



Media Release

for immediate release



News item from MacDonnell Regional Council released on 22 October 25 October 2016

For further information please contact MacDonnell Regional Council, Communications Officer Darren Pfitzner by phone 08 8958 9608 or email media@macdonnell.nt.gov.au



Hidden gem discovered by Territory Tidy Town awards



Upon being named this year's *Territory Tidy Town* at last night's Keep Australia Beautiful (NT) awards ceremony, Areyonga will cease to be the best kept secret of Central Australia. Civil Works team members from Areyonga shook the desert off their hi-vis workwear before dressing sharp to attend the gala awards ceremony in the tropics at the Darwin Hilton.



Despite being a relatively small population, receiving this Northern Territory wide recognition is testament to the community's pride and vitality. The entire Areyonga community has embraced the responsibility to keep their community clean. While the local Civil Works team of the MacDonnell Regional Council provides the backbone for getting things done, they are well supported by the efforts of the residents.



Known locally as *Utju*, Areyonga is nestled in a spectacular valley in the West MacDonnell Ranges, about 100km from Hermannsburg and 240km west of Alice Springs. Its population of 235 residents predominantly speak Pitjantjatjara, having originally come from the Petermann Ranges in the 1920s when *Anangu* were forced to leave the Docker River area during a long running drought.



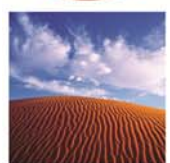
Visitors to Areyonga have always exclaimed "ah! what a lovely community" upon arrival at the small hamlet. Following the commitment by its residents and the MacDonnell Regional Council, to improving the community's services and tidiness, the visiting Tidy Town judges are now saying "Ah! what a tidy town"



When MacDonnell Council formed in 2008, many communities didn't have a regular rubbish collection and households burned their waste in old fuel drums in the street. Today communities compete successfully across the territory and the nation to best impress the judges.



Awards recognising the efforts of staff and residents, from councils and communities across the Northern Territory, were presented by the Minister for Housing and Community Development



many voices, one dream, building a quality desert lifestyle

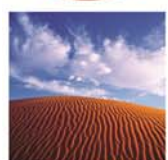


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Gerry McCarthy and Minister for Environment and Natural Resources Lauren Moss in a gala ceremony at the Hilton Hotel in Darwin.

MacDonnell Regional Council keeps going from strength to strength in the Territory Tidy Town awards. At this year's awards ceremony the MacDonnell Regional Council again emerged as the major winner of the evening:

- Areyonga won the major *Territory Tidy Town* award and will go on to represent the Northern Territory at the National Tidy Town Awards next year.
- This followed Areyonga being awarded *Best Medium Community*
- Areyonga also won the *Dame Phyllis Frost Litter Control and Prevention Award*, with Finke, Santa Teresa and Imanpa all receiving commendations for their endeavours
- Santa Teresa's ongoing commitment was acknowledged when presented the community encouragement award, the *Geoff Finch Memorial Cup*
- Santa Teresa also won the *Community Participation* award, while Finke, Imanpa and Areyonga all received commendations in the category
- the Ltyentye Apurte Catholic Education Centre in Santa Teresa won *Best Territory Tidy Towns School* award while Finke and Wallace Rockhole both received commendations for their schools
- community member Justin Colley from Santa Teresa was recognised with a *Community Citizen* award for his continuing efforts
- and the MacDonnell Regional Council won the *Best Regional Council* award for a third straight year

"I knew our communities were doing great work – but to be told we are the *Best Regional Council* for three straight years suggests we are doing something right!" said Council President, Roxanne Kenny.

A healthy competition among the 13 communities of the MacDonnell Regional Council means the achievements of its staff are rated very highly when judged against the rest of the Northern Territory. In many aspects of local government and service delivery in remote Australia, the MacDonnell Regional Council is seen as a leader and innovator by stakeholders and peers.

End.

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