Cities' achievements keep Australia beautiful

The City of Canada Bay in Western Sydney is the overall winner of the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities Awards. Now in its third year, the competition celebrates the outstanding efforts of individuals and organisations working to improve their communities both environmentally and socially.

Credit: City of Canada Bay

Announcing the winner in late October, the Sustainable Cities national judge, Sean Rooney[1] said: 'The award recognises the City of Canada Bay's strong vision, comprehensive approach to local programs and technologies that have delivered terrific outcomes in water re-use and stormwater harvesting, waste and litter reduction, energy efficiency and CO_2 emissions reductions.'

Keep Australia Beautiful has operated as a social change movement for over 40 years with the mission 'to lead, challenge and inspire all Australians to strive for a sustainable and litter-free environment'. The Sustainable Cities Awards are one way it helps to deliver on this mission – they span all facets of sustainability and acknowledge the combination of collaboration, innovation, on-ground action and results in the efforts of each of the state and territory finalists.

The entrants compete across eight award categories including water conservation, energy innovation, resource recovery and waste management, and community action and partnerships.

Mr Rooney spent a day with each of the finalists, learning about and assessing their achievements. 'I was very impressed by the levels of passion, collaboration and innovation displayed in the projects and activities I reviewed. Time and time again I witnessed the spirit and pride that comes from working together on making a community more sustainable,' he said.

Here are some of his highlights:

1. **ACT:** Sourcing food from over 50 donors and delivering it free of charge to around 40 local charities, OzHarvest's food 'rescue' service delivers ~1500 kg of food per week to people in need in the Canberra region. The program greatly reduces waste to landfill, provides food support and frees up funds previously spent on food by community service groups for other vital activities.

2. **WA:** The Brunswick River Restoration Action Group's (BRRAG) grassroots community action model successfully focused effort on restoring and protecting the Brunswick River. It runs river restoration and public environmental awareness events.

3. **NT:** Palmerston's 'Safe Communities Program', recognised by the World Health Organization as an International Safe Community in 2008, works in partnership with Council, NT Government, businesses and the community to promote safety in the home and community, at work and at play. It reduces injuries, accidents and crime, and supports healthier lifestyles.

4. **QLD:** Ipswich's recently opened Environment Education Centre provides a dedicated community resource that interprets sustainability in the local context and provides education and advice on local programs and actions for community members.

5. **TAS:** The City of Launceston has shown leadership in managing, interpreting and celebrating the city's natural environment and cultural heritage. Local volunteers have shown enthusiasm and passion in working tirelessly on local environmental projects and conservation works.

6. **NSW:** The City of Canada Bay's innovative approaches to water management include the Cintra Hockey Park water recycling system, which recycles 4.5 million litres of water per annum, and the Powell Creek Reserve Stormwater Harvesting project, which saves 2 million litres per annum.

7. **SA:** Port Adelaide Enfield's inclusive and practical approach to public space shows in the Mikawomma Reserve within the 'Westwood' residential development. The Westwood Neighbourhood Development Group, in conjunction with the Council, local indigenous groups and school children, worked together to create an open public space that serves many purposes including providing an innovative stormwater management system, community playground and interpretation of local indigenous culture and values.

8. **VIC:** The City of Hobsons Bay brought together a mix of partners from the Council, state government, local business and community groups in local sustainability projects such as the transformation of an abandoned power substation into a community arts centre, the development of a regional strategy to better manage the Kororoit Creek waterway, and work with local groups to create an active maritime village celebrating the role the precinct has played in the region's history.

For a full listing of the various award categories and winners this year visit: http://www.kab.org.au/programs/sustainable-http://www.kab.org.au/programs/sustainable-cities

[1] Sustainability Program Manager at Sinclair Knight Merz.

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