

**INQUIRY INTO PERFORMANCE OF THE NSW
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY**

Organisation: Keep NSW Beautiful

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Submission to the Inquiry into the performance of the NSW Environment Protection Authority

Keep NSW Beautiful (KNSWB) has worked with the EPA in collaborative partnership since it commenced involvement in KNSWB programs in 2013.

During this time KNSWB has formed a strong and rewarding relationship with the EPA. The organisation wishes to relay its experience of the EPA in relation to the Inquiry topic (a), its performance against objectives outlined in the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*.

The EPA has partnered with KNSWB in functions consistent with the Authority's objectives and KNSWB lends its unyielding support to the EPA in the course of this Inquiry.

The EPA has worked directly with KNSWB in the following capacities:

- Partnership in two of our Awards Programs, Clean Beaches and Sustainable Cities. These are the coastal and metropolitan complements of a state-wide program which seeks to educate and motivate environmental initiatives undertaken by individuals, community groups, businesses, clubs and associations, and local councils to protect and enhance their local natural habitats. EPA involvement has covered:
 - The Clean Beaches Awards 2013: Overall Program Partner.
 - The Clean Beaches Awards 2014: Category Presenter of two awards, The Waste Less, Recycle More Award and the Hey Tosser! Litter Reduction Award.
 - Also the Sustainable Cities Awards 2014: Category Presenter of two awards, The Waste Minimisation Award and the Hey Tosser! Litter Reduction Award.
- Presenting Partner for the inaugural KNSWB Congress: Less Litter, Live Better. The EPA contributed to the conception, planning and implementation of the Congress and was an active participant in the discussion.
- Contracting KNSWB to deliver a grants program, the Community Litter Grants. KNSWB administered the Community Litter Grants in 2013 and 2014, with the following funds allocated:
 - 2013 Community Litter Grants: \$167,912 (ex GST) of grants distributed; program costs totalling \$146,331 (ex GST)
 - 2014 Community Litter Grants: \$420,000 (ex GST) of grants distributed; program costs totalling \$123,293 (ex GST)

Objectives of the Authority

1 (a) To protect, restore and enhance the quality of the environment in New South Wales, having regard to the need to maintain ecologically sustainable development.

The EPA has provided support through consultancy and professional advice to KNSWB in areas consistent with this objective, including

- Assistance in developing the twelve awards categories for the KNSWB Awards Programs, Tidy Towns, Clean Beaches and Sustainable Cities, to address a holistic vision of sustainability which protects and enhances the NSW environment.
- Lending expertise in creating program judging criteria aligned with these environmental objectives.
- Providing EPA staff members to assess and judge (two separate functions as part of the overall judging process) the Awards for Clean Beaches and Sustainable Cities.
- Assistance in promoting program participation to EPA contacts and databases.
- Involving the EPA in the conception, development and implementation of the KNSWB Congress.
- Facilitating through support of the Congress the gathering of a cohort of experts with experience in litter reduction to establish best practice and share ideas.
- Contributions to the content of a Congress green paper, currently in production, to disseminate best practice methods in litter reduction and prevention.
- Direct input into Congress presentations: CEO Barry Buffier and Litter Programs Manager Sharon Owens both delivered presentations, and Sharon Owens also sat on one of the discussion panels.
- Collaboration on establishing a template for an annual Congress event to investigate sustainable environmental management as it relates to litter reduction.
- In the course of KNSWB's administration of the Community Litter Grants Program, providing expert consultation, advice and assistance in developing communications with community groups, effectively conveying the key messages of the program and advice on community engagement.
- Providing access to KNSWB to a comprehensive kit of creative material developed for the Hey Tosser! campaign, assisting KNSWB in creating promotional material and communicating to engage potential program participants.

1 (b) To reduce the risks to human health and prevent the degradation of the environment, by means such as the following:

- ***Promoting pollution prevention***

The EPA contributed to discussions on litter pollution reduction at the KNSWB Congress and provided input in shaping the direction of the Congress to explore litter reduction technologies and methods.

The EPA has also assisted KNSWB in preventing pollution:

- In the form of litter by enabling the Community Litter Grants Program
- By supporting the Waste Minimisation Awards in the Clean Beaches and Sustainable Cities Programs
- Through providing relevant judging criteria to guide and motivate community groups' involvement in pollution reduction

- ***Minimising the creation of waste by the use of appropriate technology and***
- ***Encouraging the reduction of the use of materials, encouraging the re-use and recycling of materials and encouraging material recovery***

EPA involvement in the KNSWB Congress supported the exploration of innovation and technology use in preventing and reducing litter.

Advice from EPA staff informed the judging criteria to include innovation and use of technology for award categories relating to waste minimisation: the Waste Minimisation Award, the Hey Tosser! Litter Reduction Award and the Waste Less Recycle More Award.

The Community Litter Grants program, funded by the EPA, gives local community groups the resources to implement better technology in reducing litter in their area.

- ***Setting mandatory targets for environmental improvement***

In KNSWB's experience dealing with the EPA, the organisation has found the EPA to work relentlessly in pursuit of the target of a 40% reduction in litter by 2016. Research

- ***Promoting community involvement in decisions about environmental matters***

Collaboration between KNSWB and the EPA on the Community Litter Grants Program promotes maximum autonomy to the community. The EPA has provided consultancy and guidance on engagement strategies and facilitated the appointment of a Litter Grants Program Manager to provide dedicated capacity-building support to communities.

Funds provided from the EPA assisted in implementing workshops for Clean Beaches in 2013 which educated local citizens in coastal areas, both regional and metropolitan, in the conception and implementation of environmental projects specific to their local area.

- ***Conducting public education and awareness programs about environmental matters***

EPA involvement in the Congress enabled 25 presentations from industry, community, local and state government representatives, including interstate and international representation, explored various methods of inciting behaviour change for littering, littering psychology, encouraging community involvement, educational programs, and clean-up and maintenance programs, with a focus on responsible environmental management and sustainability.

EPA staff were instrumental in developing the format and content for the inaugural Congress even to maximise opportunities for meaningful discourse addressing the most pressing litter problems and innovative solutions

- ***Environmental goals, having been established, should be pursued in the most cost-effective way, by establishing incentive structures, including market mechanisms, that enable those best placed to maximise benefits or minimise costs to develop their own solutions and responses to environmental problems.***

By selecting KNSWB to carry out the Community Litter Grants program implementation, the EPA is choosing the most efficient mechanism for engaging community groups; KNSWB has been working with community organisations and local groups for its 39-year history and has an extensive network of contacts through its program history.

EPA staff comprise the judging panel who assess each grant application and award funds on a competitive basis, judged on the applicants' ability to utilise funds in the most cost-effective way for maximum impact.