

# Judge Report

## CLEAN BEACHES 2013

*Godfrey's Beach, Tasmania*



**Keep Australia Beautiful National Association**

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*“In all of the five finalists, it was obvious that a special spirit emerges where a community has a strong and enduring connection to its local environment”.*

## Introduction

### Overall

Godfrey’s Beach, on the wind-swept north coast of Tasmania, proved itself home to a dynamic, tight-knit and welcoming community. The town of Stanley, adjacent to Godfrey’s Beach, is rich in history and civic pride, and is characterised by passionate long-term residents who are very much committed to raising children as tomorrow’s leaders in litter prevention and sustainability.

The community’s connection to Godfrey’s Beach is demonstrated by their involvement in beach profiling, weed control, and management of penguin habitat. Further investment in community-wide energy and water innovation, more education for visitors about the area’s indigenous history, dune rehabilitation and management, and some innovative thinking about how Stanley might become a leader in recycling in Tasmania could make Stanley and Godfrey’s Beach even more extraordinary.

### Date judged

6 September 2013

### Population

500

### Contact

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## Community Action & Partnerships

Godfrey's Beach and the associated public foreshore park, barbeque and shelter area, are used extensively by tourists, locals, families and a variety of groups including school excursions. Physical activities centred around the Godfrey's Beach area include using the playground equipment, walking or running on the beach, swimming, surfing, water sports, playing ball games or relaxing using the variety of seating that is available.

A number of groups are active in the management of Godfrey's Beach, including Circular Head Council, Cradle Coast Natural Resource Management (NRM), Parks and Wildlife Service, Stanley Primary School and the Circular Head Landcare group. Other volunteer groups such as the Stanley Discovery Museum play an important role as custodians of local history, and in making Stanley's many stories accessible to visitors to the town.

Priorities of the various groups include:

- Circular Head Council: Maintaining and beautifying park area.
- Cradle Coast Natural Resource Management Beachwatch programme.
- Parks and Wildlife Service: Penguin habitat area including planting of vegetation, weed control, protection of area and educational programmes.
- Stanley Primary School: Part of Beachwatch programme, Clean-up Australia days and work closely with Parks and Wildlife re penguin habitat.
- Circular Head Landcare: TASMARC (Tasmanian Shoreline Monitoring and Archiving Project) recording of baseline information on tides and sand movement.

Work to manage and improve Godfrey's Beach and the adjacent public land continues, for example through significant funding to repair tidal damage, and building of a new ramp to allowing easier access to beach completed in 2013. The Council's King Park Master Plan also includes a commitment to deliver new long lasting playground equipment and six new picnic settings, to be completed by November 2013.

## ***Dame Phyllis Frost Litter Prevention***

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Small covered bins are available in public areas around Godfrey's Beach, and are emptied daily except for Sunday by a Council employee who then disposes of all the rubbish at the Waste Transfer Station, White Hills, Smithton. Students from Stanley Primary School have identified locations where they would like to see new bins, including in the public areas along the foreshore, and have provided their recommendations to the Circular Head Council.

Students from Stanley Primary School are also part of the Beach Watch program and have adopted Godfrey's Beach. This program is supported by NRM facilitators and currently only runs in three Council areas including Circular Head. Clean-ups occur twice a year with the results being reported to the Tangaroa Blue Ocean Care Society. In addition to this, students participate in KAB Clean Up Australia days at both Godfrey's and Tatlow's beaches. The students' long term goal is to ensure no more clean-up days are necessary.

## Resource Recovery & Waste Management

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Bins around the Godfrey's Beach area do not provide visitors access to recycling facilities. This may be related the broader challenge of making recycling cost-effective in Tasmania, however if so there may be an opportunity for Godfrey's Beach, and the associated community of Stanley to provide leadership in innovative waste management.

The Council and local community have demonstrated their commitment to using recycled materials, for example for the construction of a new recycled fence for the protection of Godfrey's penguin habitat. Locally-sourced natural materials have also been used to create a beautiful rock wall in the shape of a wave along the foreshore of the park area that provides practical seating, showers for after bathing, wind shelter and corrosion protection.

Circular Head Council also plans to install six new picnic settings using recycled materials, to be completed by November 2013; as well as to replace the bark soft fall under playground equipment with recycled rubber soft fall when funding becomes available.

## Environmental Protection & Innovation

The students of Stanley Primary School are key leaders in developing a sustainable community. Over a period of eight years, the school, guided by the present Principal, have provided a real sense of leadership within the local community, especially in relation to environmental management and sustainability.

In conjunction with Parks and Wildlife, the students of the Stanley Primary School have been helping manage weeds and establish native plants to improve habitat for the Godfrey's Beach penguin colony. Work includes students assisting in building artificial penguin burrows that are then strategically placed, creating signs promoting the rookery, and educating their friends, family and visitors on how to protect it. The 'Penguin' crossing sign situated on the road at the top end of Godfrey's Beach was the result of lobbying by a student from the school some years ago.

The students work in partnership with officers from the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service which is working towards:

- Protection of the penguin rookery: establishment of a new recycled plastic fence in same design as the nearby cemetery fence has been installed this year so as not to allow access by vehicles, etc. This also includes new signage on fence.
- Continuation of vegetation planting including weed control (plants surrounded by wood chips to encourage growth and conserve moisture) and protection of plants by core flute guards.
- Publication of an educational brochure on the Little (Fairy) Penguins and plans for more educational material in the near future.

A Discovery Ranger from the Parks and Wildlife Service conducts informative sessions free to the public over summer months which includes the Penguin Viewing Area and the Nut precinct. These are reportedly very popular by locals and tourists alike.

Godfrey's Beach is also part of the Tasmanian Shoreline Monitoring and Archiving Project. TASMARC, run by local Landcare volunteers, is engaged in recording of baseline information on tides and sand movement at Godfrey's Beach. The group measure the profile of Godfrey's Beach from fixed survey marks on an average once per month and now have three years of continuous measurement. This will help to build a data base to look at the effect of sea level rise and storms on Tasmanian coastlines. The data collected to date is stored in a data base

and available via the World Wide Web. TASMARC is the result of collaboration between scientists from the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Co-operative Research Centre, The University of Tasmania and Mr Chris Sharples, private consultant.

## Water Conservation

The public area behind Godfrey's Beach includes toilets and showers which have recently been updated as part of the King Park Landscape Master Plan. Water conservation measures have recently put in place, including:

- Toilet cisterns in the refurbished public toilet area have been replaced with dual flush water savers.
- Beach showers are on timers to ensure minimal wastage.
- In ground irrigation system for summer watering operating 15 minutes per day.

The town sewerage depot is located directly behind the dunes of Godfrey's Beach. The state water authority is responsible for operating the sewage depot, and ensures it operates within health and safety standards. During the site visit, the depot was unobtrusive. Residents did not report any concerns over its operation, and reported that the appropriate authority undertakes a storm water infrastructure audit to ensure storm water not entering sewage.

## Energy Innovation

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The community reports that minimal management of energy is required at Godfrey's Beach due to the limited amount of energy used. Existing night-lighting at the beach is on a day/night switch in the toilets and barbecue pavilion, and barbecues are on timers. There may be opportunities to investigate energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives in the community more broadly, for example through sustainability education and awareness beyond the excellent work underway in Stanley Primary School.

## Heritage & Culture

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The European and Indigenous history and culture of Stanley, Godfrey's Beach, and the associated port, are an important part of Australian history. The people of Stanley amply demonstrated their capable custodianship of this history, and the physical elements of it that are scattered across the landscape. Volunteers from the Stanley Discovery Museum maintain a collection of historical photographs and memorabilia pertaining to all aspects of Stanley. The Museum is open to the general public and school groups, ensuring the history of the area is sustainable for future generations.

Historic Highfield homestead, completed in 1835, and its importance to the VDL company, is a particular highlight. The house and surrounds are now owned by the State Government, managed by Parks and Wildlife and open to the public. Historical information is available on sandstone obelisks at various locations around the town including at the Godfrey's Beach precinct. Unusual cultural events are commemorated, such as the landing of Guiseppie Garibaldi, unifier of modern Italy, at Three Hummock Island in 1852.

Other cultural events, such as an annual guitar-making workshop led by a master-craftsman, make Stanley a rich and surprising cultural experience, and are evidence of a dynamic and interesting community.

## Young Legends

The intelligence and enthusiasm of Stanley Primary School's students is a key driving force in the small community of Stanley, as is the passion of their Principal and parents. The students demonstrated an ongoing commitment to protecting their beach and its values, in particular through their work removing weeds and rehabilitating native vegetation in penguin habitat, creating nesting boxes for the birds, and promoting the importance of litter management and recycling to the Circular Head Council.

As the nomination notes:

*“All sixty two students that attend Stanley Primary School live within the township and are therefore the key to delivering and educating the community about litter prevention. This gives them a sense of ownership and pride about their town and as they are the youth of today, a sustainable future is ensured.”*