

Tuesday 11 December 2012

AWARD FOR RYDE'S 'OUTSTANDING' SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL AND COMMITMENT

The City of Ryde's strong commitment to the environment has been recognised in the prestigious NSW Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards 2012.

Described as an outstanding submission based on the Council's four year delivery plan, Ryde's A Place for Sustainable Lifestyle and Opportunity - business model and approach 2011/12 - was the Divisional Local Sustainability Award winner for Councils with a population of more than 60,000 people.

Praised for its holistic approach and innovation, Ryde's business model ensures that sustainability principles are embedded in all Council operations, decisions and actions so that positive environmental outcomes are delivered across the City now and in the future.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Ivan Petch, said: "The policies and practices we have put in place shows the City of Ryde is leading by example through practice and policy to maintain and build an ecologically sustainable City for future generations.

"This Award recognises our integrated approach to sustainable economic, social and cultural growth, without damage to our fragile ecological systems," he said.

The Ryde Strategic Plan focuses on seven key outcomes: A City of Liveable Neighbourhoods, A City of Wellbeing, A City of Prosperity, A City of Environmental Sensitivity, A City of Connections, A City of Harmony and Culture and A City of Progressive Leadership.

Achievements to date have included:

- 50 local businesses joined the Sustainable Businesses in Ryde program to reduce water, energy and waste.
- Long term partnerships with community groups, schools and parents, businesses, neighbouring Councils and Government agencies build overlapping involvement and opportunity.
- Community volunteers devoted over 5,270 hours to a range of environmental projects.
- Keeping the community informed through workshops, newsletters, promotions, committees, events, website, letter-drops, an on-line sustainable living guide and seminars.
- The Catchment Connections program involved over 650 businesses, schools and other organisations to improve water quality in local creeks, preserve bushland, monitor pollution and improve biodiversity. This was achieved through a home advisory

service, festivals, public lectures, seminars, a business program, bush-regeneration, school activities reaching over 5000 students, tours, guided bushwalks and water sensitive urban design (WSUD) projects.

- Sustainable Transport – the Top Ryder free community bus services connects five key centres in the City of Ryde. Last year the Top Ryder transported 55,000 passengers (more than 175,000 since July 2008). The timetable is now available to the community by smartphone technology.
- Council Fleet Policy – fuel efficient cars – over 85% hybrid or 4 cylinder cars and B20 fuel reducing green house gas by 17%.
- Since 2004 Council has reduced potable (drinking/tap) water usage by 25% in Council facilities with no increase in its energy use. Energy use has also decreased by 6% from 2010.
- The Ryde Riverwalk along the Parramatta River Foreshore, recognised for its initiative and design, illustrates how a safe, beautiful and healthy environment plays a significant role in people’s physical, mental and social wellbeing. A new 3km Shared User path was constructed last year bringing the City’s total to 18kms. Other recently constructed shared paths include those along Waterloo Road between Lane Cove Road and Macquarie Shopping Centre and Epping Road in front of Optus.
- Strong strategic community partnerships with both business and Macquarie University for improved project communication and facilitation.
- Improved stormwater quality and waterway rehabilitation at Strangers Creek; construction of stormwater harvesting/reuse plant at Meadowbank promotes an integrated water cycle system.
- New Community Nursery will involve the community in the life cycle of plants and provide a learning centre for schools.

Environmental outcomes underpin the Ryde 2021 Community Strategy Plan ensuring balance is maintained between the pressures from population growth, climate change and the protection and enhancement of the natural ecosystems.

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