

M E D I A R E L E A S E

NSW region's win Local Government Environment Awards

Two **RENEW NSW** Voluntary Waste Groups, NetWaste and the North East Waste Forum recently gained recognition of their outstanding waste management achievements and were presented with Local Government Excellence in Environment Awards for 2006-2007.

NetWaste and the North East Waste Forum (NEWF), who are both **RENEW NSW** voluntary waste groups and provide waste management solutions for rural and regional NSW, were award recipients. Midwaste member councils Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Gloucester and Kempsey and NEWF member council Clarence Valley also received an award at the December 2007 awards presentation.

The Eco-Friendly Youth Project saw the North East Waste Forum, which represents the North East region of NSW including Byron Bay, Ballina, and the Clarence, Richmond and Tweed valleys, win the Environment Education overall category award. This award recognises initiatives that inform the community and increase people's capacity to be active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

The North East Waste Forum's North Coast Eco-Friendly Youth Project promotes the adoption of environmental practices within Youth Centres. The project helps and supports youth service providers in the region to become an Eco-Friendly Youth Centre through the 6 Step Approach. From this 6 Step Approach the centres will implement and integrate environmental practices into their centres, programs and activities. Youth who visit these centres are encouraged to engage and become involved in becoming more environmentally aware.

"Winning this award is recognition of the value of working in partnership with the community organisers. It has been a privilege working with the enthusiastic people at the Youth Centres who are dedicated to making changes towards environmental sustainability," commented Bernadette Thomas, NEWF Coordinator.

The Community Sharps overall category award was presented to NetWaste, which represents the Central and West of NSW including Bathurst, Dubbo, Blue Mountains and Broken Hill, for their Community Sharps Management Project. This award recognises the councils who have put in place ongoing and/or initial trial collection systems and community education programs for community sharps waste generated in household and public places.

NetWaste, the NSW Department of Health and 14 Councils within the NetWaste region joined together to provide a collaborative and best practice approach to sharps collection units at pharmacies, public toilets and public places across the region. A community sharps management plan, policy and procedure as well as a community education awareness campaign enabled NetWaste to achieve the aims of this project. The key message of their education campaign was 'be a community sharps safety stickler'.

"We've appreciated the recognition for this project as it was quite challenging to undertake across a large geographical area. Member councils recognised the importance of offering a community sharps collection service and of raising community awareness and behaviours," commented Dara Clayton, NetWaste Projects Manager.

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Gloucester Shire Council, a member of Midwaste which represents the Mid North Coast of NSW covering regions including Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Gloucester, was the Division A winner for this same award category. The Gloucester Shire Council recognised the lack of community sharps disposal facilities available to residents and visitors to the area and developed the Gloucester Community Sharps Management Project in conjunction with the NSW Health Department. Two 120 litre community disposal facilities within easily accessible areas in the Gloucester Township were established and an information brochure was developed by the council which was distributed to all medical practitioners, veterinarians and pharmacists advising of the service.

Midwaste member Councils Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie-Hastings received a highly commended in the Waste Management Award category for their respective programs the Coffs Coast Waste Services and the Organic Waste Management – Towards Sustainability. The Waste Management Award recognises effective recovery and management of recyclables and solid wastes generated from households and/or managed through council facilities.

Coffs Harbour City Council's 'Coffs Coast Waste Services' is delivering advanced waste management systems and services through the use of leading technologies and a collaborative approach that is a model for regional Australia. The Port Macquarie-Hastings Council gained a Highly Commended for their Organic Waste Management program. This program led to significant changes in organic waste. As part of this service a weekly collection of the organics green wheelie bin and a free kitchen tidy and compostable cornstarch bag system were made available to residents to help them separate foodwaste at home.

“Port Macquarie-Hastings, Coffs Harbour and Gloucester Councils are thrilled to be recognised in the recent local Government Environment Awards. This shows that Midwaste and other RENEW NSW Councils represented at the Awards are leaders in waste and resource management,” says Nicole Julian, a Midwaste Council representative.

The Clarence Valley Council, member of NEWF, won the Local Sustainability overall category award as well as Coffs Harbour and Kempsey Councils, members of Midwaste, who were awarded highly commended in this same category. The Local Sustainability Award is a special award covering council initiatives to implement Ecologically Sustainable Development and strive for a sustainable future for their local community.

The Clarence Valley Council received the Overall Category Winner for their Clarence Valley Sustainability Initiative which outlines their approach to delivering sustainable outcomes in the Clarence. As a result of this initiative there has been a fundamental change in the way the Clarence Valley Council does business and there has been a solid move towards creating an organisation with a culture of sustainability.

Coffs Harbour City Council's 'Coffs Harbour - The Healthy City, the Smart City, and the Cultural City for a Sustainable Future' gained a highly commended due to the sustainability strategies now delivering tangible benefits to the city. These strategies are producing results in the areas of government decision-making, reclaimed water research and development, water conservation, energy efficiency, waste management and resource recovery, education and in community services.

Another member of **RENEW NSW** Kempsey Shire Council received a highly commended for their Ecological Sustainable Development (ESD) Strategy which is a broad-scale plan designed to facilitate sustainable development within the shire. ESD provides a vision for a sustainable future and is designed to integrate effective environmental, social, and economic management within the Shire.

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“**RENEW NSW** is delighted with the outstanding recognition its voluntary waste groups have received for their achievements in 2006-2007. This recognition will help **RENEW NSW** continue to achieve our objectives in providing waste management solutions in rural and regional NSW through having greater influence in policy making and funding and building on our reputation as the experts in waste management,” says Stephen Sykes **RENEW NSW** Chair.

Further information on **RENEW NSW** can be found on their website: www.renewnsw.com.au.



RENEW NSW Coordinators Dara Clayton and Sue Clarke (NetWaste), Bernadette Thomas (NEWF) and Nicky Julian (Midwaste)

Interviews are available with –

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Kristy Cosier – NetWaste Project Coordinator 02 6393 8770
Bob Bailey – Midwaste Coordinator 02 6581 8562
Stephen Sykes – **RENEW NSW** Chair 0419 415 110

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