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RYDE'S 'OUTSTANDING' ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT AND ACHIEVEMENTS AWARD

The City of Ryde's strong commitment to the environment has been recognised in the prestigious Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Sustainable Cities Awards 2012.

Described as an outstanding submission based on the Council's Integrated Outcomes Framework of the Ryde 2012 Community Strategic Plan, *Ryde – Sustainable Lifestyle and Opportunities at your Doorstep* was the close runner-up in the hotly contested Overall Sustainable Council award.

Praised for its holistic approach and innovation, the plan 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.

"True sustainability is achieved when growth in one area creates positive benefits in all areas," the Mayor, Cllr Artin Etmekdjian said. "This Award is the highest recognition given to councils that are doing the most to address issues surrounding long term sustainability.

"It recognises our commitment to sustainable economic, social and cultural growth, without damage to our fragile ecological systems.

"The City of Ryde is leading by example through practice and policy and by involving the whole community to play an active part in bringing to life this robust environmental strategy."

Achievements to date:

- 50 local businesses have joined the Sustainable Businesses in Ryde program to reduce water, energy and waste.
- Long term partnerships with community groups, schools/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.
- Awareness campaign keeps the community informed through workshops, newsletters, promotions, committees, events, website, letter-drops, an on-line sustainable living guide and seminars.
- The Catchment Connections program which involved over 650 businesses, schools and other organisations to improve water quality in local creeks, preserve bushland, monitor pollution and improve biodiversity 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.

- Transport options – the Top Ryder free community bus services connecting five out of six key centres in Ryde transported 55,000 passengers last year. Since July 2008 it has provided transport for more than 175,000 passengers and now includes smartphone timetable 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% 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 Strategic Plan ensuring balance is maintained between the pressures from population growth and the protection and enhancement of the natural ecosystems.

The Strategic Plan focuses on seven key outcomes. These include: *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*

Attached Photo: (left to right) Bernie Murphy, Acting CEO of Keep Australia Beautiful; Austin Morris, City of Ryde Service Unit Manager - Infrastructure Integration; Sam Cappelli, City of Ryde Service Unit Manager - Environment, and the Hon. Robyn Parker MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage.

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(Left to right) Bernie Murphy, Acting CEO of Keep Australia Beautiful; Austin Morris, City of Ryde Service Unit Manager - Infrastructure Integration; Sam Cappelli, City of Ryde Service Unit Manager - Environment, and the Hon. Robyn Parker MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage.