

# Australian Tidy Towns 2012 Program Report

**Town/Community:** MORNINGTON VIC ..... **Date judged:** 13 & 14 December 2011

**Population:** Approx 22 000

**Organisers:** Mornington Peninsula Shire in partnership with the general community

**Contact Names:** Sam Ackland Email: Samantha.ackland@mornpen.vic.gov.au

## COMMUNITY ACTION/PARTNERSHIPS

MORNINGTON has a proud commitment to the Tidy Towns program and overall sustainability as well as other related environmental and beautification programs conducted throughout the community.

MORNINGTON has numerous active groups, individuals and a committed Shire that work in partnership in protecting the environment and well as implementing a host of sustainability initiatives.

Extensive business and community partnerships are also evident and celebrate numerous activities that help make MORNINGTON a special part of Victoria.

The community has a strong sense of commitment and pride and are involved in a broad range of initiatives to ensure a sustainable future.

Notable example is the MORNINGTON Community Garden which continues to provide education and support in living sustainably as well as looking to adapt to climate change. Instances of this have been through a range of workshops conducted on organic food production, waste reduction, waterwise gardening, non-chemical pest and weed control and many more.

MORNINGTON's Schools Environment Week has been an annual event since 1983 and recently involved over 2 500 participants.

The event provides a diverse and interactive range of environmental learning activities for primary and kindergarten students on topics ranging from marine and wildlife education to tree planting and learning about sustainability.

The event consists of an Environmental Expo with over 20 interactive exhibits and four workshops including 'Woodlands and Wetlands', 'Hands in the Dirt' and 'Indigenous' and 'Green Living'.

The event is run by a committee of management involving local teachers, businesses, the indigenous and local communities as well as representatives from the MORNINGTON Peninsula Shire and Department of Sustainability & Environment. It also brings together volunteers from the community and environmental groups who make a valuable contribution to the event and assist with activities and interactive displays.



## 'DAME PHYLLIS FROST' LITTER PREVENTION

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

A typical example of litter prevention is within the main street in MORNINGTON which is a constant hype of activity. With a historic maritime theme, the street offers a unique range of shops, restaurants and numerous diverse stores.

The street is also host to a weekly market every Wednesday. The Main Street MORNINGTON Market is the longest running street market in Victoria, being nearly 30 years old. Visitors come from far and wide to sample the many homemade crafts, home grown plants and produce, and to soak up the vibrant atmosphere that the market is famous for.

With all this activity a strategic and collaborative approach needed to be undertaken to ensure the cleanliness and beauty of the street. To achieve this, a partnership has been developed between the MORNINGTON Peninsula Shire, MORNINGTON Chamber of Commerce and local traders called 'Clean Up Main Street' program.

'Clean Up Main Street' involves street sweeping four times a week, footpath sweeping and cleaning three times a week, litter bins emptied daily and loose litter collected daily.

An educational component has also been a key aspect of the 'Clean Up Main Street' program. This has included working with local traders to minimise waste leaving their premises as well as clear signs on rubbish and recycling bins along the main street together with cigarette butt bins installed in high traffic areas.



## RESOURCE RECOVERY & WASTE MANAGEMENT

The MORNINGTON Peninsula Shire is committed to a sustainable peninsula, as such care is taken to preserve and protect the natural environment of the area and includes managing the effective recycling and disposal of waste. As a result, MORNINGTON's recycling and resource recovery initiatives divert an extensive number of tonnes of waste from landfill each year.

The Shire operates three resource recovery centres, one of which is in MORNINGTON. This site is strategically located to provide a convenient means for residents to manage waste and recycle materials.

The site has clear and descriptive signs and specifically designated disposal areas for the collection and recycling of different types of material, eg, paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum, etc. There is also an area for the collection and mulching of green waste.

A unique aspect of the site is the Outlook Centre, which is similar to an Op Shop. Residents are able to dispose of good quality pre-loved items for free before entering the designated disposal area. This is an effective way to reduce waste to landfill, reuse items and save landfill costs. Residents are able to purchase new items for a reduced price.



The site also hosts a permanent 'Detox Your Home' facility. A large number of unwanted or left over household items such as paint, batteries or gas bottles can be harmful to the environment if disposed of incorrectly. Permanent 'Detox Your Home' facilities allow for the dispose of these items safely and for free.



## ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION & PROTECTION

Numerous voluntary environmental community groups work in partnership with the Shire and effectively contribute to enhancing and protecting MORNINGTON's well managed environment.

Example includes Tanti Creek, which is a modified natural creek that runs through a number of housing estates in MORNINGTON leading to Mills Beach. This area provides a native bushland and aquatic habitat for native fauna.



The area has slowly eroded over time due to urban and industrial development that has increased water runoff, litter and environmental weeds within the creek. However, local residents and the MORNINGTON Peninsula Shire have recognised the value of the area and are working together to reduce erosion and protect local native flora and fauna.



A management plan has been developed to protect Tanti Creek which lead to the creation of two friends groups, Friends of Tanti Creek and Friends of Mills Beach who undertake projects in the area.

The Friends group have undertaken a number of projects to manage weeds, revegetation works and clean up projects.

Most recently the Friends group has undertaken a project with the assistance of a Melbourne Water grant, to restore the creek banks along Tanti Creek estuary. This project also involves monthly testing of water quality as well as hosting working bees each month.



Friends of Mills Beach have also undertaken a number of projects to manage weeds in the area and clean up projects. They also manage the restoration of the endangered Coastal Banksia woodland along Mills Beach foreshore. This is a joint project between the Federal Government and MORNINGTON Peninsula Shire. With the assistance of contractors, the group removes woody weed and then replants native understory shrubs and trees at working bees once a month.

## WATER CONSERVATION

In late 2010, work began to install the infrastructure needed for the MORNINGTON Community Recycled Water Scheme.

This collaborative project between the MORNINGTON Peninsula Shire, South East Water, the MORNINGTON Racing Club and a number of local user groups aimed to reduce potable water consumption within the MORNINGTON region. All groups were strongly committed to reducing the demand for potable water as well as finding a long term sustainable alternative for irrigation of sporting and community facilities.

Over 200 million litres of Class A recycled water will be supplied to both the MORNINGTON Racing Club and the MORNINGTON Peninsula Shire and service over six key user groups.

Officially commissioned in March 2011, the Scheme will save 107 million litres of drinking water each year.

MORNINGTON Community Garden programs include water conservation and waterwise gardening. As a result of a grant, the group tapped into a stormwater drain to harvest water that would otherwise end up in the sea. The garden is quickly becoming a self-sufficient sustainable asset for its members and broader community.



## ENERGY INNOVATION

In response to the key barriers identified through the Shire's Climate Change Conversations information sessions, specifically the prohibitive cost of purchasing sustainable products, difficulty in accessing government grants and ambiguous information, the Shire coordinated a group purchase scheme for photovoltaic systems. The Shire facilitated the bulk purchase by seeking expressions of interest from qualified suppliers, evaluating the responses and promoting the preferred supplier/s to all residents.

More than 800 residents registered their interest in the program which ran from May to June 2009. The program was prematurely closed due to changes in government rebates, however over 250 residents participated each purchasing 1 KW system.

This has reduced approximately 430 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year entering the atmosphere from homes on the peninsula, which is equivalent to removing 110 cars off the road each year.

From the success of the first program the Shire has subsequently run three additional group purchase schemes in line with State Government grants at the time.

A group purchase for solar hot water systems and rain water tanks ran from November 2009 to March 2010. More than 1 000 residents registered their interest and 100 solar hot water systems and 150 rain water tanks were installed.

A second group purchase scheme for photovoltaics was held in March to May 2011. Over 250 solar systems were installed ranging in size from 1.5KW systems to 5KW systems the majority of which were on homes in the MORNINGTON area. In total, over 700 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year have been eliminated which is equivalent to removing 175 cars off the road each year.

Saint Macartan's Parish Primary School has a 5.4kw solar system which has generated 5mw since installation. As the school was designed and constructed on a sustainability platform, it was considered essential to integrate as many sustainable practices as possible into student education.



The energy generated by the panels is logged by the school's computers and data is sent to a digital visual display at the school entrance. Students and community members are also educated about the school's generation and consumption through a SOLARSET web page.

There is also no air conditioning at the school. Ceiling fans, pergolas, awnings and solar chimneys are used to reduce heat gain and leave rooms cool in summer.

While classrooms have efficient gas space heaters, room temperatures are recorded three times per day by students to monitor building performance. Students try to maintain temperatures in winter between 18 and 22 degrees C and actively choose to turn off heaters when rooms are comfortable.

The Energy Team carries out random temperature checks and reports its findings to the school community.



## HERITAGE & CULTURE

Heritage restoration and preservation is on a large scale in MORNINGTON with numerous buildings restored to their former glory. Various private and public buildings are tastefully conserved providing a welcoming ambience which is inviting to locals and visitors alike.

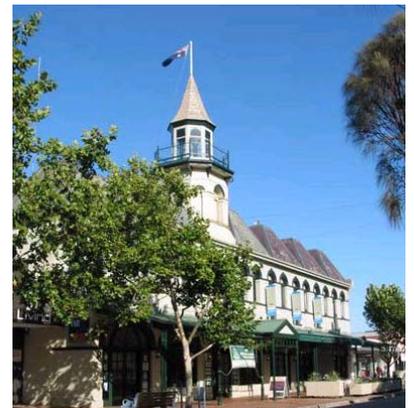
MORNINGTON's Historical Society has undertaken a number of key projects including saving the town's old post office, the old bank, protecting the MORNINGTON station and establishing the museum.

The Historical Society has also been the driving force in developing the MORNINGTON Historical Walk. This is a self-guided walking tour that takes visitors along a winding trail exploring the historical landmarks and sights of MORNINGTON.

In October 2011, MORNINGTON celebrated 150 years of gazetted history as a township. The celebration was marked with a day at MORNINGTON's historical park with a village fair atmosphere. Local residents came together to share stories and reminisce about old times. A number of activities were held throughout the day including a picnic, Devonshire tea, Blacksmith demonstration, Couta boat race and heritage fashion parade.

The celebrations also included a church service followed by a colonial dinner at the historic Grand Hotel.

All activities throughout the weekend were organised by volunteers from the Historical Society and wider community in conjunction with the MORNINGTON Peninsula Shire.



## YOUNG LEGENDS

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

At Saint Macartan's Parish Primary School, the student's leadership program has been successfully integrated into the school's curriculum.

A review identified student leadership as an area requiring development. Students were asked to identify the essential qualities and tasks expected of a leader. Five main areas were identified including: Environmental Systems, Health & Wellbeing, Social Justice, Communications and Projects. There are 23 school leaders who work across these areas.

- The Environment Systems Team supports and promotes school initiatives with a focus on sustainability.
- The Health and Well Being Team supports and promotes the health, fitness, emotional and social wellbeing of the school community.
- The Social Justice Team supports and promotes faith and local/global activities that highlight social justice issues.
- The Communications Team communicates school activities to the wider community and promotes the school.
- The Projects Team promotes and assists in school and community based projects.

In addition to these leadership roles held at the senior student level (Year 6), Sustainability Teams are in place across areas of water, waste, energy and biodiversity where 40 students from Prep to Year 6 contribute to the education of the community within their area of expertise.

MORNINGTON's Schools Environment Week has been an annual event for over 10 years and in 2010 involved over 2 500 participants.

The event provides a diverse and interactive range of environmental learning activities for primary and kindergarten students on topics ranging from marine and wildlife education to tree planting and learning about sustainability. In 2010, 35 local primary schools and kindergartens participated.

Environment Week is an important activity in the educational year with its vision ensuring children connect to the environment in a sustainable way and to develop positive relationships between students and the community.

## SUGGESTIONS

MORNINGTON's Tidy Towns Award for Victoria is a great achievement for the community and could be promoted on local business brochures and Shire 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.

If not already in place, the Shire may consider establishing or facilitating an Australian Association of Environmental Education (AAEE) or Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI) network through the current regional educational system. An AAEE or AuSSI initiative may complement a consistent approach to environmental education in the region.

Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria's Clean Site program's educational resources are available to assist with raising the building and construction industry's awareness of the need to build in harmony with the environment. The program in particular focuses on stormwater pollution prevention and resource recovery onsite.



To complement MORNINGTON's well planned development, the Shire may wish to consider introducing a consistent sign approach to promote the facilities/services available within the community. If applicable, happy to provide further information.

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

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

*Dick Olesinski  
National Tidy Towns judge*