

HCI AWARDS 2008 – CITATIONS

COMMUNITY AID & SERVICES

BRAILEYS TRANSPORT PTY LTD and MATTHEW BROADBRIDGE

Awarded for coordination of a food rescue initiative after World Youth Day

We all saw the pictures of the hundreds of thousands of people celebrating World Youth Day in Sydney – but did any of us stop to think that excess food from this event could be distributed amongst our food aid charities in the Illawarra to help feed those in need? Well, Matthew Broadbridge from Anglicare did – Matthew heard that food rescue charity OzHarvest had been distributing leftover food in Sydney and he sought to find a way to get some of this food down to Wollongong so that OzHarvest could then distribute it here.

Matthew contacted Brailey's Transport in Port Kembla and Brailey's generously offered a semi trailer free of charge to transport the food to the Illawarra. As a result of this five charities in the Illawarra, including Manna House at Figtree Anglican, Wesley Church in Crown Street Mall, and Warrawong Community Centre have had their food supplies boosted and have been able to pass this on to their clients.

BROOKELYN DAVIES and EMMA MCQUEEN

Awarded for organising the first 'Fruit Day' at Mt Terry Public School

Mufti Day took on a healthy twist at Mount Terry Public School last June when Emma McQueen and Brookelyn Davies organised the first 'Fruit Day' at their school. These two year five students organised a day of fun and games to promote the importance of including fruit as part of your everyday diet.

Fellow students embraced the spirit of the day, dressing up – some even as pieces of fruit! - and taking part in events such as an orange relay and eating apples dangling from pieces of string. Sounds like heaps of fun and they raised \$110 for the school to boot. Great effort girls!

CHERYL BIRD

Awarded for demonstrated commitment to children's nutrition

Creativity is the recipe of the day at Kiama Downs Children's Centre. Getting children to eat their fruit and veggies is a challenge for many of us but not for Chef Cheryl Bird who uses themed food days, music and dance to bring fun and interest to meals at the Kiama Downs Pre School. Cheryl has been dishing up delicious and nutritious food for the past five years with special days to celebrate the cuisine from many different countries as well as marking many significant days throughout the year such as Pink Ribbon Day and Universal Children's Day. How wonderful to be taught the joys and diversity that surrounds food at such a young age. Keep up the good work Cheryl!

EUNICE MICALLEF

Awarded for dedicated voluntary work including providing shelter for people in need

Eunice is one very special woman whose acts of kindness have gone well beyond the ordinary over her lifetime. Over the years, she has taken 11 homeless people into her home and provided them with the love and protection they have needed. Most of these people had lives broken by abuse, mental illness, drugs and alcohol or violence and after living with Eunice for various periods of time, were all able to get their lives back on track and now live productive, happy lives.

Eunice is known for her unique gift with sayings and poems. After a homeless person she was caring for deliberately broke a special possession of hers and insisted that Eunice throw them back out on the street, Eunice told them that "what had been broken was replaceable but the person who broke it was not".

Eunice receives daily phone calls from her extended "family" and most of them call her "mum". She is a shining example of when you share your love selflessly with others, it comes back to you tenfold.

FOCUS FIRE SAFETY COMMITTEE BLUESCOPE STEEL
Awarded for conducting a Home Fire Safety Campaign for staff

When the Focus Fire Safety Committee at BlueScope Steel wanted to get employees fired up about fire safety in the home, they got busy organising an awareness raising campaign for staff. 30% of home fires each year in Australia occur during the winter months. To raise awareness of potential fire hazards in the home during winter, committee members made presentations to shift teams and gave away smoke detectors and home fire safety packs.

The campaign turned up the heat on fire safety in the home and hopefully inspired BlueScope employees to ensure their homes were truly “smoke free zones”.

HOPE COMMUNITY OUTREACH –WARRAWONG
Awarded for establishing the House of Hope Food Barn

It was a brighter Christmas for residents in Berkeley last year when Jeff Dakers, the pastor at the Hope Centre Outreach Church, opened the House of Hope Food Barn.

Jeff and his wife Gally established the food store to cater specifically for needy families and since then have been overwhelmed by the response. The House of Hope has had thousands of registrations from people in need and this has prompted the church to open another outlet recently in Warrawong.

For a \$25 donation customers who use the service receive between \$80 - \$100 groceries with the Food Barn being generously financed by the Hope Centre Outreach Church. An awesome effort from all those involved!

KAREN VAN DER VEEN
Awarded for participating in Food bank’s Cans4Films festival food drive

Every year many thousands of Australians rely on food relief to survive from day to day with the number growing every year. Karen Van der Veen owner/manager of Network Video Dapto embraced the opportunity to help make a difference joining in the Cans4Films festival food drive in July this year.

Cans4Films is a food fundraiser initiated by Foodbank, one of Australia’s largest hunger relief charities.

Members of Network Video Dapto were invited to donate one can of food in return for a weekly rental – you could say swapping their beans for Mr Bean!!! Karen’s generosity saw over 100 cans of food collected and donated to the Salvation Army for distribution.

A fabulous outcome, Karen – well done.

READYMIX
Awarded for supporting Kiama Surf Life Saving Club for over 10 years

Some relationships are set in concrete and this one is no exception. For over 10 years Readymix group has generously donated fuel for the Kiama Surf Life Saving Club’s surf rescue jet boat. More recently, Readymix also provided the club with an extra \$5000 to repair the engine of the vehicle which tows the boat.

Congratulations to Readymix for setting a very practical example of good corporate citizenship.

LAKE ILLAWARRA HIGH SCHOOL

Awarded for dedication of a memorial garden in memory of Aunty Mary Davis

Lake Illawarra High School commenced its Aboriginal Cultural Program in November last year. As part of the official opening for this program, the school's memorial garden was formally dedicated to the memory of the much loved and respected Aboriginal elder, Aunty Mary Davis.

Many of Aunty Mary's family and friends, as well as a large group of students and teachers, gathered together for the dedication ceremony.

Aunty Mary worked tirelessly to improve Aboriginal health and educational opportunities and through this memorial garden, her legacy will be long remembered by the school and the broader community who will continue to care for the garden.

LAKE ILLAWARRA POLICE COMMAND

Awarded for demonstrated commitment to Reconciliation

During Reconciliation Week, the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command invited local Aboriginal elders to join them in an official flag raising ceremony.

There are 8 Aboriginal staff members in the Lake Illawarra Police Command and this event was viewed as an important sign of the Area Command's commitment to reconciliation and their work with the local Aboriginal community.

NOVOTEL NORTHBEACH

Awarded for establishing an Indigenous job training program

The Novotel Northbeach has shown that a little bit of hospitality can go a long way when they established the Indigenous Job Ready Program in September 2006 in partnership with Mission Australia. The program aims to provide traineeships for indigenous Australians in the tourism and hospitality sector and has been implemented nationally across the Accor hotel group. The program's success at a local level has resulted in several indigenous participants booking a permanent spot on the Novotel's payroll. Here's to another great example of responsible corporate citizenship provided by the Novotel Northbeach.

TRENT HAYWOOD, JAIMI GARCIA and CHIMERE MERCIECA

Awarded for founding the 'Phwoar – Youth Matters' magazine

What life is like as a homeless youngster is beyond the experience for most of us but this disadvantaged group in our community has found a new voice thanks to the great efforts of Trent Haywood, Chimere Mercieca and Jaimi Garcia. These young people have been responsible for producing a magazine "Phwoar – Youth Matters" which raises issues that young people face such as drug use, youth unemployment and homelessness. They hope that they can raise community awareness which will hopefully lead to a change in attitudes and the eventual removal of stereotypes that can be associated with homelessness.

Trent, Chimere and Jaimi have been supported by the Southern Youth and Family Services and the University of Western Sydney with this project, with one of the lead investigators quoting, "instead of allowing homelessness to define them these young people are actively engaged in shaping their own futures with enthusiasm and commitment." We wish you all the best with your endeavours guys!

VOLUNTEER

ALLAN ESKDALE

Awarded for your continued support of Food Fairness Illawarra

Food Fairness Illawarra is a community based alliance made up of local organisations and community members working together to address local food security issues. Local businessman Allan Eskdale from GSE Capital generously donated his time and expertise to conduct their recent Strategic Planning Day.

Allan has also been able to give valuable advice and guidance in Food Fairness Illawarra's challenge to engage the local business community.

Thank you Allan for your generosity, it is much appreciated!

BRAD KIRKWOOD, EMMA FLANNIGAN, JASMINE TIGHE, JAMES WIFFEN, SIMON BOYCE, SARAH O'CONNELL, RACHEL GALE, NATHAN CORDINA

Awarded for helping to organise the inaugural Albion Park Outdoor Camp Kitchen Challenge

Simon Boyce, James Wiffen, Brad Kirkwood, Sarah O'Connell, Rachael Gale, Emma Flannigan, Nathan Cordina and Jasmine Tighe are 8 typical teenagers from Albion Park, who put down their skateboards, bikes, iPods and playstations to offer their services to their local community for the Albion Park Outdoor Camp Kitchen Challenge. The Challenge is a joint venture between the Central Illawarra Youth Services and Albion Park Chamber of Commerce and, designed to develop better relationships between local business and young people in the community.

We all know about kids in the kitchen – they love to cook but when it comes to the cleaning up they're suddenly nowhere in sight. These guys however, were an essential part of the organization of the Camp Kitchen Challenge, from go to whoa – from the planning of the day right up to the emptying of the final garbage bin after it was all over. Another fine example of young people rolling up their sleeves and getting stuck in – Congratulations all.

BUNNINGS WAREHOUSE – WARRAWONG

Awarded for voluntary work to rejuvenate Port Kembla Hospital gardens

Team members from Bunnings Warehouse including the local Warrawong store were able to demonstrate their skills by doing a backyard blitz on the outdoor areas at Port Kembla Hospital. The crew from Bunnings donated their time, expertise and materials to undertake a range of improvements to four outdoor areas at the hospital. New fencing was installed, pergolas, garden and murals were painted which all made a huge contribution to the atmosphere and facilities available for patients at the hospital.

A great effort by a local business putting back into local services.

CEDAR'S CHRISTIAN COLLEGE YEAR 10 STUDENTS – 2007

Awarded for partnering with Soul Survivor to undertake voluntary work

How often are we bombarded by the media with messages that the youth of today are increasingly self-absorbed, having very little regard for community and others? The Year 10 kids from Cedar's Christian College certainly don't listen to that rubbish – particularly during 'Mission's Week' when they're out helping others in the community.

Each year, Year 10 students roll up their sleeves and offer their services to Soul Survivor, a Ministry of Figtree Anglican Church service that links volunteers with community groups and charities. Last year, Yr 10 helped house paint, do gardening, landscape, and cook for several different community groups. Congratulations Cedar's College on this most worthwhile partnership.

DR MARGARET GARDINER

Awarded for outstanding commitment to breast cancer research

Dr Margaret Gardiner is a local GP who knows first hand the far reaching and devastating effects and challenges of breast cancer. Now, as well as living a very full and busy life, she volunteers tirelessly for the National Breast Cancer Foundation to raise funds for research into a cure for the disease. Through her innovative and successful fundraising efforts she has done a fine job of increasing community awareness about breast cancer - on that note I do hope she drove here today in the 'Bra Car'.

As a result of her demonstrated enthusiasm and leadership, Margaret has received numerous awards across the region, the state, and the country. We here at Healthy Cities Illawarra would like to add our voice to those others and congratulate Margaret for outstanding commitment to breast cancer research and through it, increasing community awareness. Congratulations Margaret.

JIM WOLTER

Awarded for over 12 years as a Community Transport Volunteer for Shellharbour City Council

Following his retirement Jim knew that a quiet life wasn't for him wasn't for him. He found his way into volunteer driving for the Shellharbour Community Transport Scheme and hasn't looked back. He is now a regular driver taking children with physical disabilities to Figtree High and has been doing it for the past ten years.

He loves the role and gets plenty of satisfaction helping out the local community. Without people like Jim who else would provide these important community services. Congratulations

JOYCE DONOVAN

Awarded for outstanding contribution to Indigenous rights and health

"It takes a whole community to raise a child" is the philosophy Joyce Donovan, Aunty Joyce, lives by and promotes far and wide across the State.

In recent times we have been devastated by the findings contained in the *Breaking the Silence*, and *Little Children are Sacred* Reports of Inquiries into child sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities. Sadly, none of this was news to Joyce Donovan who has worked tirelessly, traveling across the state (often living out of her car), in an effort to raise awareness and rally the communities to put a stop to such abuse. Aunty Joyce has a long, long history of campaigning for human rights and improved health for the Aboriginal community, and Healthy Cities Illawarra sincerely thanks her for her long term, outstanding contribution to improving the health and well-being of Aboriginal people in the Illawarra region.

ILLAWARRA COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Awarded for establishing the International Friendship Program

About 25% of students at The University of Wollongong are from other countries and many of these students face various challenges getting used to life in and around Wollongong. Not only can language be a barrier but other issues such as housing and transport affordability, cultural differences and personal safety. However, a group of volunteers formed the Illawarra Committee for International Students to welcome and support our International students.

They have organised free English conversation and provide advice, assistance and referral to other services. By extending a hand of friendship to our International students this group are reflecting the positive values of the importance of cultural diversity to our region.

MARK WHALAN**Awarded for voluntary work at the Pilots Cottage Kiama**

Nestled into Blowhole Point, Kiama is the historic Pilots Cottage which is now operated as a museum by the Kiama & District Historical Society. Mark Whalan has been donating endless hours in the maintenance and development of the museum and its displays.

He has also been serving as an unpaid tour guide taking groups through the museum and sharing with them information about the local history of the Kiama area.

SOPHIA NIVEN**Awarded for voluntarily mentoring disadvantaged children**

Many a high school student is kept busy with their studies, and Warrawong High School student Sophia Niven is no exception. But once Sophia's own homework is out of the way, she doesn't put her feet up and turn on the telly to see what's going down on Ramsey Street. Instead Sophia mentors other children to help them with their homework and studies as a volunteer for the Smith Family's 'Learning for Life' Education Program. She is also a dab hand in the craft department and when she's not helping kids with their reading and writing she's volunteering at her local community centre, running children's after school art and craft sessions. Well Done Sophia on a most valued contribution to your community.

SUSAN HUGHES**Awarded for 10 years of voluntary work with the Australian Irish Welfare Bureau**

At a time in her life when she may have been expecting to be the recipient of services instead Susan Hughes is providing a range of services to elderly people through the Australian Irish Welfare Bureau. Susan has been donating her time for the past ten years doing fundraising, preparing food for morning tea & lunches and helping out at the centre's regular drop ins. She also sends people cards when they're sick and on special occasions.

TOM CANVIN**Awarded for voluntary work with Aussie Helpers**

After seeing a documentary on Australian Story about the founder of Aussie Helpers, Tom Canvin was inspired to help out following his retirement from the trucking industry. Aussie Helpers is a program which provides financial and social assistance to drought affected families. In his work in the trucking industry Tom developed a real appreciation of how tough life is for many rural families.

He has been establishing the Aussie Helpers program in the Illawarra and has visited many of the schools in the Northern Illawarra to promote the work of the program and also to educate urban dwellers about life in the country. In his spare time Tom is also a volunteer driver for Anglicare.

WOLLONGONG OLYMPIC JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB**Awarded for providing assistance to the Franco Family**

Starting again in a new country is incredibly difficult for very many reasons. Joining in local social and sporting activities is one way of establishing new networks and making new friends. A love of the 'World Game', soccer, brought the Wollongong Olympic Junior Football Club into the lives of the newly arrived refugee family, the Francos from Sudan.

Different language and cultures were not the only barriers facing the four Franco boys. As any parent of a 'sporty' child knows, membership of a sporting team can be a significant expense. There's the registration fees, the kit and equipment required to play, and of course then there's the transport to and from training and games that, no matter what the sport, seem to be played from one extreme end of the Illawarra to the other one week to the next – a seemingly insurmountable barrier for a family without a car. The Wollongong Olympic Junior Football Club fixed all of this for the Franco family, and we congratulate them for providing this assistance and extending such a welcoming hand to newcomers to our region.

TONY STODDART

Awarded for founding the Illawarra Breakfast Poets

At 7am on a Wednesday morning every week in Wollongong a group of Passionate Poets (PP's) gather to share their love of poetry. The Illawarra Breakfast Poets is the brainchild of Tony Stoddart who knew there must be others out there who share his penchant for prose. He has managed to uncover a variety of performance poets such as Amazing Arno, Terrific Trevor and Zesty Zondrae and others who can think of nothing better than hollering haiku or singing sonnets first thing in the morning.

The group has grown rapidly and other people come along just to listen and enjoy those who love to perform their poetry. Through their passion for pentameter and love of limericks people get to connect with each other and this creates a great sense of community.

FUNDRAISING

CHARLIE D'AMICO

Awarded for organising the "Farm Aid" fundraising event

After hearing about the plight of drought stricken farmers across NSW, Charlie D'Amico decided to take the bull by the horns. He got to work organising two Farm Aid fundraising concerts that were held in Wollongong and Kiama late last year. Talented bands and entertainers from across the Illawarra volunteered their time to perform at the concerts which raised money for the Salvation Army Drought Relief Program.

Charlie is a committed fundraiser who already organised a fundraising concert in 2005 to raise money for Indonesian tsunami victims. Congratulations Charlie!

CHRIS NEWBOLD and KIRK SMITH

Awarded for fundraising for the South Coast School for Children with Autism

This group of burly bikers are anything but Hells Angels! Together, they came up with a plan to ride, not Harleys, but mini bikes all the way from Wollongong to Cairns to raise money for the South Coast School for Children with Autism, whilst also raising awareness of autism spectrum. As well as securing corporate sponsorship, the group stopped in more than 20 towns along the way, revving up the locals to support their cause. Chris' five year old daughter has autism. He and his wife Jenny have worked tirelessly to organise several fundraising events including a Family Fun and Rock Concert Carnival as well as a Charity Black Tie Dinner and Auction to assist the school. Congratulations to all of you for your commitment to such a worthy cause.

CURVES KIAMA, KIAMA BEAUTY STUDIO and KIAMA.NET.AU

Awarded for commitment to fundraising for cancer charities

These 3 local Kiama businesses have worked together to raise funds for the Illawarra Breast Cancer Support Group. Not only are these gorgeous girls passionate about fundraising, but they do it with style and a song in their hearts! With ABBA songs ringing in their ears, they organised a charity preview of the smash hit movie, "Mamma Mia" - hosted by Catriona Rowntree - and had locals saying "I Do, I Do, I Do I Do I Do" to help raise money for The Breast Cancer Support Group. Other events included a 'Girls Night In' and Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, and have all raised money and awareness of the great work that the Illawarra Breast Cancer Support Group do in the community. Curves Kiama have also gone to the great lengths of auctioning off the Mayor of Kiama's husband in their quest to raise money for the Robert East Cancer Research Memorial Fund. Congratulations girls for seeing the need to give support for the Support Group.

DANIEL WESTMAN**Awarded for fundraising to purchase sporting equipment for Woonona Public School**

Inspired by his Year 6 teacher, this former pupil of Woonona Public School took it upon himself to do something about the shortage of sports equipment at his school. Daniel Westman, with the help of his family and friends, fundraised during 2007 to achieve his goal of buying hockey equipment to give to his school.

Daniel is a great example of how age should not be a barrier to achieving goals and enriching the lives of those around us. Congratulations on a job well done!

EARL TANKS, TOM PRESTON and ROLAND NESTLER**Awarded for riding to Melbourne to raise funds for Camp Quality**

These three men bring new meaning to the phrase "on your bike"!

Along with 4 others, they took 10 days to ride from Mittagong to Melbourne, raising more than \$10,000 for Camp Quality. The group was very well organised, promoting the ride for 3 months beforehand and organising door knocks, a dinner and other sponsorship to help achieve their fundraising goals. These bike riding buddies were so inspired by the experience, that they are busily planning for an even bigger and more successful event next year. Keep up the good work and we wish you every success for next year!

GAIL BAILEY, LYNDA KLEIN and SUSAN SOPER**Awarded for fundraising for Illawarra Cancer Care Centre and the Breast Cancer Support Group**

These three sisters and breast cancer survivors know what a long hard road cancer treatment can be. To make that journey just a little easier for others, they decided to raise money for a TV and entertainment unit for the Illawarra Cancer Care Centre.

Early this year, this Sister Act organised a fashion spectacular which raised \$4500. After purchasing the entertainment unit, the remainder of the money was donated to the Breast Cancer Support Group which has supported each of these courageous women through their own battles with cancer.

It is always inspiring to meet people like these women who have been through so much themselves, and who are willing to give something back to help others.

INDO-AUSTRALIA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION**Awarded for fundraising for breast cancer research**

Bollywood was the theme for an afternoon of fun, friendship and fundraising at a luncheon organised by the Indo Australia Cultural Association.

\$4000 was raised for breast cancer research when around 250 women gathered together to enjoy a display of Bollywood dancing followed by the opportunity to bust their own Bollywood moves. This fundraiser was a wonderful example of how sharing cultures can be a fun and creative way to bring people together for a good cause.

LACHLAN PRITCHARD**Awarded for fundraising for Illawarra Surf Lifesaving**

Saving lives and having fun at the same time may seem impossible, but not for Lachlan Pritchard! Lachlan has raised money for Illawarra Surf Lifesaving by helping organise a 'Boardies Day' at Holy Spirit College.

Being a volunteer lifesaver, Lachlan was able to put together the need to be "cool and casual" as well as have an incentive for his fellow students to raise funds by approaching local businesses to give prizes and merchandise to help with the success of the day. With the money raised used for

surf life saving training and equipment, Lachlan has already saved lives without even getting sand between his toes!

Congratulations Lachlan on a great idea for a valuable organisation.

LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH LIFE GROUP
Awarded for fundraising for the Turk Family of Oak Flats

Giving help and support to people in the community is something that one group of people from the Lighthouse Church have demonstrated wonderfully well. Members of a bible study group were inspired by the story of Michelle Turk and her battle with motor neurone disease and decided to raise money to help Michelle and her family.

The group asked their church community to help the Turk family by bringing items for a huge garage sale, and combining it with a bbq and cake stall. The group were also able to meet Sarah and offer their support.

LUKE KOSTER
Awarded for organising a “Rock-a-thon” to raise money for CanTeen

In March last year, this talented young musician and his mates from the band “Moroccan Holiday” decided to turn up the volume and organise a rock concert called “Scream for CanTeen”.

All the money raised from ticket sales went to the cancer charity CanTeen. The bands involved in the night played free of charge and Luke also organised extra sponsorship from local businesses.

Well done Luke and friends for being head bangers with big hearts!

SIMONE CONTI and STEVE CONTI
Awarded for fundraising for the Longbottom Family

Friends like Steve and Simone Conti are hard to find. They have helped raise over \$160, 000 for their friends Darren, Aimee and Bowie Longbottom of Kiama. Darren broke his neck while on a surfing holiday in Indonesia in May, and wanting to help provide for their future, Steve and Simone Conti organised a fundraising night at Shellharbour Workers Club. With wonderful and generous support from both the local community and surfing fraternity, over \$160, 000 was raised for the Longbottom Family.

Darren, Aimee and daughter Bowie can now plan the changes necessary for their future, thanks to these wonderful friends – Congratulations to Steve and Simone Conti – the friends you want in your corner in a crisis!

ST PIUS X PRIMARY SCHOOL YEAR 2 STUDENTS – 2007
Awarded for fundraising for the Breast Cancer Foundation

There is no doubt that most people in the room know someone that has suffered from breast cancer. The same is true for last years Year 2 students from St Pius X Primary School. Their teacher, Toni Howard suffered complications in her battle with breast cancer. This led to these Year 2 students starting their fundraising to find a cure for cancer!

Pink baskets, bags and posters were part of the campaign to raise money. With a love for their teacher, and guidance from teacher-librarian Janet Bowater, these year 2 students have raised money for the Breast Cancer Foundation – and demonstrated the bond that exists between a teacher and pupils. Congratulations to an inspiring group of students.

ENVIRONMENT

BLUESCOPE STEEL

Awarded for establishing the BlueScope Steel 'Tank a Day Challenge'

With water becoming such a precious commodity, BlueScope Steel has done its part to assist schools and community to reduce their water usage by donating a large water tank to a school every school day for one year.

The Tank A Day Challenge aims to help Australian primary schools kick start their water saving journey and educate students about the importance of conserving our precious natural resources. As well as receiving a free tank, an education program assists students to learn about the water cycle and the importance of rainwater harvesting, conservation and management.

An unexpected spin off has been that the donation of a tank has often served as an incentive for schools to review the sustainability of their operations.

The program is continuing this year and the program has even expanded to assist other community facilities.

CHRIS HOMER

Awarded for campaigning to have The Farm at Killalea gazetted as a National Surf Reserve

If you live in the Illawarra it's hard to get away from the surf. We have some of the best surf breaks around, and they attract surfers from all over the world.

The south-facing surf at Killalea State Park will now be recognised as a National Surf Reserve following a combined application organised by Chris Homer. The assessment committee found Chris' application to be one of the most comprehensive they've seen. It highlights 'The Farm's' significance and forms part of Chris' activities in fighting the proposed tourist development in the park.

Congratulations Chris for bringing this valuable site to the attention of Australia. It's recognition sends a message of the need to protect the surfing heritage of the area and its surrounding parkland beauty.

COLEDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Awarded for demonstrated commitment to the environment

The whole school community has embraced environmental protection at Coledale school. With great enthusiasm the school reviewed all aspects of their operations and students were involved in thinking about how the school could be more environmentally friendly.

A water audit was conducted and a range of activities undertaken to reduce water use. The school was also successful in obtaining a water tank from Bluescope Steel's 'Tank a Day Challenge'. A vegetable garden was established and the food from this garden is being used to make healthy school lunches and linked to this will be classes teaching kids about healthy eating. The money saved from these water-wise practices has been used to buy a frog pond and native plants.

CHRIS WADE

Awarded for protection of the Green and Gold Bell frog

The endangered Green & Gold Bell frog has cause for hope with the committed efforts of individuals like Chris supported by Port Kembla's Industrial businesses. Chris discovered the Green and Gold Bell frog population while working at the Brick and Block site in Port Kembla in 2000. Since that time he has committed significant amounts of his personal time to encouraging his company and other local businesses to creating frog friendly facilities.

Brick and Block has created an eco-resort for its treasured kermit including a purpose built pool, landscaped gardens a viewing platform and is fenced from predators such as foxes, feral cats and French food lovers. A number of other companies including Bluescope, Veolia, Hatch and Civil have also contributed funds to the creation of other frog sanctuaries in the area.

DAPTO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Awarded for initiating a clean up project of Mullet Creek

Mullet Creek is one of the four main tributaries into Lake Illawarra and students from nearby Dapto High School have been instrumental in an environmental protection project aimed at restoring the once picturesque creek to its former glory. With the aid of a \$17000 grant the students were able to enlist mechanical support to help them to remove weeds, camphor laurels, privet, tobacco plants, lantana and willow trees. They are also involved in plantings of native species which will assist to stabilize the banks of the creek. The students hope that once cleaned up the mullet and other fish will return.

A great example of local schools, involved in protecting their local environment with government and corporate partners.

ERIN FENELEY

Awarded for implementing environmentally friendly business practices

Waste is not just something that our mothers told us not to do. As we run out of land-fill areas, waste is also becoming an expensive by-product for businesses.

Through taking part in Wollongong City Council's sustainability program, Erin Fenely has reduced the amount of waste produced by the Beachhouse Restaurant by half, saving \$8000 a year. Her next step is to introduce a worm farm to reduce organic waste and she expects to save the business another \$3500 a year. After that, Erin has water savings in her sights.

Congratulations to Erin for showing that helping the planet can also make good business sense.

TOOLIJOOA – HARLEY HILL PROTECTION GROUP

Awarded for campaigning for environmental protection in Toolijooa

The Gerroa Community Association has been successful in stopping a 1040-block caravan park from being built on farmland at Toolijooa – they were concerned about the environmental impact of on-site sewage treatment and the loss of valuable agricultural land.

The mainly elderly population would also be at a disadvantage because of the lack of surrounding infrastructure, transport and facilities.

The Gerroa Community Association is one of the thousands of community groups dedicated to protecting their local areas from inappropriate development. Without such dedicated volunteers, our lives, and environments, would be poorer.

GERROA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SOCIETY

Awarded for campaigning for environmental protection near 7 Mile Beach

When it came to new plans for a significant expansion of sand mining near 7 mile beach, Gerroa this group of local residents did not stick their heads in the sand. The Protection Society were unhappy with the extent of the proposed mining activities as well as the potential environmental destruction of ecologically sensitive areas.

The group pored over plans, wrote numerous submissions, lobbied local politicians, conducted a media campaign and enlisted the legal support of the Environmental Defenders Office to fight the NSW State Minister for Planning's approval of the development application in the Land & Environment Court. The case resulted in the court ordering the creation of new conditions of consent which will require a larger environmental protection zone, more trees being planted and provide increased habitat for wildlife.

INDIA MARK

Awarded for coordinating a climate change petition to Kiama Council

It often takes just one person to make a difference and young India Mark is one person who intends to do just that.

After seeing Al Gore's film 'An Inconvenient Truth', about the risks of global warming, the 13-year-old India collected signatures on a petition to present to Kiama Council. Living near the ocean, she was afraid that her home could be under water within 50 years, and wanted to make sure that Kiama council knew about her concerns. Council has responded by looking into what they can do to reduce greenhouse gases. Congratulations India for taking action and making a difference.

KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Awarded for conducting a special 'One Stop Climate Change Shop' day

Climate change is concentrating a lot of people's minds at the moment, and it's not just about avoiding sunburn.

Getting the message out is an important step in reversing this potentially disastrous impact of our wealthy lifestyles. At Kiama Council, they have taken the step with the 'One Stop Climate Change Shop' on World Environment Day. The shop provided a single venue for residents to find out about how to change their habits to use less energy, grow their own vegies and protect nature.

The people of Kiama found the shop to be a valuable source of information and inspiration in helping the planet.

PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN & YEAR 6 STUDENTS 2008

Awarded for planting trees at King George V Oval in Port Kembla

These kids will be able to grow up alongside their trees. The Port Kembla Public School kindergarten students have planted 30 trees at King George V Oval, with the help of Conservation Volunteers Australia Green Corps team, the Port Kembla Community Project and Wollongong City Council.

Starting with a bare park, the School will plant trees every year, with the aim of creating a shade-filled oasis of native plants that the next generation will enjoy. Well done to the young students and Port Kembla Public for their vision and enthusiasm.

SAVE KILLALEA ALLIANCE

Awarded for campaigning for environmental protection of Killalea State Park

It is our responsibility to future generations to protect our places of special beauty and significance from inappropriate development. This group of committed citizens has set themselves this task in relation to a proposed development involving the construction of over 200 units, shops, restaurants, swimming pools and a convention centre in Crown Land at the Killalea State Recreation Area in Shellharbour.

The Save Killalea Alliance was formed to bring together organizations and community members who oppose the development. The Alliance has undertaken numerous deputations to members of Parliament, conducted public meetings, rallies and community events, collected and delivered a petition with over 15000 signatures to Parliament and conducted a media campaign including establishing a website.

Their efforts have resulted in a scaling back of the plans however, the group are still concerned about the nature of this development.

SHELLHARBOUR CITY COUNCIL'S – WHOLESALE NURSERY

Awarded for implementing water saving initiatives

Water is shaping up to be one of the major issues for the 21st century. But at Shellharbour City Council's wholesale nursery, they are doing their bit towards saving water and keeping nutrient pollution out of the environment.

Growing plants is a thirsty business, but Shellharbour's nursery is saving 10,000 litres a day through its waste water filtering and recycling system – that's around half of their total water use. As if that weren't enough, staff at the nursery are planning to collect rainwater for use on their plants. By recycling rainwater, stormwater and waste water, they expect to become fully self-sufficient for water.

With examples like this, other nurseries can see what's possible and make good use of this precious resource.

SONYA MCKAY

Awarded for establishing & coordinating the Community Environment Coalition

A true community environmental advocate Sonya McKay is a whirlwind. Identifying a need for an umbrella organisation to address a range of issues affecting the sustainability of the region, Sonya established the Illawarra Community Environmental Coalition. The Coalition has attracted representatives of various local community groups and individual community members who are concerned about the environmental, heritage, health and quality of life impacts of various proposed developments.

Sonya has convened numerous public meetings, written many submissions to government, collected thousands of signatures for petitions and spoken at numerous forums on such topics as Killalea State Park, Sandon Point Development, Longwall mining, Regional Airport Joyflights proposal, and changes to planning laws. She also established and maintains a website which lists a huge number of events and activities going on in the region. In her spare time she took on the role of Secretary of the Illawarra Escarpment Coalition and has conducted local fundraising events for cancer prevention. Sonya's passion and purpose are a great asset in the protection of Illawarra's unique environment.

PARRYS RAINES

Awarded for producing a kids guide to climate change DVD

Although only 12 years old Parrys has become a true climate change ambassador. Prompted by youthful curiosity Parrys has taken it upon herself to spread the message to other kids and adults about the practical steps we can all take to reduce our impact on the environment. Parrys became a youth Ambassador for the World Wildlife Fund and was a key part of the Earth Hour event conducting various media interviews and featuring in Girlfriend and Dolly magazines promoting environmental action.

Parry's was also an invited speaker at the 2008 United Nations International Children's Conference in Norway and afterwards met with city officials in Vienna to suggest the historic Town Hall should turn its lights off for Earth Hour! She was successful in obtaining a \$5000 grant to produce a short DVD aimed at kids showing them ways in which they can help the environment.

The DVD which has a unique Illawarra flavour includes interviews with local identities and students at the environmental award winning Mt St Thomas Public school.