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Editions > 2006 > June

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Whittlesea City a winner in 2005 'Livcom' awards*

Victoria's City of Whittlesea's achievements were recognised in the finals of Livcom, the world's most prestigious finals for liveable communities. Whittlesea was awarded the 2005 Enhancement of the Landscape Award in recognition of the community's efforts in the transformation in the quality and quantity of its open space.

The dramatic change that has occurred in Whittlesea's open space areas over the last ten years reflects the city's growing level of sophistication in the management of its open space.

Whittlesea places a much higher importance on open space provision and development with newly developing residential areas. Developers are now required to provide, in association with their new housing estates, fully embellished parkland. To ensure that the expanding open space areas are able to be maintained in a sustainable manner, Whittlesea entered into a strategic partnership with Toro Australia to develop an integrated irrigation control solution for its irrigated open space areas.

"The Toro solution offered a high end reporting capability," said Peter Ali, Council's Parks Special Projects Officer. "It has the ability to control, not only irrigation systems, but all electronically switched systems within the city. Other major players gave us briefings on potential solutions, but the solution presented by Toro was the best fit for our circumstances."

The Toro Irrinet system was installed in January 2005 and has already resulted in dramatic environmental improvements.

The system adjusts irrigation water applications to match prevailing weather conditions and automatically provides information back to a central computer about its own operation. Meters on irrigation lines monitor the amount of water flowing through the lines. If the flow exceeds the preset amount, the computer shuts off the whole line and signals an alarm. Broken sprinklers and other malfunctions can be quickly identified to prevent water wastage.

Although the amount of landscaped area in the municipality has doubled in the past six years, use of the automated control system has enabled the city to stay within statewide drought imposed water use levels.

"In summary, the Livcom award demonstrated that, while we may not have the resources of some of the largest municipalities in the world, our level of environmental performance can be considered world class by any standards," Peter Ali said.

For further information contact Anthony Long, Regional Manager - Irrigation Division, at Toro Australia, on (03) 9580 7355 or visit www.toro.com.au.

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