

Lend a hand on Sunday March 7 for Clean Up Australia Day

EARTH FIRST

By Peter West, ECCO

It's that time of year again when communities all over Australia join forces to collect rubbish as part of Clean up Australia Day. This year's event is being held next weekend, Sunday March 7, and about 1 million volunteers are expected to turn up to help clean up the environment.

It has been 20 years since Ian Keirnan (chairman and founder) had a vision to drive a community-based clean up campaign in Sydney Harbour. The initiative has now grown to become Australia's largest single clean-up initiative involving people and communities from across the entire nation. Over 6000 sites have now been registered across the country.

According to the Clean up Australia Day organisers, Australian's are among the highest producers of waste rubbish in the world, and billions of waste items are discarded thoughtlessly each year ending up in our waterways, streets and parklands. To date, Clean up Australia Day volunteers have collected over 200,000 tonnes of rubbish – equivalent to 4.7 million household wheelie bins!

When to get involved

There are three separate events this year: Clean up Australia Day on Sunday 7 March; Schools Clean up Day on Friday 5 March; and Business Clean up Day on Tuesday 2 March. For more information visit www.cleanup.org.au

Sites in Orange

There are about 18 sites registered for Clean Up Australia Day in and around Orange this year. This is more than any previous year showing that the event is growing in popularity.

The ECCO community group in conjunction with the Orange City Councils Tidy Town Committee have registered 5 sites that anyone can help at:

MORNING SESSION 10 am – 12noon

1. Moulder Park – Anson street (from the netball courts))
2. Elephant Park – Woodward Street
3. Somerset Park – Burrendong Way (from Robin Hood)

AFTERNOON SESSION 1pm – 230pm

4. Gosling Creek Reserve, Bargwanna Road
5. Hill Park, Jilba Street, Bowen.

To support the event, a free lunchtime barbeque will be offered to event participants at Elephant Park from 12noon courtesy of ECCO and Orange City Councils Tidy Towns Committee.

These sites have been selected to help protect our water catchments. Collecting rubbish in these areas will contribute to higher quality water in the Blackman's Swamp Creek (thereby preventing rubbish entering the stormwater harvesting scheme) and Gosling Creek catchments. Discarded cigarette butts, recyclable glass and plastic bottles, food packaging and plastic wrappers were among the most commonly collected items last year.

Other registered sites in the district include Spring Hill recreation ground from 9am, and Lake Canobolas from 9am. To find out more about these and other site in Orange, go to www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au

How to participate

If you have a little time on Sunday March 7, please consider volunteering in Australia's largest community based clean up initiative. Simply turn up on the day and register at any of these sites. Don't forget to wear sturdy shoes, gloves, a hat, sunscreen and long pants.

Clean up Australia Day is a fun, easy and enjoyable event. Not only are there direct benefits to our environment, parks, gardens, waterways, wildlife and water catchment areas, but participants contribute to a truly worthwhile cause.

For more information, contact Orange City Council, ECCO (www.eccoorange.org.au) or visit the Clean up Australia Day website - www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au

Sustainable tip for the week: A high proportion of discarded items collected during Clean Up Australia Day each year are recyclable, such as glass and plastic bottles. For a detailed summary of what can be recycled in Orange, refer to Orange's recycling guide at <http://www.orange.nsw.gov.au/go/home-and-neighbourhood/waste-and-resource-recovery/orange-waste-book> or ring the Waste Hotline on 1300 725 415.

Green dates for the calendar

Groundwater Awareness Week March 7-13 – See next weeks article
Earth Hour – Saturday 27 March - Stay tuned for more details.