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Waihi cleans up the competition in this year's Keep New Zealand Beautiful Awards



FINALIST

Image: Artzentao Photography

You little beauty, Waihi!

Already known as the town with a heart of gold, Waihi is now in the running for a new claim to fame as New Zealand's Most Beautiful Small Town.

The town was recently named as a finalist for this year's national **Most Beautiful Small Town Award**, along with Raglan

The Beautiful Awards, run by Keep New Zealand Beautiful, celebrate effort taken by communities, businesses, schools, individuals and councils to enhance a town's environment. And it's not only the town that has excelled. The Awards also recognise individuals who invest hours of their own time doing the right thing for their local environment and community, and community groups, as well as businesses who are leading the way in their own sustainability projects and endeavours.

- Waihi community group Keep Waihi Beautiful is a finalist in the **Community Group Award**
- Waihi College student Amy Magyar is in the running for the **Young Legend Award**
- Local business The Falls Retreat is vying for the **Most Sustainable Small Business Award**

The finalists and winners will be celebrated at a special gala dinner in October.

Most Beautiful Small Town Award

Will Waihi win the crown?

Waihi and Raglan are competing to be crowned as the country's most stunning town.

Keep Waihi Beautiful co-founder, Councillor Anne Marie Spicer, says the organisation put Waihi forward for this award not only to highlight the area's diverse beauty, but also to celebrate its amazing community spirit.

"In the application we highlighted our rivers, waterfalls and the stunning Whiritoa coastline, but we also talked a lot about our voluntary groups and all the good things they do. The fact we made it into the top two is such a credit to all the great work people do here, it's very exciting," she said.

Keep New Zealand Beautiful Chief Executive Heather Saunderson said both towns had put in a massive effort to take care of their patch.

"It's going to be a very tough year for judging" she said.

Each town will now have the opportunity to showcase its best bits to the judges who will pay them a visit in the near future.



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Community Group Award Keep Waihi Beautiful

Hauraki District Mayor John Tregidga says community group Keep Waihi Beautiful, which was co-founded by Waihi Councillor Anne Marie Spicer, Jill Macgregor, and Jonnie Mead, has had an enormous impact in the town.

"All credit to this community group which literally just put on its gumboots, rolled up its sleeves and took responsibility for keeping our town beautiful," he said.

"In my experience the best projects are community driven. It's all about community participation and that's what you can see here in spades. Waihi people taking great pride in their town. Council's role is to help the community to achieve its own goals."

The group's first clean-up of the main street resulted in 57 bulging bags of rubbish. The next time, a few months later, there were seven.

The group also removed graffiti from an A&P shed, replacing it with urban art, and designed an education programme for primary school aged children which was delivered by students from the local college.



FINALIST

Young Legend Award Amy aims to do the right thing

Waihi College year 12 student Amy Magyar finds more hours in a day than most. An active member of the Keep Waihi Beautiful Student Committee she also chairs the College Leo Club, and represents college students on her school's Senior Council.

This year, she's planted native trees, helped out with Lions Club fundraising events, and given talks at local primary schools encouraging young tamariki to think hard about their rubbish and where it ends up.

She also ran a poster competition, with students from the Keep Waihi Beautiful Student committee, and had input into the recent A&P shed beautification project on State Highway 2. Picking up rubbish whenever she can and encouraging her friends and locals to do the same, she is already a winner in our eyes and a total legend who deserves to be recognised.

The business!

FINALIST

Most Sustainable Business Award

The Falls Retreat is the business when it comes to sustainability. We're proud to see businesses like this leading the way in our District and wish the team all the best in carving up the competition!