



Media Release

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Queensland Wins Australian Clean Beach Challenge

Queensland has won the Keep Australia Beautiful Council's Australian Clean Beach Challenge, with The Strand in Townsville being named as Australia's Cleanest Beach at an award ceremony at Redcliffe today.

And in an award quinella, Scarborough Beach at Redcliffe was named as Australia's Friendliest Beach.

Two other Queensland beaches also took out national awards in a competition which saw the best beaches from Queensland and NSW go head-to-head in the popular Clean Beach Challenge.

After surviving a judging process that began last year with 186 beaches in NSW and 137 beaches in Queensland, awards were presented in December 2003 for the overall Cleanest Beach in each State as well as in eight Outstanding Accomplishment categories.

The State winners then went on to compete in the Australian Clean Beach Challenge, which was judged in January.

The winners of the eight National Outstanding Accomplishment Awards are:

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| 1. <i>Friendly Beach Award</i> | Scarborough Beach (Redcliffe, south east Queensland) |
| 2. <i>Resource Conservation & Waste Management Award</i> | Balmoral Beach (Sydney Harbour, NSW) |
| 3. <i>Young Legends Award</i> | Kingscliff Beach (northern NSW) |
| 4. <i>Community Action Award</i> | Werri Beach (Kiama, Illawarra region, NSW) |
| 5. <i>Community – Local Government Partnership Award</i> | Manly Council for Manly Beach (Sydney, NSW) |
| 6. <i>Litter Prevention Award</i> | Noosaville Foreshore Beach (Sunshine Coast, Queensland) |
| 7. <i>Protection of the Environment Award</i> | Holloways Beach (north Queensland) |
| 8. <i>Beach Spirit Award</i> | Rosedale (Bateman's Bay, south coast NSW) |

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Keep Australia Beautiful National Association Chair of the Board Molly Robson said The Strand's status as a Townsville icon at the heart of civic and community activity had helped it to clinch the title of Australia's Cleanest Beach.

"The Strand has become a major, all-age recreational focus for close to three million visitors each year," Ms Robson said.

"It offers excellent visitor hospitality with its day- and evening-use facilities which include four beaches, two Surf Life Saving Clubs, fresh water swimming pools, a water play area and children's playgrounds.

"These and many other features make The Strand a deserving winner of the Australian title."

KAB Chief Executive Officer Barton Green said the Clean Beach Challenge program had been operating in Queensland for the past six years, and in NSW for three years, and it was decided last year that the best beaches from both States should challenge each other in a head-to-head competition.

"Next year the Australian Clean Beach Challenge will lift a gear, with Victoria running its first Clean Beach Challenge," Mr Green said.

"The winning Victoria beaches will compete in the Australian Clean Beach Challenge in 2005 and we hope to attract other States over the next couple of years, so that the competition to find Australia's Cleanest Beach becomes bigger and better."

Thanks to a sponsorship from the Outdoor Advertising Association of Australia, as part of their win, The Strand and Scarborough Beach will each receive two billboards to promote their new titles, which will be displayed throughout Queensland and New South Wales over the next 12 months.

***For further information please contact:
KAB CEO Barton Green on 07 3252 2886 or 0411 702 209***

Australian Clean Beach Challenge 2004 Judge's Comments

Australia's Cleanest Beach - The Strand (Townsville), north Queensland

The Cleanest Beach Award takes into account a beach's geographic, environmental and economic circumstances, and assesses how efficiently and effectively the community uses the resources available to it against a range of criteria, including tidiness and litter abatement, visitor friendliness and hospitality, fauna and flora management activities, community interaction, youth activities, resource conservation and waste management, and local government leadership within a community.

The Strand, now four years old in its present form, has become a Townsville icon and a focus of civic and community activity. The Strand offers excellent visitor hospitality with its day- and evening-use facilities, four beaches (two of them with seasonal stinger net enclosures), two Surf Life Saving Clubs, fresh water swimming pools, water play area, children's playgrounds, fitness trail, fishing jetty, basketball court, amphitheatre, restaurants, kiosks, gardens, parks, and permanent artwork. All facilities are wheelchair accessible, including the beaches thanks to a 4WD motorised wheelchair. Signage and printed information is clear and pleasant. The Strand is a leader in effective resource conservation and waste and litter management policies and practices, including storm water quality control, on-site separation and multi-clearing of waste, beach sand sifting, water and energy conservation, cleaning without chemicals, and associated education and damage prevention programs. The Strand is a declared Dugong Protection Area and a turtle nesting site. Active community and Townsville City Council partnerships provide fauna monitoring and research; dune and other vegetation is managed under a Vegetation Management Plan; and dune beach sands are replenished regularly to ensure retention of their storm damage protection role. The Strand has become a major, all-age recreational focus for close to three million visitors each year, 69% of whom are local residents. Community events and celebrations include festivals, services, parades, competitions, regattas, concerts, weddings, markets, and arts and crafts exhibitions. The Strand is consistently being 'fine-tuned' in response to proactive surveys and feedback, and has acted as a catalyst for redevelopment and upgrading in the surrounding area. The Strand displays the highest standards across all the EPA Clean Beach Challenge judging criteria and well deserves the honour of being Queensland's Cleanest Beach for 2003 and Australia's Cleanest Beach 2004.

Australia's Friendliest Beach – Scarborough Beach (Redcliffe), south east Queensland

This award recognises the importance of visitor hospitality and safety, and instructive and easily understood local information facilities.

Scarborough Beach attracts huge numbers of locals and visitors each year and it's easy to see why. Statuesque Norfolk Island Pines stand at attention above the lovely beachfront and serve as a natural signpost to the adjacent parkland with its shade shelters, barbecues, picnic tables, toilet facilities and accessible car park. The range and quality of public amenities ensures all visitors are well catered for. There is a skate half-pipe and basketball court, but ask any young visitor what the best part is and they will be sure to tell you - in an animated and enthusiastic response - the Pirate Place and Railway Place. These two creative and impressive play areas complement the gnarly old cottonwood trees which are just perfect for climbing. To ensure all members of the community can enjoy these great facilities, disabled access from the nearby carpark is currently being improved, and security lighting, including solar powered lighting, keeps the area well lit at night. Scarborough Beach and its parkland facilities are impeccably maintained by Redcliffe City Council. The beach is mechanically swept and the dune areas cleaned by hand, barbecues are steam cleaned, bins regularly emptied and toilets kept hygienically clean. Peak times can see toilets cleaned hourly. To help protect Moreton Bay, a gross pollutant trap has been installed to capture litter before it reaches the beach and Bay. Redcliffe City Council works hard to maintain this beach and adjacent park and the result is a wonderful open space the whole community can enjoy.

Resource Conservation and Waste Management Award – Balmoral Beach (Sydney Harbour), NSW

This award recognises outstanding accomplishment in resource conservation and waste management.

Strong partnerships between Mosman Council and local businesses and community groups have resulted in a range of resource conservation and waste management initiatives being implemented at Balmoral Beach on Sydney Harbour. These initiatives include the mulching and reuse of suitable green waste; collection and reuse/recycling of glass, paper, cardboard, aluminium, plastic and oil; collection and appropriate disposal of non-recyclable materials and a number of energy conservation practices. There is well-planned action, involving community participation, to overcome the problems of poor drainage and stormwater pollutants. The stormwater management plan is particularly important, not only because of the steep catchment that provides runoff to the beach, but the fact that any litter would eventually end up in Sydney Harbour.

Young Legends Award – Kingscliff Beach, northern NSW

This award recognises outstanding accomplishment by youth and by a beach/community which encourages and promotes youth activity.

Kingscliff High School's Year 10 students have undertaken a major community environmental education program. Students have co-ordinated school and community clean up days and are working towards obtaining a grant for the restoration of the Cudgen Creek area. Students collect marine waste by regularly snorkelling at the beach and water quality testing is conducted on a weekly basis. The outcomes of these activities have been documented in a student-made film, which has been presented to the local council and community groups to increase awareness of environmental issues in the area.

Community Action Award – Werri Beach, south coast NSW

This award recognises outstanding community organisation and pride – expressed through civic, cultural and environmental activities.

More than a kilometre in length, Werri Beach has a well-established dune system isolating it from the road, residential properties and holiday complexes beyond. A range of community groups is involved in improving, protecting and maintaining the beach and its public facilities. The 'Adopt a Beach' program has been implemented by a Progress Association and local surfers. The Werri Beach Dunecare Group has focused on removing Bitou and planting low-growing native species along the entire length of the dunes. The group has also planted trees on the southern headland with the aim of providing a stable environment for a local echidna population. An overall management plan for the beach and surrounding area, developed by Kiama Municipal Council, is being implemented in partnership with groups including the Dunecare Group, Gerringong Lions and the Gerringong Ratepayers' Association. These groups, along with Gerringong Primary School and local surfers, are actively involved in annual beach clean-ups and tree planting activities. The Gerringong Lions Club has adopted the boat harbour picnic area and members continue to plant native tree species as well as maintain a grass mowing roster. Future plans include a project to build a whale-watching platform on the top of the headland, in partnership between the Lions Club and Kiama Municipal Council.

Community-Local Government Partnership Award – Manly Council for Manly Beach, (Sydney), NSW

This award recognises outstanding partnership achievements by a local government and its community.

Approximately eight million people visit Manly Beach each year, and the area has become a social and cultural hub for the Peninsula. Manly Council is involved in a plethora of projects which have helped, and continue to make, Manly Beach one of the most popular beaches in the greater Sydney area. These projects relate to all aspects of beach life, from resource conservation and waste management, to visitor friendliness, litter prevention and youth activity. The Council is partnering with local clubs, groups and residents on many of these projects. Council also works closely with local youth to educate them about the coastal environment. Overall, Manly Council has demonstrated a firm commitment to involving the community in its efforts to protect and improve Manly Beach.

Litter Prevention Award – Noosaville Foreshore (Sunshine Coast), Queensland

This award recognises outstanding accomplishment in litter prevention, management and education.

Sometimes simple messages can be the most effective, and Noosa Council has one which certainly fits the bill. “We swim in what you put in” is the slogan used to great effect by the Council in an awareness program aimed squarely at the source of litter. Through the cooperation of business and community, litter at Noosaville Foreshore Park and beach is almost non-existent. The Beverage Industry Environment Council's litter “hotspot analysis” has been used effectively to appropriately site litter bins in the area. Attractive vegetation barriers and carefully selected garden plants, as well as shade cloth along fences, are used to capture windblown litter, particularly plastic bags, before they enter the waterway. The trial of a gross pollutant sock at the beach has provided the opportunity to analyse the pollutants washed through stormwater drains so that corrective action can be taken. Regular cigarette butt collection days, together with the distribution of novel Butt-ya-bins, with the message “It’s Laguna Bay not an ashtray”, help to develop community awareness of this significant litter problem. A regional litter forum was held in October, aimed at fostering a wider outlook on the awareness and management of litter on the Sunshine Coast. It is through this combination of strategies, and Noosa Council's commitment to litter prevention and management, that Noosaville Foreshore Park is maintained as an attractive, litter free area for families.

Protection of the Environment Award – Holloways Beach, (Cairns) north Queensland

This award recognises outstanding accomplishment in the protection of the local natural environment and, specifically, the preservation of fauna and flora.

Holloways Beach has been subjected to severe sand erosion and Cairns City Council is addressing the problem with an intensive program of sand replenishment and sand retention measures. In a partnership between the Cairns City Council, Holloways Beach residents, the Beach Protection Authority and the Environmental Protection Agency, a vegetation management plan is being prepared for the foreshore, dunes and beach under the auspices of the Marlin Coast Landscape Master Plan. Regular maintenance of foreshore areas, including weeding, fertilising and mulching is undertaken by Cairns City Council and local residents. The partnership has continued with this year’s planting of local native trees and shrubs to assist with the development of beachside habitats and wildlife corridors. The Tree Planting Group has weeded the area adjacent to the Environment Centre at the northern end of the beach, and has planted and established native trees. This privately-run Centre operates programs for school students of all ages, promoting awareness of coastal environments and conservation strategies. Recognition of the value of the natural features at Holloways Beach has been demonstrated by the retention and prominence of the ‘starling tree’, one of the foreshore features, and by the fencing of remnant vegetation to restrict public access to important wildlife habitats. Holloways Beach has a strong commitment to activities and management practices that protect and enhance the local natural environment.

Beach Spirit Award – Rosedale Beach, south coast NSW

This award recognises coastal communities which are facing or have faced difficult times, but which show outstanding commitment to solving problems by turning them into opportunities.

Rosedale Beach, just north of Moruya, is a small beach well known for its great rock formations. Rosedale is a typical holiday village, with the population more than doubling during summer. The community is dedicated to maintaining the quality of the beach, which forms a major part of their lives. An historic community boat shed at the northern end of the beach dates back to the 30s, and is regularly maintained by local boat owners. The Council works with various community groups such as Landcare to restore and maintain the dunes. An extensive program of environmental weed control and revegetation with natives has been very successful in re-stabilising the dune system. A regular newsletter for local residents helps to educate the community about coastal conservation and promote clean-ups and Landcare efforts. Monthly beach clean-ups and working bees regularly attract up to 70% of the local population, with many ‘part-time’ summer residents also participating when they are in town – evidence of just how much this beach is loved by the community.