



Australian Government

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



NATIONAL AWARDS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2025 Winners and Honourable Mentions



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.



Voting determination and image credits

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 2025. Images on winning and honourable mention pages are those provided by the council for the specific entry.

The text and images submitted in this document are publicly available on the voting platform, once the first stage of the assessment process has been cleared. By uploading a submission, participants are giving permission to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication, Sport and the Arts (the department) to use pictures, video recordings, sound recordings, transcriptions of sound recordings or video recordings, other reproductions of materials provided in any way. This includes the ability to edit, copy, exhibit, publish and distribute that material to third parties. Through this submission process, participants waive any right to compensation, from any person, arising out of or related to the use of the material and for the department to reuse the image in future local government promotional material.

Contents

About the National Awards for Local Government	04
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Recognition	08
Addressing Violence against Women and Children	12
Affordable Housing	16
Arts and Culture	20
Cohesive Communities	24
Disaster Readiness and Recovery	28
Environmental Sustainability	32
Productivity through Infrastructure	36
Regional Growth	40
Road Safety	44
Women in Local Government	48
Workforce and Skills	52
New for 2025 – Outstanding Rural and Remote Council	57



About the National Awards for Local Government

The National Awards for Local Government (National Awards) are the peak awards for the sector and showcase inspirational projects local governments are delivering in communities across Australia. They highlight the diversity of successful projects at the grassroots level and the positive impact local governments have on bringing communities together.

The National Awards are an annual celebration to recognise innovative and future-focused projects of excellence across the nation.

Taking part in the National Awards demonstrates commitment and pride in the community, and is an opportunity to show the nation the exciting and inspiring projects that are happening across Australia.

2025 National Awards for Local Government

The National Awards, now in their 39th year, have been updated to better reflect the changing economic, social and environmental issues facing Australia. In 2025 there are 13 award categories including a new **Affordable Housing** category and the expansion of the Waste Management category – now called **Environmental Sustainability** – which encompasses all environmental sustainability projects.

This year also saw the introduction of the new **Outstanding Rural and Remote Council** award. This award recognises the unique challenges and significant contributions of smaller councils in rural and remote areas. This award is for all elected local government areas (LGAs), local government associations, local councils and other recognised organisations that provide direct services to Australian communities with **a population of 15,000 or less**, and have entered a project in one or more of the other 12 award categories.

Award Categories

- ▶ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Recognition
- ▶ Addressing Violence against Women and Children
- ▶ Affordable Housing
- ▶ Arts and Culture
- ▶ Cohesive Communities
- ▶ Disaster Readiness and Recovery
- ▶ Environmental Sustainability
- ▶ Outstanding Rural and Remote Council
- ▶ Productivity through Infrastructure
- ▶ Regional Growth
- ▶ Road Safety
- ▶ Women in Local Government
- ▶ Workforce and Skills



192

entries from
organisations across
Australia



13

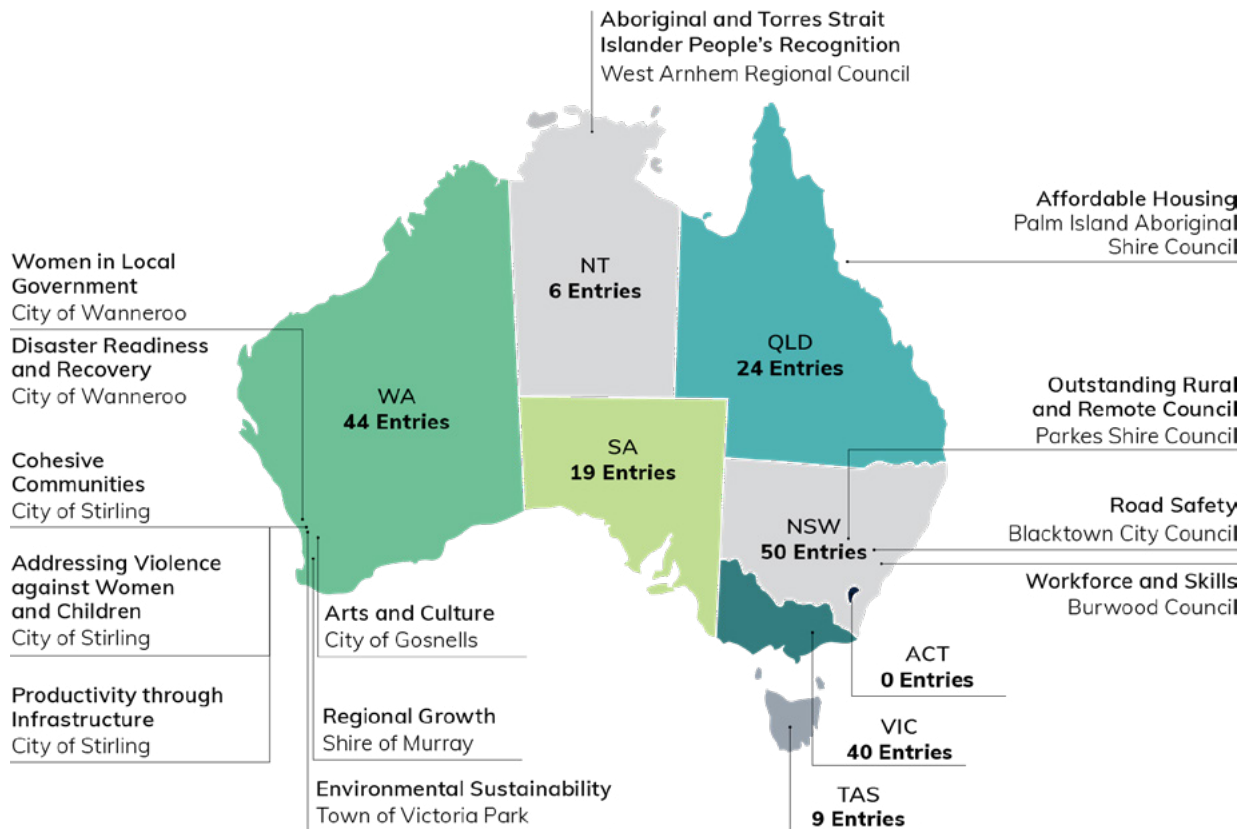
category winners




14

honourable
mentions

2025 Category Winners and entries per state







Celebrating the
2025 Winners and
Honourable Mentions
in each award
category



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Recognition





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ address inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through community-based policies and programs developed in consultation with and delivered by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.
- ▶ have specific First Nations employment goals, strategies and support mechanisms such as cadetship programs and mentoring, and cultural development and awareness initiatives.
- ▶ recognise an outstanding employee who is making an impact within their community and workplace by delivering high quality projects and outcomes through the sharing of knowledge, skills, experiences and stories.
- ▶ raise awareness and appreciation of the diversity and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, languages and culture.

Entries

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales

Building Connection – Memorandum of Understanding with the Local Aboriginal Lands Council

Brewarrina Shire Council, New South Wales

Walking Together – Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Futures

City of Hobart, Tasmania

Crowther Reinterpreted Project

City of Kwinana, Western Australia

Boola Maara Aboriginal Advisory Committee

City of Wanneroo, Western Australia

Creating visibility and recognition of Noongar culture through language

Gannawarra Shire Council, Victoria

Gannawarra Reconciliation Action Plan

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Leader, Mentor and role model – Eva-Haines

Shire of York, Western Australia

Reintroducing traditional Aboriginal mosaic cultural burning to Ballardong Country

Torres Strait Island Regional Council, Queensland

TSIRC – Celebrating Culture and Promoting Initiatives for Indigenous Community Members

West Arnhem Regional Council, Northern Territory

West Arnhem Youth Leadership Summit





Winner

West Arnhem Regional Council, Northern Territory

West Arnhem Youth Leadership Summit

About the winning project

West Arnhem Regional Council covers an area of almost 50,000 square kilometres across West Arnhem Land, encompassing five remote communities, including two islands and more than 100 homelands. The five communities include Jabiru, Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Waruwi and Minjilang and are scattered across salt and freshwater, stone country, and within the World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park.

The West Arnhem Youth Leadership Summit is a story of strength, culture, and collective vision – this initiative was created for First Nations young people from communities across West Arnhem Land.

Emerging in response to a deeply felt need to elevate youth voices, this initiative brings together young people from across languages and Country to explore leadership, identity, and action. Through a carefully crafted, culturally respectful process of co-design and collaboration, students identify the pressing needs in their communities – and work together to find solutions.

More than a program, this annual initiative is a living framework for youth-led change. It provides immersive opportunities for First Nations students to collaborate across community lines, develop action plans, and present their ideas in an expo-style format to elders, Aboriginal Corporations, council members, and Territory Government. These are not tokenistic conversations; they are presentations that open funding pathways, secure community buy-in, and build real-world momentum.

What began as a leadership summit has now become a strategic cycle of youth-informed decision making. There are participants that contribute to Local Authority and interagency meetings, witnessing their visions evolve into funded community projects. Graduates return as mentors, anchoring a sustainable model of peer-led leadership, workforce development, and cultural continuity.

This initiative is unapologetically grassroots – and it is thriving. It recognises that young people are not just future leaders, but current stakeholders in the wellbeing and development of their communities. It shows what is possible when First Nations youth are not consulted after decisions are made, but before – and every step thereafter.

This annual initiative is hosted by West Arnhem Regional Council, supported by National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) – Arnhem Land Groote Eylandt Region, NT Department of Education and Youth Engagement Project.



The West Arnhem Youth Leadership Summit is a story of strength, culture, and collective vision – this initiative was created for First Nations young people from communities across West Arnhem Land.



Honourable Mention

City of Wanneroo, Western Australia

**Creating visibility and recognition of
Noongar culture through language**

About the project

The City of Wanneroo's Noongar Naming project improves the Noongar naming process by ensuring greater respect and consultation with Elders and Knowledge Holders. Previously, the City applied Noongar names where opportunities arose, but lessons learned highlighted the need for a more meaningful approach.

The City engaged Noongar language experts, Nyungar Birdiyia, to lead the project. Initially focused on distinct geographical themes, however, through listening and learning from Noongar stakeholders it became clear that an isolated theming approach did not represent the inter-connectiveness of Noongar Country and culture. Following advice from Elders and Knowledge Holders, and as part of a larger cultural framework, the City has developed a comprehensive framework of principles, themes, and methods applicable across the entire City, fostering consistency and cultural respect in place naming initiatives. To the best of its knowledge, the City of Wanneroo's approach to Noongar naming is unique among local governments in Western Australia.

Implementing the City's Noongar naming process safeguards against tokenism and ensures naming is truly meaningful, culturally appropriate, and contributes to the revival and preservation of Noongar culture. It prioritises quality over quantity, avoiding a trend-driven approach that could result in disconnected names.

Utilising this process, the City recognised the opportunity for Noongar naming at its newest development of a library and youth innovation hub, now known as Dordaak Kepup, "place of living waters". The name derives from the living waterways, living heritage, places of connection and inspiring the future. There have been 15 Noongar names given to internal rooms and spaces.

To promote awareness, name plates at entrances include QR codes linking to pronunciation guides, historical context, and illustrations by local Noongar people with braille for accessibility. This initiative transforms public spaces into cultural learning hubs. The concept of naming the rooms reflected Noongar wisdom in a modern context, choosing symbolic and metaphorical names rather than direct translations.

The City will embed it's learning and new processes into its operations and support others, including land developers, to adopt the approach to ensure consistency throughout the region.



Implementing the City's Noongar naming process safeguards against tokenism and ensures naming is truly meaningful, culturally appropriate, and contributes to the revival and preservation of Noongar culture.



Addressing Violence against Women and Children





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ address issues of gender inequality and power imbalances to eliminate violence against women and children.
- ▶ provide services, support and advocacy for women and children who are at risk of or experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence.
- ▶ prevent violence by driving sustainable change in community awareness, attitudes and behaviours.
- ▶ offer programs to address community attitudes, identify sexual violence, sexual harassment and gender-based abuse and facilitate change.

Entries

Burwood Council, New South Wales

Burwood Domestic Violence Hub – Transforming domestic violence support

City of Gold Coast, Queensland

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence initiative

City of Kwinana, Western Australia

Arclight Kwinana

City of Stirling, Western Australia

Naala Djookan Healing Centre

City of Tea Tree Gully, South Australia

White Ribbon Day and 16 Days of Activism

Cumberland Council, New South Wales

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV)





Winner

City of Stirling, Western Australia

Naala Djookan Healing Centre

About the winning project

The City of Stirling leads a consortium of ten specialist partner organisations (including the City) to operate the Naala Djookan Healing Centre (NDHC), a Family and Domestic Violence One Stop Hub (Hub). NDHC aims to simplify access for women affected by family and domestic violence by providing trauma-informed therapeutic services.

NDHC supports women and children in their healing journey from their experience of family and domestic violence. Growth and healing are promoted through holistic approaches addressing health and well-being of women and children, while building capability, resilience, promoting healthy relationships and safety. NDHC provides one-to-one case management (advocacy service) to clients, supporting risk assessment, safety planning and working alongside clients to navigate multiple systems and processes and work towards their identified goals.

Women and children can access multiple specialist support services, including counselling, legal advice, financial counselling, parenting support and healing programs and activities, all in one safe, welcoming, culturally responsive location. The Hub model seeks to improve access to the right assistance at the right time, contributing to improved outcomes and allowing women to tell their story only once, reducing the trauma associated with re-telling their experience.

Since opening in December 2020, the NDHC has:

- ▶ Received over 1800 individual referrals of which 33% identified as CALD clients, 20% identified as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both.
- ▶ Over two-thirds of individuals self-refer, indicating individuals feel safe to seek support from the service.

- ▶ Delivered over 300 individual workshops and activities to 1,300 participants each year (over 5,200 participants to date).
- ▶ Actively advocated for FDV awareness and response services across multiple platforms and sectors.

NDHC is the only local government-led Hub in Western Australia. The City is the backbone organisation of the consortium, responsible for the management and delivery of the Hub service model. This includes funding management, developing and maintaining partnerships (including consortium and subcontract arrangements), providing leadership and stakeholder support, and managing associated risks of service delivery. Furthermore, the City plays an important role in supporting co-located and linked services networks, including capacity building for consortium partnership organisations to strengthen locally based services.



The Hub model seeks to improve access to the right assistance at the right time, contributing to improved outcomes and allowing women to tell their story only once, reducing the trauma associated with re-telling their experience.



Honourable Mention

Burwood Council, New South Wales

Burwood Domestic Violence Hub – Transforming domestic violence support

About the project

Domestic and family violence is one of the most pressing challenges facing our community, disproportionately impacting women and children. In response, Burwood Council established the Burwood Domestic Violence Hub – a ground breaking, survivor-centred initiative providing coordinated and accessible support to women in crisis. Over the past 12 months, the Hub has assisted approximately 120 women, offering vital intervention when it is needed most.

Unlike traditional fragmented service models, the Burwood Domestic Violence Hub removes barriers that often prevent survivors from seeking help by co-locating key support agencies in one safe, centralised, and accessible space – the Burwood Library and Community Hub. Operating fortnightly, the Hub provides direct access to Legal Aid, financial counselling, housing support, Police, court advocacy, Services Australia, Services NSW, and family support organisations. This innovative, streamlined approach ensures that survivors receive immediate, coordinated care, reducing the emotional distress of repeatedly recounting their experiences.

Beyond crisis response, the Burwood Domestic Violence Hub is driving long-term change by addressing the root causes of domestic and family violence. Through collaboration with Metro Assist, Women and Girls Emergency Centre (WAGEC), and other community organisations, the Hub delivers education, awareness

programs, and advocacy initiatives to challenge harmful attitudes, identify and prevent sexual violence, harassment, and gender-based abuse.

The Hub is also playing a critical role in breaking the cycle of intergenerational violence. By empowering women to leave abusive situations and access the support they need, the Hub fosters healthier relationships and safer futures for women and children.

This initiative stands as a powerful example of local government leadership, demonstrating how collaboration between councils, community organisations, and frontline services can create lasting social impact. More than just a service, the Burwood Domestic Violence Hub is a symbol of hope, resilience, and progress, reinforcing the message that domestic violence will not be tolerated, and support is readily available.

By eliminating obstacles, empowering survivors, and shifting societal attitudes, the Burwood Domestic Violence Hub is setting a new benchmark for domestic and family violence support and prevention, ensuring a future where safety, dignity, and equality are a reality for all.



More than just a service, the Burwood Domestic Violence Hub is a symbol of hope, resilience, and progress, reinforcing the message that domestic violence will not be tolerated, and support is readily available.



Affordable Housing





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ address housing affordability, accessibility (safe and secure housing), sustainability and homelessness.
- ▶ focus on expedited zoning, planning and land release to deliver on social and affordable housing in well located areas.
- ▶ deliver on planning and land use reforms that will make housing supply more responsive to demand over time.
- ▶ focus on the building of strong and sustainable Community Housing that add to housing targets.

Entries

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales

Bringing it home: Bega Valley Shire Council's Affordable Housing Strategy

Brighton Council, Tasmania

South Brighton Development Precinct

City of Melbourne, Victoria

People's Panel on Affordable Housing

City of Melbourne, Victoria

Key Worker Housing Definition Research

City of Sydney, New South Wales

City of Sydney Affordable Housing Scheme

Orange City Council, New South Wales

Redmond Place Precinct

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Palm Island Housing Investment Scheme

Waverley Council, New South Wales

Waverley Affordable Housing Contributions Scheme





Winner

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Palm Island Housing Investment Scheme

About the winning project

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council (PIASC) has developed a first for Queensland, if not Australia, with the development of its housing strategy that will provide the opportunity for local residents to purchase their own home.

This is an ambitious 10-year housing capital investment strategy supported by the Queensland Government and Department of Housing.

The strategy includes a range of initiatives aimed at providing immediate high-quality, affordable housing solutions and long-term, sustainable programs that will combine to transform the way housing is delivered on Palm Island.

Under the revolutionary strategy, and for the first time in over 100 years, community members of Palm Island will have the opportunity to purchase their own homes.

Driven by PIASC CEO Michael Bissell and his management team, the housing strategy was recently approved by the Queensland Government following extensive engagement and advocating efforts from the Council. The strategy will unlock home ownership to Community members for over 300 social homes across a 10-year period on Palm Island.

As part of the overarching strategy, Council has acquired 10 high-quality, prefabricated one-bedroom units for installation by April – May 2025 helping to solve the immediate and pressing demand for this single bedroom accommodation. A further nine homes (4x 4-bed and 5 x 3-bed) will be completed over the next 24 months located on the same site and timeframe helping to extract maximum value from the \$1.1 million

in developmental costs (civil, sewer, roads, footpaths, power etc). Early design works are well underway to develop two new greenfield communities comprising 36 and 80-lots on strategic sites that have allowed for expedited planning and reconfiguration approvals.

The program is also refurbishing a number of identified existing homes where need and cost-effectiveness is highest in contributing to the creation of more accessible, safer and sustainable housing.

An aged care facility that was at its end-of-life is currently being demolished to make way for the construction of seven new social homes that will provide accommodation for the most vulnerable.

This suite of projects is a demonstration of Council's innovative thinking to deliver a high-quality Community housing supply which is affordable and fit-for-purpose for all members of the Palm Island community.



The strategy includes a range of initiatives aimed at providing immediate high-quality, affordable housing solutions and long-term, sustainable programs that will combine to transform the way housing is delivered on Palm Island.



Honourable Mention

Brighton Council, Tasmania South Brighton Development Precinct

About the project

The South Brighton Development Precinct (SBDP) in Brighton, Tasmania, aims to activate and intensify a low-density residential area within the existing Urban Growth Boundary. Spanning approximately 73 hectares south of the township, the project is a collaborative effort between Brighton Council, the Department of Education, Community and Young People (DECYP), and TasWater, designed to increase housing supply.

Re-zoned in mid-2024, the SBDP includes a mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial zones involving approximately 30 lots in separate land ownership. The SBDP encourages residential investment while offering opportunities for local businesses and services, especially within the nearby highway services precinct, Brighton hub and commercial activity centre. Extensive community engagement, involving stakeholders such as TasWater, DECYP, Homes Tasmania, and local landowners, was integral in the project's success.

The SBDP complements the new Brighton High School (opened in February 2025) and combines greenfield and infill developments to deliver approximately 565 new residential lots, with 110 designated for affordable and social housing. This directly supports the National Housing and Homelessness Plan and the Tasmanian Housing Strategy 2023–2043, providing affordable housing options through private, social, and affordable housing initiatives, including the Tasmanian Government's "MyHomes" shared equity program.

The SBDP is strategically located within walking distance of schools, the Brighton commercial precinct, and shared open spaces, offering significant health, social, and economic benefits, as well as reduced travel times. The development's Specific Area Plan prioritises exceptional amenity, connectivity, open spaces, and riparian areas, leveraging and enhancing existing natural assets.

The SBDP's importance was recognised with an Australian Government Housing Support Program – Community Enabling Infrastructure Stream (HSP-CEI) grant jointly awarded to Brighton Council and TasWater, to install critical enabling infrastructure to support development of the SBDP. In a first-of-its-kind approach, Tasmania, Brighton Council and TasWater took a collaborative approach to unlock affordable land for development, removing the costs and challenges experienced by first movers in Tasmania.



This directly supports the National Housing and Homelessness Plan and the Tasmanian Housing Strategy 2023–2043, providing affordable housing options through private, social, and affordable housing initiatives, including the Tasmanian Government's "MyHomes" shared equity program.



Arts and Culture





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ create stronger and more engaged communities through arts and culture.
- ▶ develop and promote local opportunities that embrace community connection, support wellbeing, encourage diversity and promote social inclusion.
- ▶ leverage arts and culture to improve community economic growth and sustainability.
- ▶ promote engagement and awareness of the arts and culture.

Entries

Adelaide Hills Council, South Australia

Fabrik Arts + Heritage

Barunga West Council, South Australia

Port Broughton Civic Square – Cultural Revitalisation Through Arts and Public Spaces

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales

Paving the way: Bega Valley Councils Arts and Culture Strategy

Blacktown City Council, New South Wales

Dawson Mall Upgrade

Blacktown City Council, New South Wales

Glenwood Beach Volleyball

Burwood Council, New South Wales

Burwood 150 Years Program – A Celebration of Arts, Culture and Heritage

City of Ballarat, Victoria

Craft Lab

City of Gosnells, Western Australia

2024 Fusion Food and Culture Festival

City of Greater Dandenong, Victoria

9 by 5 Exhibition

City of Hobart, Tasmania

Crowther Reinterpreted Project

Colac Otway Shire Council, Victoria

COPACC Equity Action Project

Cumberland City Council, New South Wales

Parramatta Road Urban Amenity Improvement Program (PRUAIP) Cumberland: Auburn Public Art Trail

Flinders Shire Council, Queensland

Festival of Outback Skies

Frankston City Council, Victoria

South Side Festival

Knox City Council, Victoria

Immerse 2024

Mildura Rural City Council, Victoria

Tropical North Victoria

Nillumbik Shire Council, Victoria

Tread Gently Together by Tim Read at Diamond Hills Preschool

Nillumbik Shire Council, Victoria

Changing Places Mural Art by Matthew Thompson (Ling) and David Hooke (MEGGS) at Alistair Knox Park, Eltham

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Palm Island Art Installation

Port Phillip City Council, Victoria

St Kilda Festival

South Gippsland Shire Council, Victoria

Art Cubes

Surf Coast Shire Council, Victoria

2024 Surf Coast Arts Trail

Town of Claremont, Western Australia

Youth Art Mentorship Project

Wollondilly Shire Council, New South Wales

Wollondilly Performing Arts Centre – A Transformational Cultural Hub





Winner

City of Gosnells, Western Australia

2024 Fusion Food and Culture Festival

About the winning project

The City of Gosnells' Fusion Food and Culture Festival is a free major event that strengthens community connection through arts and culture. In 2024, the festival broke attendance records, attracting over 40,000 people across two days to celebrate the vibrant diversity that defines the City of Gosnells, Western Australia, and Australia.

A highlight of the City's cultural calendar, 'Fusion' creates an inclusive space where people of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures unite. With live music, traditional and contemporary dance, interactive art, a Global Village featuring multicultural demonstrations from 18 nationalities and diverse food experiences from 45 food stalls, the festival fosters engagement and understanding. It's not just a festival though; it's a celebration of connection, wellbeing and shared experiences.

Fusion goes beyond just entertainment. It takes a total of 840 staff, contractors, entertainers, and volunteers to bring the event together. By embracing connection, wellbeing, diversity, and inclusion, the festival delivers tangible social benefits – and local businesses, community groups and performers gain a platform to showcase their talents and services, boosting economic sustainability, as well as community cohesion. The record-breaking success achieved in 2024 highlights Fusion's powerful impact.

Fusion also champions cultural awareness and artistic expression and is a powerful platform for cultural exchange. It promotes emerging and established artists, ensuring representation and appreciation of the many cultures that make up the City of Gosnells.

Through storytelling, music, and visual arts, the event highlights the rich heritage of First Nations people, migrant, and refugee communities, fostering deeper cultural understanding.

Further solidifying its impact, the 2024 festival gained major mainstream media attention, with Channel 10 among a range of outlets highlighting Fusion's impact – amplifying its cultural significance and its genuine and meaningful impact throughout Perth, Western Australia and, via social media, further afield.

The City of Gosnells' commitment to arts and culture as a driver for community unity and growth is exemplified through Fusion. By evolving and expanding its reach, the festival strengthens local identity while positioning Gosnells as a leading advocate for cultural celebration and economic vibrancy. In 2024, it set a new benchmark for engagement, inclusion, impact, and community pride.



By embracing connection, wellbeing, diversity, and inclusion, the festival delivers tangible social benefits – and local businesses, community groups and performers gain a platform to showcase their talents and services, boosting economic sustainability, as well as community cohesion.



Honourable Mention

Burwood Council, New South Wales

Burwood 150 Years Program – A celebration of arts, culture and heritage

About the project

In 2024, Burwood Council marked its 150th anniversary with a year-long series of arts and cultural programs designed to engage and unite Burwood's diverse community in celebration.

From intimate artist-led activations to large-scale festivals, new public artworks, special commissions, exhibitions, historical talks and tours, the Burwood 150 Years Program showcased the stories of Burwood's places, people and cultural icons.

By harnessing local creative talent and embracing the central role of arts and culture in shaping our evolving City, the Program engaged 574 artists and performers, igniting our local arts and cultural scene and creating meaningful opportunities for social connection.

Highlights included:

- ▶ Light a Lantern Activation: Featuring 150 handcrafted lanterns released on Burwood park pond, involving 92 artists and cultural groups alongside 1,000 community members.
- ▶ Burwood Street Party: Attracted 20,000+ visitors to a dynamic 150-metre closure of Burwood's main street, involving 396 artists, vintage cars, night markets, and an open-air dance party. A stand out moment was the 300-strong community and Adult Glee Club choirs premiering a council-commissioned AC/DC medley, honouring former residents Angus and Malcolm Young, which has since toured Australia.
- ▶ Burwood Pictorial History: An accessible publication chronicling 150 years of Burwood's development through 180+ carefully selected photographs.

- ▶ Public Art Installations: Unveiling of 10 new public artworks, including the Back in Black AC/DC Mural, developed in consultation with Angus Young, and Wilay Mulaa: Spirit of Light featuring 10 handcrafted lanterns reimagined as contemporary art.
- ▶ Special Sesquicentenary Council Meeting: Featuring live music and elevated cultural elements.
- ▶ Local History Initiatives: Two curated local studies exhibitions, six history displays, and 10 guided tours led by Burwood library.
- ▶ Community Partnerships: Church open days and an unforgettable afternoon of music and poetry in honour of renowned Burwood composer Miriam Hyde.

The Program has proven to be a transformative initiative, bringing together diverse communities, fostering social inclusion, enriching our City's identity, and driving both cultural and economic growth.

By engaging new audiences, the Program successfully energized the local creative economy, generating an estimated local economic impact of \$2 million+ and an overall social media reach of 35 million+, driving repeat visitation to Burwood as a distinctive cultural destination.



From intimate artist-led activations to large-scale festivals, new public artworks, special commissions, exhibitions, historical talks and tours, the Burwood 150 Years Program showcased the stories of Burwood's places, people and cultural icons.



Cohesive Communities





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ drive an inclusive approach to the design of policies, programs and partnerships that value, protect and promote diversity.
- ▶ foster a sense of belonging, identity and values and promote civic rights and responsibilities.
- ▶ foster participation in community events and develop innovative approaches to connection and engagement.
- ▶ celebrate cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and foster inclusiveness and respectfulness.

Entries

Bass Coast Shire Council, Victoria

Bass Coast Homelessness Community Think Tanks

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales

Community Halls Odyssey

Blacktown City Council, New South Wales

Glenwood Beach Volleyball

Break O'Day Council, Tasmania

2024 Volunteer Film Festival

Burke Shire Council, Queensland

Sale of Staff Housing Initiative

City of Burnside, South Australia

Chat with a Local

City of Greater Dandenong, Victoria

Springvale Snow Fest 2024

City of Greater Dandenong, Victoria

#Proud2Be

City of Greater Geraldton, Western Australia

Spalding Revitalisation Project

City of Joondalup, Western Australia

Ready Reading Program

City of Kwinana, Western Australia

Street-by-Street

City of Palmerston, Northern Territory

Brekkie in the Park

City of Stirling, Western Australia

Walking Together Local Convos

City of Swan, Western Australia

Weitj Park

City of Sydney, New South Wales

Mobile Cooling Hub

City of Victor Harbor, South Australia

Accessibility in Action: Supporting a Council Member Who is Blind

City of Victor Harbor, South Australia

Active Wellbeing at the City of Victor Harbor

City of Vincent, Western Australia

The Poppy Project

Cumberland City Council, New South Wales

DIAP Campaign, Community Education 'Shared Spaces, Shared Responsibility: Creating Accessible Environments Together'

Cumberland City Council, New South Wales

Create Cumberland

Cumberland City Council, New South Wales

Cumberland Safe Kids Day 2024

District Council of Cleve, South Australia

The Cleve Wellbeing Index

Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Queensland

Hinchinbrook Shire Council's Liveability 2044 Strategy – Shaping the Hinchinbrook Way

Knox City Council, Victoria

Empowering Communities Project

Mildura Rural City Council, Victoria

Tropical North Victoria

Moreton Bay Regional Council, Queensland

City of Moreton Bay Changing Places Network Plan

Mount Alexander Shire Council, Victoria

A wellbeing approach to Economic Development

Nillumbik Shire Council, Victoria

Changing Places Mural Art by Matthew Thompson (Ling) and David Hooke (MEGGS) at Alistair Knox Park, Eltham

Noosa Council, Queensland

Connecting Noosa Xmas Convoy

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Palm Island Night Patrol

Port Phillip City Council, Victoria

Pets of Port Phillip Desexing Program

West Tamar Council, Tasmania

Beauty Point Foreshore Project





Winner

City of Stirling, Western Australia Walking Together Local Convos

About the winning project

The City of Stirling is one of the most diverse communities in Australia, with a mix of cultures, lifestyles and abundant opportunities. To support the community in getting together to deepen connection, chat about local needs and identify local priorities, the Walking Together Local Convo series was created.

The series, an initiative of Locally-led Stirling, supports the vision to get everyone involved in shaping what it means to be 'a local'. At the heart of this approach is supporting two-way conversations that listen and respond with a local focus.

Over the 30 days of September 2024, the City hosted a local walk in each of its 30 suburbs. "We collaborated with community groups and demonstrated that by coming together, conversations were meaningful and inclusive, leading to diverse voices being heard across the local community". Each walk responded to the unique elements of the local area, such as the Mirrabooka Market Meetup, Mount Lawley Heritage Trail, Trigg Nyoongar Coastal Walk, Hamersley Walk to School, Jackadder Lake Walk, Karrinyup Mall Walking Group, Joondanna Family Tree Walk and more.

Households from across the City were invited, and for those people who couldn't attend in-person, online opportunities were provided. Together, the series generated several outcomes including:

- ▶ 1,120 community members joining a local walk
- ▶ 3,542 people casting their vote to identify 150 local priorities
- ▶ 43,105 visits to the city's dedicated local suburb webpages
- ▶ 106,972 social media impressions

An important outcome of the Walking Together Local Convos was defining the top five local priorities for each suburb. These insights have been used to inform the city's integrated planning and budget process for 2025/26 to identify opportunities for collaboration with stakeholders, community and other tiers of government.

The initiative demonstrated how walking together can help people experience improved circles of connection, rethink how the city delivers services, and partner with local people to champion ways to improve our local areas.

"It was a pleasure to show the community and City of Stirling staff around the Coolbinia Bushland and discuss its importance, our group's achievements and future goals," said Ashe from Friends of Coolbinia Bushland.



We collaborated with community groups and demonstrated that by coming together, conversations were meaningful and inclusive, leading to diverse voices being heard across the local community.



Honourable Mention

City of Greater Dandenong, Victoria

Springvale Snow Festival 2024

About the project

Springvale Snow Fest is the City of Greater Dandenong Council's flagship community event, embodying the Council's commitment to inclusive community engagement. Attended by 30,000 people, this winter food festival features real snow, multicultural performances, and community stalls, providing a platform for cultural exchange, social connection, and community pride.

By design, the festival fosters a sense of belonging, identity, and values among attendees, promoting civic rights and responsibilities. The event's inclusive approach ensures that all members of the community can participate and engage, regardless of their cultural background, age, or ability.

The initiative celebrates Springvale's diversity, providing free and low-cost entertainment to residents of all incomes, particularly benefiting families from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Springvale has the lowest median individual gross income in Greater Dandenong, equivalent to 61% of metropolitan Victoria levels.

The festival addresses issues of accessibility, cultural engagement, and communication between the council and local organisations with its diverse community. For example, community organisations such as the Unified Filipino Elderly Association, Peranakan Melbourne, Springvale Rise Primary School, Falun Dafa, and Maya Dance Troupe participate in the festival, showcasing their culture and talent to a large audience.

Additionally, organisations such as Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority (CFA), and LiverWELL engage with the community, providing health and safety information. The festival also encourages participation in community events, with opportunities for youth engagement, council ambassadorship, and community stallholder participation.

Local businesses, many from CALD groups, benefit from the event, with 69% of survey respondents stating they spent a budget of \$0–100.

The Springvale Snow Fest is a testament to the Council's commitment to multiculturalism, inclusivity, and community engagement. By providing an enjoyable and accessible experience for all residents, the festival enhances social connection and community pride.



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Disaster Readiness and Recovery





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ actively reduce risks from disasters and pandemics while delivering benefits and building resilience across communities.
- ▶ unlock economic opportunities in relation to disaster planning and preparation.
- ▶ focus on protecting the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable communities and individuals and future-proofs infrastructure and income.
- ▶ develop and implement disaster recovery plans to ensure the community is prepared to respond to challenging events.

Entries

Alpine Shire Council, Victoria

The First 72 Hours Program: Strengthening Community-Led and Inclusive Approaches to Resilience and Emergency Preparedness

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales

Hope, Loss, Resilience Podcast

Bellingen Shire Council, New South Wales

Bellingen Shire Council Disaster Communications

Blacktown City Council, New South Wales

Blacktown City Council's role in the Whalan gas explosion response

City of Onkaparinga, South Australia

Bushfire Preparedness and Resilience in the City of Onkaparinga 2022–25

City of Wanneroo, Western Australia

Mariginiup Bushfire – From preparedness to recovery, a community-first approach

City of Wanneroo, Western Australia

Mindarie Breakwater Upgrade

Douglas Shire Council, Queensland

Turbidity to Tranquility – Rebuilding Water Resilience

Gannawarra Shire Council, Victoria

The Gannawarra's community flood recovery

Longreach Regional Council, Queensland

2024 Be Ready Central West Calendar Project

Nillumbik Shire Council, Victoria

Disaster Resilient Nillumbik Project (DRN)

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Progressing a resilient community

Shire of Coorow, Western Australia

The Resilient Initiative – Strengthening Disaster Readiness and Recovery Strategy

Shire of Dandaragan, Western Australia

Jurien Bay Airport East West Runway

Shire of York, Western Australia

Reintroducing Traditional Aboriginal Mosaic Cultural Burning to Ballardong Country

South Burnett Regional Council, Queensland

Council and Community Working together for Recovery Success

Wollondilly Shire Council, New South Wales

Resilient Wollondilly: Building Connected and Prepared Communities through Innovation, Technology, and Volunteer Support





Winner

City of Wanneroo, Western Australia

Mariginiup Bushfire – From preparedness to recovery, a community-first approach

About the winning project

The Mariginiup Bushfire, which began on 22 November 2023, was one of the most devastating bushfires in the City of Wanneroo's history, destroying 18 homes and 15 commercial properties. However, thanks to robust disaster readiness and community resilience initiatives, no lives were lost. With 90% of the City in a bushfire-prone area, the City's ongoing focus on preparedness played a critical role in mitigating the disaster's impact.

Prior to the bushfire, the City engaged the community through "Prepare Together" activities at local Bunnings stores and participated in local emergency management committees, ensuring that both residents and staff were prepared. The City also implemented key pre-season training and established Memorandums of Understanding with neighbouring councils for collaborative response.

When the bushfire struck, the City's established partnerships with state agencies and community organisations were pivotal. The City's presence in the incident control centre and evacuation centres allowed for immediate recovery action alongside the response efforts, ensuring that recovery needs were identified and addressed promptly. A notable achievement was the City's successful advocacy for commercial businesses to access the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund and the introduction of the WA Government-funded Mariginiup Bushfire Coordinated Clean-up Program.

Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) State Recovery commended the City for embracing their role as recovery leaders and for its community-first approach.

This was exemplified through the strong governance structure, led by the Local Recovery Coordination Group, supported by community, environmental, finance, and infrastructure sub-groups. The City's collaborative approach resulted in the development of the Mariginiup Fire Operational Recovery Plan.

Throughout the recovery, the City remained community-focused, offering personalised support to 220 affected homeowners and tenants. One impacted resident shared, "Thank you to the staff for the time and effort that you gave to me during the past year, I am truly grateful." The Recovery Centre operated for three months, and dedicated phone lines remained open for six months. The City continues to provide ongoing support to residents over a year after the event.

The City of Wanneroo's comprehensive response and recovery efforts exemplify leadership in disaster resilience, ensuring the protection of lives, livelihoods, and the long-term recovery of vulnerable communities.



When the bushfire struck, the City's established partnerships with state agencies and community organisations were pivotal. The City's presence in the incident control centre and evacuation centres allowed for immediate recovery action alongside the response efforts, ensuring that recovery needs were identified and addressed promptly.



Honourable Mention

Shire of York, Western Australia

Reintroducing traditional Aboriginal mosaic cultural burning to Ballardong Country

About the project

Cultural mosaic burning, a traditional fire management technique used by First Nations Peoples for over 60,000 years, is key to maintaining land health and sustainable ecosystems in Australia. The practice involves lighting low fires in small areas when vegetation and weather conditions are right for cool burns. Fires are closely monitored, ensuring that only the underbrush is burnt.

Although this practice has been largely lost across many parts of Australia due to historical land dispossession, it is now being recognised for its potential to mitigate extreme bushfires exacerbated by climate change. The Shire of York is one of the first local government authorities in WA to revive this traditional practice in collaboration with the local Ballardong community. By incorporating mosaic burning into the Shire vegetation management and bushfire mitigation strategies, Aboriginal cultural heritage is respected and revived, setting a new standard in sustainable land management.

Lands managed under York's Noongar Standard Heritage Agreement, which are Registered Aboriginal Heritage Places immediately adjacent to the York townsite were assessed as high risk during routine Shire due diligence. Additionally, the Ballardong community's desire to reconnect with and care for Country, were the catalyst for the Shire to engage EcoLogical Australia to prepare a Conservation Management Plan of the 147 ha Wongborel/Mt Brown Reserve and a 7km town centre stretch of the Gogulgar Bilya/Avon River Reserve, identifying priority areas for burning and revegetation.

With funding from the National Disaster Risk Reduction Grants Program, ten local Aboriginal participants underwent training covering cultural burning techniques, bushfire safety and firefighting. Six cultural burns have taken place, involving Ballardong community participants, bushfire brigade volunteers and coordination from the Shire of York Community Emergency Services Manager with guidance from the Western Australia Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) Bushfire Centre of Excellence.

The project's success owes much to the strong partnerships between the Shire, the Ballardong community, local environmental volunteers and the WA DFES Bushfire Centre of Excellence. Their expertise and collaboration have brought this vision to life, with plans in place to continue mosaic burning practices post grant ending in July, when a detailed case study will be available, sharing best practice.



By incorporating mosaic burning into the Shire vegetation management and bushfire mitigation strategies, Aboriginal cultural heritage is respected and revived, setting a new standard in sustainable land management.



Environmental Sustainability





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ focus on innovative solutions through renewable energy, conservation, waste management, net zero, and environmental sustainability projects.
- ▶ improve information to support innovation, guide investment and enable informed community decisions to enable direct environmental benefits for the local region.
- ▶ focus on sustainable management of energy, water, waste, and other resources.
- ▶ educate and engage the community about environmental sustainability.

Entries

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales
Fogo is GOGO! Organics Processing Facility

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales
Greenshoots Recovery Program

Blacktown City Council, New South Wales
Biodiversity Strategy

Blacktown City Council, New South Wales
Edmund Street Basin Drainage and Open Space

Camden Council, New South Wales
Oran Park Leisure Centre

City of Burnside, South Australia
Eastern Adelaide Region Power Purchasing Agreement (EARPPA)

City of Busselton, Western Australia
City of Busselton Reuse Shop

City of Canning, Western Australia
Waste-Free Festivities: Canning's Low-Waste Event Culture

City of Joondalup, Western Australia
Climate Change Strategy

City of Kwinana, Western Australia
Street-by-Street Face-your-Waste

City of Mitcham, South Australia
Mitcham Community Energy

City of Vincent, Western Australia
GreenTrack and RapidLCA – Pioneering a National Model for Sustainable Homes

Cumberland City Council, New South Wales
Strategic Approach to Litter Prevention in Cumberland

Gannawarra Shire Council, Victoria
The Gannawarra's renewables journey

Muswellbrook Shire Council, New South Wales
Sustainable Futures Network

Nillumbik Shire Council, Victoria
Tread Gently Together by Tim Read at Diamond Hills Preschool, Greensborough VIC

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland
Innovation and community partnering to reduce waste

Port Phillip City Council, Victoria
Port Phillip Urban Forest Strategy

Randwick City Council, New South Wales
Eco Living Festival and Maroubra Beach Markets

Shire of Dumbleyung, Western Australia
Dumbleyung Desalination WaterSmart Farms Trial Project

Shire of East Pilbara, Western Australia
Little Red in the Hood

South Gippsland Shire Council, Victoria
Venus Bay Saltmarsh

Town of Victoria Park, Western Australia
Bird Waterers – Cockitroughs

West Arnhem Regional Council, Northern Territory
Stop the Drop

Yorke Peninsula Council, South Australia
North Coast Road Upgrade Stage 2



Winner

Town of Victoria Park, Western Australia

Bird Waterers – Cockitroughs

About the winning project

In 2018, the Town of Victoria Park designed and developed the Bird Waterer (aka Cockitrough®), an innovative bird watering station that provides a permanent, safe, clean, and low-maintenance fresh water supply for birdlife in public open spaces, particularly the endangered black cockatoos in Western Australia. It has been a labour of love and a story of collaboration.

The Bird Waterers play a crucial role in reconnecting fragmented urban ecosystems, enhancing local flora and fauna, fostering biodiversity and supporting a healthier community.

Designed by the Town's Parks and Operations team, and manufactured locally, a prototype helped test the structural engineering that allowed the water to flush and refresh, and to resolve design flaws.

After the first summer, the height was increased to 4m, larger troughs and jarrah perches were added to accommodate the volume of black cockatoos that regularly visit the Town's parks and Jirdarup Bushland. This was done in consultation with ornithologists and the local Friends of Jirdarup Group.

This unique environmental sustainability project has expanded significantly, with the Town now supplying the Bird Waterers to more than 130 other local councils, universities, schools and government agencies across Perth and South West Western Australia, including Kings Park Botanical Authority.

In 2024, the design evolved to accommodate models with solar power for the irrigation system, and all-weather mounted cameras for monitoring birdlife.

The Town combines tree planting with nearby Bird Waterers to create and enhance ecological corridors. Locating Bird Waterers within the Town's remnant banksia woodland at Jirdarup attracts diverse bird species, making them ideal locations for wildlife observation and research.

Key features:

- ▶ Provides a consistent source of fresh water for native birds. The design ensures the water automatically flushes clean. Battery operated irrigation ensures consistent water levels in each trough.
- ▶ The elevated 4m design creates safe and accessible water sources by protecting birds from roads, human interference and natural predators.
- ▶ Contributes to the Town's award-winning Urban Forest Program and conservation goals.
- ▶ Easy to install in public places, parks and natural areas.
- ▶ Available for purchase by other local governments, conservation groups, businesses and private residents.



The Bird Waterers play a crucial role in reconnecting fragmented urban ecosystems, enhancing local flora and fauna, fostering biodiversity and supporting a healthier community.



Honourable Mention

City of Mitcham, South Australia Mitcham Community Energy

About the project

Mitcham Community Energy: Local Government Leading Climate Action.

Having declared a climate emergency, the City of Mitcham recognises the need to reduce emissions, boost renewable energy adoption, and ease cost-of-living pressures. However, renewable energy market complexity, low battery uptake, and rising energy costs slowed progress. To address these challenges, the City of Mitcham conducted rigorous due diligence to establish public-private partnerships, ensuring a trusted, accessible transition to green energy. This led to Mitcham Community Energy (MCE) – a program integrating renewable energy, circular economy solutions, and community engagement for sustainability.

Recognised with one national and two state awards, MCE is a leading local government model, delivering measurable environmental and economic benefits.

The Community Renewables Program provides solar, battery storage, and Virtual Power Plant (VPP) solutions with no upfront costs, making renewable energy more accessible. Over 1,000 households have participated, saving \$3M on energy bills and preventing 1,800 tonnes of CO₂ annually, inspiring adoption by five other councils.

The Green Energy Plan (GEP) transforms council buildings into energy self-sufficient hubs with solar panels, batteries, and smart energy systems. Stored power runs streetlights and sporting facilities, cutting 1,200 tonnes of CO₂ annually, equivalent to powering 300 homes.

Through strategic partnerships, Solar Panel Recycling Program tackles solar panel waste, creating a collection and recycling service, supporting a circular economy for renewables.

Mitcham is collaborating with industry leaders to explore local government's role in delivering a public EV charging network, including re-purposing Streetlight poles for infrastructure. A federal exemption allows the first trial to start this year.

Mitcham's Mitcham Virtual Power Plant (VPP) connects household and council solar and battery systems into the national energy market. It stabilises the grid, reduces fossil fuel reliance, and generates council revenue, while all participants financially benefit. Households have gained \$1,860 in upfront discounts and VPP income over three years, with council earning revenue from energy trading, proving the economic viability of local government-led green energy solutions.

Through these initiatives, MCE is advancing green energy, reducing emissions, and easing cost-of-living pressures – a scalable model for local government leadership in climate action.



Recognised with one national and two state awards, MCE is a leading local government model, delivering measurable environmental and economic benefits.



Productivity through Infrastructure





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ utilise technological innovations or regulatory changes to improve and develop infrastructure.
- ▶ consider sustainability, liveability and productivity of a region via investment strategies and planning and takes advantage of region-specific opportunities.
- ▶ address long-term infrastructure priorities with clear economic productivity and growth benefits.
- ▶ strengthen and create investment and development opportunities, share resources, build local capability, and create jobs.

Entries

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales
Barclay Street, Eden – Recreational and Sporting Precinct

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales
Brogo-Bermagui Water Treatment Plant

Blacktown City Council, New South Wales
Edmund Street Basin Drainage and Open Space

Brighton Council, Tasmania
South Brighton Development Precinct

City of Palmerston, Northern Territory
SWELL – Swimming, Wellness, Events, Leisure and Lifestyle

City of Stirling, Western Australia
Hamersley Public Golf Course Redevelopment

Hepburn Shire Council, Victoria
Djuwang Baring – Creswick Trails

Mildura Rural City Council, Victoria
Tropical North Victoria

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland
Developing local capability to build the community

Parkes Shire Council, New South Wales
Fleet Optimisation and Innovation – A smarter approach to asset management

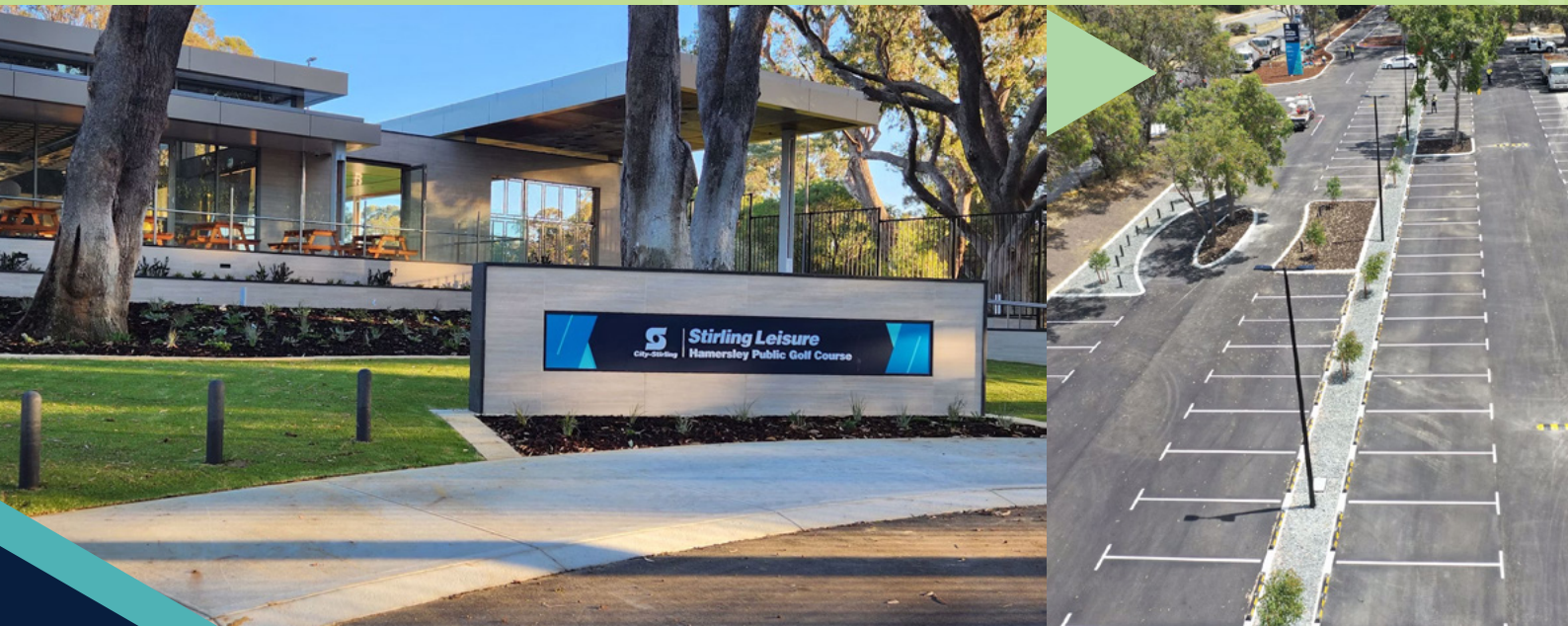
Shire of Dumbleyung, Western Australia
Shire of Dumbleyung 50 Year Roads Strategy

Torres Strait Island Regional Council, Queensland
TSIRC – Saibai Road Upgrade Project completion

Wentworth Shire Council, New South Wales
Wentworth Visitor Centre

West Tamar Council, Tasmania
Legana Sports Oval





Winner

City of Stirling, Western Australia

Hamersley Public Golf Course Redevelopment

About the winning project

The Hamersley Public Golf Course (HPGC), the City of Stirling's only public golf course, has been a vital community asset since its opening in 1968. Welcoming over 90,000 visitors annually, the course serves as a key hub for recreation and social connection. Recognising the aging state of the facility, which no longer met contemporary standards or community expectations, the City embarked on a significant redevelopment project. As part of this, investigations into modernising the driving range included exploring automation and ball trajectory technology to attract a younger demographic and enhance the overall experience.

The redevelopment of HPGC has achieved transformative outcomes:

- ▶ **Modernised Assets:** Upgraded aging infrastructure to support recreational and community activities.
- ▶ **State-of-the-Art Facilities:** Delivered a contemporary golf pavilion and cutting-edge driving range.
- ▶ **Enhanced Accessibility:** Inclusive bays for left- and right-handed players, along with teaching bays for community learning.
- ▶ **Broader Appeal:** Expanded the facility's appeal to non-golfers.
- ▶ **Increased Capacity:** Added 71 new car parking bays to meet growing demand.

- ▶ **Positive Impact:** Boosted customer satisfaction, as demonstrated by 130,000 visitors and 2,906,072 balls hit since reopening on 16 December 2024.
- ▶ **Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles,** focusing on energy efficiency, water savings, and greenhouse gas reduction in alignment with the City's ESD guidelines.
- ▶ **Preservation of local ecology,** including arborist-supervised civil works within Tree Protection Zones.
- ▶ **Redevelopment contributing to seven full-time jobs.**



The Hamersley Public Golf Course (HPGC), the City of Stirling's only public golf course, has been a vital community asset since its opening in 1968. Welcoming over 90,000 visitors annually, the course serves as a key hub for recreation and social connection.



Honourable Mention

City of Palmerston, Northern Territory

SWELL – Swimming, Wellness, Events, Leisure and Lifestyle

About the project

SWELL is the City of Palmerston's most significant and exciting project to date, delivering a new recreation hub for our entire community to enjoy. The project revitalised the 30-year-old Palmerston Swimming and Fitness Centre into a family friendly, inclusive swimming and recreation destination for those living in Palmerston and surrounds.

The upgrades included a refurbished 50m swimming pool, 20m heated program pool, kids splash area, basketball half-court, and an adventure play zone unlike any in the Top End. The facility also has a refurbished gym and the local youth drop-in centre is co-located on site.

The SWELL project commenced in August 2022 and was completed in December 2023, for a total cost of \$20.4 million. Council funded the project through Northern Territory Government grants, the Australian Government Building Better Regions Fund and its own funding.

A comprehensive benefit and cost analysis was undertaken prior to the project commencing to understand the potential benefits to the community for the investment. This included looking at social, health and productivity benefits to the community. In total, the combined economic and social benefits are estimated to be \$20 per visit, or \$2,500 per person if they attend 2 to 3 times per week.

A key part of the facility's success beyond the construction project was the council making pool access free for the entire community for at least the first few years of it being open. This removes financial barriers to access the facility and enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of swimming and pool activities.

In its first year, the facility has been well attended by the community, with over 120,000 visits. Those attendees have been able to access the pool for free, brave the adventure play course or participate in organised activities such as aqua aerobics or gym classes. The economic benefit of those attendances is in the order of \$2.4 million.

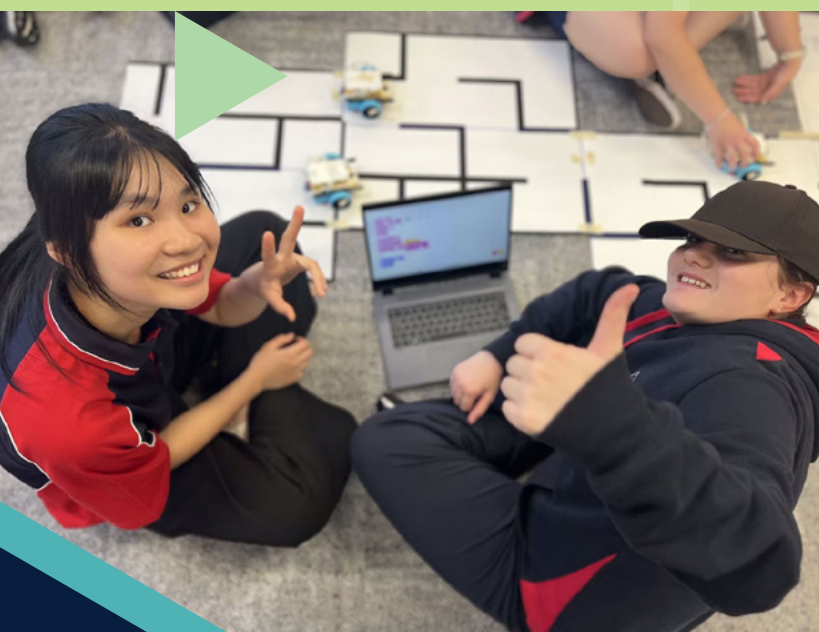
SWELL is a project that improves liveability for Palmerston residents and will continue do so for many years, supporting Council's vision of being a 'Place for People'.



A key part of the facility's success beyond the construction project was the council making pool access free for the entire community for at least the first few years of it being open. This removes financial barriers to access the facility and enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of swimming and pool activities.

Regional Growth





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ improve the liveability of a region by taking advantage of region-specific opportunities.
- ▶ strengthen investment and development opportunities, share resources, build local capability, and create jobs.
- ▶ improve productivity, employment and workforce skills throughout the region.
- ▶ foster the development of vibrant, connected, self-reliant communities and regions with strong economic futures.

Entries

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales
Business Activator

Blacktown City Council, New South Wales
Edmund Street Basin Drainage and Open Space

Blue Mountains City Council, New South Wales
Blue Mountains Business Mentoring Program (2022–2025)

City of Casey, Victoria
Department of Transition

District Council of Cleve, South Australia
Cleve's Bioeconomic Strategy

Frankston City Council, Victoria
Imagine Frankston

Gannawarra Shire Council, Victoria
Rejuvenating Kerang's CBD

Hepburn Shire Council, Victoria
Future Hepburn

Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Queensland
Hinchinbrook Shire Council's Liveability 2044 Strategy – Shaping the Hinchinbrook Way

Lithgow City Council, New South Wales
LEEP – Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan – Leading practice transitions management

Mildura Rural City Council, Victoria
Tropical North Victoria

Moyne Shire Council, Victoria
Garvoc Hall community childcare model

Moyne Shire Council, Victoria
Moyne Corangamite library shared service model

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland
Ambitious projects set to transform Island community

Penrith City Council, New South Wales
St Marys Town Centre Master Plan: Capitalising on regional growth to improve liveability of St Marys and Western Sydney

Scenic Rim Regional Council, Queensland
Beaudesert Enterprise Precinct

Shire of Merredin, Western Australia
Merredin CBD Redevelopment Project

Shire of Moora, Western Australia
Moora Regional Early Childhood Development Precinct

Shire of Murray, Western Australia
The Exchange Hotel, Pinjarra

Shire of Upper Gascoyne, Western Australia
Gascoyne Connect Mining Symposium

The Hills Shire Council, New South Wales
The Hills Shire Council Economic Growth Plan and Strategic Centres Precinct Plans

Upper Hunter Shire Council, New South Wales
Scone CBD Revitalisation

West Tamar Council, Tasmania
Innova Business Park/Fermentation Hub





Winner

Shire of Murray, Western Australia

The Exchange Hotel, Pinjarra

About the winning project

The Exchange Hotel redevelopment is a landmark project, profoundly impacting the local community and Western Australia's heritage. The revitalisation significantly boosted Murray's economic prosperity, as well as WA's tourism industry.

Built in 1866, the Hotel is one of Peel's oldest buildings and resides in one of Western Australia's first European settlements – Pinjarra.

After closing in 2008, the once-proud Hotel fell into disrepair. Recognising its immense cultural and historical significance, the Shire purchased the site with a view to transform it into a vibrant hub for community, tourism, and commerce while preserving its historical essence.

Reopening in September 2024, the Hotel's transformation reintroduced a key heritage asset, drew substantial visitor numbers and bolstered the region's economy.

The total redevelopment cost was \$8.8m – attracting investment from the Australian Government, State Government, Shire of Murray, and hoteliers Karl and Janine Bullers.

Today, the stunning venue combines the best of modern architecture with Pinjarra's heritage. It is widely accepted as one of Western Australia's finest heritage buildings and known as a regionally iconic hospitality venue.

The Exchange Hotel operates every day, offering dining, entertainment and event spaces. With deliberate limited carparking to encourage pedestrian movement within Pinjarra, the Hotel creates noticeable energy in town and stimulates surrounding businesses.

Overlooking the Murray Amphitheatre, part of the hotel grounds was excised off to form a continuous river foreshore. This provides a vibrant, activated riverfront, passive recreation and improved river access.

The Hotel is a prominent stop on the Pinjarra Heritage Walking Trail. It also hosts major events, providing new local experiences and enhancing liveability while engaging a wider audience. This further cements its role as a social and economic regional anchor.

Further adding to the region's economic prosperity, the Hotel's small-batch distillery supports Western Australia's craft beverage industry – using local products and promoting Agri-tourism.

Today, the Hotel operates at full capacity, is Pinjarra CBD's largest employer and provides diverse job opportunities. In its first month, the Hotel served 15,000 pints of beer, 13,600 meals, employed 69 staff (40FTE equivalent), and welcomed 20,000 visitors. Local businesses benefit from this surge in activity, with the hotel contributing directly and indirectly to economic growth.



Today, the stunning venue combines the best of modern architecture with Pinjarra's heritage. It is widely accepted as one of Western Australia's finest heritage buildings and known as a regionally iconic hospitality venue.



Honourable Mention

Lithgow City Council, New South Wales

LEEP – Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan – Leading practice transitions management

About the project

The establishment of the Net Zero target in 2022 and the Net Zero Authority in 2023 presented a clear mandate for Australia's energy future. And as coal-fired power stations close, mining industry workers will need to find new jobs.

Recognising the impact this would have for the Lithgow local government area, where coal mining and electricity supply contribute almost 46% of Gross Value Added to the economy and employ more than 16% of the workforce – Lithgow City Council acted swiftly to commission, along with the NSW Government, a plan to help Lithgow transition to a more diverse, robust economy with new job opportunities: the Lithgow Emerging Economy Plan (LEEP Report).

The LEEP implementation has initially focussed on two key areas to improve employment and workforce skills, and amplify region-specific opportunities:

- Land use planning and precinct development, to ensure there is a market-ready supply of land to foster business growth.

- Supporting targeted education and skills training for the community.

The LEEP team established the Adaptive Skills Hub, a dedicated space for delivering training to help local workers re-skill, and community engagement activities to support the Lithgow region's capacity to navigate change. The LEEP team worked with local schools on the Lithgow STEAM Uplift program, developing a bespoke curriculum targeted to the unique needs of the Lithgow LGA, with a focus on STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths. This program included all schools (bar one) in the Lithgow LGA, bridging the divide between public, private and independent, and giving student equitable access to expensive STEAM equipment.

For the primary schools, the Lithgow STEAM Uplift program incorporated robotics, coding, and film-making. For the secondary school Drone Pilot Program students build, code, repair and choreograph drones in a cross-school approach. The innovative curriculum developed for the Drone Pilot Program is now recognised as a Department of Education iSTEM course.

Combined with an innovative Engagement Plan which focuses on working in partnership with all three tiers of Government in addition to key stakeholders, the LEEP program is well poised to continue to foster a vibrant, cohesive and resilient community with a bright economic future.



Road Safety





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ improve road or roadside infrastructure with a focus on safety benefits including heavy vehicle transport.
- ▶ address the specific safety needs of vulnerable groups or target specific road user risk factors.
- ▶ improve emergency medical response services for those involved in road crashes.
- ▶ address specific risk factors and create innovative road safety solutions that make communities safer, more liveable and contribute to a reduction in road crash deaths and injuries.

Entries

Barkly Regional Council, Northern Territory
Kargaru Road – Safe Pathway Project

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales
Safety Around Schools – Collaboration Counts

Blacktown City Council, New South Wales
Risks of NOT Planting Trees Along Our Streets

Brisbane City Council, Queensland
Brisbane City Council's Beams Road upgrade stage 1A (Lacey Road to Balcara Avenue)

City of Rockingham, Western Australia
Mandurah Road Upgrade

City of Tea Tree Gully, South Australia
City of Tea Tree Gully – Road Safety Campaign

City of Vincent, Western Australia
40km/h Local Residential Road Zone Project

Douglas Shire Council, Queensland
Connecting Cape Tribulation: The Road to Safety

Shire of Manjimup, Western Australia
Shire of Manjimup Progress with Road Traffic Safety Management Systems ISO39001

Yorke Peninsula Council, South Australia
Stage 2 North Coast Road Upgrade





Winner

Blacktown City Council, New South Wales

Risks of NOT planting trees along our streets

About the winning project

Currently, Australian local councils do not plant large shade trees on streets with speeds above 50km/hr. This is because current guidelines state large shade trees present a safety risk to errant vehicles. It does not consider the risks pedestrians and cyclists are exposed to when traveling along the road corridor or all of the risks if councils do or do not plant large shade trees along their streets.

Funded by the NSW Government, this innovative research project sought to identify all the risks Council and its community would be exposed to if large shade trees are not planted along its streets. Risks were considered across the categories of physical and mental health, environment, economy, infrastructure and policy.

A holistic and comprehensive risk assessment process was undertaken, with Council partnering with researchers from Western Sydney University, University of Wollongong and University of New South Wales. Council also engaged subject matter experts from the legal and work health and safety sectors, and invited representatives from Western Sydney Local Area Health District, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, Local Government NSW, Austroads and Transport for New South Wales to join the risk assessment process.

Reviewing over a decade of crash data for Blacktown City and undertaking associated risk assessments, it was found that the risks of planting trees were outweighed by the risks of not planting trees on roads with speed limits up to 70km/hr. It was also determined that planting more shade trees would improve sun safety, promote physical activity, improve mental health, mitigate heat-related aging of infrastructure assets and decrease urban heat.

The research had tangible outcomes with risk-based legal advice recommending that Blacktown City Council should not adopt a blanket policy that prohibits the planting of non-frangible trees along its streets provided it takes a holistic, balanced, risk-based view of the risks.

As a result, Blacktown City Council now plants large shade trees along roads up to 70 km/hr across Blacktown City Council with the safety of all road users at the centre of our work.



It was also determined that planting more shade trees would improve sun safety, promote physical activity, improve mental health, mitigate heat-related aging of infrastructure assets and decrease urban heat.



Honourable Mention

City of Vincent, Western Australia

40km/h Local Residential Road Zone Project

About the project

The default speed limit (un-signposted) on residential local roads in Western Australia is 50km/h.

The City of Vincent Strategic Community Plan 2018 – 2028 articulates under a key pillar of 'Accessible City' that "We want to be a leader in making it safe, easy, environmentally friendly and enjoyable to get around Vincent". It includes an Action: "4.1.1 – work with the State Government and Inner-City Group of Councils to implement a 40km/h zone in all residential areas of the City of Vincent by 2023."

A portion of West Perth had already been operating under a 40km/h speed limit in residential areas since the 1990s.

With the support of the community, in 2018 the City of Vincent initiated a 40km/h speed zone trial within its southern suburban residential areas to assess the impact of slower speed limits on road safety. The objective was to create safer neighbourhood streets and improve the overall street environment for residents and road users.

The trial was supported by key stakeholders, including the Road Safety Commission (RSC), Main Roads Western Local Government Association (WALGA). These partners collaborated within an evaluation working group to assess the effectiveness of the 40km/h limit, with the goal of improving traffic safety, supporting sustainable road usage patterns and improving active transport.

Over the course of the trial, various rounds of data collection and analysis were conducted, including reports and evaluations by consultants and stakeholders. The final assessment indicated significant community support for the permanent implementation of the 40km/h speed limit and a recommendation to extend this limit to other areas within the City of Vincent.

Based on this assessment, Council resolved in February 2023 to approve the application to MRWA to progress a permanent 40km/h speed limit on all local roads which are currently posted 50km/h with implementation scheduled 2023/2024.

In October 2023 the City of Vincent received advice from MRWA that the application to implement a 40km/h speed limit on all local residential roads was approved, meeting the Strategic Plan deadline. Signage and line marking to implement was subsequently carried out.



We want to be a leader in making it safe, easy, environmentally friendly and enjoyable to get around Vincent.



Women in Local Government





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ implement initiatives in the workplace that promote greater roles for women and improve the progress and representation of women in leadership positions.
- ▶ establish programs to support and recognise women as current and emerging leaders, including mentoring, networking and training opportunities.
- ▶ develop gender equality strategies, programs and advocacy to support women of all ages to participate and become leaders in their workplace and community.
- ▶ highlight an outstanding woman who is making a positive difference to their local government and community.

Entries

Adelaide Plains Council, South Australia

Amy Fagan, Manager Customer Experience

Adelaide Plains Council, South Australia

Sheree Schenk, Director Corporate Services

City of Burnside, South Australia

Christine Baillie – 25 years of volunteering and still going strong

City of Kwinana, Western Australia

EmpowerHer Working Group

City of Swan, Western Australia

Kayla McNicol

City of Wanneroo, Western Australia

Kirsten Thrush and Katie Russell – Leading the disaster recovery from Mariginiup Bushfire

Knox City Council, Victoria

Social Connections

Knox City Council, Victoria

As a mentor and leader

Nambucca Shire Council, New South Wales

Jocelyn Box – Highlight an outstanding woman who is making a positive difference to their local government and community.

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Inspiring women on Palm Island

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, New South Wales

Aspiring Leadership Pipeline

Shire of Coorow, Western Australia

Empowering Women, Empowering Communities

Town of Claremont, Western Australia

Building Career Pathways Program

West Tamar Council, Tasmania

Kristen Desmond, CEO, West Tamar Council



Winner

City of Wanneroo, Western Australia

**Kirsten Thrush and Katie Russell –
Leading the disaster recovery from
Mariginiup Bushfire**

About the winning project

The Mariginiup Bushfire, which began on 22 November 2023, was the most devastating in the City of Wanneroo's history. Over five days, it destroyed 18 homes, 15 commercial properties, and damaged many others. While no lives were lost, the community faced immense hardship, requiring urgent and sustained recovery efforts.

In this crisis, Kirsten Thrush, Local Recovery Coordinator, and Katie Russell, Community Recovery Lead, exemplified extraordinary leadership. Their unwavering commitment to the community shaped a recovery that was not only effective but also deeply compassionate. Through strategic vision, decisive action, and collaboration with emergency services, government agencies, and local partners, they dismantled bureaucratic silos, fostered innovation, and ensured the community's needs were at the forefront.

Kirsten's coordination with emergency responders was pivotal in deploying the right staff at critical moments, supporting the evacuation process and immediate response efforts. Katie's leadership in establishing an evacuation centre – and later a Recovery Centre – transformed these spaces into hubs of empathy and support. The Recovery Centre became a safe haven, providing essential emotional and mental health services alongside practical recovery assistance.

Their efforts secured a \$2.7 million State Government grant for recovery and clean-up, ensuring those most affected received prioritised aid. Kirsten's development of the Mariginiup Bushfire Clean-Up Program was widely praised for its compassionate and tailored approach, offering personalised support to every affected resident and business owner.

Community members expressed deep gratitude, with one resident stating, "As heart-wrenching as it has been, I would like to thank everyone for assisting us in getting back on our feet." Superintendent of Western Australian Police lauded their leadership: "The leadership, effort, tenacity and drive shown by the City of Wanneroo was second to none. When walking past the Community Recovery Centre, I couldn't help but stop and watch the abundance of empathy and support filling the room. A humbling experience."

Through resilience, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to their community, Kirsten and Katie have redefined leadership in local government. Their work not only facilitated recovery but also set a powerful precedent for women in leadership – demonstrating that through empathy, strength, and collaboration, they can drive meaningful, lasting change.



In this crisis, Kirsten Thrush, Local Recovery Coordinator, and Katie Russell, Community Recovery Lead, exemplified extraordinary leadership.



Honourable Mention

City of Burnside, South Australia

Christine Baillie – 25 years of volunteering and still going strong

About the project

Christine Baillie has been a dedicated and passionate contributor to the City of Burnside's environmental and biodiversity initiatives for over 25 years. Chris was the very first official biodiversity volunteer for the City of Burnside, and her commitment to protecting and enhancing our local natural environment began even earlier—working in an informal capacity for five years prior to the establishment of the Council's Conservation Volunteer Program.

Chris's leadership and hands-on efforts have been instrumental in the creation and ongoing care of some of Burnside's most significant biodiversity sites. Her work has contributed directly to the restoration and conservation of areas such as Bell Yett Reserve creek line, Kensington Park Reserve, Tusmore Park, Langman Reserve, and many others. Her tireless advocacy and action have helped protect precious remnant vegetation, ensuring that our native flora and fauna have safe and sustainable habitats to thrive in for generations to come.

As a long-standing and active member of the community, Chris continues to inspire others through her dedication. She is a regular participant in the weekly Karra Tartu (Waterfall Gully) bush regeneration project, where her practical knowledge, enthusiasm, and deep care for the environment make her a valued and respected member of the team.

Beyond her public volunteering efforts, Chris also brings her commitment to conservation into her own home. She is actively engaged in revegetation projects, making a concerted effort each year to source local native species from the City of Burnside's Biodiversity Nursery Giveaway. She carefully cultivates these plants in her garden to create habitat and attract local wildlife, contributing to the broader ecological health of the community.

Chris's unwavering dedication, passion, and leadership make her an outstanding role model for environmental stewardship. Her legacy can be seen not only in the flourishing local reserves but also in the growing community of volunteers she has inspired.



As a long-standing and active member of the community, Chris continues to inspire others through her dedication. She is a regular participant in the weekly Karra Tartu (Waterfall Gully) bush regeneration project, where her practical knowledge, enthusiasm, and deep care for the environment make her a valued and respected member of the team.

Workforce and Skills





About the Category

This award recognises leaders and projects in local government which:

- ▶ support employment opportunities and career changes through apprenticeships, traineeships or cadetships.
- ▶ implement initiatives in the workplace to improve career progression.
- ▶ increase workforce participation for all ages, support succession planning and knowledge retention in the community.
- ▶ attract, retain and strengthen skilled and diverse workforces in the community.

Entries

Bega Valley Shire Council, New South Wales

Investing in our People – Internal talent development

Burwood Council, New South Wales

Breaking Barriers – Growing the learn to swim workforce

City of Busselton, Western Australia

City of Busselton – Reuse Shop

City of Rockingham, Western Australia

Youth Employment Program

City of Swan, Western Australia

City of Swan Graduate Engineer Program

City of Victor Harbor, South Australia

Driving the Future Program

City of West Torrens, South Australia

"It Reflects on YOU" Campaign

MacDonnell Regional Council, Northern Territory

Civil Team to Essential Services Officers

Shire of Coorow, Western Australia

Empowering Careers and Building Diversity





Winner

Burwood Council, New South Wales

Breaking Barriers – Growing the learn to swim workforce

About the winning project

In response to the ongoing national shortage of swimming instructors caused by the lasting impacts of Covid, the Enfield Aquatic Centre developed an innovative recruitment strategy to boost the number of Learn to Swim instructors. Our goal was to expand our instructor team, enabling us to offer more classes to the community and provide increased opportunities for children to learn how to swim.

To ensure the success of the strategy, the council conducted an in-depth analysis to identify the key challenges and barriers preventing potential candidates from applying for instructor positions. One of the most significant obstacles uncovered was the high upfront cost of training, which deterred young people and career changers.

Initially, the council partnered with Royal Life Saving, which was also working to address the nationwide shortage. Through this collaboration, temporary funding to cover training costs for new candidates was secured. Royal Life's support was helpful for a limited time, however, it was soon realised that by self-funding the training, the opportunities could be extended to include more aspiring instructors and foster long-term career pathways. All of which would create additional local employment opportunities for young people entering the workforce.

To remove financial barriers, the council committed to funding the \$330 training cost per trainee. This decision proved pivotal to driving a surge in recruitment.

To maximise outreach, job advertisements were updated to emphasise the availability of paid training, making the positions more attractive and significantly increasing applications compared to previous recruitment efforts.

The impact of this initiative was profound, achieving the following results over the past year:

- ▶ 327 applications received for paid trainee positions.
- ▶ 78 interviews conducted.
- ▶ 20 new Learn to Swim instructors onboarded, doubling our learn to swim team while maintaining high retention rates.
- ▶ A record 1600 students enrolled, reflecting a 30% increase in Learn to Swim participation and reduction in waitlists. This approach enabled us to double our workforce, expand class numbers, and enrol more children in swimming lessons than before the pandemic. By proactively removing financial barriers, supporting workforce participation, and investing in skills development, we strengthened community access to vital swimming education while supporting individuals in launching careers in the aquatics industry.



One of the most significant obstacles uncovered was the high upfront cost of training, which deterred young people and career changers.



Honourable Mention

City of Swan, Western Australia

City of Swan Graduate Engineer Program

About the project

The City of Swan is the largest local government in the Perth metropolitan by land size of 1,042 square kilometres with a population set to reach 300,000 by 2050. The attraction and retention of skilled workforce is crucial to manage growth, maintain over \$3.6 billion worth of infrastructure and provide essential services to improve the quality of life for our community.

The City's Graduate Engineer Program is a strategic initiative that addresses aging workforce and recruitment difficulties within local government and risks to the City's capabilities. The Program was established in 2007 following a presentation delivered in the 2007 IPWEA National Conference, which showed that 70% of Local Government Engineers would be retiring in 15 years and 50% within 10 years. It was recognised that historically, local government was not a preferred career path for engineers.

The Program offers a rewarding and structured pathway for engineers in local government and enables the City to attract, retain and strengthen its workforce. Graduates rotate through all areas of the City's Operations Division where they gain invaluable experience in project management, construction, maintenance, asset management, subdivisional engineering, facility management, fleet management, waste management, traffic engineering, tender administration, and contract management. Graduates are also supported with extensive career development opportunities including technical training, financial assistance for further study,

mentorship, opportunities to act in leadership roles and support in attaining a Chartered Status through Engineers Australia.

Prior to its commencement, the City employed five engineers with an average age of 55. Today, the City employs 30 engineers with an average age of 33 – improving the City's capabilities by providing a pipeline of diverse, skilled professionals that are equipped to contribute to the City's needs. Its success and impact is evident in former Swan graduates forming leadership positions across several WA municipalities and beyond, with some who have also established similar programs to achieve the same outcomes.

The Program is highly deserving of the Workforce and Skills Award as it serves as a model for local governments by demonstrating a proactive approach to workforce development that benefits the professionals, the organisation and the wider community.



The Program offers a rewarding and structured pathway for engineers in local government and enables the City to attract, retain and strengthen its workforce.







New for 2025 – Outstanding Rural and Remote Council

The Outstanding Rural and Remote Council Award recognises and celebrates the achievements of smaller, more rural and remote councils. To be eligible for consideration in this award, an entry received from a council with a population of 15,000 or less were automatically entered this category.



Entries

Adelaide Plains Council, South Australia

Sheree Schenk, Director Corporate Services

Adelaide Plains Council, South Australia

Amy Fagan, Manager Customer Experience

Alpine Shire Council, Victoria

The First 72 Hours Program: Strengthening Community-Led and Inclusive Approaches to Resilience and Emergency Preparedness

Barkly Regional Council, Northern Territory

Kargaru Road– Safe Pathway Project

Barunga West Council, South Australia

Port Broughton Civic Square: Cultural Revitalisation Through Arts and Public Spaces

Bellingen Shire Council, New South Wales

Bellingen Shire Council Disaster Communications

Break O'Day Council, Tasmania

2024 Volunteer Film Festival

Brewarrina Shire Council, New South Wales

Walking Together: Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Futures

Burke Shire Council, Queensland

Sale of Staff Housing Initiative

District Council of Cleve, South Australia

The Cleve Wellbeing Index

District Council of Cleve, South Australia

Cleve's Bioeconomic Strategy

Douglas Shire Council, Queensland

Turbidity to Tranquility: Rebuilding Water Resilience

Douglas Shire Council, Queensland

Connecting Cape Tribulation: The Road to Safety

Flinders Shire Council, Queensland

Festival of Outback Skies

Gannawarra Shire Council, Victoria

Rejuvenating Kerang's CBD

Gannawarra Shire Council, Victoria

The Gannawarra's renewables journey

Gannawarra Shire Council, Victoria

The Gannawarra's community flood recovery

Gannawarra Shire Council, Victoria

Gannawarra Reconciliation Action Plan

Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Queensland

Hinchinbrook Shire Council's Liveability 2044 Strategy – Shaping the Hinchinbrook Way

Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Queensland

Hinchinbrook Shire Council's Liveability 2044 Strategy – Shaping the Hinchinbrook Way

Longreach Regional Council, Queensland

2024 Be Ready Central West Calendar Project

MacDonnell Regional Council, Northern Territory

Civil Team to Essential Services Officers

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Innovation and community partnering to reduce waste

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Palm Island Housing Investment Scheme

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Developing local capability to build the community

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Inspiring women on Palm Island

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Palm Island Night Patrol

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Palm Island Art Installation

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Ambitious projects set to transform Island community

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Progressing a resilient community

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, Queensland

Leader, Mentor and role model – Eva Haines

Parkes Shire Council, New South Wales

Fleet Optimisation and Innovation – A smarter approach to asset management

Shire of Coorow, Western Australia

Empowering Women, Empowering Communities

Shire of Coorow, Western Australia

The Resilient Initiative – Strengthening Disaster Readiness and Recovery Strategy

Shire of Coorow, Western Australia

Empowering Careers and Building Diversity

Shire of Dandaragan, Western Australia

Jurien Bay Airport East West Runway

Shire of Dumbleyung, Western Australia

Shire of Dumbleyung 50 Year Roads Strategy

Shire of Dumbleyung, Western Australia

Dumbleyung Desalination WaterSmart Farms Trial Project

Shire of East Pilbara, Western Australia

Little Red in the Hood

Shire of Manjimup, Western Australia

Shire of Manjimup Progress with Road Traffic Safety Management Systems ISO39001



Shire of Merredin, Western Australia
Merredin CBD Redevelopment Project

Shire of Moora, Western Australia
Moora Regional Early Childhood Development Precinct

Shire of Upper Gascoyne, Western Australia
Gascoyne Connect Mining Symposium

Shire of York, Western Australia
Reintroducing Traditional Aboriginal Mosaic Cultural
Burning to Ballardong Country

Torres Strait Island Regional Council, Queensland
TSIRC – Celebrating Culture and Promoting Initiatives for
Indigenous Community Members

Torres Strait Island Regional Council, Queensland
TSIRC – Saibai Road Upgrade Project completion

Town of Claremont, Western Australia
Youth Art Mentorship Project

Town of Claremont, Western Australia
Building Career Pathways Program

Upper Hunter Shire Council, New South Wales
Scone CBD Revitalisation

Wentworth Shire Council, New South Wales
Wentworth Visitor Centre

West Arnhem Regional Council, Northern Territory
Stop the Drop

West Arnhem Regional Council, Northern Territory
West Arnhem Youth Leadership Summit

Yorke Peninsula Council, South Australia
North Coast Road Upgrade Stage 2

Yorke Peninsula Council, South Australia
Stage 2 North Coast Road Upgrade





Winner

Parkes Shire Council, Western Australia

Fleet Optimisation and Innovation – A smarter approach to asset management

About the winning project

Since completing the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) Fleet Management Certificate, it became clear that Parkes Shire Council needed a robust fleet management system for its \$14 million fleet. To address this, Council implemented the TechOne Ci Anywhere system, ensuring full financial transparency, governance, and compliance.

Key features include a 10-year replacement programme and a comprehensive scheduling system covering all assets. Dashboards track critical metrics such as maintenance schedules, whole-of-life costs, fleet utilisation, and repair expenses. Senior staff and finance teams can access real-time data, improving decision-making.

The system operates at least a month ahead of schedule, providing flexibility for workforce availability and parts procurement. This ensures servicing meets manufacturer specifications and regulatory requirements, particularly under Heavy Vehicle National Law. Smaller assets, previously overlooked, are now maintained on schedule, improving compliance and longevity.

Additionally, the system includes compliance management for depot and workshop operations. Inspections for cranes, pressure vessels, and electrical tagging are scheduled in advance, with work orders generated a month before due dates. This streamlines tracking, allowing seamless documentation for audits.

Council now makes data-driven decisions regarding plant and fleet feasibility using real-time analytics, the IPWEA WOLC calculator, and predictive maintenance strategies. This enhances financial and operational efficiency.

Safety has also improved through Geotab telematics, which enables real-time vehicle monitoring. Council receives alerts when staff remain in the field after hours, prompting welfare checks. Geotab also provides safety and performance data to optimise fleet usage.

A significant improvement is the inclusion of rural fire trucks in maintenance schedules. Previously, compliance depended on individual farmers delivering trucks for servicing. Now, the system ensures these emergency vehicles receive timely maintenance, enhancing reliability.

The TechOne fleet management system has transformed Parkes Shire Council's operations, improving efficiency, compliance, safety, and financial oversight. By leveraging advanced technology, predictive scheduling, and real-time analytics, Council has created a proactive and cost-effective fleet management framework that aligns with long-term strategic goals.



Council now makes data-driven decisions regarding plant and fleet feasibility using real-time analytics, the IPWEA WOLC calculator, and predictive maintenance strategies. This enhances financial and operational efficiency.



Honourable Mention

Two councils received Honourable Mentions in this new category for 2025.

Shire of York, Western Australia

Reintroducing traditional Aboriginal mosaic cultural burning to Ballardong Country

About the project

Cultural mosaic burning, a traditional fire management technique used by First Nations Peoples for over 60,000 years, is key to maintaining land health and sustainable ecosystems in Australia. The practice involves lighting low fires in small areas when vegetation and weather conditions are right for cool burns. Fires are closely monitored, ensuring that only the underbrush is burnt.

Although this practice has been largely lost across many parts of Australia due to historical land dispossession, it is now being recognised for its potential to mitigate extreme bushfires exacerbated by climate change. The Shire of York is one of the first local government authorities in WA to revive this traditional practice in collaboration with the local Ballardong community. By incorporating mosaic burning into the Shire vegetation management and bushfire mitigation strategies, Aboriginal cultural heritage is respected and revived, setting a new standard in sustainable land management.

Lands managed under York's Noongar Standard Heritage Agreement, which are Registered Aboriginal Heritage Places immediately adjacent to the York townsite were assessed as high risk during routine Shire due diligence. Additionally, the Ballardong community's desire to reconnect with and care for Country, were the catalyst for the Shire to engage EcoLogical Australia to prepare a Conservation Management Plan of the 147 ha Wongborel/Mt Brown Reserve and a 7km town centre stretch of the Gogulgar Bilya/Avon River Reserve, identifying priority areas for burning and revegetation.

With funding from the National Disaster Risk Reduction Grants Program, ten local Aboriginal participants underwent training covering cultural burning techniques, bushfire safety and firefighting. Six cultural burns have taken place, involving Ballardong community participants, bushfire brigade volunteers and coordination from the Shire of York Community Emergency Services Manager with guidance from the Western Australia Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) Bushfire Centre of Excellence.

The project's success owes much to the strong partnerships between the Shire, the Ballardong community, local environmental volunteers and the WA DFES Bushfire Centre of Excellence. Their expertise and collaboration have brought this vision to life, with plans in place to continue mosaic burning practices post grant ending in July, when a detailed case study will be available, sharing best practice.



By incorporating mosaic burning into the Shire vegetation management and bushfire mitigation strategies, Aboriginal cultural heritage is respected and revived, setting a new standard in sustainable land management.





Honourable Mention

Wentworth Shire Council, New South Wales Wentworth Visitor Centre

About the project

In 2015, the old Wentworth Services Club closed down, leaving a large vacant building in the middle of Wentworth. Shortly afterwards, the community started a petition asking Council to purchase and redevelop the building.

The sale was finalised in 2016, and plans were put in place to transform the space into a community hub and offices. The Wentworth Visitor Centre opened in October 2024, with all Council services located under one roof including the Visitor Information Centre, Library, Theatre, the Junction Café, Council Administration Offices, Conference Room and Council Chambers.

The Visitor Information Centre features various interpretive displays and has become a tourism attraction within itself. The museum-style set-up showcases Wentworth's rich history and heritage. The new Wentworth Library overlooks the Darling River and includes a children's area, meeting rooms, courtyard and the Wentworth Historical Society facilities.

Located next door are the new Council offices, which feature an open-plan layout with all departments working in a shared office space – a strategic move to encourage open communication. Upstairs, the new Conference Room has the capacity to host up to 200 people and includes a kitchen, bar and break-out areas. These facilities are located near the Council Chambers and Mayors Office. The new Visitor Centre benefits the local community, visitors and Council employees. It is located in the middle of town, making it accessible for the local community.

The move into the new offices has been a positive change, leading to stronger working relationships across departments, increased collaboration on projects and a more cohesive working environment.

The project fits into this category by acknowledging how the Visitor Centre delivers sustainability and productivity to the region through creating lasting economic benefits to the town as well as a creation of jobs. The redevelopment sets the future for Wentworth by introducing a new tourism attraction through taking an old building and bringing it new life through the development of a community hub. It addresses long-term infrastructure priorities by introducing new facilities to Wentworth, as well as sharing resources by creating more efficient ways of working. Technological innovations are utilised through the interactive displays and games.



The redevelopment sets the future for Wentworth by introducing a new tourism attraction through taking an old building and bringing it new life through the development of a community hub.

Congratulations to all of the winners and honourable mentions this year and thank you to councils across Australia for being a part of the success of the 2025 National Awards for Local Government. Your incredible projects, community strength and spirit is inspiring to all.

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