

Friday 14 October 2011

Sustainability Awards winners announced tonight

The winners of the Indigo Shire Council Sustainability Awards will be announced tonight from 5:30 - 8pm at the Department of Primary Industries Research Station – Chiltern Valley Road, Rutherglen.

The night will feature a presentation from Dr Scott Rawlings from the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability titled *A Meaningful Environment*.

Indigo Shire Council Mayor Cr Ali Pockley said that the idea for an awards program came from Council's Environment Advisory Committee during the development of Council's Greenhouse Action Plan and Environment Strategy.

"This is the second year of the awards and already we have seen some exemplary examples of sustainability across our Shire. The awards showcase successful examples of sustainability to inspire other people to take action themselves. The evening shows the importance of applying sustainable practices in every part of our day-to-day life," Cr Pockley said.

This year, the category 'Education' was added to the existing categories of Agriculture, Business, Community and Household.

"Judging was made difficult because of the high standard of applications, but luckily we had help from independent judge Dr Alison Mitchell from the Centre for Sustainable Skills, TAFE Space Wodonga. Tonight we will be recognising four award recipients in the categories of Agriculture, Business, Community and Education and two High Commendations in the categories of Business and Household," Cr Pockley said.

The trophies are designed and made by local Yackandandah artist Ali Rowe from a large Red Gum tree that was blown over on her property in the 2003 storms.

The evening will also see the launch of two of Council's Better Build Toolkit – the New Home and Home Renovation Guides. These Guides provide people taking on any scale of sustainable development with a summary of helpful information.

Cr Pockley said "The Better Build Toolkit is a series of four guides designed to inform people on a range of development in Indigo Shire. Each Guide is intended to encourage innovation and excellence above existing industry standards when developing our communities. The Guides focus on improved building efficiency by providing information on climate sensitive design and construction elements," Cr Pockley said.

"The New Home and Home Renovation Guides will be launched tonight. These are the first two to be launched, with the Commercial Development and Subdivision Guides to follow," Cr Pockley said.

The 2011 Award Recipients are:

Agriculture - Philippa and Simon Noble from Brimin Lodge, Brimin, for their nomination – Agroforestry.

Philippa and Simon's operations integrate the production of trees for sawlogs with many other elements on their property, including Murray Cod aquaculture.

Business – Gina Bladon and Matt Pfahlert from 1860 Luxury Accommodation for their nomination – Sustainable Building 1860 Mountain Accommodation.

This building and everything in it was made by salvaged materials. It has 100% green power, compost waste recycling and no chemical cleaning.

Community - Yackandandah and District Historical Society for their nomination Solar Power Generation.

When the Yackandandah Museum Building was gutted by fire in December 2006, the committee saw the opportunity to rebuild in an environmentally sustainable and energy efficient way.

Education - Yackandandah Primary School for their nomination Yackandandah Primary School New Learning Spaces.

As a result of significant increase in enrolments over past 10 years, the school was in need of new teaching and learning spaces. As part of the Victorian Governments *Building Future* program, the school built new learning spaces using a range of sustainable practices.

Highly Commended

Household - Simone Engdahl of Yackandandah for her nomination Household Sustainability.

Simone's straw bale house was built using local materials and is energy efficient, solar passive and is the only straw bale home in Indigo Shire that is off-grid.

Business - Shannan Smith from Rubens of Beechworth for her nomination – Eco Hairdressing.

Rubens uses ECO Hair - non-carcinogenic and ammonia free products and low emission equipment.

For more information or for a copy of Council's Better Build Toolkit please contact Indigo Shire Council's Team Leader Natural Resources Shay Simpson on 02 6028 1128, 1300 365 003 or ssimpson@indigoshire.vic.gov.au .

****ENDS****

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Caption: Gina Bladon and Matt Pfahlert's 1860 Luxury Accommodation took home the Business category for their Mountain Accommodation, built from salvaged materials.