Calendar’s Popularity Goes from Strength to Strength

Glamorgan Spring Bay Council recently released its fourth annual Glamorgan Spring Bay Freycinet Coast Calendar. The calendar began as an initiative of Council’s Community Development Manager, to raise funds towards youth projects within the municipal area. A photography competition is held each year and the winning entries are used for the calendar. The theme for the 2009 competition was East Coast Impressions and more than 180 entries were received. The overall winner was Bruce Troode of Bicheno with his image of the Bicheno Blowhole, featured on the front cover of the 2010 calendar. The calendar is not only a great fundraiser for youth projects but is also an excellent means of promoting the picturesque East Coast. The calendars are very popular with tourists and locals and are sent to friends and relatives around the world. In 2009, the calendar made close to $8,000 profit.

Glass Recycling Heads Down New Path

Glass recycling in Victoria is heading down a new path with an industry and government initiative looking into the alternative use of crushed glass in footpaths. The Packaging Stewardship Forum (PSF) of the Australian Food and Grocery Council has partnered with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and Sustainability Victoria to undertake trials of recycled glass and brick to be used as a sub-base aggregate in Local Government footpaths and shared pathways for pedestrians and cyclists. The use of recycled materials in road construction by Local Government in Victoria has plateaued in recent years. Large stockpiles of crushed glass and crushed brick are growing across the state and it’s proving more difficult to open new quarries from which to obtain sub-base. These trials are a crucial step forward in reducing the stockpiles of glass and bricks and putting them to good use.

Council Website Attracts Medical Professionals to Local Region

A website established by Coffs Harbour City Council to attract international health professionals to its region has had an encouraging response in its first couple of months of operation, attracting hits from 21 countries. Council has already received specific enquiries from overseas health professionals about employment opportunities in the region, which have been forwarded to the appropriate health facilities. The focus is on attracting health professionals whose qualifications are the most closely aligned with those existing in Australia, to enable new arrivals to seamlessly move into the local health industry. The website enables prospective employees in the health sector to research the city and the many job opportunities available to them. For further information about the website, contact Coffs Harbour City Council on (02) 6648 4000.

The winning image of the Bicheno Blowhole by Bruce Troode, featured on the cover of Glamorgan Spring Bay Council’s 2010 fundraising calendar
Gum-buster Machine to get Council out of Sticky Spot

A gum-sucking golf buggy capable of removing sticky spots in three seconds could be added to the Cairns Regional Council’s arsenal to clean dirty CBD streets. It comes as the Council looks at spending as much as $20,000 for a contractor to use pressure cleaners on CBD streets in 2009. The gum removal vehicle is a $55,000 battery operated, solar panelled, super-heated steam vapour machine. It heats water to 170°C before blasting the streets with water at 115°C, while using detergent and a vacuum. The machine, which has been patented by the Brisbane City Council, costs $35 a day to run. It blasts gum in five seconds and uses less than three litres of water an hour.

Alice Springs Transformation Plan

The Alice Springs Transformation Plan has been developed with the aim of improving life outcomes for Aboriginal residents and visitors in Alice Springs, particularly in town camps, and to reduce homelessness through housing and infrastructure upgrades and provision of suitable support services. The Northern Territory and Australian Governments are working in partnership with the corporate and community sectors to achieve the transformation and deliver sustainable improvements in service delivery.

The plan has three broad action strategies to deal with social issues, transform town camps and reduce homelessness. The plan includes:

- $100 million for new and refurbished housing and upgraded infrastructure in town camps;
- $25 million to enhance social support services;
- $11 million towards short-term accommodation to reduce homelessness; and
- $2.25 million for a Communities for Children site.

Four WA Shires Agree to Amalgamate

Four councils in Western Australia’s mid-west region have agreed to amalgamate into one new Local Government area. The Shires of Mingenew, Three Springs, Morawa and Perenjori have put an amalgamation proposal to an advisory board - established by WA’s Local Government Minister, John Castrilli, to oversee the state’s Local Government reform process. It is believed that the amalgamation could be completed within six months. The WA government has called for the number of councils in the state to be reduced from 139 to fewer than 100 under the reform process. Councils are encouraged to use the reform process to become stronger, more sustainable operations that are better able to plan, manage and deliver services to their communities.

Innovative Affordable Housing Scheme Rolled Out

An innovative scheme to supply affordable housing to families in the City of Salisbury is on target and the Council is looking to repeat the initiative in future years. The Council, in partnership with HomeStart Finance, is constructing 11 affordable homes for selected families who would not have been able to afford their own house. The houses are being built on surplus council land and construction should be completed by March 2010. Council created a website and called for interested families to lodge expressions of interest in buying the homes. Around 98 families made formal applications to purchase a house. To qualify, families had to live in the municipality and be earning less than $59,000 a year. The 11 successful families have a standard mortgage with HomeStart Finance that applies to 70% of the value of the house. The City of Salisbury has a 30% share of the property under a shared equity mortgage arrangement.