



MEDIA RELEASE

Communications & Marketing

Darwin City Council Wins Major Awards

For immediate release

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Darwin City Council has been successful in winning three separate awards, in addition to receiving a Highly Commended accolade.

Council's first award was for the Activate NT program, winning the SA/NT Parks and Leisure award for "Inclusive and Connected Communities".

The Activate NT program was introduced as a means for community members to get together and actively improve their lifestyles. The program is a community driven program with a focus on increasing awareness of key lifestyle issues such as physical activity, reducing weight, healthy eating and quitting smoking. Over a ten week period a variety of activities are on offer and caters for all ability levels. The program has many ongoing benefits not just for the individual participants such as improving school and employment attendance and productivity and reducing the strain on our health system.

Over the ten weeks that the program was run this year it was recorded that in total participants walked over 21 million steps (17,000 km), collectively lost over 90 kgs with a total waist loss of 180.2cm and took part in 333 individual events.

The Activate NT program combined the Palmesstonnes Healthy Lifestyle Challenge and DarwinLite Lifestyle Challenge.

According to Deputy Lord Mayor, Alderman Helen Galton, staff received advice that Council had been selected from a field of organisations from across the Northern Territory and South Australia.

"I'm very proud that Darwin City Council came in above such a high level of competition," Alderman Galton said.

Activate NT will now be considered for a national award which will be announced at the Parks and Leisure Australia National Conference to be held in Darwin in September. The Activate NT program also received a Highly Commended accolade in the recently announced Heart Foundation Local Government Awards.

Darwin City Council had success in two other awards via the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport in conjunction with Landcare Australia.

Council's 'Zero Toad' project took out the Local Government Landcare Partnerships Award and the 'Greening Mindil' won the Australian Government Coastcare Award.

Through the Zero Toads project Darwin City Council worked in conjunction with FrogWatch North and the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation. These groups worked together to set up more 'trap lines' (deflection fences leading towards traps) and in an environmentally friendly and humane manner eradicated cane toads.

Larrakia Nation Rangers were provided with the cane toad traps and were provided training on setting up and monitoring the traps and trained on how to conduct 'toad busts'.

To date, the Zero toad project has established fence lines and completed over 30 community 'toad busts' comprising more than 250 volunteer hours by 141 members of the community, resulting in the collection of over 40,000 cane toads in the last two years.

The success of this project has not only preserved iconic species of significant community and resource value such as goannas, northern quolls and fill-neck lizards, it has helped preserve the critical aquatic habitats given the negative impact of cane toads on our aquatic systems.

Council staff drove this project and worked collaboratively with FrogWatch North and the Larrakia Rangers to deliver this important project.

Finally, the Greening Mindil project saw Darwin City Council staff working with Larrakia Rangers to protect and enhance the primary sand dune system at Mindil Beach.

The human impact together with the storm surge events associated with the monsoon season had led to significant erosion, degradation and fence damage on the primary dune. This specific site is registered with the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority as being a traditional burial ground of the Larrakia people. The erosion had also threatened to expose known locations of human burial remains. The Greening Mindil project, through the revegetation, re-fencing and new beach access activities, has mitigated the immediate threat of erosion and has protected this area of significance for the Larrakia people, using traditional ecological knowledge.

The Greening Mindil project has also removed weeds in order to reduce the fire fuel loads.

According to Alderman Galton, the work between Larrakia Nation and Darwin City Council has given the area a much needed helping hand.

“It is envisaged that the improving health of the ecosystem will help not only the local native species but also assist in the fight against climate change,” Alderman Galton said.

“I’m very proud of the collaborative efforts of the Larrakia Nation and Darwin City Council. This award is a symbol of how organisations can work together to secure the future of the environment”.

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