

Australian Tidy Towns 2012 Program Report

Town/Community: KYOGLE NSW **Date judged:** 14 February 2012

Population: approx 2 800

Organisers: KYOGLE Tidy Towns Committee in partnership with the KYOGLE Council and general community

Contact Names: Ian Judd *Email: ian.judd@bigpond.com*

COMMUNITY ACTION/ PARTNERSHIPS

KYOGLE is the 'Gateway to the Rainforests' and is a traditional country town with all the characteristics of a vibrant and industrious country centre.

KYOGLE's diverse range of projects makes up the community's commitment to Tidy Towns and other related environmental and beautification programs.

KYOGLE Tidy Towns Committee has delivered active and enthusiastic promotion of the town and provides extensive infrastructure and support of community activities. It is a well-organised group with a committed approach to the Tidy Towns program with an exciting vision and mission statement.

Vision: KYOGLE Tidy Towns strives to promote a more sustainable community.

Mission Statement: KYOGLE Tidy Towns is a not for profit community organisation partnering with the community to protect the natural environment, nurture cultural diversity, support sustainable development, encourage community involvement and promote a positive community spirit.

Numerous groups are proactive in KYOGLE including *Growing KYOGLE* who is involved in leasing a cinema, railway station and is a parent organisation for Tidy Towns, *Active KYOGLE* provides grants, facilitates a community gym and health promotion website as well as *KYOGLE Together* which promotes links with many organisations and has an understanding with groups to promote and develop community spirit.

Partnerships are a key to the town's Tidy Towns success including ones between the KYOGLE Tidy Towns (KTT), Council, service groups, schools, Chamber of Commerce, Art Council and businesses.

KTT manages the local Farmers' Market, undertakes promotions, assembles Christmas hampers made up of local foods to encourage people to reduce food miles and support local industry, offers input into economic development policy, has regular input and regularly represents community issues at Council meetings and in Council's monthly newsletter.

The community is committed to ensuring that homes and private gardens are tidy and maintained. Residents and Council ensure that approaches to the town, including signs and features, public parks, and sporting areas are well tendered.



'DAME PHYLLIS FROST' LITTER PREVENTION

Positive litter control strategies and the community's commitment to keeping KYOGLE litter free were more than evident.

KYOGLE is a clean and well-maintained town due to a highly motivated and industrious community with extensive volunteer support for litter pick up at the town's popular lookout and along roadsides.

Council works closely with schools and the Tidy Towns Committee to promote sustainable waste and litter strategies. This process is reinforced in the schools with a similar system operating and a program of litter reduction and waste minimisation using the five R's – Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Reward people that manage litter and waste.

A new era of waste management started in KYOGLE in 2011. A new recycling program and the introduction of cell technology to resource recovery and landfill minimisation has resulted in significant improvements to litter reduction in the region; combined with a strong commitment to Clean Up Australia Day and use of new waste bins and butt bins in the town's main street.



RESOURCE RECOVERY & WASTE MANAGEMENT

KYOGLE's local waste management facility is clean and well maintained. Recycling is provided for a host of resources including paper, bottles, metal, plastic and green waste together with the development and implementation of a new plastics recycling program.

KYOGLE High School has developed a red and yellow, *Let's Keep Kyogle High School Clean* program and recycles paper and bottles with resource recovery promoting sustainable recycling and waste management.

KYOGLE has taken a holistic approach to managing waste with strong partnerships with Council, Tidy Towns, service organisations and schools providing a practical and functional use, reuse and recycle resources policy.



The KYOGLE community has been involved in:

- Use of the 'Tip Shop' to recycle old treasures.
- KYOGLE Bazaar provides an avenue for community to sell old treasures once a month.
- Development of Tidy Towns Garage Sale Trail.
- Vinnie's and Op shops providing an avenue for reusing furniture, clothes and books.
- Waste facility provides free recycling of metals.
- Council subsidises waste fees by 50% if half loads are recyclables.
- Award winning new waste cell system to reduce landfill.
- Mobile Muster carried out at KYOGLE High school, Council and Post Office.
- Cartridge recycling carried out at KYOGLE High School and Post Office.
- KYOGLE Tidy Towns organising and sponsoring a sculpture competition using recycled farm materials.

Outcomes include excellent education programs through Council newsletters and links with schools to promote the town's new recycling system. Strong uptake has been achieved by schools and the general community for effective waste management and reduction of contamination in the waste stream.

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION & PROTECTION

KYOGLE is surrounded by World Heritage National Parks and quality agricultural land. Through innovation and excellence it has developed a number of projects that have enabled the town to become more sustainable and provide access, conservation and ingenuity to the local community.

The KYOGLE community has been involved in a broad range of environmental protection and biodiversity initiatives including:

- Award winning restoration of the old KYOGLE quarry with a local resident, Trevor Bendall, working for 30 years to improve the biodiversity of the site.
- Award winning KYOGLE Council Hydroponic Wetland and Sewage Treatment Facility which reuses wastewater, improves the quality of water entering the Richmond River, hydroponically waters over 5 acres of native plants and supplies trees for Landcare, community and school groups.
- Development of Bush Tucker Garden at KYOGLE High School working with a TAFE program.
- Aboriginal Rangers partnering on Landcare projects.
- Botanic Gardens managed by Landcare, Tidy Towns, Recreation Area Reserve Trust and local schools.
- Development of community and school food gardens.
- Development of a koala brochure with funding support from Tidy Towns.
- Cane toad identification workshops and musters by Landcare with arrival of toads to the region.
- Workshops on climate change for local farmers.
- KYOGLE High School announced as the regional Landcare winner for 2011 education category.

The outcome has resulted in strong partnerships between government and community groups to improve local sustainability with areas around the town being improved and biodiversity increased.



WATER CONSERVATION

KYOGLE is fortunate to experience an average annual rainfall of over 1 100 millimetres. However, being situated at the top of the Richmond River catchment, the community has taken on responsibility to ensure that water that runs from the catchment area is pure and free of contaminants.

Extensive work has been undertaken on riparian zone weed eradication and restoration of banks to improve water quality. Landcare and Catchment Management Authority have linked with local landholders to improve the waterways in the valley. Work has occurred to improve the rivers with tree planting, water testing and erosion control through sediment traps and contour banks in paddocks.

KYOGLE has been successful in the KAB NSW Tidy Towns award for its hydroponic system using the water from the treatment works. Plans are being made for a levy bank to reduce flood impact by the river and a water holding dam to develop an off-stream water holding capacity site.

Local water authority, Rous Water, have been involved in a forum for school students to highlight the importance of clean water. The launch of the *Triple A Team* conducting water audits at KYOGLE High School. The program is a pilot for the North Coast and involves Rous Water assessing current water use at the school and then developing strategies for water savings.



Local industry commitment to water conservation approaches includes an effective water filtration system at Daley's Nursery that recycles water for the irrigation of plant stock together with the construction of a large dam at the nursery to reduce use of town water.

ENERGY INNOVATION

KYOGLE is located in the northern area of NSW and experiences cool winters and hot summers. Energy use is high in the summer months with use of air conditioners and fans. As a result, efficient energy use and management is essential to reduce costs and carbon emissions.

KYOGLE community's commitment to innovative energy use involves:

- The community purchase by numerous residents of photovoltaic systems to capitalise on volume buying. Outcome saw numerous homes generating their own electricity.
- The school's *Triple A Team* conducted energy audits at KYOGLE High School as part of green day.
- The introduction of solar panels at the golf club.
- KYOGLE High School involved in *Climate Clever Energy Savers* program to develop strategies to reduce energy use at school.
- KYOGLE High School has introduced solar panels and developed an energy sustainable classroom using energy efficient lighting and solar tinting on windows. Air conditioners are set at 25 degrees and signs in classrooms encourage lights to be turned off.
- KYOGLE Council has commissioned a report to outline energy savings for town lighting.
- The use of solar panels at railway signals.
- KYOGLE Council implemented regulations for energy efficient houses.

As a result of the raising of awareness of innovative energy use and climate change issues, the use of energy efficient products to conserve energy at schools and the community has developed as well as increased support by local government and businesses for innovative energy conservation initiatives.



HERITAGE & CULTURE

Heritage restoration and preservation is on a large scale in KYOGLE with numerous buildings carefully restored to their former glory. Various private and public buildings are tastefully conserved providing a welcoming character that is inviting to locals and tourists.

The town presents well with classic Art Deco architecture and buildings clean and presentable. An Art Deco tour has been introduced that showcases the unique style of the town.

KYOGLE has maintained the character of its main street, hidden behind Art Deco façades, numerous boutique shops, cafés, specialty shops, Community Gallery, coffee shops and hotels offering visitors a unique experience.

Notable examples of the preservation of heritage and culture within KYOGLE Include:

- An annual reconciliation march to celebrate local indigenous culture that finishes at Anzac Park, a place of indigenous cultural significance.
- The recently restored Railway Man's Cottage art gallery.
- Restored 'Painted Ladies' homes, some a century old, line local streets.
- The preservation of antique projection equipment at the local cinema.
- The restoration of the iconic Council Chambers and KYOGLE Memorial Institute.
- The development by KYOGLE Council of a local heritage policy.
- The planning of a new historical museum and art gallery.
- The development of a maritime museum.
- The showcasing of historical trucks by national transport company, Brown and Hurley.
- The organisation and successful celebration of the Centenary of KYOGLE Show.
- The collection of timber axes, pioneer hut and memorabilia of Doug Campbell.
- Historic photographic display of the timber industry donated by Rob Dwyer.
- The environmental refurbishment of Anzac Park, a significant indigenous site.



YOUNG LEGENDS

Environmental awareness and education programs are an integral part of education in KYOGLE with students actively involved in numerous community activities and partnerships.

KYOGLE caters for the environmental, sporting and cultural needs of its youth with the development of the local Youth Environment Council (YES), a District YEC and a Youth Environment Society (YES) - a community based environmental group for youth aged 11 to 25 years. There is a strong grass roots movement for proactive environmental engagement.

Highlights of youth-initiated and coordinated projects in KYOGLE include:

- Development, piloting and facilitating of the *Triple A Audit Team* to deliver a snap shot assessment of a school's sustainability.
- Development of the local skate park.
- Refurbishment of the local youth club with a new roof and focus on sustainability through a grant from KYOGLE Council.
- Development of the KYOGLE acoustic musical society (KAMS) that has many youth members.
- Development of Drama in Rural Towns (DIRT) and local youth drama group.
- Local students representing state SRC and regional YEC committees.
- Local pony club operating and serving the needs of the youth with a \$10 000 grant from *Active KYOGLE*.
- Continuing success of the Youth Circus Express that puts on quality performances for the community.
- Continued existence of Rural Youth that caters for the farming youth. The state executive now operates in KYOGLE.
- The successful youth ventures group catering for the needs of less advantaged youth in the community.

Due to the proactive commitment of key educators within KYOGLE, guided by Ian Judd, strong education programs have focused on sustainable development with outstanding youth based leadership programs on a local and regional level.

Other outcomes include numerous awards for outstanding programs, experience based camps where students learn about environmental education in a fun, hands on learning style as well as sustainable partnerships developed between schools, Tidy Towns, KYOGLE Council and service organisations.

SUGGESTIONS

KYOGLE's Tidy Towns Award for New South Wales is a great achievement for the community. The success is a great opportunity to be promoted on local business brochures and Council letterheads, envelopes, etc. Promoting the community's great commitment to Tidy Towns may assist in encouraging involvement as well as developing positive economic benefits and marketing opportunities for the town and region.

To further complement current beautification approaches throughout the town, Tidy Towns may wish to consider introducing a commercial site landscaping/garden award program.

To assist with maximising the reduction of waste to landfill and increase recycling rates, large and colorful signs directing residents to respective waste separation areas may be considered. A great opportunity is also available to further extend the 'Recycling Shop' facility to increase fundraising for local charities or profit for the site operator.



The town's lookout is a prime site for major beautification and development to enable an enhanced experience for visitors and residents.

To complement KYOGLE's unique Art Deco self guided walk experience, an opportunity to install interpretive sign panels describing respective historic backgrounds may be worth considering.

Congratulations to everyone involved in the KYOGLE's Tidy Towns and associated community action programs.

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

*Dick Olesinski
National Tidy Towns judge*