
MEDIA RELEASE

29 June, 2012

Illawarra residents celebrate Climate Challenge

Residents from around the Illawarra were recognised as local Climate Champions at an awards night in Wollongong on Wednesday for completing the Nature Conservation Council of NSW's Illawarra Climate Challenge.

The participants completed the challenge by taking practical actions, such as saving power and taking public transport, to reduce their carbon footprint and help save on household bills.

Darren Collins, a father of three from Jamberoo, was the overall winner of the challenge and awarded the major prize, a \$300 voucher generously donated by Bike Hub.

"If we want our children to have a future, we need to start taking responsibility for our impact and learning to live more lightly on the earth," said Mr Collins.

"It's important to enjoy the process though! The Climate Challenge has been very rewarding, as everyone is on their own journey and we both teach and learn from each other."

High-school student Cecilia Arsenovic of Mangerton was awarded the People's Choice Award for her poster presentation of her journey through the Climate Challenge.

When Rebecca Bucholz and her partner Tim Holt of Fair Meadow started the Climate Challenge in April 2012, their household generated more than 7 tonnes of CO₂ each year. Upon completing the challenge last week, they recalculated and found they had reduced their footprint by two thirds to a little over 3 tonnes of CO₂ each year.

"It felt like a great achievement at the end, seeing how much our footprint had dropped," said Ms Bucholz.

"It was awesome to discover so many easy ways we could reduce our footprint. We decided to install solar panels, switch to 100% Greenpower, and started to use smart power boards so we could turn all our appliances off at the wall with one flick of the switch," said Ms Bucholz.

"Next stop, carbon neutral!"

"From Wollongong to Shellharbour to Kiama, over 300 participants took the challenge to reduce their carbon footprint and live in a more sustainable manner," said Rachel Mimmo, Sustainability Program Manager at the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

"We had such an enthusiastic response from the families, workers, students and shopkeepers who signed up," said Ms Mimmo.

"Participants earned points for every practical action they chose – from turning appliances off at the wall, to starting a kitchen garden and taking more public transport.

"The Illawarra has shown that household and community actions can be part of the solution to climate change," Ms Mimmo said.

All Climate Champions are to receive fruit trees to celebrate their completion of the Climate Challenge.

The Illawarra Climate Challenge was run in partnership with Wollongong City Council and Kiama Municipal Council, and was supported by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency. Successful Climate Challenges have previously run in the Central Coast, Mosman, Warringah, Parramatta and Hunter Valley local government areas.

Photos available. For media enquiries, please contact Xavier Mayes, NCC Media & Communications Officer (Climate Change), 0423 030 658.