

Sunshine Coast takes out top environmental award

An impressive Sunshine Coast group has taken out one of the World's most prestigious environmental awards – the [2011 Australian National Riverprize](#) worth \$195,000.

The Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative is a group of over 30 community groups and government agencies, headed by Sunshine Coast Council, totally dedicated to protecting and improving the waterways of our region.

The *Riverprize* was awarded on Tuesday 27th September during the 14th International *Riversymposium*, and rewards, recognises and supports those who have developed and implemented outstanding, visionary and sustainable programs in river management.

NICA's Project Coordinator, Maree Prior, attended the awards presentation as NICA's representative. "After being with NICA for only 12 months, it was a great honour to be part of this outstanding initiative. I sincerely thank the NICA team and the Council waterways staff who have demonstrated how successful partnerships can work- everyone at the presentation felt included in working towards a common goal for the benefit of all and future generations".

NICA's projects include: The River Rangers-'Noosa River Watch' including Clean Up Australia, Noosa River Mangrove Watch, Noosa River Seagrass Watch, Fishing Line Recovery (Tangler) Bins and Community Education. Project Officer Wendy May was filmed outside the NICA office speaking about NICA's programs, and the video was played throughout the week at the Sunshine Coast Council display booth during the *Riversymposium*.

Environment Portfolio Councillor Keryn Jones said that it's wonderful to have all the hard work recognised.

"Our environment, economy and lifestyle all depend on having, maintaining and improving clean, functional, healthy waterways," Cr Jones said.

"This award shows that as a community, we're working in the right direction together.

"The *Initiative* certainly unites an impressive collection of achievements involving improvements to creek-side vegetation, in-stream habitat, and

land management practices as well as range of waterway health planning and research projects.

“Council’s recently adopted Waterways and Coastal Management Strategy provides a solid foundation for action and with community groups, three levels of government, industry and research organisations all working together – both within and between catchments – we’ve got a real recipe for success.”

Prize money will be used to fund innovative and catalytic waterway management and improvement projects across the Sunshine Coast.

Background

Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative, Queensland

The Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative, submitted by the Sunshine Coast Council, unites an impressive collection of river-health planning and on-ground achievements in six catchment areas, comprising approximately 5000km of waterways across the Sunshine Coast region in southeast Queensland. Conducted by a collaboration of Council, local community groups, industry, natural resource managers and other government partners, the Community works to protect and improve the health of local waterways.

The Initiative is delivered outcomes via five themes:

1. Science — regional ecosystem health monitoring and modelling; issue-based research and investigations, and catchment-based community Waterwatch monitoring;
 2. Planning and policy — planning scheme provisions, a sustainability policy framework and integrated strategies including a strategy for waterway management that integrates plans for major catchments;
 3. Partnerships — between community, local, state and federal governments, industry and research organisations; within and between catchments;
 4. Education and advocacy — encouraging the broader community to value and support the protection of their waterways;
 5. On-ground projects — major freshwater and estuarine restoration and extensive programs to minimise urban and rural diffuse-source impacts.
- The activities of the Initiative have been underpinned by sound science, constructive partnerships and an enterprising spirit. This has resulted in continual improvements in waterway management and uptake of local learnings in other regions.



Image: Councillor Bob Abbot (far left) with the Sunshine Coast Rivers Initiative representatives and Matthew Reddy (far right) | Credit: International RiverFoundation

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