



Rossko Award – Excellence in Waste Management



Pictured (from left) are Cr Alan Wilson (Cook Shire), LAWMAC Chair Cr Greg Thomsen (Mackay Regional Council), Cr Jennifer Downs (Cassowary Coast Regional Council) who presented the Rossko Award, and Matthew McCarthy (Townsville City Council) who received a Highly Commended Award. Rossko Award winner Sheils Barra is pictured below.



Cook Shire Council's Environmental Health Officer Sheils Barra has been named the winner of the Rossko Award, an annual award for excellence in waste management.

Councillor Jennifer Downs, from Cassowary Coast Regional Council, was honoured to be asked to present the Award which is in memory of former Mayor of Johnstone Shire Council, the much loved Ross Overton, who served three terms as Mayor from 1985.

Ross Overton was also instrumental in founding the Local Authority Waste Management Advisory Committee (LAWMAC) in 1993 to work together with councils from Mackay north to investigate better ways of managing waste and to share new ideas.

Presenting the award at the quarterly meeting of LAWMAC in Townsville on Thursday 18 November, Cr Downs commented that the award fostered increased sharing of knowledge and innovative ideas in the management of waste for councils in regional areas.

"The tyranny of distance means that traditional recycling, for instance, is simply not viable. However, seeking regional solutions like the sharing of mobile facilities such as glass crushers, cardboard compactors, and looking for ways to use the recycled products may provide much needed solutions in the future," Cr Downs commented.

LAWMAC has also forged excellent partnerships with State

Agencies such as DERM and other industry groups, who provide information and education to member councils on topical issues.

Sheils Barra won the award for the work he has done in improving Cook Shire Council's landfill site, and the public education programs undertaken to provide better management of waste and great community outcomes in the Cape and the Cook Shire area.

Sheils started work with Cook Shire in 2006 and since then has played a key role in transforming the shire's "dumps" into modern waste management facilities.

Sheils has also secured funding from certain organisations such as the National Packaging Covenant that provided financial support for compartmentalised trailers, which are used as mobile transfer stations for the collection of sorted waste in remote areas and during community events.

The other nominee for the Rossko Award, Matt McCarthy from Townsville City Council, received a Highly Commended Award.

The award recognises the innovative and progressive outcomes achieved through his work as an Environmental Health Officer including management of kerbside collection trucks, using GPS tracking, innovative award re-structuring, advertising opportunities on collection trucks to bring in revenue, and streamlining of the pick-up services offered.