

Sustainable Cities 2011 - Queensland

Recipient: Ipswich City Council **Pop:** approx. 170 000

Location: 40kms south west of Brisbane

Category: Community Action & Partnerships

Highlights:

Working Together – IPSWICH Council recognises that building and maintaining healthy and vibrant communities is a collaborative effort and is essential for long term sustainability. It would be impossible for Council to achieve what it does without support from partnerships across government, business, industry and local community networks across Ipswich and beyond. This was critical in response to the January 2011 flood event.

Health and Well Being - Council's network of over 500 parks, expansive reserves, conservation estates and sporting fields and facilities provides ample space for physical and sporting activity and events. Council's Physical Activity Strategy responds through providing a range of activity and information for all age groups across Council's cultural mix often in partnership with other organisations.

Council's Office of Economic Development establishes partnerships with local businesses to support economic growth and development in the region.

January 2011 Floods - There is no better demonstration of the strength of partnerships in the face of challenge than the Council's and community's response to the January 2011 flood event.

The January 2011 flood event across the IPSWICH region resulted in:

- 3600 Homes being impacted
- Over 1000 Homes totally inundated
- 600 businesses impacted, with 70+% now reopened
- Damage to social infrastructure including sporting and recreational facilities, community centres and schools.

It was critical to the recovery of the City, that Council provide a coordinated response to supporting disaster affected communities in the reconstruction of the both physical infrastructure and their emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing.

The delivery of a diverse range of immediate response activities was established to support the recovery of the community by Council.

Council provided a collaborative effort across a broad range of recovery services, internally and externally, within the IPSWICH area.

It was vital that local business were supported and the following initiatives were undertaken to ensure flood effected businesses re-established with minimum effect on the local economy.

To ensure coordinated recovery continues a Council Community Recovery Plan was developed to provide the direction for the medium to long term recovery period that follows on from the immediate response activities.

Category: 'Dame Phyllis Frost' Litter Prevention

Highlights:

'What a Waste!' - Council's free, comprehensive environmental education program is delivered through IPSWICH's primary and secondary schools, prep and childcare centres.

The program focuses on sustainable litter and waste management and minimisation by introducing children and youth to the 3R's - Reduce, Re-use and Recycle, and targets key issues including the environmental, economic and social costs of waste production, consumption and disposal.

As part of the program Council assists schools with:

- Establishing a free recycling program
- Assisting to develop a waste management/litter strategy
- Providing compost bins/worm farms - more than 24 were provided in 2010-11.



Many schools were involved in the 'Litterless Lunch' challenge, where students are encouraged to pack lunches that generate no waste packaging. Schools often follow their '*What a Waste!*' experience by completing a waste audit of school grounds in order to develop a site-based litter reduction strategy.

This program is complemented by dynamic, hands-on displays at Council's Environmental Education Centre in Queens Park.

Category: Resource Recovery & Waste Management

Highlights:

Council's '*What a Waste!*' program sessions include:

- The Journey of Rubbish – key learning objective is understanding the difference between refuse, recyclables and organic waste. Models (eg Polly Plastic and Steel Can Steve) are used to explore the workings of a landfill and recycling factory. Interactive games help children recognise recyclables from non-recyclables.
- Getting worms! Worm Farming and Composting – key learning is about how having worms helps the environment and about special types of rubbish (organic waste) that can be fed to worms or composted.
- Percy the Plastic Bag and Friends – through the use of storytelling and puppets children learn how plastic, glass and aluminium are made and what happens to things that are sent to landfill.

Students are encouraged to make a pledge stating what changes they will make in their lives to reduce, reuse and recycle. The program also complements areas of the QSA curriculum such as SOSE, Science English and the Arts.

The secondary level program investigates alternative waste management options and encourages students to consider the concept of waste minimisation as a sustainable waste management solution for the future.

The entire program can also be delivered through Council's mobile '*What a Waste!*' education van.

IPSWICH Waste Services - A commercialised business unit of Council, IPSWICH Waste Services provides the following key services:

- Domestic, commercial and industrial waste collection.
- Transfer station operations.
- Product Destruction.

Domestic kerbside waste collection

- Over 4.8 million domestic waste and recycling services performed annually.
- 12 140 tonnes of recyclables collected.
- Services have increased by more than 20% over past 5 years.
- 2.5 kg per household per week recyclables collected in 2005, 3.8 kg recyclables in 2011.

Commercial Services

- IPSWICH Waste Services offers a range of services to commercial customers including, skips, frontlift, hooklift, road sweepers and recycling.

Product Destruction Operation

- Facility recycles pre-consumer beverage containers and recovers the liquid content for re-use.
- 98% material recovered.
- Annually processes over 400 semi-trailer loads of product.

Category: Environmental Innovation & Protection

Highlights:

Sustainable City - As one of 17 catalytic projects identified in the IPSWICH Regional Centre Strategy, jointly written by QLD State Government and Council, Council is redeveloping its City Centre. Planning for this substantial undertaking intensified during 2010-11 when Council purchased the City Centre. Construction commences December 2011 on a 15 year program of rebuilding the City Centre to create a key regional business, cultural and residential hub. All development will meet the 5 star GreenStar environmental rating including rainwater harvesting and solar energy. Not only is this a demonstration of Council's commitment to environmental sustainability, it is also an imperative response to sustainable growth management and quality lifestyle for South East Queensland.

Protecting the Natural Environment - Council's four-year Nature Conservation Strategy ensures Council is on track with activity in this important area. A range of policies, procedures and plans flow out of the Strategy which guide on-going activities.

Council works closely with its community to protect the City's environment and green spaces. Important partnerships and activity include:

- Voluntary Conservation Agreements - 99 landholders participating covering 7 746 hectares
- Land for Wildlife involving 174 landholders covering 7 815 hectares
- Weed management assistance program
- Free plant program supports landowners, schools and community groups with an annual allocation of free native plants
- Urban Bushland community tree planting
- Bremer Catchment Association funds grants to landholders toward riparian revegetation
- Riparian corridor rehabilitation in partnership with Griffith University
- Healthy Waterways Network
- SEQ Catchments
- Honorary Park Ranger program involving more than 130 volunteers
- Adopt a Park program - community groups, businesses, etc. caring for parks
- IPSWICH Women and the Environment involving more 114 women making a difference through responsible environmental decisions in their homes
- Koala conservation and management in partnership with UQ Gatton
- Society for Growing Australian Plants
- Ecowarriors - IPSWICH Girls Grammar School program.

IPSWICH Nature Centre - a habitat for native and endangered fauna and flora. Highlight is a state-of-the-art Bilby habitat program supports Dreamworld's breeding program for this endangered species.

Environmental Education Centre - includes community focused displays delivering information and education about conservation of IPSWICH's native flora and fauna.

Conservation Estates and Reserves – Council's Enviroplan levy has enabled acquisition of 6 420 hectares in Council conservation estates and reserves. These areas provide protection for rare and threatened species and represent important environmental and recreation value.

Category: Water Conservation

Highlights:

Sports Field Irrigation Management - IPSWICH City Council has pioneered a successful sports field irrigation management program which is saving Council more than \$100 000 annually.

Council has over 500 parks and actively manages 33ha of irrigated sports fields. The program has replaced the irrigation of sports fields on the basis of volumetric allocation instead of on the basis of soil moisture needs.

Permanent, automated soil moisture probes have been installed in 75% of Council's irrigated sports fields. Linked to a web based system these probes enable real time data access and parameter manipulation while logged on to the internet. The system allows Council to set low and high points for soil moisture and, in automatic mode, over-rides the irrigation control until soil moisture decreases to the low set point. Irrigation is then enabled at scheduled times until the high set point is reached when the system then disables the irrigation. Rain switches ensure that irrigation is suspended if it rains during an irrigation cycle.

Re-use initiatives - Council routinely uses recycled water sourced from the Bundamba Advanced Water Treatment Plant, part of the Queensland Government's \$2.4 billion Western Corridor Recycled Water Project and third largest in the world to water areas where there is no primary contact including street trees and median strips.

IPSWICH Waste Services have installed a 240 000 litre water storage facility to harvest rainwater which is used to for a variety of operations including street sweeping. This has saved Council 4 million litres of potable water previously used to deliver this service.

Category: Energy Innovation

Highlights:

Council has a policy of adopting green building standards for City assets and has endorsed a Corporate Energy Efficiency Strategy. The strategy identifies regular monitoring of corporate energy efficiency and identification of opportunities for improvement. As a result of the strategy, all major Council buildings were audited by external consultants for energy efficiency of building systems, lighting, heating and cooling and opportunities for improvement programmed into future budgets.

Council's Corporate Energy Efficiency Strategy also identified 'green purchasing' as an area for review. The Council currently has continued to support 'green policies' around the purchase/hiring of a broad range of plant, equipment, supplies and electricity.

Council organised and hosted a climate smart low carbon diet seminar to raise public awareness of impacts of climate change on IPSWICH's natural environment. It also informed how to reduce carbon footprint. Fact sheets, website information and display boards have been produced.

Council will commence working with Energex on the Energy Conservation Communities project which is expected to commence in the eastern area of the City later this year and is focused at incentives for the community to take up energy saving opportunities.

Category: Heritage & Culture

Highlights:

IPSWICH celebrated its 150th 'birthday' throughout 2010 with numerous events for the community. A dedicated, interactive IPSWICH 150 website was created to promote this milestone and to enable the community to voice their stories of the past and dreams for the future as well as register their own celebrations.

The city is rich with history and Council sees custodianship of significant buildings and places as critical to the city's identity with over 7 000 places within IPSWICH protected under the IPSWICH Heritage Program.

Community consultation is a feature of Council's heritage initiatives. The IPSWICH Heritage Program works in partnership with knowledgeable members of local Indigenous communities to link their oral tradition with archaeological evidence of sites.

Council also offers the community a range of heritage celebration events and support services.

The City's artistic and cultural passion is preserved at the IPSWICH Art Gallery, most visited regional gallery in Australia, through performances at the Civic Centre and the Incinerator Theatre, and the annual IPSWICH Festival.

Category: Young Legends

Highlights:

Ipswich Youth Advisory Council (IYAC) - Council understands that young people's opinions are diverse due to factors such as age, gender, cultural and religious background, education, lifestyle choice and economic status. Council also understands that young people are an integral, valued and vital part of community life who provide innovative, new and creative ideas and perspectives.

Council continuously strives to make young people feel valued in the community. This is achieved through addressing young peoples needs, issues, and ensuring young people's wellbeing is included as part of Council's core business - IPSWICH City Council, Youth Policy.

IYAC was developed by Council's Community Development Branch and currently comprises of 29 local young people aged 12-17. Leadership is provided by Council's Youth Development Officer.

Evidence suggests that young people who are connected to opportunities and where they feel valued by their community, and can have a voice, are more likely to have a greater sense of identity, have greater self-esteem, self-efficacy and resilience skills.

IPSWICH Schools - Council engages with the annual Clean Up Australia Day with 13 IPSWICH schools participating in the March 2011 event.