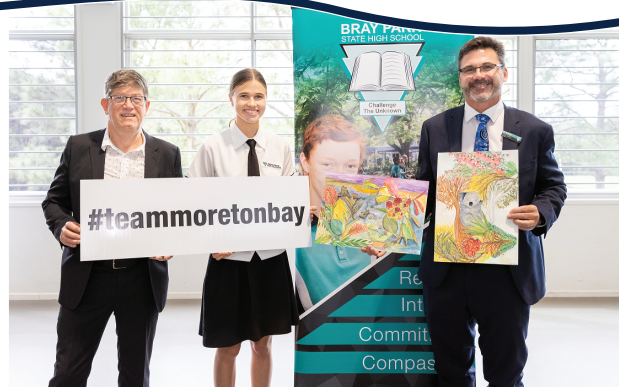




Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts



NATIONAL AWARDS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2023 Winners and
Honourable Mentions

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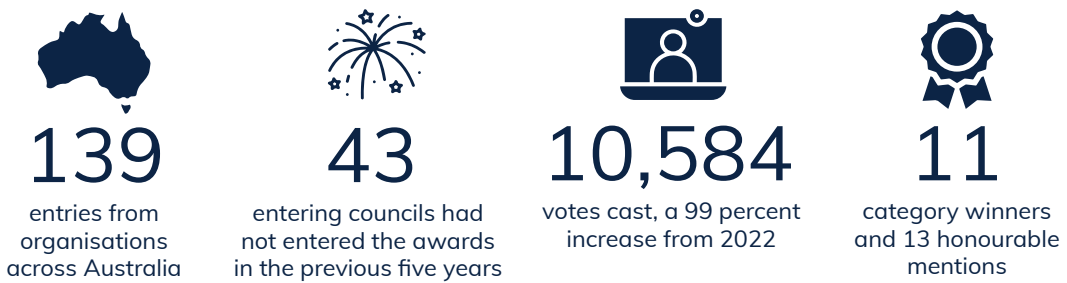


Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



About the National Awards for Local Government



The National Awards for Local Government (National Awards) are an annual celebration of local government achievements in Australia.

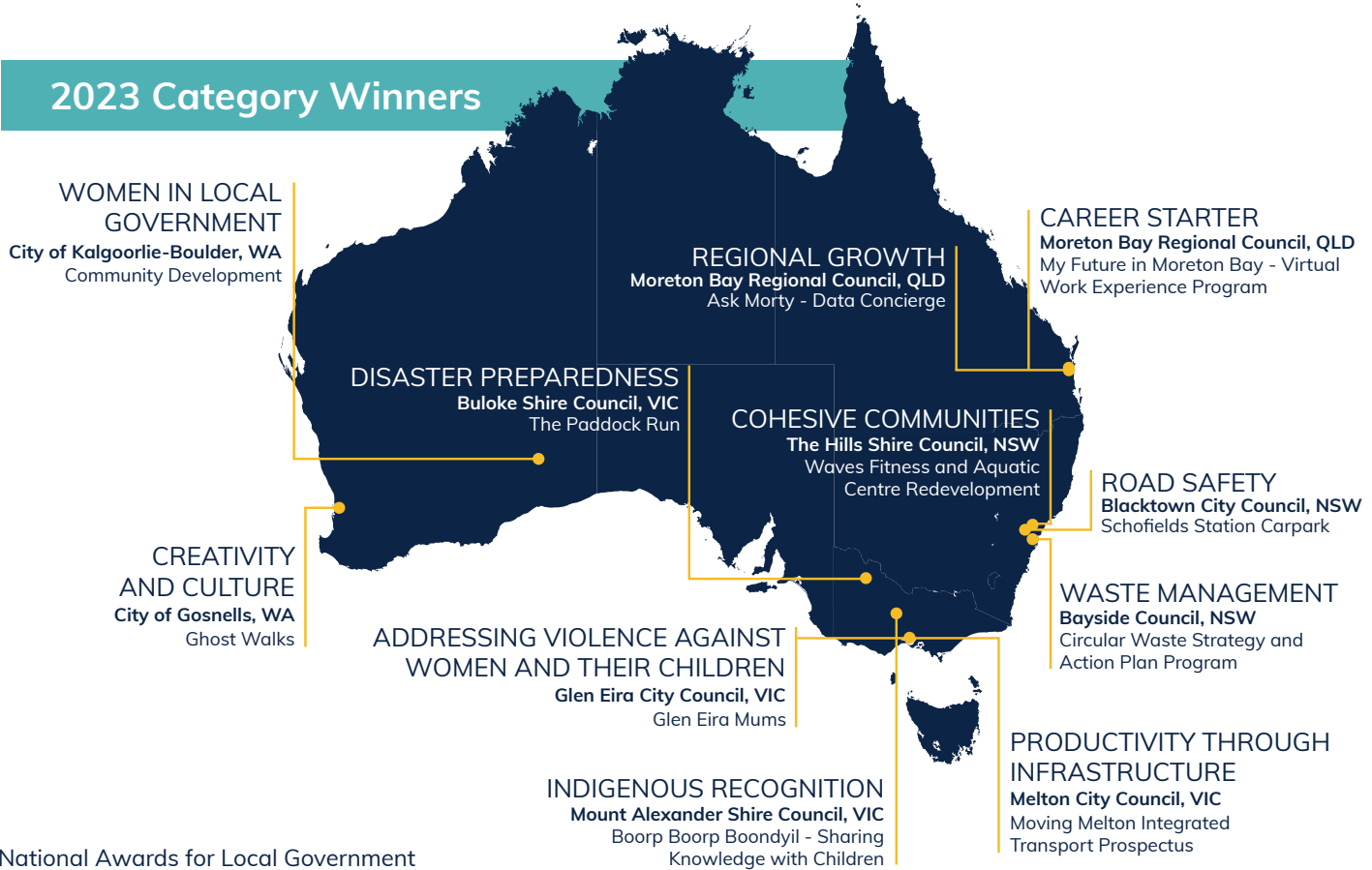
Now in its 37th year, the National Awards highlight initiatives implemented by local governments that are innovative, make a difference to their local communities, display excellence, and have outcomes that are replicable across the country.

The Australian Government recognises that local governments play a critical role in maintaining and developing the nation's social and economic fabric and building stronger communities into the future.

For the 2023 National Awards, there were 139 eligible entries across the 11 categories from 90 councils and two relevant community associations.

In 2023, councils and communities were encouraged to vote for projects across each of the 11 categories that best displayed excellence, innovation and replicability. There were 10,584 votes cast from 7,709 individual voters, a 99 percent increase from 2022.

The profiles, descriptions and images of each winner and honourable mention in this report are those provided by the council itself in its submission for the 2023 National Awards.



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Category
Winner
2023

City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, WA

Community Development

Two key female leaders at the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder exemplify the powerful interface between local government and community through their work empowering female City staff and women in the broader community.

Director of Community Development, Mia Hicks, is the City's sole female executive member, leading by example to empower colleagues and the community. She draws on 10 years' local government and consultancy experience, and other powerful project and policy work in industry and development.

Mia is a strong advocate for gender equality, promoting greater roles for women in leadership and mentoring multiple City staff members, some of whom have continued to significant career advancement, or to win State awards. Mia has organised the City's inaugural International Women's Day celebration and is advocating for formal City programs to encourage greater representation of women in local government leadership.

Mia is a strong advocate for First Nations empowerment, encouraging cultural change through City decisions. Mia selected respected First Nations artist, Regina Donaldson, to create the artwork for the City's new entrance signs, and has led the City's nationally significant First Nations CBD arts project, in which more than half of the artists are female.

The advocacy of Lauren Chapman-Holle runs deep into the community. Lauren has 17 years' City experience in communications, public relations and policy, and is currently the City's Manager of

Community of Development. Lauren has developed and overseen various workforce initiatives which empower women. Lauren's most recent initiative is the City's successful application for a childcare education scholarship fund. This fund has facilitated the study

of eight women, whose work will in turn permit multiple women to work outside the home and pursue leadership opportunities.

Lauren oversees the City's just-launched, inaugural Age Friendly Strategy, which overwhelmingly supports women. Lauren is also a longstanding Australian Services Union representative, and was named 2022 WA Local Government Divisional Delegate of the Year.

Lauren has a strong track record of leading high performance local government teams, including coaching and mentoring female staff, and supporting women in grassroots community initiatives.

Mia and Lauren consistently model integrity as they work to ensure the best outcomes for their co-workers and empower women in the community.

Mia and Lauren consistently model integrity as they work to ensure the best outcomes for their co-workers and empower women in the community.



Honourable
Mention
2023

Katherine Town Council, NT

First Female CEO Makes Waves: Ingrid Stonhill

Ingrid Stonhill is an outstanding female leader who is leading a cultural shift, within her organisation and local community, striving for higher standards and accomplishments. Ingrid has achieved this and more since her appointment in February 2022, when she became the first female CEO for this Northern Territory council in its 44-year history.

Stonhill has overseen development of higher standards across the Council including an organisational Workplace Health and Safety reform; a financial restructure; the Council's first strategic plan; and waste recycling. These higher standards have resulted in enhanced transparency and engagement between Council and community, ensuring a more informed and engaged public. Council received the Snap Send Solve Community Engagement Award 2022.

Stonhill has championed additional Council events including a mayoral ball, raising funds for a local hospital therapy dog, business networking events for professional interaction/development, and a partnership with the Territory Government for a weekly community event during the tourism season.

Stonhill has advocated for community developments, ensuring a \$10 million election promise to upgrade the local pool, and continues to campaign for economic development opportunities,

whilst responding to unprecedented incidents of crime. This has resulted in a more cohesive community, respect for Council's work, its staff, and better liveability for residents.

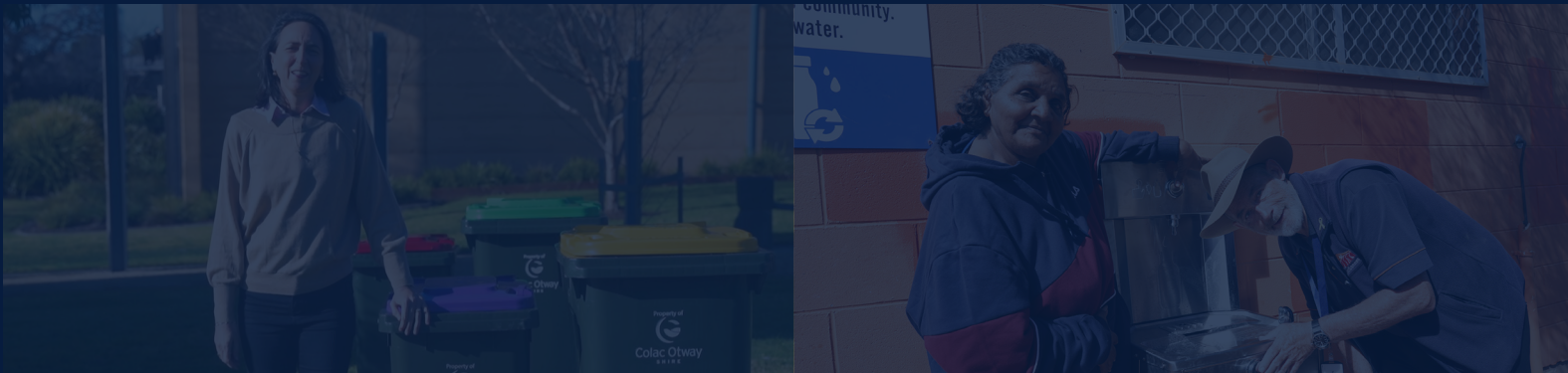
Regional areas are often male dominated, including leadership positions, but Katherine is unique with many women holding leadership roles. Stonhill championed the achievements of her peers in the article *Katherine Women: Natural Born Leaders*, printed in the Territory Q Magazine, NT News and the Council newsletter. Ingrid has showcased Katherine as a place of opportunity, emphasised

Ingrid has showcased Katherine as a place of opportunity, emphasised female elected representatives at Council and higher government, and also acknowledged feats of local women on International Women's Day.

female elected representatives at Council and higher government, and also acknowledged feats of local women on International Women's Day.

In the workplace, Stonhill has ensured women are part of the leadership team. Ingrid listened to staff and created a comfortable staff room, allowing parents to bring children to work when necessary. Other changes include office renovations for a better work environment, a mental health expert (post COVID-19) session for staff and the community, and a Staff Kindness Award.

The Council and local community has benefited from this real change, with Stonhill an exemplary example of a woman in leadership.



Waste Management

ABOUT THE CATEGORY

The 'Waste Management' category recognises local government initiatives which:

- » improve resource recovery and reduce amounts of waste generated in order to benefit human health, the environment and the economy;
- » increase use of recycled material and build demand and markets for recycled products;
- » better manage input and output of waste materials, to benefit human health, environment and economy;
- » improve information to support innovation, guide investment and enable informed community decisions relating to waste management; and/or
- » support the transition to a circular economy by transforming waste into sustainable resources.

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- » creating employment opportunities, protecting the environment, and better managing valuable and finite resources;
- » recognising the opportunities waste materials can provide and the economic value they retain; and/or
- » accelerating the recovery and reuse of community resources.

2023 ENTRIES

- » Bayside Council, NSW - **Circular Waste Strategy and Action Plan Program**
- » City of Darwin, NT - **Innovative Leachate Treatment System**
- » City of Greater Bendigo, VIC - **Circular Greater Bendigo**
- » Colac Otway Shire Council, VIC - **Monitoring Waste and Recycling Behaviours**
- » MacDonnell Regional Council, NT - **Water Refill Station Project**
- » Town of East Fremantle, WA - **East Fremantle George Street Festival: Waste Free Event**



Bayside Council, NSW

Circular Waste Strategy and Action Plan Program

In July 2018, Bayside Council embarked on a circular economy journey by introducing the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030*.

Achieving this vision and providing sustainable waste management requires the conceptualisation, implementation, trialling, and constant improvement of 'collective impact initiatives'. These need to be guided by a strong vision, effective leadership, and structured collective participation to enable us to reach common shared goals.

In 2023, Council has initiated a project which will see up to 90 percent of the 2,500 tonnes of material collected by mechanical road sweepers diverted from landfill.

Recent key initiatives and outcomes of this rolling Strategy, include the following.

- Up to 18,000 tonnes of organic material is extracted annually from the general waste bins at an advanced treatment facility.
- Council successfully obtained a NSW Environment Protection Authority grant (\$1.255 million) to introduce source separated organics infrastructure in 2024 and transition to FOGO by 2030.
- Implementation of garden beds at off-leash fenced dog parks, where the soil is nourished using a rotational dog poo worm farm and compost bin system, helping the community see beyond this as a nuisance waste.

- Council's entire annual road re-sheeting program specifies/mandates the use of recycled crushed glass (570 tonnes or 2.6 million glass bottles) and reclaimed/recycled asphalt (4,455 tonnes).
- Improvement of Council pollution control devices including litter booms, trash racks, litter-guard devices, sediment traps, tidal flaps and gross pollutant traps to divert 225 tonnes annually, recovering organics, soils and recovered fines as well as water.
- Initiation of a project in 2023 which will see up to 90 percent of the 2,500 tonnes of material collected by mechanical road sweepers diverted from landfill.
- Expansion of the materials accepted at 22 Community Recycling Events annually whereby the community can drop off items to be reused, repaired or recycled, diverting over 170 tonnes from landfill, including voluminous items such as polystyrene.
- Introduction of smart technology, custom surveillance trailers, convenient and affordable methods of disposal, and education has assisted in reducing illegal dumping incidences by 10 percent, and weight by 27 percent per capita.
- Implementation and improvement of a 'smart-cities' beach litter prevention program which prevents 60 tonnes annually from entering our waterways using 80 bespoke litter bins on the beach with LoRaWAN linked sensors.
- Creation of an interactive mapping system of all dwellings within Bayside, including waste collection points, bin infrastructure condition, and service frequencies linked to rates to improve service delivery and customer service.

Category
Winner
2023



Honourable
Mention
2023

City of Darwin, NT

Innovative Leachate Treatment System

Project Summary

City of Darwin has applied an innovative solution in effectively managing leachate and protecting the local environment.

Leachate is a toxic liquid generated in landfills, posing a significant management challenge to landfill owners around the world. Leachate contains heavy metals, nutrients, and persistent chemicals such as PFAS. While nutrient and heavy metals can be effectively removed with the current available technology, PFAS removal from contaminated raw leachate is technically challenging often requiring a combination of multiple technologies.

To address the problem of leachate in Darwin's high rainfall climate, City of Darwin partnered with Water Carbon Group (WCG) to facilitate a research and development project for a chemical free and affordable PFAS removal technology. Following the successful demonstration of the technology, the City of Darwin awarded WCG with a \$13.2 million contract to design, construct, and operate the innovative leachate treatment plant, the first of its kind in Australia.

Solution

The Leachate Treatment Plant uses a world first innovation called Low-Energy Evaporative Fractionation (LEEF) system to remove PFAS from leachate. The air bubbles injected in the raw

leachate allows PFAS to attach to the bubbles and be skimmed from the water as a foam without chemicals and with minimal energy use.

Treated effluent from the LEEF System® is then further processed via a biological treatment plant which utilises microbes for nutrient removal. Finally, the treated leachate is irrigated onto a Vetiver grass crop growing on the capped landfill, where the roots of the

Vetiver plants stabilise the landfill cap and draw up residual contaminants, resulting in zero discharge.

Outcomes

This sustainable, cutting-edge leachate treatment solution supports the City of Darwin's commitment to protecting the environment.

The leachate treatment system is the first in the world treating PFAS in leachate coupled with biological and ecological treatment and zero disposal – a closed loop system. The plant uses zero chemicals, low energy, processing up to 140,000 litres of raw leachate a day.

The development of the LEEF System® through an intellectual property agreement is an outstanding example of how local government and the private sector can partner to innovate and solve emerging environmental challenges.

The leachate treatment system is the first in the world treating PFAS in leachate coupled with biological and ecological treatment and zero disposal – a closed loop system.



Honourable
Mention
2023

MacDonnell Regional Council, NT

Water Refill Station Project

MacDonnell Regional Council is proud to promote that they don't use any single use plastic in any of their 13 communities.

To support this initiative, MacDonnell Regional Council has installed vandal resistant water bottle filling stations with a built-in filter and chiller outside their MacDonnell Regional Council offices.

Community members are able to refill their water bottles, effectively reducing the purchase and use of single use plastic water bottles in communities.

This initiative has made a remarkable difference in the amount of litter that was generated by water bottles.

More water bottle filling stations will be installed throughout each community due to the success of this project especially in places like youth recreation halls and sporting ovals.

By providing easy access to safe drinking water, there has been a fantastic and positive response from the communities.

These initiatives are also in line with the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

- Goal #3: Good Health and Well-Being;
- Goal #6: Clean Water and Sanitation;
- Goal #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities; and
- Goal #12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

MacDonnell Regional Council has installed vandal resistant water bottle filling stations with a built-in filter and chiller outside their MRC Council offices and is proud to promote that they don't use any single use plastic in any of their 13 communities.

Road Safety

ABOUT THE CATEGORY

The 'Road Safety' category recognises local government initiatives which:

- » improve road or roadside infrastructure with a focus on safety benefits including heavy vehicle transport;
- » improve emergency medical response services for those involved in road crashes; and/or
- » address the specific safety needs of vulnerable groups or target specific road user risk factors.

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- » making communities safer and more liveable;
- » reducing the financial costs of road congestion and transport accidents; and/or
- » contributing to reductions in deaths and serious injuries from road crashes.

2023 ENTRIES

- » Blacktown City Council, NSW - **Schofields Station Carpark**
- » Kiama Municipal Council, NSW - **National Road Safety Week Activities**
- » Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, VIC - **Safer Speeds on Rural Roads**
- » Penrith City Council, NSW - **Community and Road Education Scheme**
- » Warrnambool City Council, VIC - **Improving Safety in the City Centre**



Category
Winner
2023

Blacktown City Council, NSW

Schofields Station Carpark

Blacktown City Council has designed and constructed a new carpark that maximises carparking spaces while creating a safe environment and targeting road user risk factors such as disabled access and urban heat.

Rapid growth in the Schofields area has created high parking demand especially near Schofields Railway Station. The former carpark only provided

28 formalised carpark spaces with an adjacent informal carpark. It also lacked any managed traffic flow, which created the risk of vehicle collisions as well as risk to pedestrians.

The new carpark provides 144 parking spots including three disabled spots.

To maximise the number of car spots, the new carpark is constructed with an innovative cantilever over the top of a bank, supported by a combined retaining wall and safety barrier at the edges of the north and eastern sides. Further, aquaplaning is eliminated through mid-block vegetation in the centre of the largest part of the carpark.

In the surface construction, we used decomposed granite stabilised with water permeable binder to combat the heat island effect. This surface type absorbs less heat than traditional surfaces like concrete and asphalt and therefore does not store and release heat at the same levels.

Blacktown City Council also planted additional native trees within the site to increase shade, improve air quality and minimise the visual impact of the carpark. Hardy species were selected to deal with the harsh carpark environment and cope with western Sydney summers.

Our aim is that these trees will provide up to 50 percent shade cover over the carpark within 10 years. This aligns with our 'Cooling Canopies' program and other initiatives.

This critical piece of infrastructure supports the growing community at Schofields by providing four key road safety features:

- efficient transport link;
- safe and clearly marked spaces, wayfinding signposts and disabled parking spaces;
- effective and aesthetically pleasing safety barriers that incorporate a retaining wall and safety grille; and
- reduction in heat island effect through shade from trees, landscaping and choice of heat absorbing materials.

Our aim is that these trees will provide up to 50 percent shade cover over the car park within 10 years.





Honourable
Mention
2023

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, VIC

Safer Speeds on Rural Roads

Mornington Peninsula Shire believes our groundbreaking 'Safer Speeds on Rural Roads' project is the largest local government led speed limit initiative ever implemented in Victoria.

Mornington Peninsula Shire has a strong commitment to address our history of unacceptably high levels of road trauma. One of our key actions has been implementation of 80 km/h speed limits across all 33 high-risk Shire-managed rural sealed roads that had 90 km/h and 100 km/h speed limits. The project was implemented in late-2019 as a systemic batch approach to speed limit management.

The objectives were to better match the speed limit with the road environment and characteristics of our rural roads. In line with Safe System principles, this reduces the likelihood of crashes occurring, and the risk of vehicle occupants being seriously injured or killed if a crash occurs.

The Victorian Department of Transport (DoT) coordinated a comprehensive evaluation of the project during 2022.

In summary, the 80 km/h speed limits have been successful, achieving a high level of community support (59 percent of people supported versus 22 percent opposition), reducing average vehicle speeds, and reducing road trauma by a significant 68 percent. Since implementation of the 80 km/h speed limits, there have not been any fatalities

involving these roads, compared to six in 2019. With a significant proportion of deaths and serious injuries occurring on council-managed roads (35 percent across Victoria), a considerable reduction will need to be achieved to make significant progress towards Victorian and National road safety strategy targets aiming to halve road deaths by 2030.

Since implementation of the 80 km/h speed limits, there have not been any fatalities involving these roads, compared to six in 2019.

Speed limit corrections are a critical element of road safety and must be a key part of the solution to reduce road trauma on local roads.

Cost efficient road safety improvements are essential due to the long lengths of road networks managed by local government (643,057 kilometres which is around 73 percent of the Australian road network), and tightening capital works budgets due to rate capping, as well as a growing range of services that councils deliver.

With these project results and DoT evaluation breaking new ground, there is potential for other councils to replicate our approach to achieve significant road trauma reductions.

Further information: <https://shape.mornpen.vic.gov.au/safer-speeds>



Honourable
Mention
2023

Penrith City Council, NSW

Community and Road Education Scheme (CARES)

Penrith City Council's Community and Road Education Scheme (CARES) is a purpose-built bicycle safety education facility located in St Marys that gives school students an interactive and fun way to learn about road safety.

Council manages the facility and CARES program as the leading entity with sessions presented by NSW police officers and funding provided by Transport for NSW under their Road Safety Program.

The CARES program was created to assist in the reduction of risk, injury and death for young road users and has been successfully running for 29 years at Penrith City Council. It has been specifically designed for Year 4 to Year 6 students, as children in that age bracket are a higher crash risk category of road users.

The program helps to develop children's road sense, and includes sessions looking at helmets, bike maintenance and road safety. It is a practical, outdoor program, with students participating in an obstacle course before using the simulated roadways to expose them to a variety of real road situations in a controlled environment.

The purpose-built track is equipped with road signage, working traffic lights, roundabouts and pedestrian crossings.

Penrith Council has also been able to tailor our program to meet the specific safety needs of our community and vulnerable groups.

In January 2023, our CARES facility hosted a pedal bike and road safety event in partnership with SydWest Multicultural Services which runs a Migrant and Refugee Play Group in St Marys. The event increased awareness of pedal bike and

pedestrian road safety for families and provided a safe place for first time bike riders to gain confidence and experience.

On average, 3000 students attend the CARES program each year.

The program not only develops pedestrian and bike safety skills for children, it also fosters an important and positive relationship

between children and the police. These positive experiences can have a lasting effect on children's perception of the police force and road safety as they grow which is portrayed in the many creative artworks Council receives from students reflecting on their experiences and learnings at CARES.

The CARES program was created to assist in the reduction of risk, injury and death for young road users and has been successfully running for 29 years at Penrith City Council.

Regional Growth

ABOUT THE CATEGORY

The 'Regional Growth' category recognises local government initiatives which:

- » improve the liveability of a region and take advantage of region-specific opportunities;
- » empower vibrant and connected regional communities that promote diversity and inclusion; and/or
- » strengthen investment and development opportunities, share resources, build local capability, and create jobs.

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- » improving productivity, employment and workforce skills through the regions;
- » valuing, protecting and promoting diversity, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, cultures and traditions; and/or
- » fostering the development of self-reliant communities and regions with strong economic futures.

2023 ENTRIES

- » Barunga West Council, SA - **Fishermans Bay Redevelopment**
- » Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW - **Canberra Regional Joint Organisation Community Strategic Plan**
- » City of Gold Coast, QLD - **Neighbourhood Framework: A Vision for the Future of the Broadbeach to Burleigh Heads Corridor**
- » City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, WA - **Lynas Rare Earths Processing Facility Project**
- » City of Mount Gambier, SA - **Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre**
- » City of Victor Harbor, SA - **Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030**
- » Eurobodalla Shire Council, NSW - **Observation Point Viewing Platform**
- » Eurobodalla Shire Council, NSW - **Beach Accessibility Improvements**
- » Gladstone Regional Council, QLD - **Economic Transition Roadmap**
- » Moreton Bay Regional Council, QLD - **Ask Morty: Data Concierge**
- » Moyne Shire Council, VIC - **Key Worker Cabins**
- » Narrabri Shire Council, NSW - **Business Improvement Program**
- » Newcastle City Council, NSW - **People-Centred Economic Development**
- » Port Stephens Council, NSW - **Karuah Place Plan**
- » Shellharbour City Council, NSW - **The Waterfront Development at Shell Cove**
- » Shire of Morawa, WA - **Morawa Regional Migrant Employment Program**
- » Shire of Murray, WA - **Food Innovation Precinct Western Australia**
- » Tamworth Regional Council, NSW - **Tamworth Global Gateway Park**





Moreton Bay Regional Council, QLD

Ask Morty: Data Concierge

Small business owners have never been under more pressure. Natural disasters, pandemics and inflation at a 30 year high have all impacted their workload and profitability. They are often resource and time poor - working *on* the business is not possible as they are fully occupied working *in* the business.

So how do they plan for the future? How do they find time and information in a complicated information overloaded environment that will help them grow their business? How do they get answers to questions that Google can't answer?

With 97 percent of our 30,000 business being micro or small and facing such pressures, Moreton Bay Regional Council took its Small Business Friendly Council obligations to a new level by providing a small business solution that puts useable data in their hands.

Council partnered with TechConnect IT Solutions to develop Ask Morty, a free automated data concierge service. This chatbot takes complex 2021 Australian Census data and Queensland Government population projections and provides easy-to-use curated demographic data. Ask Morty identifies the suburbs in the region with the largest number of people that match

the key characteristics of a business's current or future target markets, such as age, gender, home ownership, work status and industry, and income levels.

The chatbot's easy customer interaction, simple question and answer design, and instant results make it an accessible and valuable tool for any small business. No data literacy or technical skill is required.

Since its launch on 26 September 2022, Ask Morty has been:

- accessed more than 3,500 times (potentially all individual companies);
- adopted as a course resource for a University Business Planning program;
- promoted by local chambers and industry groups to approximately 1000 members; and
- commended by the Queensland Small Business Commissioner as a shining example of a Council being small business friendly.

Everyone says that small business is the lifeblood of the Australian economy, but only Moreton Bay Regional Council is helping small businesses make evidence-based business decisions and

better plan for growth by putting the power back in their hands.

Since its launch on 26 September 2022, Ask Morty has been accessed more than 3,500 times.



Eurobodalla Shire Council, NSW

Beach Accessibility Improvements

Eurobodalla's beaches are a key attraction for residents and visitors to the region. This project was developed in response to requests Eurobodalla Shire Council received from the community on the importance of providing improved beach access for everyone. As Eurobodalla Shire consists of 83 beaches, prioritisation for the accessibility upgrades were given to seven of the eight patrolled beaches to maximise user safety.

Council collaborated with not-for-profit charity Accessible Beaches Australia on the project, with funding secured through the NSW Government's Regional Tourism Activation Fund.

After procuring the heavy-duty roll-up mobility mats, the mats were linked to hard surface lead-in paths, with several new lead-in paths being constructed for this purpose. The mobility mats were deployed by lifeguards during the 2022/23 summer school holidays at seven patrolled beaches across Eurobodalla. The mats were packed up ahead of storms or large seas to avoid any damage.

The beaches included in the project were:

- Surf Beach
- Malua Bay Beach
- South Broulee Beach
- Moruya South Head Beach
- Tuross Head Main Beach
- Dalmeny Beach
- Narooma Surf Beach

Benefits to the community included:

- improved beach access for people with disabilities, the elderly, and users of mobility scooters, wheelchairs, strollers, and trolleys;
- the option for beach-goers to use the mats at seven different beaches across the shire;
- encouraging visitation at patrolled beaches means improved beachgoer safety and user access to other facilities like toilets and beach wheelchairs;
- the mats and lead-in paths are made from recycled materials, reducing the environmental impact.

The beach mobility mats were well used over the summer and Council received a great deal of positive feedback from our community and visitors. The lessons Council has learnt so far will be incorporated to further improve user experiences next summer.

The beach mobility mats were well used over the summer and Council received a great deal of positive feedback from the community and visitors.

Thanks to the assistance of our volunteer Surf Life Saving Clubs, the mats will be deployed on Anzac Day 2023 at Malua Bay, South Broulee, Moruya South Head, and Narooma Surf beaches. Line marking

for new disability parking spaces will soon be installed at beach carparks at Moruya South Head, Tuross Head, Dalmeny, and Narooma Bar and Surf Beaches to create further inclusive improvements.

Productivity through Infrastructure

ABOUT THE CATEGORY

The 'Productivity through Infrastructure' category recognises local government initiatives which:

- » utilise technological innovations or regulatory changes;
- » consider sustainability, liveability and productivity in investment strategies and planning; and/or
- » address long-term infrastructure priorities and offer clear economic productivity benefits.

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- » connecting cities and regions in a way which supports population growth;
- » providing safe and efficient transport links and service delivery; and
- » strengthening and diversifying regional economic bases by better connecting industries to markets and customers.

2023 ENTRIES

- » Barunga West Council, SA - **Fishermans Bay Redevelopment**
- » Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW - **Merimbula Airport: the Gateway to the Sapphire Coast**
- » Blacktown City Council, NSW - **Schofields Station Carpark**
- » City of Joondalup, WA - **Burns Beach to Mindarie Dual Use Path**
- » City of Victor Harbor, SA - **Mainstreet Precinct Masterplan (Stage 4)**
- » Litchfield Council, NT - **PIT STOP (Pavement Inspection Technology Servicing Transport Operations Program)**
- » Melton City Council, VIC - **Moving Melton Integrated Transport Prospectus**
- » Mitchell Shire Council, VIC - **Community Infrastructure Sequencing and Planning**
- » Moyne Shire Council, VIC - **Key Worker Housing**
- » Northern Beaches Council, NSW - **Forestville Library 24/7**
- » Shire of Murray, WA - **Food Innovation Precinct**
- » Shire of Upper Gascoyne, WA - **Gascoyne Junction Water Sustainability Project**
- » Tamworth Regional Council, NSW - **Tamworth Global Gateway Park**





Category
Winner
2023

Melton City Council, VIC

Moving Melton Integrated Transport Prospectus

The City of Melton is growing rapidly, with the population projected to double from 216,389 residents today to 450,823 by 2051, and ultimately increase to over 500,000.

Residents find it difficult to access employment, education and services. There is a high car dependency with 85 percent of weekday trips made by car, and a household average of three cars. Over 70 percent of the workforce leave the municipality for employment. Investment in the transport network is Council's number one advocacy priority. The City of Melton's Investment Attraction Strategy identified the need to create 100,000 jobs by 2051 supported by investment in transport.

That is why Council developed the Moving Melton Transport Prospectus, which outlines detailed road, rail, bus and active transport projects that better connect the community and attract commercial investment. This is an innovative interactive online website that provides a data driven modelling platform and scenario planning to demonstrate benefits of transport investment.

Council analysed data on population growth, travel patterns and congestion to identify the transport projects we need. Council prepared costings, project designs, traffic projections, diagrams and renders of what the projects would look like.

Council conducted independent economic modelling to provide cost benefit ratios and productivity improvements such as travel time saved, and reduction in crashes and Co2 emissions.

The City of Melton has whole estates that are not serviced by buses, so we reviewed the bus network and identified benefits of a no-cost reconfiguration and \$3 million, \$5 million and \$10 million additional annual investments.

This interactive online platform provides a robust evidence base to inform decision makers in supporting the projects our community needs.

The launch of the prospectus in October 2022 was attended by 83 participants, including academics, transport planners, MP's and other councils. The website had over 1,200 unique visitors in its first month.

Melton City Council is proud of the innovative approach to providing a digital, interactive, and engaging solution to planning for critical infrastructure.

The Department of Transport has adopted our traffic modelling and to quote a representative of the department "Melton has provided an evidence base behind all the asks and is the council most aligned with State's planning philosophy and expectations."

This interactive online platform provides a robust evidence base to inform decision makers in supporting the projects our community needs.

Shire of Murray, WA

Food Innovation Precinct

The Shire of Murray is a gateway to Western Australia's agricultural region. Located 80 kilometres south of Perth, the Shire has superior access to infrastructure and transport linkages, and a strong history of farming and agriculture.

But to take advantage of our region-specific opportunities required a clear mission and strategy.

We developed the idea for a centre of agri-food knowledge and enterprise hub to tackle wider local challenges.

These challenges were manifold: socio-economic disadvantages such as an ageing population corridor, high levels of unemployment, reliance on traditional industry sectors, soil and water issues, and a poor history of food and beverage product development.

The answer was the Food Innovation Precinct Western Australia (FIPWA). FIPWA is both a new physical location (with a research and development facility, a production building and a one-stop common-use food-technology amenity), and an ecosystem of food and agri-innovation specialists.

To deliver such an ambitious project, the Shire had to step out of its traditional remit to lead a coalition of partners that comprised federal, state and local government, academia, international businesses, local community, and industry. Together, we envisioned a future that would empower and

connect our regional communities and place us at the leading edge of food science, technology, and food manufacturing at global standards.

Together, we envisioned a future that would empower and connect our regional communities and place us at the leading edge of food science, technology, and food manufacturing at global standards.

We raised \$35 million to develop and build FIPWA, an initiative which brings with it a high level of risk for a local government.

That funding underpins a massive social and economic benefit: we will bring a billion-dollar boost to Western Australia by enabling up to \$330 million in the food and beverage sector, and another \$737 million in the wider economy over the next five years. Up to 51 new food businesses will be created, creating up to 506 direct and 977 indirect jobs.

The Shire's early activation of partnerships has led to export trials that will see FIPWA deliver at least three percent of the forecast growth in 2022-23 alone.

It is an unusual project for a small Shire to lead, but one which absolutely supports the role of a local government to support its community and encourage multigenerational social economic development.

Honourable
Mention
2023



Indigenous Recognition

ABOUT THE CATEGORY

The 'Indigenous Recognition' category recognises Indigenous initiatives and employees in local government which:

- » achieve representation of Indigenous people in their community and inform local government activities and policies;
- » overcome inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through community-based policies and programs that are done in partnership with local Indigenous people;
- » have explicit Indigenous employment goals, strategies and support mechanisms such as Indigenous cadetship programs, mentoring and cultural awareness initiatives; and/or
- » have an outstanding Indigenous employee who is making a difference to their community and workplace by delivering high quality initiatives and outcomes.

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- » bringing together Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and communities to share skills and experiences;
- » undertaking initiatives that reinforce, strengthen, and promote Indigenous culture, traditions and languages;
- » raising awareness and understanding of the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and culture; and/or
- » building positive and productive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians through policies and programs.

2023 ENTRIES

- » Carpentaria Shire Council, QLD - **One Carpentaria Shire Team**
- » Ku-ring-gai Council, NSW - **Gai Mariagal Festival Program 2022**
- » Mount Alexander Shire Council, VIC - **Boorp Boorp Boondyil: Sharing Knowledge with Children**
- » Moyne Shire Council, VIC - **Ngootyoong Laka, Ngootyoong Yana: Walking and Talking with Respect**
- » Woollahra Municipal Council, NSW - **Aboriginal Heritage Study**





Category
Winner
2023

Mount Alexander Shire Council, VIC

Boorp Boorp Boondyil: Sharing Knowledge with Children

Ten years in the making, Boorp Boorp Boondyil (which in the language of the Jaara people in central Victoria loosely translates as “sharing knowledge with children”) is the brainchild of Uncle Brien Nelson, and was taken up by his son Uncle Rick upon his passing. It is the manifestation of a dream of a permanent space in Castlemaine which could teach not just the young, but all locals and visitors, the story of the Jaara, or Dja Dja Wurrung, peoples both past and present.

Boorp Boorp Boondyil is the manifestation of a dream of a permanent space in Castlemaine which could teach not just the young, but all locals and visitors, the story of the Jaara, or Dja Dja Wurrung, peoples both past and present.

Uncle Rick collaborated with Mount Alexander Shire Council and SharingStories Foundation, an Aboriginal-led organisation, to design, develop and install the exhibition in Castlemaine’s historic Market Building. This location brings together Jaara and colonial history in one place, another step towards Reconciliation, for which Uncle Rick has a particular passion.

Council secured funding from the Victorian Government’s Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund for the design and build, then took a crucial, innovative step. While engaging with the local Aboriginal community, a decision was made that this could not be a Council-led project, with ‘consultation’ provided by Aboriginal people. Rather, it needed to be Aboriginal-led. As a result, Uncle Rick was hired by Council as Project Lead.

This exhibition is, as a result, a truly Aboriginal one; the product of self-determination by the Aboriginal community of the shire, and is in keeping with Council’s Reconciliation Plan.

The exhibition, now completed, features beautiful physical renderings of Jaara culture, artworks made by local and Aboriginal artists, and innovative interactive

displays. These beautiful displays feature Uncle Rick discussing bush tucker, local culture, language and the Jaara creation story of the eagle, the bat and the crow, told by Uncle Rick and delightfully illustrated by the kids.

Now several months into operation, the exhibition has become a highlight, attracting new visitors to the Visitor Information Centre based in the Market Building, allowing for school excursions run by Nalderun Aboriginal Education Corporation, and providing a point of pride for the local Aboriginal community.

It is an enormous success and a testament to Mount Alexander Shire Council’s commitment to reconciliation and self-determination.



Honourable
Mention
2023

Moyne Shire Council, VIC

Ngootyoong Laka, Ngootyoong Yana: Walking and Talking with Respect

This year, for the first time in our Shire’s history, Moyne Shire Council hosted the regions first Australia Day ceremony dedicated to Indigenous history reflection.

We engaged First Nations Elders and representatives, working together to create an inclusive, respectful event honoring the region’s Indigenous history, while remembering the pain caused by colonisation. The event was held at the Port Fairy Indigenous Massacre Memorial and was attended by over 300 people.

The event began with a smoking ceremony and song performed by local Gunditjmara/Kirrae Whurrong man Brett Clarke. Peek Whurrong Elder Uncle Rob Lowe Senior then spoke and remarked that the date served as a reflection day on the trauma of growing up as an Indigenous Australian on mission stations. He spoke about how ceremonies such as this one gave Indigenous people a chance to meaningfully share their experiences.

“These are our stories, this is my story, this is what we lived through, this is what we witnessed,” he said. “These are the stories that we have to tell because no one would know what it was like

growing up on the mission stations in this area. If we tell the stories, and white Australians hear the stories, it becomes our shared history and we move forward, together.”

Following the ceremony, damper and tea was made available to all attendees and tube stock trees, native to the Moyne Shire region were handed out. These were sourced from local Indigenous nursery Worn Gunditj and provided another opportunity to learn of the native flora in the area.

The response following the event was overwhelmingly positive. It afforded Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members to come together, to talk, listen, learn and share stories, language and culture.

The event also provides a model for other Councils to replicate in the future. It has also started meaningful conversations and actions highlighting unified pathways forward within our Shire.

The event was made possible by a grant afforded to the Moyne Shire Council from the National Australia Day Council. Wherever possible, local Indigenous businesses, artists and vendors were used.

The event afforded Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members to come together, to talk, listen, learn and share stories, language and culture. It also provides a model for other Councils to replicate in the future.

Disaster Preparedness

ABOUT THE CATEGORY

The 'Disaster Preparedness' category recognises local government initiatives which:

- » support communities to manage and adapt to climatic events by investing in disaster prevention, recovery and preparedness;
- » actively reduce risks from disasters and pandemics, particularly as they impact local communities;
- » ensure the Australian community is prepared to endure more frequent challenging events; and/or
- » implement programs and policies that ensure communities survive and prosper following these events.

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- » lowering the potential impacts of disasters and pandemics by analysing and managing the causes;
- » identifying risks and mapping capacity to respond to hazards;
- » protecting lives and livelihoods, communities and individuals; and/or
- » reducing damage or loss from disaster, particularly when it comes to public and private infrastructure.

2023 ENTRIES

- » Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW - **Brogo Water Treatment Plant**
- » Brighton Council, TAS - **Climate Change and Sustainability Education Program**
- » Buloke Shire Council, VIC - **The Paddock Run**
- » City of Victor Harbor, SA - **Climate Agenda 2030 and Youth Climate Summit**
- » Hawkesbury City Council, NSW - **Resilient Hawkesbury**
- » Hinchinbrook Shire Council, QLD - **Disaster Communication and Early Warning**
- » Macedon Ranges Shire Council, VIC - **Kettelwell's Storm Recovery Processing Site**
- » Mid Coast Council, NSW - **A Reflection and Lessons Learnt**
- » Mildura Rural City Council, VIC - **Mildura Region Flood Response 2022/23**
- » Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, VIC - **Peninsula Disaster Preparedness for a Changing Climate**
- » North West Queensland Regional Organisations of Councils, QLD - **Get Ready NWQ**
- » Renmark Paranga Council, SA - **River Murray Flood: Levee Network and Interactive Mapping**
- » Shoalhaven City Council, NSW - **Recovery into Resilience Project**
- » Wollondilly Shire Council, NSW - **Activate Wollondilly**
- » Wollondilly Shire Council, NSW - **Community Recovery Hub Toolkit**





Buloke Shire Council, VIC

The Paddock Run

Getting information to ‘where they are’ is the motivation behind The Paddock Run – a community driven initiative developed by the Buloke Shire Council supporting the harvest workforce and wider community during the October 2022 Victorian Flood event.

Floods impacted around 50 percent of agricultural area in Buloke, with homeowners and businesses impacted by flooded roads, cutting off access during what would normally be a busy trading period.

Council partnered with food businesses and grain receival sites to deliver flood support and assistance information to the paddock, truck, tractor, harvester, ute etc., using a less conventional, but more practical delivery method – via their stomachs.

In all, 8000 cards, 1000 packets of Kooka's and more than 70 posters were distributed, saturating the shire population of 6178, and empowering the community to support each other.

When visiting participating food businesses for a grocery shop or to pick up a takeaway meal for a bite to eat, harvest workers and families were given a card with condensed key messages and contact numbers for specialist advisors, who could swiftly direct them to the help they needed such as mental health advice.

At grain receival sites, grain truck drivers were handed a Paddock Run card and also a packet of

Kooka's Country Cookies, a beloved, locally made treat, to share with colleagues in the paddock, after often waiting hours in a queue.

This initiative also served as an occupational violence intervention. Staff working at grain receival sites are often young women and have historically been subjected to verbal abuse when customer grain deliveries do not make the grade and may be financially penalised, or have the load not accepted.

In December 2022, a large fire near Donald resulted in farmers (Country Fire Authority volunteers) leaving their harvest to fight the fire until late in the day, and then having to rush back to the receival

with a load of grain before closing. The Paddock Run's provision of Kooka's and key information was timely as the farmers were exhausted and hungry.

In all, 8000 cards, 1000 packets of Kooka's, and more than 70 posters were distributed, saturating the shire population of 6178, and empowering the community to support each other.

The initiative strengthened the connection between Buloke's food and harvest workforce, empowering them to support each other, and to be proactive as partners, investing in their futures.

Renmark Paringa Council, SA

River Murray Flood: Levee Network and Interactive Mapping Tool

In 2022, South Australia faced the second biggest River Murray Flood in 152 years, which the state Government said, “will be one of the most, if not the most, significant natural disaster in the state's history”.

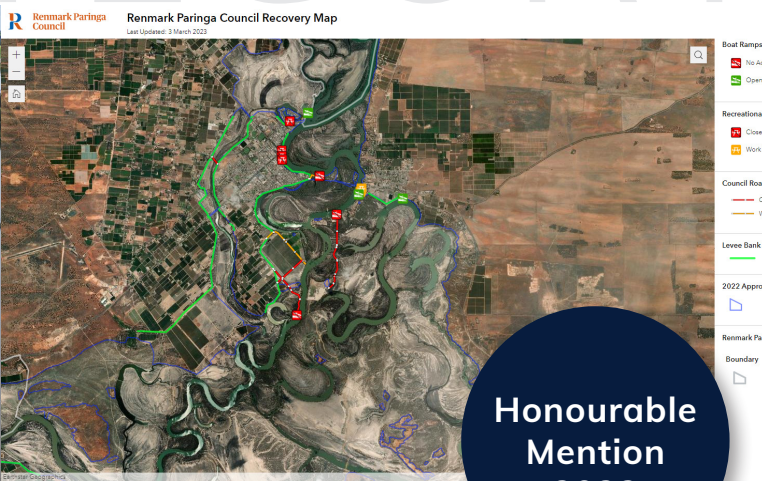
Renmark Paringa Council adopted a ‘go hard and go early’ approach to re-engineering the 38 kilometre levee network to ensure the community was protected and the devastating impacts of a flood were prevented.

To ensure our community was engaged and informed, an interactive map was embedded in Council's website to showcase water inundation modelling, as well as the status of remediation works undertaken to the levee network.

Council's approach to disaster prevention and preparedness had two main goals:

1. ensure that the infrastructure and townships could withstand the impending flow of the River Murray; and
2. engage and inform the community throughout the event.

The peak of the flood hit 18.55 metres and Council's levee network stood strong, with no breaches incurred. Our townships were prepared, with no residential houses within the levee network affected.



Early on, fear and anxiety permeated the community due to the threat of the unknown and the spread of misinformation.

Council adopted a ‘go hard and go early’ approach to re-engineering the 38 kilometre levee network to ensure the community were protected.

The interactive map allowed Council and the community to accurately identify the areas of the levee network being worked on and what works were scheduled. The interactive map was a huge success. It kept the community engaged, eased anxiety, and brought the community back to a central point of truth.

The success of Council's flood response can be measured in two ways:

1. towns were protected from floodwaters; and
2. community engagement was exceptional and measurable.

Our towns stayed dry and no lives were lost in the Council area.

These are the fundamental foundations of our success but, what was most incredible, was the positive engagement and feedback Council received from the community.

Overall, Council's management of the River Murray Flood ensures we are prepared to withstand another high river event and that our community has confidence in Council to deliver on disaster prevention, recovery, and preparedness in future.



Creativity and Culture

ABOUT THE CATEGORY

The 'Creativity and Culture' category recognises local government initiatives which:

- » create opportunities to showcase the best of communities through arts and culture;
- » embrace wellbeing and diversity, and encourage social inclusion through community participation in artistic activities; and/or
- » leverage arts and culture to improve community sustainability and increase local economic opportunity.

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- » fostering opportunities for the enjoyment of the arts through broad community engagement;
- » establishing local arts hubs for community arts, performances and exhibitions; and/or
- » supporting arts initiatives that foster inclusion and skill development.

2023 ENTRIES

- » Blue Mountains City Council, NSW - **Water Trail**
- » Brisbane City Council, QLD - **Visible Ink Youth Hub Music Program**
- » City of Gosnells, WA - **Ghost Walks**
- » City of Greater Geraldton, WA - **Iwarra Wilungga: Spring by the Sea**
- » City of Joondalup, WA - **Invitation Art Prize**
- » Fairfield City Council, NSW - **Spinoff: A Safe Place for Dangerous Ideas**
- » Gunnedah Shire Council, NSW - **Book Paper Folding for Fairy Tale February**
- » Indigo Shire Council, VIC - **Creative Lands: Indigo Youth Mental Health Project**
- » Inner West Council, NSW - **Inner West Fest**
- » Kiama Municipal Council, NSW - **GLaM First Birthday Party**
- » Leeton Shire Council, NSW - **Leeton Museum and Gallery and Public Art Program**
- » Merri-bek City Council, VIC - **Creative Coburg**
- » Mitchell Shire Council, VIC - **hArt of Mitchell Exhibition**
- » Northern Beaches Council, NSW - **PLAY MANLY 2022**
- » Northern Beaches Council, NSW - **Manly Creative Library**
- » Penrith City Council, NSW - **Ngara Showcase (listen, hear, think)**
- » Roper Gulf Regional Council, NT - **Our Barunga Dogs**
- » Shire of Christmas Island, WA - **Our Streets Are Our Museums**
- » Shire of Dardanup, WA - **Enlighten 2022**
- » Shire of Dardanup, WA - **Southern Ports Festive Auslan Choir Project**
- » Shire of Three Springs, WA - **Silos Projection Project**
- » Southern Grampians Shire Council, VIC - **Hamilton Gallery Exhibition**
- » **Luminous: John Orval Stained Glass Artist**
- » Wollongong City Council, NSW - **Luminous Culture Fest**



Category
Winner
2023

City of Gosnells, WA

Ghost Walks

The City of Gosnells Ghost Walks takes participants on an inclusive, immersive, performance-based experience that showcases local historical venues, the Wilkinson Homestead Museum and Kenwick Pioneer Cemetery, and tells the true stories of characters who were among the original settlers in the area.

Ghost Walks, a community-focused celebration of the region's history through arts and culture, is a creative event that provides opportunities for local residents, staff and volunteers to join the cast and crew, research and develop historically accurate scripts and be part of a living history through artistic performance.

Performing to more than 100 people per night, Ghost Walks provides opportunity for the wider community to engage in the arts and an immersive performance experience, with many attendees coming from across Western Australia and even overseas. Ticket pricing makes the event affordable for all, with the tour recommended for people over 10 years of age.

The City of Gosnells organises nine Ghost Walks over three nights each year during the warmer months when the moon is full. They have proven so popular they are usually booked out months in advance.

Ghost Walks employs up to 14 performers each night, in addition to four guides and eight staff. By engaging local artists and businesses to

help deliver the event, the City of Gosnells Ghost Walks provides employment and economic development opportunities to the local community. The high-quality production encourages return visits to the Wilkinson Homestead Museum.

Ghost Walks were reimaged for 2023, with new characters and historic locations.

Performing to more than 100 people per night, Ghost Walks provides opportunity for the wider community to engage in the arts.

The 'spook-tacular' City of Gosnells Ghost Walks engaged and entertained hundreds of participants across January, February and March in 2023, fostering opportunities for the enjoyment of the arts through broad community engagement, creating opportunities for performers, and promoting inclusion and skill development – key reasons why the artistic experience remains a favourite item on the City of Gosnells' annual events calendar.



Honourable
Mention
2023

Shire of Dardanup, WA

Southern Ports Festive Auslan Choir Project

A community Christmas choir convened by the Shire of Dardanup sang and presented carols in sign language as part of a December 2022 festively-themed outdoor movie night event held in the small rural town of Burekup.

With funding support from Southern Ports, the Festive Auslan Choir project was created and implemented by the Shire's Place and Community Events Team to build community participation, connection, accessibility and inclusivity.

In preparation for the performance, 24 community members aged between eight and 70 years attended an eight week Auslan course facilitated by Kelly Hope from Hope CODA (Child of Deaf Adult) Services. Participants learned the signing of basic words, fingerspelling, and six Christmas songs.

The Auslan Choir joined with Vocal Fusion Youth Choir for their 6.30pm performance at the Movies by Moonlight event in Burekup which was part of the Shire of Dardanup's Fuel to Go and Play Summer in Your Park Series held between December 2022 and February 2023 and attended by almost 420 patrons.

Southern Ports Regional Manager, Lee Smith, said the organisation was proud to partner with the Shire of Dardanup and Hope CODA Services to deliver the initiative, which enriched the community through important and positive social outcomes.

As you know, we already use Auslan in our family with my grandparents who are deaf, but to incorporate this in such a family friendly, fun and festive way was very special for us and created treasured memories.

Following on from the success of the Choir, Kelly Hope was further engaged by the Shire to provide a signing service at three more outdoor music events held in early 2023 also part of the Summer in Your Park Series.

The full eight week program and the performance included involvement of four people with disabilities and celebrated their active participation.

Wide ranging positive local media coverage, including digital, print and radio, provided excellent positive exposure for Auslan as a universal language to the wider community and attendees at all of the summer events.

Participant Lauren Jones said: "My mum, my daughter Harlow, and myself had a great time. It was a lovely bonding experience for us. As you know, we already use Auslan in our family with my grandparents who are deaf, but to incorporate this in such a family friendly, fun and festive way was very special for us and created treasured memories."





Cohesive Communities

ABOUT THE CATEGORY

The 'Cohesive Communities' category recognises local government initiatives which:

- » foster a sense of belonging, identity and shared values and promote civic rights and responsibilities;
- » develop accessible infrastructure to encourage participation in the local community and build community harmony; and/or
- » celebrate the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the community and create an inclusive and respectful community.

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- » creating communities that everyone can belong to, identify with and contribute to equally;
- » increasing participation in local communities and building community harmony; and/or
- » celebrating differences, talents, and fostering an inclusive and respectful community.

2023 ENTRIES

- » Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW - **Youth Speak**
- » Break O'Day Council, TAS - **Festival of Wellbeing**
- » City of Canada Bay Council, NSW - **Emerging Community Leaders Program**
- » City of Joondalup, WA - **Whitford Library AIR + Mural**
- » City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, WA - **Age Friendly Strategy**
- » City of Melbourne, VIC - **Micro-Labs: Reimagining Retail in Melbourne**
- » City of Ryde, NSW - **Embracing Multicultural Ryde**
- » City of Vincent, WA - **Strive, Survive and Thrive**
- » City of Vincent, WA - **Smoke Free Town Centres**
- » Geelong Regional Library Corporation, VIC - **Talking it Up**
- » George Town Council, TAS - **East Beach All Abilities Recreation Area**
- » Gunnedah Shire Council, NSW - **Brain Training @ the Library**
- » Gunnedah Shire Council, NSW - **Multicultural March 2021**
- » Huon Valley Council, TAS - **Huon Beings**
- » Indigo Shire Council, VIC - **People of Beechworth Exhibition**
- » Inner West Council, NSW - **Pride Inner West Program**
- » Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, VIC - **Citizens' Panel: Australia's First Representative Standing Panel**
- » Penrith City Council, NSW - **Pride Month**
- » Randwick City Council, NSW - **PermaBee Community Gardening Program**
- » Roper Gulf Regional Council, NT - **Baby Animals Belong in the Bush**
- » Shire of Mundaring, WA - **Swan View KAOS**
- » Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale, WA - **Mobile Library Service**
- » Shire of Upper Gascoyne, WA - **Two Rivers Memorial Park**
- » Sorell Council, TAS - **Accessible Beach Accesses**
- » The Hills Shire Council, NSW - **Waves Fitness and Aquatic Centre Redevelopment**





Category
Winner
2023

The Hills Shire Council, NSW

Waves Fitness and Aquatic Centre Redevelopment

After 50 years of service, The Hills' beloved local pool no longer met community needs or accessibility standards. To ensure it would be capable of serving a region with more than 250,000 additional residents expected within the next decade, the decision was made to demolish the existing pool and develop a new complex to maximise use of the existing space and encourage greater participation.

Waves Fitness and Aquatic Centre (Waves) retains the charm of a visit to the local pool, while offering as many new features as possible. Inclusivity and accessibility were top design priorities.

Outdoors, a 10-lane, 50 metre World Aquatics (formerly FINA) compliant pool and additional 10-lane 25 metre pool serves squads, swim clubs and lap swimmers. Squads are popular for teens and adults, with Waves' Gold Squad recently winning three medals in the Open Water Championships.

Waves retains the charm of a visit to the local pool, while offering as many new features as possible. Inclusivity and accessibility were top design priorities.

Indoors, two heated pools create opportunities for year-round swimming, serving all stages of water confidence through learn to swim classes and aqua fitness programs. A leisure 'lagoon' area and toddler pool invites exploration by all ages and abilities.

A large gymnasium is fitted with state-of-the-art equipment. Group classrooms provide supported fitness opportunities, while a hireable multipurpose room for community group use is available.

Families are key users and a monster splash pad with slides, soakers and sprayers brings people together for all-day fun. The adjacent party room, with sea-themed mural by artist Samuel Kim, is popular for birthdays.

The school community has embraced Waves with swimming carnivals and sports activities held regularly.

Universal accessibility is key. A non gender-specific change village provides options to traditional facilities. Ramp access is included for both the indoor program pool and outdoor pools and a portable hoist and aquatic wet chairs are available. A dedicated adult change room with a motorised bench and hoist, equitable reception desk, and universal access facilities allow for greater participation.

Seniors and social groups visit the complex and disability organisations have added Waves to their activity schedules. A special 'Explore Waves for Free' day was held on International Day of People with a Disability. Waves also supports the accreditation process for SES and RFS volunteers to complete aspects of their certification.



Honourable
Mention
2023

City of Melbourne, VIC

Micro-Labs: Reimagining Retail in Melbourne

The City of Melbourne has a long history of running global innovation challenges. In 2021, Council focused on 'Reimagining the City' to support a social and inclusive economic recovery. The Micro-Labs pilot was selected by judges and a community vote.

Micro-Labs reimagines ground-floor tenancies to match the needs of local communities and businesses. Pre-

pandemic, with 99.9 percent occupancy, small businesses, and community groups were priced out of accessing spaces to support their needs. In nine months of operation, Micro-Labs has hosted 15,000 visitors, 200 events and 60 organisations demonstrating the value of free, shared, inclusive and digitally enabled spaces to drive community connection and create opportunities for previously excluded groups to share their talents and participate in the local economy.

Many of the people who have visited or hosted events at Micro-Labs are culturally and linguistically diverse. Events held include tax return advice in Portuguese, how to fix a car for international students, and delivery driver support groups.

From the outset, Micro-Labs has included the community. The universal design-driven co-design process had a deliberate focus on engaging people and groups who are underrepresented in the CBD. Together, we shared decisions on how it should work, the values that support the space, the floor plan, and the items inside. Despite being a

government-run venue, Micro-Labs is deliberately institutionally neutral with many staff speaking more than one language. This has contributed to community users feeling welcome, making it their own as they occupy the space to drop-in, collaborate, and host events.

Micro-Labs reimagines ground-floor tenancies to match the needs of local communities and businesses.

Micro-Labs houses a library service, makerspace, equipment and books for borrowing, high-speed internet, digital displays, sensors, audio/visual meeting equipment, movable furniture and curtains, and more. Importantly, the fit-out remains iterative in response to community feedback, which is captured actively and regularly.

Micro-Labs aligns with eight out of 27 CBD community neighbourhood priorities including accessible spaces and services, coworking and improving digital literacy, local community connection, and international student support.

In 2023, as the city recovers, there is still an 18 percent retail vacancy rate. Micro-Labs demonstrates the impact of creating mixed-use spaces that are community co-designed to create more cohesive and connected communities.

Career Starter

ABOUT THE CATEGORY

The 'Career Starter' category recognises outstanding career starter initiatives in local government which:

- » support entry-level employment opportunities in local government through apprenticeships, traineeships or cadetships;
- » implement initiatives in the workplace which help to improve the progress and representation of junior employees;
- » establish programs to support and encourage emerging leaders, including mentoring, networking and training opportunities; and/or
- » demonstrate an outstanding apprentice, trainee or cadet who is making a difference to their community and workplace and who has been outstanding in all aspects of their training.

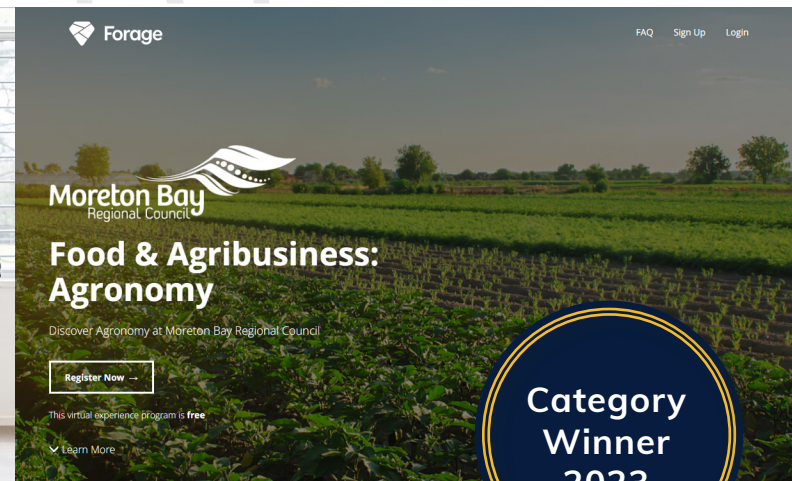
Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- » promoting greater roles for young people, new entrants and those seeking a career change;
- » increasing workforce participation from people of all ages, and supporting succession planning and knowledge retention in the council and community; and/or
- » creating new opportunities for members of the community to work and stay in their region while being able to reach their potential.

2023 ENTRIES

- » Bayside Council, NSW - **Graduate Program**
- » City of Greater Geraldton, WA - **Passport 2 Employment 2022**
- » City of Rockingham, WA - **Youth Employment Program**
- » City of Stirling, WA - **Outstanding Legal Trainee**
- » City of Victor Harbor, SA - **Traineeship Program**
- » Cumberland Council, NSW - **Mentoring and Development Program**
- » Goulburn Mulwaree Council, NSW - **Career Sponsorship Pathway**
- » Kempsey Shire Council, NSW - **Water Industry Operations Traineeship Program**
- » Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council, QLD - **Encouraging Youth to Join the Workforce**
- » Moreton Bay Regional Council, QLD - **My Future in Moreton Bay: Virtual Work Experience Program**
- » Northern Beaches Council, NSW - **Customer Service Onboarding Program**
- » Shire of Murray, WA - **New Pathways**
- » Tamworth Regional Council, NSW - **Rotation Engineer Program**
- » Warrnambool City Council, VIC - **The Stephanie Bant Story**





Moreton Bay Regional Council, QLD

My Future in Moreton Bay - Virtual Work Experience Program

The shortage of skilled workers in Moreton Bay is one of the lasting legacies of COVID-19.

In response to feedback from industry about the difficulty of sourcing and retaining workers who often don't have a clear understanding of their role and requirements, Moreton Bay Regional Council created a free virtual career experience program to give potential talent a taste of the workforce, while addressing supply shortages.

Council partnered with The Forage, an international leader in virtual work experience programs, to develop My Future in Moreton Bay, a first for an Australian local government.

My Future in Moreton Bay is designed to give potential workers (with a focus on Year 10-12 students) a step ahead in the workforce and provide them with the suitable skills for a career in Moreton Bay long-term.

It also helps promote our region and its opportunities at a national level to 240,000 registered participants and two million users internationally.

There are eight online modules covering the region's four priority industries: Advanced Manufacturing; Food and Agribusiness; Tourism; Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Industry representatives including local companies and TAFE Queensland helped inform the relevant topics, themes and tasks. The flexible training modules allow participants to complete them in

their own time and at their own pace. Participants receive a digital certificate after completing the program to share on their resume and with employers.

As the third-largest council in Australia, Moreton Bay is home to more than 30,000 local businesses. This virtual work experience program helps boost workforce pathways and helps foster a generation of young residents seeking employment across our region.

The program will help transform and modernise the region's economy and help it stand out in a crowded marketplace where talent is scarce and mobile. The program matches people to priority industry needs and enables time-poor businesses to interview potential recruits who are already predisposed to their industry.

My Future in Moreton Bay is designed to give potential workers (with a focus on Year 10-12 students) a step ahead in the workforce and provide them with the suitable skills for a career in Moreton Bay long-term.

My Future in Moreton Bay has been successful. For example, The Forage reports that employers are twice as likely to advance a graduate of the virtual work experience program to interview stage, and they are four times more likely to extend an offer to a graduate of the program than to a candidate who has not completed the program.



Cumberland Council, NSW

Mentoring and Development Program

Council's 2022 Mentoring and Development Program was developed to enhance the skills and experience of emerging leaders across the organisation.

In participating in the Mentoring and Development Program, a cohort of staff had the opportunity to explore career development opportunities for both their current role and future career path.

This allowed Council to ensure succession planning is occurring within teams, improving workplace culture and assisting with retaining staff, as well as strengthening working relationships across levels of management within the organisation.

In addition, the program also fulfils goal four of Council's Community Strategic Plan, being to provide local leadership and to serve the community in a sustainable and transparent manner.

The Program commenced in April 2022, through a partnership with APA Training and Development, for a duration of eight months. The first cohort of the program consisted of seven mentors, all of whom held leadership positions within the organisation, and 11 mentees from various departments across Council.

The Mentoring and Development Program also focused on ensuring equal opportunities for

staff across the organisation, and a key target of the program was to ensure that 50 percent of participants throughout the Program were women.

The Program was tailored to cover the topics of professional development, mentoring and growth, projects and communication, people and performance, managing change and presentation skills.

The Mentoring and Development Program had a profoundly positive impact upon the emerging leaders of Cumberland in providing them with the opportunity to develop their skills, both professionally and personally.

Staff who participated in the Mentoring and Development program were also provided with the opportunity to further their skills and represent Council through participating in the 2023 Australian Management Challenge.

Council's 2022 Mentoring and Development Program achieved overwhelming success which has been evident through the progression of staff who participated. Most notably, these staff have been provided with acting and secondment opportunities in leadership roles across the organisation, and have had the opportunity to practically apply the skills they developed throughout the Mentoring and Development Program.

Council's 2022 Mentoring and Development Program achieved overwhelming success which has been evident through the progression of staff who participated.

Honourable Mention 2023

Addressing Violence against Women and their Children

ABOUT THE CATEGORY

The 'Addressing Violence against Women and their Children' category recognises local government initiatives which:

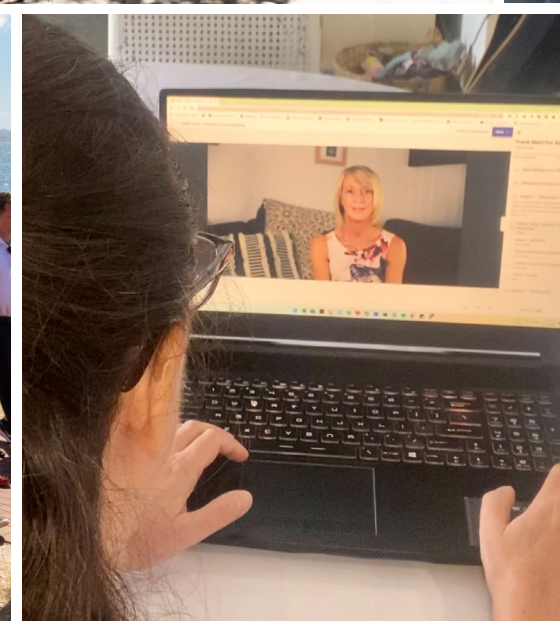
- » address underlying causes of gender inequality and power imbalances to eliminate violence against women and their children;
- » support and advocate for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence and sexual harassment; and/or
- » raise awareness and create cultures and communities of respect, inclusion and gender equality.

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- » preventing violence towards women by driving sustainable change in community awareness, attitudes and behaviours;
- » supporting women and children who are at risk of, or experiencing, family and domestic violence, sexual violence or sexual harassment; and/or
- » changing the attitudes and social norms that excuse or condone disrespect, sexual harassment and abuse.

2023 ENTRIES

- » Bayside Council, NSW - **Domestic Violence Action Plan**
- » Brisbane City Council, QLD - **Fresh Start for Me**
- » Campbelltown City Council, NSW - **Campbelltown Purple Bench Project**
- » City of Ryde, NSW - **Domestic Violence Awareness Campaign for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities**
- » Glen Eira City Council, VIC - **Glen Eira Mums**
- » Mitchell Shire Council, VIC - **Gender Impact Assessment App**





Glen Eira City Council, VIC

Glen Eira Mums

Glen Eira Mums (GEMS) is designed to provide early intervention to family violence, operating within Glen Eira City Council's Maternal and Child Health Service (MCH). GEMS has helped more than 151 families since it was established in 2018 through a partnership between Council and the Peninsula Community Legal Centre (PCLC), and demand continues to grow.

GEMS was established as a proactive response to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence to address violence against women. Research indicates that women are at greater risk of experiencing violence from an intimate partner during pregnancy and early parenthood, which is a time when families are engaged with Council's MCH Service.

GEMS has supported some of Glen Eira's most vulnerable mothers and their children to avoid homelessness, debt and other complications that can arise

from experiencing family violence through access to legal advice and representation, including for intervention orders or victims of crime applications.

A lawyer from PCLC provides services directly to MCH clients from a discreet, safe location and offers secondary consults to the nurses. The legal service

includes free one-to-one consults for families who disclose family violence or who were identified as at risk by the MCH nurse. PCLC provides individualised support to meet the mother's safety needs. The program provides a non-stigmatising and 'soft entry' point into a legal service, and the MCH Service remains involved to continue to support the family with other areas of need.

Council's commitment to preventing family violence is articulated in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and enacted through the Community Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025, and Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025.

In one instance, GEMS helped mother-of-two 'Angela', who had tried to separate from her violent partner 'Harley'. Angela had applied for an Intervention Order but allowed Harley to return home after he agreed to complete a behaviour change program. He didn't complete the program, continued to be physically and verbally abusive, and refused to leave.

Through GEMS, Angela was connected to a PCLC lawyer who negotiated a two-year Intervention Order with full conditions.

The cost of the program is approximately \$35,000 per annum.

GEMS has supported some of Glen Eira's most vulnerable mothers and their children to avoid homelessness, debt and other complications that can arise from experiencing family violence through access to legal advice and representation.



Bayside Council, NSW

Domestic Violence Action Plan

Local government is uniquely placed to deliver local activities and communication messages promoting healthy and safe local environments, given the diversity of services and facilities within councils, that have universal reach to a widespread local audience.

Bayside Council is committed to preventing domestic and family violence and promoting gender equality.

Bayside Council is committed to initiatives which address underlying causes of gender inequality and power imbalances to eliminate violence against women and their children, support and advocate for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence and sexual harassment; and/or raise awareness and create cultures and communities of respect, inclusion and gender equality.

In the 12 months to 31 December 2022 there were 620 incidences of domestic and family violence in the Bayside local government area, representing 341.7 incidences per 100,000 people in Bayside. This amounts to an increase of approximately four percent over a five year period, and ranks Bayside at number 74 for the highest rates of domestic and family violence in the state.

While ending domestic and family violence is everyone's responsibility, Council is able to operationalise strategic directions in ways

that are meaningful to the local community, demonstrating leadership and a shared commitment to preventing violence against women. Our work with individuals, families, community organisations and groups, sporting and recreation clubs, and cultural and religious groups means Council is well placed to address broader determinants of community wellbeing.

Council has ratified its Domestic and Family Violence Action Plan 2022-2026, representing Council's commitment to reducing gender violence in Bayside. The Action Plan includes two specific focus areas:

1. a safe, inclusive and respectful Bayside community – focusing on the whole community through partnerships, Council services, community support and communication activities; and
2. a Bayside Council culture that is welcoming, inclusive and respectful – focusing on the actions the organisation can take to improve staff culture, awareness and behaviour.

Bayside Council is committed to preventing domestic and family violence and promoting gender equality. This Action Plan is designed to underpin the Community Safety Strategy 2022-2026 and leverage local government's unique position in having extensive reach, influence and access across our local community through the various services and facilities Bayside Council provides.



List of Images

The winner and honourable mentions in each category are determined by the voting public. The winner is the entry that receives the most votes and the honourable mention is the entry that receives the second highest number of votes. Where there are two honourable mentions in a category, both entries received an equivalent number of votes or were only separated by a few votes.

Unless otherwise indicated, all images in this booklet were provided by entrants to the National Awards for Local Government 2023. Images on winning and honourable mention pages are those provided by the council for the specific entry. All other image origins are listed below. Descriptions from left to right.

Front Cover

Top row: Warrnambool City Council, VIC; Moreton Bay Regional Council, QLD;
City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, WA
Middle row: Campbelltown City Council, NSW; Wollondilly Shire Council, NSW;
Moynes Shire Council, VIC
Bottom row: Bayside Council, NSW; MacDonnell Regional Council, NT;
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, NSW

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Penrith City Council, NSW

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Break O'Day Council, TAS; The Hills Shire Council, NSW;
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City of Canada Bay Council, NSW; Shire of Murray, WA; City of Vincent, WA;
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Katherine Town Council, NT; Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW
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City of Darwin, NT; Town of East Fremantle, WA

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Kiama Municipal Council, NSW; Warrnambool City Council, VIC

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Council, NSW; Barunga West Council, SA; City of Gold Coast, QLD
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City of Victor Harbor, SA; City of Victor Harbor, SA; Brighton Council, TAS
Middle: Wollondilly Shire Council, NSW; Mildura Rural City Council, NSW;
Hawkesbury City Council, NSW; North West Queensland Regional
Organisation of Councils, QLD
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Third row: Shire of Dardanup, WA; Shire of Dardanup, WA
Fourth row: Shire of Dardanup, WA; Fairfield City Council, NSW
Fifth row: Kiama Municipal Council, NSW; Blue Mountains City Council, NSW;
Roper Gulf Regional Council, NT; Mitchell Shire Council, VIC
Bottom row: Wollongong City Council, NSW; Inner West Council, NSW;
Indigo Shire Council, VIC

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Shire of Dardanup, WA
Fourth row: Indigo Shire Council, VIC; Gunnedah Shire Council, NSW;
Brisbane, City of Greater Geraldton, WA
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Leeton Shire Council, NSW
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Joondalup, WA; Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW; Shire of Upper Gascoyne, WA
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Fourth row: Shire of Mundaring, WA; The Hills Shire Council, NSW;
Gunnedah Shire Council, NSW; City of Vincent, WA
Fifth row: City of Vincent, WA; City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, WA
Sixth row: City of Ryde, NSW; Randwick City Council, NSW;
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Bottom row: City of Vincent, WA; Geelong Regional Library Corporation, VIC;
George Town Council, TAS; Gunnedah Shire Council, NSW;
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Indigo Shire Council, VIC

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Goulburn Mulwaree Council, NSW; City of Stirling, WA
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Third row: Kempsey Shire Council, NSW; Northern Beaches Council, NSW;
Tamworth Regional Council, NSW; City of Rockingham, WA
Fourth row: Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council, QLD; Shire of Murray, WA
Fifth row: City of Greater Geraldton, WA; Kempsey Shire Council, NSW;
Cumberland Council, NSW
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Top third: Mitchell Shire Council, VIC; Glen Eira City Council, VIC
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Randwick City Council, NSW

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