

A.R.BLUETT MEMORIAL AWARD 2009/2010

SHIRES ASSOCIATION WINNER - UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL

MAYOR: CR. LEE WATTS
GENERAL MANAGER: DARYL DUTTON
POPULATION: 13,785
AREA: 8,060 sq. km

CITATION

Upper Hunter Shire Council represents a large area which, as the result of a 2005 amalgamation, incorporated the former Shires of Scone, Murrurundi and Merriwa. It was obvious to the Trustees that the new council and its administration had quickly established and maintained strong lines of communication and consultation with all towns and villages within the area. Through a number of Town Development Committees this has led to a diverse range of local initiatives and services being introduced throughout the Shire.

All operations are underpinned by an excellent administration. Innovations here include a comprehensive Community Strategic Plan subject to stringent measurement, and a strong emphasis on internal auditing, risk management and workplace reform. A very strong commitment towards business and economic development is clearly a priority, together with the Council's strong advocacy on behalf of its community in responding to local development and environmental pressures.

In particular, the Trustees noted that Council's achievements during 2009/2010 included:

- The major extension of the Scone Medical Centre to accommodate extra medical services, the establishment of a new medical centre in Murrurundi and the upgrading of the Merriwa Medical Centre.
- The Scone Civic Precinct; incorporating a new Administration Centre and Emergency Operations Centre with outstanding energy saving features and a high capacity for community access.
- The conversion of the former council building to a Neighborhood Resource Centre and Library.
- Major extensions to Merriwa's Aged Care Facility.
- The acquisition by Council of the former ABC Child Care Centre, and its transition to the Council-managed Scone Early Learning Centre – the only ABC centre acquired by a council in Australia.
- The employment of a Sports Development Officer, and particularly strong programs for young people and children throughout the shire.
- The planning of major upgrading to Scone Airport and the Livestock Selling Centre.
- The significant reduction in landfill waste throughout the shire and impressive reuse of effluent.

The Trustees congratulate Mayor Lee Watts, General Manager Daryl Dutton, Councillors and staff of Upper Hunter Shire Council on an outstanding achievement in winning the A.R. Bluett Memorial Award.

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