Following the overwhelming success of the first ever Garage Sale Trail in Bondi - where 126 garage sales were held on the same day - the Garage Sale Trail organisers are taking the event national on 10 April 2011.

The Garage Sale Trail is a fun way of promoting recycling within the community, discouraging illegal dumping of unwanted household items, and rewards householders by putting cash in their hands for doing the right thing by the environment. During the Bondi event, each participating household made an average of $750 and approximately 15 shipping containers worth of waste was saved from going to landfill.

It’s free to participate in the Garage Sale Trail. Official participation will be limited to people living in the precincts of council partners, although we encourage all Australians to get involved on the day. Councils, schools and community groups across Australia are invited to get behind this exciting new program by signing-up to the Garage Sale Trail site.

Keep Australia Beautiful Executive Officer, Scott Lyall, said “The Garage Sale Trail is set to become a major national event in April each year and Keep Australia Beautiful is on board as the environmental charity partner to help promote the reduce, reuse and recycle message within the community.” Participants will be encouraged to donate 10% of their garage sale’s taking to Keep Australia Beautiful to help with their year round efforts to reduce litter and increase recycling.

Garage Sale Trail Director, Darryl Nichols said, “We’re encouraging people to get creative and have as much fun as they can with their garage sales - it’s an opportunity to get outside, talk to your neighbours, earn some pocket money and save your pre-loved goods from simply being sent to landfill.”

The Garage Sale Trail is seeking to work with two Tasmanian councils as part of the 2011 national debut. Interested councils should contact Executive Director, Darryl Nichols, at darryl@garagesaletrail.com.au, or phone 0422 665 088.
Urban sprawl, town planning and the growth of Tasmania’s population has been under the media spotlight in recent months, generating a lot of debate from representatives of industry, housing and commercial development. An important issue connected to that discussion is pressure on operational boundaries for the extractive resources industry, which produces the raw ingredients of civil construction used in concrete, asphalt and road bases.

These ingredients include quarry rock, sand, gravel, clay and soil - materials critical to society through support infrastructure of roads, rail and water, drainage and sewerage systems, and also used in building construction.

For councils, it is important to be aware of the impact of planning on this industry, and the need for improved protection of extractive resources. As a high volume and low value product, the economic viability of extractive operations depends on proximity to markets. Location is vitally important and is initially determined by fixed geological conditions. While many of the approximate 550 quarry sites in Tasmania are in isolated areas, the expansion of urban development has resulted in quite a number now being on the edge of built-up areas. Interestingly, many of the quarry sites are very small with around 95% of the 3.9 million tonnes produced in Tasmania provided by about 40 pit sites.

Currently, extracted operations in Tasmania are required to comply with the Environmental and Pollution Control Act and the particular conditions of their environmental permit. To ensure impacts on the environment and community are minimised, the Quarry Code of Practice recommends that quarries be located specific distances from places such as schools and residences. In the case of quarries involving blasting, the required distance from built-up areas is one kilometre, while those quarries that involve crushing and screening need only be 750m away and those that are extractive, just 300m.

With the continued demand for housing development there is an increasing desire from some property developers to subdivide or build on land within these boundaries. Development within these boundary distances compromises operators’ ability to comply with environmental standards, resulting in breaches of environmental permits. Such development also results in pressure regarding the operation being mounted by residents and residents’ groups, and eventually by councils.

This in turn can result in more stringent operating conditions being imposed, which can ultimately affect the economic viability of the operation. This is an undesirable result but will become all too common unless the impacts of urban creep are not adequately addressed.

On occasions these developers have applied to local councils and, given there is a discretionary planning element, they have received approval to proceed. In the past this has attracted (and until an improved planning process is adopted, will continue to attract) the ire of the quarry operators as they need to activate the planning appeal process, which is a costly exercise to all parties. It could be argued that the larger quarries be deemed Projects of State Significance, given their strategic economic importance and the fact that some have sufficient resources for an operating life of 50-80 years. It is also logical to conclude that it will be increasingly difficult to establish new quarry sites under existing legislation.

Adequate recognition and protection in future regional planning legislation seems a sensible approach. Where necessary, it would recognise quarry boundary adjustments and also take into account the topography of specific sites with regard to noise, vibration and dust. Whether the discretionary planning component remains at the initial stages is a matter of argument. That aside, the contribution of the extractive resource industry to the daily activities of Local Government, other industry sectors and the community at large, through resource and infrastructure provision and employment is significant. Improved extractive resource protection therefore requires addressing now.

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Tasman Council has taken a giant leap in the control of priority environmental weeds over the last two years, with the appointment of a dedicated NRM Weeds Officer.

As part of the project, Weeds of National Significance (WONS) such as gorse, boneseed, pampas, serrated tussock and asparagus fern have been targeted, as well as other priority weeds including Patterson’s curse and African boxthorn. All known sites were treated in the first year including 31 gorse sites, 150 boneseed sites, 91 pampas sites and 28 African boxthorn sites.

Primary control was successful in most cases, though the boxthorn and Patterson’s curse has been somewhat persistent. We have been fortunate to have received some funds from NRM South to undertake follow up work at all of these sites. With persistence, the need for follow-up control will be reduced each year and we can one day claim that the Tasman is free of WONS and the other high priority weeds.

Other successful outcomes of the project have included capacity building of land owners/managers to undertake weed control on their own properties and motivating them to do so through numerous site visits. During the course of the project, a large infestation of serrated tussock was discovered and a successful field day was conducted to up-skill local land owners to identify the troublesome weed, and to act quickly to control it.

Serrated tussock, Spanish heath and African boxthorn were also treated on Slopen Island, where the presence of major infestations has posed a risk of infesting the Tasman. There were major obstacles to carrying out this project including appalling weather, a lack of potable water, site restrictions and time limitations due to the breeding cycles and seasonal movements of migratory birds. The project was made possible through the support of the Parks and Wildlife Service and the Dodges Ferry Sea Patrol.
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Avoid Mitigation Frustration through Predictive Planning

When Clarence City Council decided to review and update their existing Natural Assets Inventory, they engaged Entura - a Tasmanian-based environment and engineering consultancy, to assist them. Rather than simply supplying an updated inventory containing information on conservation values within the municipality, Entura developed a planning tool to improve decision-making around development applications and other land use planning issues. This tool is called the Natural Asset Information Manual (NAIM).

The Natural Asset Information Manual is a risk-based tool that is particularly useful in considering the potential impact of planning decisions on natural values, and identifying when detailed environmental assessment should be undertaken as part of a planning application.

The benefits of the NAIM are realised through the use of electronic maps that identify differing levels of risk, based on vegetation communities. Each community within the risk maps is assigned a risk level (high, medium, low) based on the potential for development to impact on natural values. These maps are integrated with the Council’s Graphical Information System, providing the ability to interrogate spatial data on screen.

One of the critical aspects of the NAIM was to undertake verification of vegetation community types in areas likely to be subject to high development pressures.

Each risk level within the maps is linked to key recommendations and information for development with regard to:

- The likely impact on natural values
- The requirements for further detailed survey of natural values present, as may be required under S43E or S54 of the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993
- Potential requirements under the Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 or Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The NAIM provides a basis for review of the Vegetation Management Overlay of the planning scheme. It can be updated over time to reflect legislative changes as well as to accurately reflect known natural values.

The NAIM not only improves decision-making around land use planning, it also enhances Council’s ability to provide quality customer service to stakeholders. In particular, the tool reduces the amount of expensive site specific natural values assessments that applicants will need to undertake. The NAIM is able to identify sites where there is little likelihood of natural value being present, therefore removing the need for an assessment. The tool also provides reasonable justification should an assessment need to be completed. In 2009, the project received an award at the Tasmanian Division Awards for Planning Excellence.

For enquiries about the Natural Asset Information Manual, or how a similar solution could benefit your Council, please contact Dan.Marr@entura.com.au, or visit www.entura.com.au.
Launceston Launches into Recycling

Thanks to funding support from the Packaging Stewardship Forum of the Australian Food and Grocery Council (PSF) for bin infrastructure and signage, there are now more opportunities for residents and visitors to recycle away from home when out and about in Launceston.

At Launceston Airport, new recycling bins have been installed throughout the terminal, carrying the PSF call to action to Do the Right Thing, Use the Right Bin. With strong support from its retailers, recycling rates are growing each month. Since installation of the new systems in November 2009, 9.4 tonnes of bottles, cups and aluminium cans have been collected - equivalent to around 1,300 household recycling bins.

Footy fans are also being encouraged to Do the Right Thing at Aurora Stadium. Aurora Stadium and the Inveresk Precinct were both funded by the PSF to install recycling systems for all the Hawthorn Home games. The ground and surrounding precinct now diverts 1.5 tonnes of recycling per game and services up to 16,000 footy fans per match.

The PSF has also provided funding to the University of Tasmania to recycle at their campuses in Newman, Launceston and Hobart, and to Hobart City Council to refresh their recycling bin signage.

For further details, contact Sally Haysom at sally.haysom@afgc.org.au.

Veolia Environmental Services provides a full range of waste management, resource recovery, environmental and industrial services to councils across Tasmania.

Specialising in waste and recyclables collection, we work closely with local government and have assisted many Tasmanian councils to develop waste management solutions that meet local requirements.

Veolia can help design and implement collection systems for the entire recyclable and general waste streams.

Council-specific waste and resource management plans may incorporate options for resource recovery, waste minimisation strategies, hard and green waste services, collection and recycling services, as well as supporting education initiatives.

To talk about your waste management solution, contact 1300 134 242

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In Brief

Climate Futures for Tasmania Project Report
The Minister for Climate Change, Nick McKim, has launched the first report from the Climate Futures for Tasmania project, titled *General Climate Impacts*, which sets out the projected changes to Tasmania’s climate during this century, including higher temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns. The Climate Futures for Tasmania project is a major step forward in understanding the changes in climate that Tasmania will experience. The information produced by the project will be essential reading for State and Local Governments, industry, planners and infrastructure managers. The *General Climate Impacts* report and a summary of its findings can be found at www.climatechange.tas.gov.au.

Derwent Estuary Program Wins National Riverprize
Tasmania’s Derwent Estuary Program has won a prestigious national prize for its work on reducing water pollution, conserving habitats and species, monitoring river health and promoting greater use and enjoyment of the foreshore. The globally recognised National Riverprize was a tribute to the dedication and co-operation of the Derwent Estuary Program partners: Brighton, Clarence, Derwent Valley, Glenorchy, Hobart and Kingborough Councils, the Tasmanian Government, Southern Water, Nyrstar Hobart, Norske Skog Boyer, Tasmanian Ports Corporation and Hydro Tasmania. Since the DEP was established in 1999, the Derwent River has shown signs of recovery. During the past five years, there has been an 80% reduction in organic inputs, an estimated 50% reduction in heavy metals, and 30% reduction in sewage-derived nutrients in the estuary, as well as improvements in stormwater treatment.