

Australian Tidy Towns 2011 Program Report

Town/Community: BARUNGA NT Date judged: 7 December 2010

Population: approx 480

Organisers: Roper Gulf Shire in partnership with the general community

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COMMUNITY ACTION/ PARTNERSHIPS

Situated 80kms south east of Katherine and located alongside the Beswick Creek in a landscape of undulating savannah-covered hills, BARUNGA is an Aboriginal community situated in the western corner of the Beswick Aboriginal Reserve and within the Roper Gulf Shire.

The BARUNGA community have a long and proud involvement with the Territory Tidy Towns program and have been successful in being recognised for various projects in the past, in particular representing the Territory for the second year in a row in the national program. This success has motivated the community to keep improving and encouraging others to get involved in Tidy Towns.

The Roper Gulf Shire Council, in partnership with the Barunga-Manyallaluk Community Government Council, is dedicated to offering the best services to the community. A proactive approach to caring for their environment encourages the community to create a place that all residents can be proud to live.

A range of sporting facilities are well maintained within the community with residents encouraged to use and to maintain a healthy lifestyle and build on community strengths.

Sporting teams from surrounding communities are encouraged and challenged to contests in the spirit of good health and sportsmanship.

With numerous CDEP projects underway throughout the community, it bears the testimony that BARUNGA residents care for their surroundings and are proud to live in this special part of Australia.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & INNOVATION

The community and Shire work in partnership with locally employed, Jawoyn Rangers to effectively protect the environment around BARUNGA.

The community and rangers have a shared understanding and care for their country.

This effective partnership is delivering positive results for the environment, community and its residents.

Wild buffalo, feral pigs and donkeys all present challenges that can lead to extensive environmental and property damage in not effectively managed.

Actions and management practices by the Jawoyn Ranges has reduced the incidence and numbers of feral animals roaming throughout the community.

LITTER PREVENTION/ RESOURCE RECOVERY & WASTE MANAGEMENT

There is a focus on litter reduction with 'Do the right thing' bins in place throughout the community to help reduce unwanted litter within this unique environment.

Residents and staff from the Shire demonstrate pride in keeping public and private areas clean and free from litter with daily clean ups that sets the standard and expectations of residents and visitors to the community.

School litter reduction programs include participation in Clean Up Australia Day as well as Keep Australia Beautiful Week activities and generally keeping the school grounds free of litter. Anti litter posters are used to ensure ongoing emphasis and education on the need to place litter in bins provided.

Due to the town's remoteness, there is major focus on a broad range of recycling approaches within the general community.

Various items including timber, batteries, bottles, cans, etc are collected, sorted and packaged for recycling.

Materials from fallen trees is also recycled and reused in and around the community as mulch for garden beds and beautification programs.

Timber mulch is also stockpiled and used freely by the community's to beautify their homes and gardens.

HERITAGE & CULTURE

The community of BARUNGA have a rich heritage and culture. The community have a special place in history, and they share their country and heritage through their festival and sporting activities.

The town's Heritage Park is a great example of displays of cultural interpretations and the community's historic background.

BARUNGA Sports and Cultural Festival is one of Australia's longest running Aboriginal festivals. Coordinated by the Jawoyn Association, it is heavily dependant on local participation and support from the Roper Gulf Shire Council.

Held every year over the June long weekend, the community welcomes visitors from around Australia. The festival is a unique opportunity to be part of a remote Aboriginal community, and share in the Jawoyn culture.

Visitors are invited to camp in the community, be part of dancing ceremonies, share traditional bush tucker, and enjoy the many cultural activities on offer.

The Festival has developed into one of the most significant celebrations of Aboriginal culture, art, music and sport in the Top End. It connects Aboriginal communities from across the Northern Territory and Kimberley in WA.

Funds raised by the festival also contribute to the upkeep of the town's cultural area, Heritage Park.

YOUNG LEGENDS

BARUNGA Community Education Centre caters from preschool to year 12 with a crèche also attached to the school. It has a strong VET program with students undertaking apprenticeships in Katherine as a result.

The Primary School community is committed to developing pride amongst its students. Environmental improvement approaches are conducted within the school including recycling, reducing litter and beautifying school grounds.

There is a major focus on health and sporting activities within the school system which encourages children to become involved during school and at home.

SUGGESTIONS

BARUNGA's Territory Tidy Towns Award is a great achievement for the community and able to be broadly promoted, in particular on BARUNGA's website. Promoting the town's great commitment assists in encouraging the community as well as developing positive marketing opportunities

With the community winning the Territory's Tidiest Town award two years in a row, it is an ideal chance to promote the success broadly. It's a great opportunity for Roper Gulf Shire to use the town as a 'model' for others within the shire to follow and also as an example for the Territory in general.

Great to hear the Tidy Towns sign at the town entrance to the community has been approved and help to reinforce success amongst residents and visitors.

Congratulations to everyone involved in the BARUNGA Tidy Towns Award 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*