

Policy Status: Approved

Document Type: Policy
Primary Keyword: Information Management
Secondary Keyword: Council Policies
Tertiary Keyword: Policy register update

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Last Updated 21/01/2005

Precis: Tidy Towns-Program

Responsible Officer: Policy Coordinator

Document:

TITLE: Cessnock City Tidy Town Program
AUTHORITY: Council
DATE OF ADOPTION/AMENDMENT: 17 June 1998
REPORT NO: 61
MINUTE NO: 841
POLICY NO: T35.3
POSITION RESPONSIBLE:
RELEVANT LEGISLATION:
PREVIOUS POLICY NO:
DATE LAST REVIEWED: 5 March 2003 - DC&RS 26/2003 - 781

OBJECTIVE

The Policy identifies the **Vision**, the **Commitments**, the **Guidelines** and the **Community Environmental Care Initiative** for the Cessnock City Tidy Town Program and forms the foundation for long term strategies that will continue to form valuable partnerships between Local Government and the community that benefits the local environment.

POLICY

CESSNOCK CITY TIDY TOWN PROGRAM **- our towns, our people, our environment -**

Introduction

Since 1987, Cessnock City Council has enjoyed a ten year working partnership with up to 13 Tidy Town communities in the city. Through the Keep Australia Beautiful Council (NSW) (KABC) the communities of Cessnock City have been encouraged to work with local government to achieve a common goal of making better environments to live in.

The City of Cessnock has seen some dramatic improvements to the towns and villages of the city through the efforts of local Tidy Town Committees. These efforts and achievements have been recognised by the Keep Australia Beautiful Council (NSW) with many awards being presented to the area in its ten year history.

In 1993, Kurri Kurri was recognised as the best town in New South Wales when it received the top Tidy Town award from the KABC (NSW). This success, along with Cessnock City Council receiving the inaugural (1994) and second (1995) KABC (NSW) Local Government Award has made the Cessnock City region an area well known for its commitment to improving the local environment through local community initiatives.

With a decade of Tidy Town experience up our sleeve, it is now time to consider the future. To ensure the future of Tidy Towns in Cessnock City retains a positive direction, this program aims to provide a focus and vision for the years leading up to 2001.

This document forms the policy for all Tidy Town Committees in the Cessnock City Local Government Area and will be reviewed annually by Council and representatives for all Tidy Town Committees in the City.

The Policy identifies the **Vision**, the **Commitments**, the **Guidelines** and the **Community Environmental Care Initiative** for the Cessnock City Tidy Town Program and forms the foundation for long term strategies that will continue to form valuable partnerships between Local Government and the community that benefits the local environment.

The Cessnock City Tidy Town Program Policy is the result of two (2) General Meetings of Tidy Town representatives held in September 1997 and March 1998. The Policy will be reviewed annually by Tidy Town Representatives, Council Officers and Council.

Vision

To ensure that the general purpose of Tidy Towns in the City of Cessnock is understood by all Committees and the community at large, a Statement of Vision provides a simple means of declaring the ultimate goal of the Tidy Town Program in Cessnock City. The Vision Statement will be reviewed every year at a General Meeting of Tidy Towns to ensure it reflects the true and evolving nature of the Tidy Town Program.

The Vision Statement for the Cessnock City Tidy Town Program was recommended at the General Tidy Town Meeting held on 24th March 1998 and reads as follows:

***The Cessnock City Council Tidy Town Program is a
community driven initiative that enhances local pride in our environment.***

CESSNOCK CITY TIDY TOWN PROGRAM
- commitment to tidy town communities -

Commitment

Cessnock City Council is committed to supporting Tidy Town Committees in the following ways:

1. *Committee Establishment and Project Support*

- a) Provide advice and initial administrative support to all recognised communities within the city area seeking to establish Tidy Town Committees within the framework of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council
- b) Adopt bonafide Tidy Town Committees in the City as sub committees of Council under the Local Government Act (1993) subject to committees meeting the guidelines for Tidy Town Committees in the City of Cessnock
- c) Consider budget allocations to provide seeding grants of \$500.00 for new Tidy Town Committees
- d) Consider on an annual basis applications from Tidy Town Committees for dollar for dollar assistance grants towards local community based projects which provide environmental and/or aesthetic improvement, and meet Council guidelines and annual budget allocation for the Tidy Town Program
- e) Consider the allocation of funds to contribute all entry fees to the KABC (NSW) Tidy Town competition on behalf of recognised Tidy Town Committees in the city
- f) Consider the allocation of funds to supply Tidy Town Committees in the City with paints and other materials for approved voluntary maintenance and improvement works to Council property and parks etc

2. *Care and Management of Ongoing Projects*

Tidy Town Committees care for and manage ongoing projects of local civic and environmental importance. The following commitment is intended to alleviate the burden of ongoing costs associated with project care and management.

- a) Consider, on an annual basis, the allocation of funds for a Community Environmental Care Initiative (CECI). The CECI will provide annual funding to those Tidy Town Committees that meet Council guidelines and agree to care for past projects and public areas that are identified at the Committee's AGM.

3. *Facilitation of Community Networks*

Tidy Towns Committees form a strong social link in communities and as such the following commitment by Council is intended to ensure that Tidy Town Committees are encouraged to meet annually to facilitate new ideas and better practices.

- a) Facilitate an annual Tidy Town social forum in April each year to promote discussion between groups, the transfer of ideas and the sharing of experiences.

CESSNOCK CITY TIDY TOWN PROGRAM - tidy town committee guidelines -

Guidelines

Since 1987, guidelines for Tidy Town Committees in Cessnock City have been largely based on verbal and vague understandings between Tidy Town Committees and Council. The lack of written guidelines has lead to a variety of interpretations to the rights and responsibilities of a Tidy Town Committee and Council.

To ensure that the partnerships created through the Tidy Town Program remain mutually beneficial, a set of guidelines has been formed. Council and Tidy Town Committees agree to use these guidelines as a framework to direct the management of each Tidy Town Committee. These guidelines will help us all achieve our vision.

The guidelines are:

Philosophy

A Tidy Town Committee is not a political movement. It is a community initiative designed to unite towns and villages to achieve better environments to live in.

A Tidy Town Committee will involve a wide cross section of the community to participate in community and environmental improvement projects

A Tidy Town Committee will adopt the principle of *'doing what you can with what you've got'* to achieve local objectives

A Tidy Town Committee is encouraged to enter the Keep Australia Beautiful Council (NSW) Tidy Town Awards Program which gives each Tidy Town Committee in the State the chance to be assessed and recognised by the Keep Australia Beautiful Council (NSW).

Committee Structure - Annual General Meeting

To be eligible for Council assistance under the Cessnock City Tidy Town Program, a Tidy Town Committee will annually and democratically elect the executive positions of Chairperson, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Publicity Officer and Executive members at an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

At the end of each AGM the Tidy Town Committee will inform Cessnock City Council of the names of the newly elected Executive

Notice of the AGM must be publicly announced to the local community at least two (2) weeks prior to the AGM using modern forms of communication

A Tidy Town Committee will identify its annual *'CECI'* plan at the AGM and supply Cessnock City Council with a copy of this plan.

Committee Structure - Meetings

- ◆ Tidy Town Committees will hold regular (ie not less than quarterly) meetings to arrange the implementation of project goals.
- ◆ The decision to submit regular meeting minutes to Council will be at the discretion of individual Tidy Town Committees. It is recognised, however, that the benefit of supplying regular minutes to Council is improved lines of communication.
- ◆ An annual financial statement and project report will be supplied to Cessnock City Council by The Tidy Town Committee in March each year for auditing purposes. Council will supply a standard Profit and Loss proforma and Project Report proforma to each Committee in March each year (see Schedule 4 & 5)
- ◆ Council Officers will prepare an Annual Report to Council in May of each year which will outline Tidy Town initiatives completed in that year.

Local Government Act (1993) - Insurance

Council will adopt a Tidy Town Committee under Section 355 of the Local Government Act (1993) upon receipt of the *'Application for Registration of a Tidy Town Committee'* form (see Schedule 1).

Within four (4) months of a General Council Election, a Tidy Town Committee will be required to re-nominate the Executive Committee members in order to be readopted as a Committee of Council under Section 355 of the Local Government Act (1993)

As a S355 Committee of Council, Tidy Town Committees and members are covered under all Council insurance policies whilst working on bonafide Tidy Town initiatives. The policy relating to voluntary

workers provides benefits which include a lump sum payment in the case of death or permanent disability, weekly payments, for up to 104 weeks for specified injuries, for those people unable to return to their paid employment, and payment for the costs of hiring home help, home nursing or home tuition for those not in paid employment. Direct medical or hospital expenses are not covered under this policy but may be claimed from Medicare or private health funds.

Maintenance of Public Property

If working on Council or public property, a Tidy Town Committee is required to inform Cessnock City Council of project intentions and seek approval from Council for such works.

Dollar for Dollar Grant Procedure

- ◆ To be eligible for Tidy Town Dollar for Dollar Grant assistance, a Tidy Town Committee must comply with Cessnock City Council's '*Tidy Town \$-\$ Grant Guidelines*' (see Schedule 3).
- ◆ Tidy Town projects that require dollar for dollar funding must occur on Council owned land or public property. Projects that are located on private property may be considered for dollar for dollar funding if the project is deemed by Council to have significant benefit to the wider community and the environment.
- ◆ The Tidy Town \$-\$ Grant Program will allocate funds to projects that provide 'on the ground' improvements to the local environment, encourage community pride and promote a positive community image.
- ◆ The care, control and management of all equipment, material and other assets that are the product of Tidy Town initiatives will be the responsibility of the respective Tidy Town Committees. Should a Tidy Town Committee cease to exist, all assets will remain the property of the local community with Cessnock City Council as custodian of such assets.

Community Environmental Care Initiative (CECI)

Council will consider on an annual basis the allocation of funding, from the Tidy Town \$-\$ Grant Program, funds for the ongoing care and maintenance of past and present Tidy Town projects. Entitled the Community Environmental Care Initiative (CECI) Tidy Town Committees in the City will be eligible to apply for CECI funding if conditions of the funding are met by the Committee. The purpose of this funding is to encourage communities to provide a level of ongoing care and maintenance to the local environment and Tidy Town projects.

To be eligible for annual CECI funding a Tidy Town Committee must:

1. Nominate at the AGM the intended purpose of the funds and submit CECI plans to Council by March each year. (ie identify what ongoing projects will CECI funds be directed). ***Proof of purchase of materials used for maintenance must be included with application for funding.***
2. Be considered an active Tidy Town Committee by Council.

(The term 'active' refers to a Committee that:

- ***supplies an annual financial statement and Project Report each year as requested;***
- ***supplies GST information in line with Australian Tax Office requirements;***
- ***holds regular meetings and makes minutes available to Council;***
- ***is actively enhancing our local environment.)***

Conditions of Policy

The Policy is applicable to all bonafide Tidy Town Committees in the City of Cessnock and Cessnock City Council.

The aim of the Policy is to clearly identify the rights and responsibilities of a Tidy Town Committee and Cessnock City Council with regard to the Tidy Town Program.

The Policy requires adoption by Cessnock City Council as a legitimate Policy of Council.

At the end of each annual review of the Policy, a report will be presented to Council outlining any weaknesses of the Policy and recommending any improvements to the Policy.

Annual funding for the Tidy Town \$\$ Program and the CECI will be at the discretion of the Council of the time and will reflect the number of active Tidy Town Committees recognised by Council at that time.