example of one of the many heritage restoration programs. The extensive restoration of the Institute's Grand Hall is to be commended. Living home to numerous arts groups as well as the Family History Society, the building is a significant example of maintaining a community's proud culture.

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, particularly given the fact that over a metre of water flowed through the building during a past flood event. The Convent, Chapel and School precinct are another jewel in Singleton's cultural crown.

Important significance has been placed on Baiame Cave. According to Aboriginal traditions of the Wanaruah Aboriginal descendants, living in Singleton, the figure within the Milbrodale art site is the figure of Baiame, the creator of all things and keeper of the Hunter Valley who watches over it. The identification of the figure as a Dreamtime spirit is significant to local Aboriginal communities with the site used by them for educational purposes.

Mention must also be made of SINGLETON Returned Serviceman's Club's (RSC) commitment to the local community and environment. A long time supporter of

community projects, including Tidy Towns initiatives, the RSC is proactive in getting involved in environmental improvement approaches from recycling initiatives to planting native species in and around their well kept facilities to introducing enviro-bags, the RSC is seen as a leader within the community.

YOUNG LEGENDS/ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Various schools within SINGLETON have an ongoing commitment to environmental care as well as visual improvement programs. From paper recycling programs to litter reduction approaches and planting programs, the town's students continue to learn about ways to reduce their impact on the local environment.

Notable example is the King Street Public School's EWOKS (Environmental Workers Of King Street) who are key characters of the school's environmental education program which is part of the school's Environment Management Plan. They assist in extending the awareness levels and understanding of protecting the environment. The program aims at involving children within the school community to participate in both school beautification and improvement projects as well as in external community initiatives.

The school's Sensory Garden project is an ideal example of students, parents, teachers and the community working together to provide a wonderful passive as well as active area for children to learn and recreate within.

Other initiatives include a Litter Meter approach to encouraging use of litter bins around the school, a waste paper recycling system linked to council's kerbside collection service, a plastic bottle and aluminium can recycling system linked to an APEX club, the introduction of a worm farm system as well as an energy monitoring program which sees students ensuring energy effective behaviour is the norm in King Street Public school.

SUGGESTIONS

If not already in place, SINGLETON's great achievement as being New South Wales' Tidiest Town for 2005 could be promoted on Council letterheads, envelopes, etc. Local businesses and tourism operators could also be encouraged to market the town's award.

The King Street School's EWOKS program is a great example of a school integrating environmental education approaches through established learning programs. The program's success and initiatives, if not already, could be promoted as a model for other schools within SINGLETON to follow.

Linking with Keep Australia Beautiful NSW's Clean Site program provides opportunities to encourage and educate the local building industry regarding the need for positive stormwater pollution prevention and effective waste management on building sites.

As a result of a planned approach to consistent signs within the community, an opportunity to further develop SINGLETON's Heritage Walk could be through well-designed interpretive signs positioned at points of historic interest throughout the town featuring images and cultural information.

SINGLETON'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.

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

Good luck with future initiatives and 'challenges' in helping to keep your part of Australia beautiful.

Dick Olesinski
National Tidy Towns judge