

**WALPOLE — PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AWARD**

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**HON MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM (South West)** [10.00 pm]: Recently it was my pleasure to join with the Walpole community to celebrate the town's win in the Protection of the Environment category at the Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns national awards, which were held in Hobart. The evening was an acknowledgement of not only the win, but also the enormous commitment by the local community and organising committee. Since the early 1970s Western Australians have been encouraged through the Keep Australia Beautiful Council to care for and take pride in their local environments, both built and natural. The Keep Australia Beautiful Council encourages people to consider litter reduction and prevention by helping to change society attitudes and behaviour. The Keep Australia Beautiful Council does this by overseeing the operation of a number of programs related to community education and enforcement and by encouraging and rewarding sustainable behaviour change and strategic policy.

In particular I want to mention the Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities program. The program acknowledges and rewards communities Australia-wide for putting in place projects that help retain and enhance those communities' natural assets, of which Walpole has many. The Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities program has significant benefits for many local and regional communities. These benefits include community pride, increased tourism, improved health standards, youth participation, respect for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage, reduced waste, sustainability gains and the retention of biodiversity. Walpole's win this year will deliver all those benefits and more to those who live in and around that beautiful town. This should happen for generations to come. Achievements such as Walpole's national win do not just happen—indeed, much time, money, effort and vision is required and very special people must be involved. One such person is Michael Filby, this year's winner of the prestigious Dame Phyllis Frost Individual Award for his contribution to protecting the environment. Michael Filby ensures that a 100-kilometre stretch of Highway 1 is kept free of litter. He collects rubbish from Kent River in the east to Shannon River in the north on a weekly basis. He is totally committed to protecting the Walpole wilderness area and his recognition is most deserved.

I also recognise the efforts of Councillor David Tapley and his tidy towns committee, together with the support of the Shire of Manjimup. Their involvement in a broad range of projects demonstrated the local residents' commitment to the tidy towns philosophy. Special mention must be made of Walpole Primary School for its contribution to the sustainable communities award. School Principal Felicity Waring, together with staff and parents, helped the students put together the UR Walpole Eco-Education program. I had the pleasure of attending a presentation of the eco program in late 2007 and was most impressed. The national judges were obviously also impressed. Walpole prides itself on the uniqueness of its physical and built environment. The national award is recognition of that pride and hard work. I congratulate all those involved and look forward to many more innovative and sustainable community strategies not only in the south west, but also throughout Western Australia.