

Judge Report

CLEAN BEACHES 2015

Guilderton, Western Australia



Keep Australia Beautiful National Association

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Introduction

Community

Guilderton, WA

Population

150

Date judged

19 June 2015

Contacts

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Overview

Guilderton is a beautiful coastal community that has grown up around the mouth of the Moore River. It has a small resident population, and attracts a large number of visitors during the holiday season. Many of the visitors have been spending their holidays at Guilderton for years, and contribute to its social fabric. Guilderton continues to grapple with pressure to develop large housing estates, and it is now one of the last intact coastal estuary systems on the Swan River Coastal Plan. Its community association is sophisticated, committed and professional in the way it engages with traditional owners, key stakeholders and government agencies, and determined as they fight to maintain the character of their town, beach and freshwater estuary.

The community in Guilderton is active in managing weeds and pressures from recreational vehicles in the dune system behind their beach, and are proactive in protecting the area's fragile dune and freshwater ecosystems. They provide many additional services, run by volunteers, including a library, a vibrant community centre, a small golf course and a men's shed. The area's private sector operators, including tourism operators, banks and businesses, value highly the clean, pristine nature of the area and are closely engaged in efforts to improve water quality, stabilise stream banks, monitor wildlife, and educate visitors as to the significance of the area.

Community Action & Partnerships

Recognises achievement in community and civic beautification, presentation, health, wellbeing and pride. Also recognises partnerships between government, business, industry and local community networks.

In Guilderton, the engagement of both residents and visitors to the area in contributing to creating a diverse, sustainable community around the beach environment is demonstrated by the huge commitment to volunteer work. During 2014/2015, volunteers contributed over 14,000 hours to various initiatives in the town, including the Library, the volunteer-run Visitor Centre, the Bowling Club, the Golf Club, the Lower Moore River Working Group, the Guilderton Community Association, the Art Group, the Moore Men's Shed, the Country Club, the Friends of Moore River Estuary, and Clean-up Australia Day.

The Guilderton Community Association (GCA), formed by volunteers in 1960, is highly regarded by the Shire of Gingin. Shire officers endorse many of the Association's requests because Guilderton has strong community engagement and a 'can-do' attitude. Members demonstrate strong leadership skills and a passion for social and environmental sustainability, coupled with a willingness to share their enthusiasm with visitors. When the GCA reported an escalating problem of Vehicles on the Beach and 'Desert', the Shire CEO organised joint patrols involving Moore River South Development Company, Shire Rangers, and Department of Parks and Wildlife.

Investment in improving facilities for visitors continues. The community has played a leadership role in delivering accessible visitor and tourist facilities, such as boardwalks, disabled access, and signage. Moore Men's Shed work closely with the GCA, making sand-boards for the Visitor Centre to sell, and helping out with events.

Apart from engagement with the groups listed previously, residents have benefited from partnerships with the 4WD Club WA, Bendigo Bank, Bunnings, Moore Sands, Lotterywest, Coastwest, Northern Agricultural Catchment Council, Moore Catchment Council, the Departments of Parks and Wildlife, Water, Water Transport (Marine Safety), and Fisheries WA, South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, Recfishwest, Reconciliation Australia, Coastal Care Groups, local Yued

Noongars and elders and many others. The Natural Heritage Trust and Battye Library have assisted with research. Local businesses also partner with the community, for example, the river cruise operator promotes the GCA's environmental messages, and a number of businesses support the Sporting Clubs.



Dame Phyllis Frost Litter Prevention

Recognises achievement in community litter management and reduction initiatives including the undertaking of litter audits, and litter education programs, conservation of resources, recovery and reuse of materials and the appropriate disposal of non-recyclable materials.

The GCA engages works with a range of partners to conduct regular clean-ups and recycling initiatives during the year at the estuary, the lookout, the beach, the Groyne, Silver Creek and the general community.

In 2015, 19 Scouts, 14 Navy Cadets and a Shire Councillor helped local residents with Clean-Up Australia Day, and for the first time a clean-up of the river was included with the use of boats. The day netted 74 bags of rubbish, and a total of 13.5 cubic meters of rubbish with all the big stuff which couldn't be bagged. Analysis of waste revealed food wrappers, cans, bottles, clothing, fishing lines and hooks, plastic sheeting, rope and foam buoys, discarded musical instruments, and a couple of dilapidated boats. The Shire took the larger items to the rubbish tip.



The community drives many recycling initiatives in the town, and are still actively lobbying the Shire of Gin Gin to provide more substantial recycling facilities. They hold regular 'Trash n Treasures' where items are donated for re-sale. Anything in need of restoration is either fixed, or if the project is too big, given to the Men's Shed to restore and sell to raise funds. Regular book stalls are held by the community library for visitors;

this project brings in revenue to purchase new books. The local tree lopper supplies the GCA with mulch for Guilderton's community gardens. Tile lots are given to local craft groups, rather than sending them to landfill and knitting wool is always passed amongst the groups who knit for charity.

Also:

- Members of the GCA hand out KAB paper litter bags at outdoor events.
- Local residents regularly pick up rubbish whenever they are out walking.
- Dogs are prohibited on the foreshore area and main beach.

Environmental Sustainability

Recognises outstanding community achievements in adaptation to environmental change, often through working in partnership with local government, industry and the wider public to manage water, energy and nature conservation.

Guilderton situated on one of the last remaining river estuaries on the Swan Coastal Plain unspoilt by development, a remarkable achievement given that it lies within 100kms of Perth. It is home to some remarkable species, including the endangered Carnaby's Black Cockatoos. It is being encroached upon by development, and is under pressure from up to 4,000 visitors a day at peak times. It is no small feat that, as a community, Guilderton have resisted development pressures over such a long period of time, and continue to provide stewardship in such a uniquely beautiful coastal environment.

The system of Quindalup parabolic dunes on the immediate southern side of the river is rich in biodiversity. Friends of Moore River Estuary (FOMRE) and the GCA have worked together for many years to reduce the environmental impact of a planned development on this land for 20,000 people with open access to the beach, and jetties into the river, to a development for 8,000 people, set further back from the beach and river foreshores, with controlled, limited access to the beach and river, and important wildlife corridors kept. These two groups have joined the development company and government groups on a Reference Group Committee to develop a Foreshore Management Plan to provide protection for the river and beach foreshores.

The Guilderton Visitor Centre manages the impact of large numbers of tourists through its' educational program – see Environmental Education.

The Lower Moore River Working Group is always active in the preservation and restoration of the river and surrounds.

The GCA has formed a Landcare Group, which works closely with Moore and Northern Agricultural Catchment Councils and other government agencies to undertake massive restoration works in the northern dunes along the beach. The community have attracted the enthusiastic support of the Natural Resource

Management team in the Moore Catchment Council, and efforts to control weeds, to repair damage to dune systems done by off-road drivers, to re-establish native dune ecosystems and protect them with fences, and to engage and educate residents and visitors are exceptional.

Part of the work to direct tourist traffic onto established pathways has seen the GCA working closely with Bendigo Bank and the Gingin Shire to provide alternative beach access via a staircase to prevent further dune erosion and allow restoration of the foreshore dunes. This also provides wheelchair access to one of the town's best view points.



Heritage & Culture

Recognises how communities proudly preserve and value cultural history.



The Moore River Estuary and beach is a significant site for the Yued Noongar people. The Guilderton community is very mindful of this strong connection, and acknowledges and shows respect to these traditional owners' at all public events.

This was demonstrated by the key role taken on by Traditional Owners at the opening of the new staircase down to the beach during the judging day, and the interest shown in the stories that were told by the large number of community members, stakeholders, business operators and visitors who came to the event.

The GCA has a Yued member, whose aunt, elder Beverley Port-Louis, performed an interesting Welcome Ceremony at the launch of 'A Secret No Longer' a history of the GCA, written by GCA former president, John Prince, and published by the GCA.

In 2014, Guilderton hosted Catch Cook 'n' Yarn last year, an event organised with project partners Reconciliation WA, the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council and Recfishwest. The event included a talk on the history of the area by Noongar Elder Fred Mockeridge, an informative lecture on river and ocean fishing by Recfishwest and some hands on fishing.

Guilderton hosted lunch on the Foreshore for Moore Catchment Council's Turquoise Coast Bus Tour. Yued Elder Charlie Shaw demonstrated a water ritual to announce the groups' presence and allow safe travel prior to the group embarking on a cruise of the Moore River.

2014 culminated with the GCA holding a 'Celebration of Guilderton' an event on the Guilderton Foreshore to celebrate some major achievements, including the launching by local MLA Shane Love of the Djena Koor-liny Trail Walk and new Estuary Informative Signage, and the handing over of a \$40,000 cheque by the Bendigo Bank for the 'Stairway to the Beach'. Noongar Elder Charlie Shaw and Shire President, Michael Aspinall each gave a Welcome, aboriginal didgeridoo players performed a strong rendition, and members of the GCA Committee cooked and served a massive quantity of damper and billy-tea. It turned out to be a huge Celebration with around 100 attendees, of which around 30 were Yueds.

Stories of European visits to the area, and its settlement are also alive and well in Guilderton. Long-term visitor John Prince has published a beautiful book that captures the story of the Guilderton Community Association between 1960 and 2012, and his experience demonstrates the long, continuous commitment by community members to maintain the beach and estuary area, and to protect it from large scale development, such as have occurred on many other parts of the coast in South West WA.

Environmental Education

Recognises an outstanding initiative, organisation or community for its innovative environmental advocacy and/or awareness program across any/all criteria.

The most exceptional element of the environmental education that occurs in Guilderton is embodied in the community's ongoing efforts to preserve the environmental values of the beach and estuary system. This requires working to influence people whose personal interests and views may lead them to see a different vision for the future of the area. The condition of the dunes and beach, particularly given the huge influx of tourists and its unprotected status, is testament to the community's appreciation of their unique environment and the importance of actively working to maintain it.

The Guilderton Visitor Centre, operated by the GCA and manned totally by volunteers, is something of a hub for this work, and set out in 2002 to manage the impacts of tourism by promoting Guilderton as a nature-based tourist asset focusing on education of the visitors. As part of this work, interpretative signage has been erected on the North Guilderton dunes, explaining why it is important to protect the dunes and the unique coastal vegetation.

The ecology of the Moore River relies on the sandbar opening and closing naturally. Unfortunately some visitors to Guilderton take pleasure in breaking the sandbar, and given the large rush of water that can result from a small amount of digging it is easy to understand why. However, this practice harms the health of the river, disturbs the many birds and animals that breed in the wetlands, and can be dangerous with people being swept out to sea. The community, including through the Lower Moore River Working Group, continues to look for innovative ways to educate tourists as to the damage that breaking the bar can do, and provides valuable information during river tours.

Northern Agricultural and Moore Catchment Councils hold regular Environmental Educational Days and Workshops in Guilderton, often on topics instigated by the GCA. The endangered Carnaby's Black Cockatoos are a favourite, the river providing a significant watering hole for them. Last year, the Carnaby's roosted on the river shore at Silver Creek. Guilderton residents participate in the Cocky

Count and plant approximately 2,000 plant feed species for Carnaby's each year. Yued elder, Beverley Port Louis talked at one of these meetings about the importance the river estuary holds to the Traditional Owners.

Flora of the Guilderton Coastal Dunes

What will I see?

These dunes are part of the Swan Coastal plain - a vast belt of sand up to 20km wide stretching from Eneabba to Dunsborough. It is composed of shoreline deposits and alluvium from erosion of the continental materials laid down up to 120,000 years ago. The North Guilderton dunes are part of the Quindalup Dune system 2000 - 10,000 old. They are composed of lime and quartz sand and were formed as a result of eustatic (global) sea level rise over the last 10,000 years.

The Quindalup Dunes are characterised by:

- . Frontal dunes (next to the sea) - subject to erosion such as blow outs
- . Secondary dunes - mostly stable covered by vegetation
- . Transgressive dunes - extensive blow outs of mobile sand resulting from episodic events

Native coastal plants are adapted to the harsh conditions of the coastal environment. The plants help stabilise the dunes by slowing the wind speed and trapping the sand, whilst their root systems hold and shape the dunes.

See if you can spot any of the below on your walk.

			
Carpeobrotus virascens - Coastal Pigface	Calorhammus quadrifidus - One sided bottlebrush	Olearia axillaris - Coastal daisy bush	Scaevola crassifolia - Thick leaved fanflower
			
Santalum acuminatum - Quandong	Melaleuca systena - Coastal honey myrtle	Hardenbergia comptoniana - Native Wisteria	Spinifex longifolius - Beach spinifex



The Traditional Custodians of the land around here are the Yued people. The natural habitat is extremely important to their cultural and spiritual beliefs. The below welcome is in Noongar - the language of the Yued.

Kaya - Wanjoo Yued Booidja
Hello - Welcome to Yued Land

Noonakoort karnya nitja Noongar boodja Noongar kep
YeYe benang boordahwan

Have respect for this is our land and waters today, tomorrow and in the future

Weed Watch

These weeds are common along the coast line and take advantage of disturbed and eroded land. Please don't help to spread them!

 Elymus villosus Poa grass an aggressive invader rhizomatous perennial	 Aphelasia stricklandii Coast weed a highly invadent weed with white flowers
 Ptilotheca capillaris Beach pellagranium a perennial herb which often grows up through tuffet-dune vegetation	 Strophanthodes discoloratus Sea spruce a vigorous creeping herb with pale fawn stems with yellow flowers







Young Legends



Recognises environmental achievement through youth initiative and/or by a community, which encourages and promotes youth initiative and environmental education programs and/or achievement.

Guilderton with its special environment draws many school groups for beach and river activities. The community invests significant effort into engaging and educating young residents and visitors to the area.

For example:

- GCA puts on a free sausage sizzle for school leavers to meet the locals. A brochure is handed out giving vital information and emergency contacts, discount vouchers for the two retail outlets in town, clean up bags, and information about preserving the environment. This has been a very successful initiative, and has resulted in the young students showing gratitude, respect, and good behaviour.
- Phil Cook, Lower Moore River Working Group member, takes school groups up the river regularly for educational tours.
- Ocean swimming lessons are given to young children by trained members of the community during the summer holidays.
- Children, Luke and Jack Ellis, and Pippi and Ellie Connor participated in the ANZAC Day Ceremony, with Luke playing the bugle, Jack giving the reading, and Pippi and Ellie laying the wreathes.
- For a number of years, the Beldon Scouts Group has been coming to Guilderton to help with 'Clean Up'. Arrangements are made with the Shire for them to camp at Silver Creek for a couple of nights. Following Clean Up, they are rewarded with a sausage sizzle and homemade chocolate brownies. This year Navy Cadets joined the team.
- Edmund Rice hold half a dozen camps at Guilderton each year for children who are 'at risk' or experiencing some form of disadvantage.
- The GCA invited the WA Youth Jazz Orchestra to perform an inaugural concert in Guilderton in October 2014. This performance secured them a further booking in March of this year at Seabird, a neighbouring coastal community.

- Catch Cook 'n Yarn (see Heritage and Culture) was well attended by children.



Invites you to an afternoon concert featuring the

WA Youth Jazz Orchestra Quintet

Saturday 25th October 2014

4pm – 6pm at Gabbadah Park, Guilderton
or the Guilderton Community Hall in the event of inclement weather

Admission free, BYO chairs, rugs & refreshments



Proudly sponsored by the Shire of Gingin