For the past 30 years, the National Awards for Local Government have recognised local government agencies nationwide for their dedication and innovation in delivering quality services to communities in urban and regional Australia.

This year I am pleased to welcome Optus Business and Woodside Energy Ltd. as private sector sponsors, joining with Australian Public Service departments in celebrating the outstanding achievements of local government.

I announced the category winners in April. I would like to congratulate the winning councils and commend all the nominees for their tireless efforts in delivering targeted, quality services that help build strong and resilient communities.

The 2016 winners were selected by independent judging panels. The quality of the entries was outstanding and the judges had a difficult task in selecting the winners.

These awards recognise the crucial role local government plays in developing and delivering infrastructure and services to provide local solutions to meet local challenges.

I encourage you to look through this booklet which showcases a broad range of projects; and I also encourage you to share your information and expertise with other councils.

The Hon Paul Fletcher MP
Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government
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About the National Awards for Local Government

The National Awards for Local Government is an annual celebration of Australian local government achievements. The Awards spotlight the important role of local governments in delivering targeted quality services to Australians in urban and regional communities.

Through the Awards, the Australian Government celebrates local government projects that demonstrate leading practice, deliver better outcomes for communities, have the potential to be rolled out across the country and which make a meaningful difference to their regions. The Government recognises that as the closest tier of government to Australians, local governments play a critical role in maintaining and developing the nation’s social and economic fabric, and supports their contributions to innovation, deregulation and smaller government.

Local governments are invited to submit projects that contribute to building a stronger, more diverse and productive economy, and deliver better services at a local community level in the following categories.

From the winners of the ten categories, a National Award for Excellence is chosen by a national judging panel.

- **Arts Animates** – excellence in building innovative and inspired communities sponsored by the Ministry for the Arts in the Department of Communications and the Arts
- **Boosting Productivity through Infrastructure** sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
- **Contributing to Regional Growth** sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
- **Digital Innovation in Local Government** sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
- **Disability Access and Inclusion** sponsored by the Department of Social Services
- **Excellence in Road Safety** sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
- **Innovation to Create More Liveable Australian Cities** sponsored by Optus Business
- **Multicultural Australia – Strength in Diversity** sponsored by the Department of Social Services
- **Promoting Indigenous Recognition** sponsored by Woodside Energy Ltd.
- **Youth Economic Participation** sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
National Award for Excellence Winner
Mackay Regional Council, Qld

Transforming a Water Business

In taking out this year’s National Award for Excellence, Mackay Regional Council demonstrated outstanding and creative use of technology in developing a program highly relevant to a continent as and as Australia.

The technology used in this project has strong potential to be used by other councils and more broadly has applicability in the utility industry.

Under this project, Mackay Regional Council’s Water & Waste Services Unit responded creatively to the challenges of population increase leading to water tariff growth by designing and implementing a water use strategy incorporating non-capital solutions. One of the key elements of the strategy was the way in which data was collected and used by consumers, which fundamentally changed the cost of delivering services.

A coordinated approach to research, planning and implementation was used which focused on community and business engagement during the process. Using a consumer-centric approach, the demand management program features groundbreaking automated metering infrastructure. Consumption monitoring software includes a free community portal that provides the Council and residents with detailed information on water consumption patterns to help them make more informed decisions on usage. Residents are educated on their consumption via a social marketing campaign, with tips on managing their outdoor water use.

This highly innovative project also makes intelligent use of data that verifies its outcomes. The data collected has changed the way Mackay Regional Council manages water use and how it engages with customers. It creatively accrued learning as it went, enabling project refinement based on experience.

Strong community and business involvement utilised a range of innovative and creative methods. The information made available to customers saves them both money and water. Customer segmentation has meant messages on water use can be more targeted.

The project formed part of a clear overarching strategy outlined in the Council’s corporate plan. As a result of the project, Mackay Regional Council has been able to defer $100 million in capital expenditure and reduce the forward price path of water to $500 per annum per customer. In parallel, the Council also learned how best to communicate with customers to change their water use behaviour.
Arts Animates – excellence in building innovative and inspired communities

The Arts Animates Award category is sponsored by the Ministry for the Arts in the Department of Communications and the Arts.

The Ministry for the Arts develops and administers programs and policies that encourage excellence in art, support for cultural heritage and public access to arts and culture. The funding and support the Australian Government provides helps artists and organisations shape our cultural landscape, increase cultural diversity, and inspire, educate and entertain audiences across Australia and around the world.

About the category

The Arts Animates Award recognises excellence by local governments in building innovative and inspired communities that:

- encourage community engagement and participation in artistic activities;
- support new arts or cultural activities by artists and organisations that bring the community together and celebrate local identity;
- promote cross-sector partnerships, networks or collaborations; and
- build sustainability and encourage commercial success for artists and organisations.

The important role of local governments in arts and cultural activities

The Australian Government believes all Australians, whether in regional areas or major cities, should have access to artistic and cultural activities, performances and exhibitions. Work by arts and cultural organisations and artists can inspire and challenge us, provoke new thoughts and ideas, and give us fresh perspectives on the world.

In sponsoring this category Award, the Ministry for the Arts recognises the important role local government has in creating vibrant local communities through arts and cultural activities.
Blue Mountains City Council, NSW

Street Art Walk

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Street Art Walk is a dynamic, community-driven outdoor art gallery located in Katoomba CBD. Designed to activate a previously passive laneway, the gallery has quickly become a cultural treasure within the Blue Mountains.

Street Art Walk is an excellent example of a local government successfully working on innovative and challenging arts projects in close collaboration with other organisations, including not-for-profit groups, Street Art Murals Australia, the University of Western Sydney, Mountains Youth Services Team and local business and community stakeholders. With eight per cent of locally available jobs in creative industries, the Blue Mountains City Council is focused on supporting local cultural initiatives and creative industries development.

Acting on a suggestion from a local business owner, Blue Mountains City Council worked collaboratively to motivate business and community support to drive this unique project. It adopted a rigorous consultation process to ensure appropriate conservation of historic architecture, as well as managing an extensive crowd fundraising activity.

International, national and local artists paint large-scale artworks through a curated process of proposal and selection. Stylistically the murals cover all street art styles and are temporary by nature, ensuring an evolving and dynamic gallery that will remain contemporary for years to come. The Street Art Walk has transformed a dilapidated area within the centre of Katoomba into Australia’s largest curated outdoor street art gallery.

With the launch of the Street Art Walk at the 2015 Blue Mountains Winter Magic Festival, this vibrant and attractive space now covers more than 30 walls that provide over 3,000 square meters of paintable space up to three storeys high featuring world standard works of street art from all aerosol disciplines.

The Street Art Walk has provided outcomes including urban beautification, artist validation, increased tourism, social inclusion and community safety. It has supported local artists as well as attracting artists of international repute from Chile, Mexico, Brazil and Australia. As a result of this unique attraction, there has been an increase in tourism and in community pride. The gallery is registering 4.5 stars on Trip Advisor and is rated as one of the top 10 places to visit in the Blue Mountains.
The Bathurst Possum Skin Project was a multi-faceted community arts project developed by Bathurst Regional Art Gallery (BRAG) in collaboration with the Bathurst Wiradyuri and Community Elders Group (BWEG) and the local Aboriginal community. The objective of the project was to create opportunities for reconciliation, empowerment and cultural understanding during Bathurst’s commemoration of its bicentennial year in 2015 (B200).

In the lead-up to B200, BRAG worked with the BWEG, the local Aboriginal community, and Banmirra Arts Victoria to host a Possum Skin Cloak Workshop where over 60 members of the community worked together to construct and decorate two traditional possum skin cloaks.

These cloaks became a central part of the B200 Proclamation Day Ceremony on 15 May 2015 when one was presented by Dinawan Dyirribang, a Wiradyuri Elder, to the Mayor of Bathurst in a symbolic gesture of reconciliation.

Possum skin cloaks are one of the most sacred cultural expressions of the Aboriginal people of south-eastern Australia. They were traditionally incised with designs significant to the wearer and their clan group.

This project represented a profound symbol of reconciliation for the Bathurst community, including becoming a powerful tool for healing and cultural pride for the local Aboriginal community. The opportunity to learn the skills, cultural protocols and connection to Country associated with this important cultural ritual and share Wiradyuri culture and history with the broader Bathurst community.

The project aligns with specific Bathurst Regional Council policies such as its Community and Social Plan (Strengthen Aboriginal Communities); Reconciliation Action Plan (Showcase local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork in Council facilities); Bathurst 2036 Community Action Plan (Liveable Communities); and State and Federal priorities supporting reconciliation.

The possum skin cloak healing workshops received a highly commended in the Museums Australia’s MAGNA Awards (Museums and Galleries National Awards) 2015 in the Indigenous Project or Keeping Place Category.
The Boosting Productivity through Infrastructure Award category is sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development supports the Australian Government in responding to emerging and critical issues affecting the nation, including: growing demand for infrastructure and transport; improving the social and economic outcomes for Australia’s regions; dealing with the opportunities and challenges presented by projected population and demographic changes; and increasing Australia’s productivity.

The Department also helps manage the Government’s significant investments in infrastructure, with the aim of improving national and local productivity and increasing the economic, social and sustainable well-being of Australian communities.

About the category

The Boosting Productivity through Infrastructure Award recognises forward-thinking local governments that are contributing to the Australian Government’s plan to invest in more modern infrastructure to boost productivity.

The important role of local governments in boosting productivity through infrastructure

As Australia’s population and economy grow and new opportunities and challenges emerge, the growth in demand for infrastructure and access to transport systems across all modes will intensify in both our urban and regional centres. So too will the challenges in managing increased urbanisation and social and economic pressures in our regions. Therefore, we need to ensure Australia’s infrastructure and transport systems attract the investment needed for a fully functioning, efficient and productive economy.
Tamworth Regional Council, NSW

Tamworth Regional Council – Regional Playground

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The Tamworth Regional Playground is a socially inclusive recreational hub that sets a new standard for community parks in regional NSW by catering for all abilities and age groups. The aim of the playground was to widen lifestyle opportunities in the region and enhance the quality of life, and to meet the recreation, health and wellbeing needs of local and regional communities.

The Regional Playground features intergenerational equity where visitors regardless of ability or age can use the interactive play and health zones. The facility is separated into zones to suit children, families, the aged and the disabled, and so can be used by all community members irrespective of ability.

Equipment includes an outdoor gym with 13 pieces of static and dynamic equipment, a children’s interactive bike track with bridges and interactive controls, and a skywalk which is the only one of its kind in the southern hemisphere. There are also three giant slides, a water splash pad feature, four towers and a web style net which acts as an access point to climb to the slides. The equipment was selected to match all abilities and also includes a wheelchair-accessible carousel and mammoth swing.

Innovative methods were used in procuring and delivering the project, building on technology to create something that is not a standard playground. Lifecycle costs were established during the planning phase to ensure the sustainability of the facility including servicing of equipment, operational/maintenance costs, staffing levels, and depreciation and subsequent replacement of equipment.

The Regional Playground is a free facility which offers picnic and BBQ areas. A café/restaurant was designed to enable ‘line of sight’ playground supervision and an amphitheatre stage completes the scene. The playground is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week due to the use of advanced technology that includes smart lighting, a state of the art CCTV network, smart parking and smart waste removal. Parking includes two disabled parking bays.

The facility enhances regional tourism. Visitations since its opening have well and truly exceeded the initial 1,000 visitors per week. The Tamworth Regional Council has recently built a second playground, enabling the area to promote itself as a playground hub.
Contributing to Regional Growth

The Contributing to Regional Growth Award category is sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, contributes to the prosperity of the economy and the wellbeing of all Australians by assisting regions to realise their potential and manage their own futures.

The Australian Government’s approach to regional development is to work in partnership with communities, government and the private sector to foster the development of self-reliant communities and regions, creating the right climate and environment to encourage the establishment of viable enterprises.

About the category

The Contributing to Regional Growth Award recognises councils collaborating on a regional basis with other councils, Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees, communities and/or other organisations to strengthen investment and development opportunities, share resources, build regional competitive advantage and create jobs.

The important role of local governments in contributing to regional growth

Australia’s regions are integral to our values and sense of identity, which come from our unique and diverse culture, landscape, history and people.

As public sector agencies, councils have a responsibility to continually improve their performance to achieve optimal value for their residents, particularly when there are community expectations for councils to do more for their communities. Improved performance can be achieved through greater efficiency by adopting innovative management practices, exploiting the potential of technology, developing more customer-focused service delivery arrangements, and/or collaborating with other councils in the region.
Swan Hill Rural City Council, Vic

Pioneer Settlement Redevelopment – Heartbeat of the Murray

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Swan Hill’s Pioneer Settlement is a living history museum which interprets and activates pioneering life in the Murray/Mallee region from 1830 to 1930. Swan Hill Rural City Council has recently undertaken a significant redevelopment of the ageing Pioneer Settlement that has transformed it into a thriving tourism attraction.

The redevelopment was driven by falling visitation, ageing infrastructure and an increasing Council subsidy to operate the Pioneer Settlement. In determining the way forward, the Council used a broad consultative process seeking feedback from the community, adjoining councils and visitors to guide potential changes to the Pioneer Settlement.

Rather than continuing the Pioneer Settlement in its existing format, Swan Hill Rural City Council took an innovative approach that transformed it from a stagnant museum into a living and breathing experience centre that provides an interactive show for visitors. The ‘jewel in the crown’ is a sound and light spectacular called ‘The Heartbeat of the Murray’ that will attract tens of thousands of additional visitors each year.

The show is set on the banks of the Little Murray River and uses water as the medium to interpret the story of the Murray River.

Lasers are projected from both sides of the river to create a 4D experience above the water. Smoke, snow, fire and bubble machines draw the visitor further into the experience. An augmented reality phone application complements the night time Heartbeat show.

In addition, the Lower Murray Inn has been reconfigured into a function, restaurant and bar space, the paddle steamer Pyap provides cruises along the Murray River and an old hall has been redeveloped into a fully functioning commercial café run by the Pioneer Settlement volunteer group.

The redevelopment has provided direct and indirect economic benefit to the region, created jobs and stimulated private sector investment in the Pioneer Settlement. In the short time since the changes, the visitor numbers have increased and are on target to meet an increase of 20 per cent this year.
Cairns Water Security Strategy – A Community Collaborative Approach

In late 2013 the Cairns Regional Council resolved to review and update its water security strategy (CWSS) to cover the next 30 years. To ensure this reflected the community’s needs and desires, it employed a best practice collaborative process for stakeholder participation and community engagement.

The Council established a reference panel to provide a platform for this. In 2014, the Water Security Advisory Group (WSAG) was formed with an independent Chairman to guide the development of the Council’s 30-year water security strategy.

WSAG membership included a wide range of local and state government departments, councils, Indigenous and youth groups, businesses and community stakeholders, who all played an active role in the consultation process and the development of the strategy. A number of different water supply options within the Council area were considered, and in a demonstration of regional collaboration, opportunities in adjacent catchments were also identified.

Through the WSAG process the CWSS was developed to provide a blueprint for the Council to ensure safe, reliable and secure water supplies supporting population and economic growth, along with an implementation plan and governance framework.

Communication and consultation has continued. As individual projects are rolled out, regular updates are provided to WSAG members and the Chairman continues to act as an independent advisor to the Council. The Council attended market days ahead of the commencement of the first capital project to inform the local community of proposed works and held meetings with major individual stakeholders.
The Digital Innovation in Local Government Award category is sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, contributes to the prosperity of the economy and the wellbeing of all Australians by assisting local governments to manage their own futures.

**About the category**

The Digital Innovation in Local Government Award recognises councils that have implemented effective and innovative initiatives to improve services through digital projects.

Local governments provide essential services and planning for their communities. Digital innovation in service delivery will make it easier for individuals and businesses to access local government services.

**The important role of local governments in contributing to digital innovation**

Every day, more and more Australians are choosing to interact with all levels of government on their mobiles, tablets and computers rather than face-to-face or over the phone. Local governments that take up the opportunity to use and engage the digital world will be able to better meet the needs of their local communities.

Going digital offers many opportunities to deliver beneficial change and reshape local government service delivery at a much lower cost. Local governments across Australia have digital strategies in place and are broadening access, system functionality and information for their local communities.
Mackay Regional Council, Qld

Transforming a Water Business

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Water & Waste Services (WWS) is a commercialised business unit of Mackay Regional Council, responsible for the provision of quality, cost effective and environmentally sustainable water services to the Mackay region. High population growth over the past decade has created challenges for WWS, resulting in tariff growth well in excess of inflation rates. Recognising that their approach was not sustainable, the Council took a non-capital approach that changed their strategy from a property-centric to a customer-centric view. This enabled the Council to look at ways in which to engage with consumers to change consumer behaviour.

The strategy WWS adopted incorporated three components – automated meter infrastructure, consumption monitoring software developed by MiWater and the myh2o website (myh2o.qld.gov.au). The automated metering infrastructure is connected to consumption monitoring software that sits on the myh2o free community portal. This provides the Council and consumers with detailed information on water consumption patterns to help them make more informed decisions on usage and put plans in place. Property owners can view their daily water consumption, and are alerted to leaks and high consumption.

Segmentation of consumers has meant that the Council can tailor and target its water usage messages more effectively. Residents are being educated on their consumption via a social marketing campaign ‘Watch the Flow,’ with tips on managing their outdoor water use. Moving into a world of big data and by analysing data sets, consumption patterns can be identified from both usage and asset management perspectives and be used to plan and predict future trends.

The Council reports that in the last year there was a 10 per cent reduction in water demand, 12 per cent of residential properties were successfully informed of water leaks and the Council was able to defer $100 million in capital expenditure.
Logan City Council, Qld

Digital Innovation: Logan’s Interactive Mapping Tool and Online Estimators

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Logan’s Interactive Mapping Tool (LIMT) is a planning scheme mapping tool and platform for Australia’s first online Infrastructure Charges Estimator and Environmental Offsets Estimator. It was originally developed in 2014 to support customer enquiries during the public consultation phase for the draft Logan Planning Scheme. The LIMT has proved popular with both customers and staff for its ease of use in delivering property-specific planning information.

The newest addition to the LIMT is the Infrastructure Charges Estimator, which allows developers to understand the infrastructure charges associated with a proposed development before they commit to a project.

It also enables customers to obtain a site-specific and development-specific estimate of infrastructure and contributions required for developments that increase demand on trunk infrastructure.

The Infrastructure Charges Estimator complements Logan’s Environmental Offset Estimator. Together they allow customers to answer common questions, such as about density and subdivision, and provide access to further detail for industry professionals.

Customers can use the tool 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to freely access planning reports and maps, and receive an estimate of infrastructure contributions and environmental offset charges applicable to proposed developments. They no longer have to contact or visit Council during business hours. The LIMT offers easy access to the Logan Planning Scheme 2015, which provides further information about acceptable development and land use options in each zone.
The Disability Access and Inclusion Award category is sponsored by the Department of Social Services.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Social Services, is working to improve the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia by responding to need across their life course, encouraging independence and participation, and supporting a cohesive society.

The National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 provides a ten-year national policy framework for all levels of government to improve the lives of people with disability. The Strategy seeks to drive a more inclusive approach to the design of policies, programs and infrastructure so that people with disability can participate in all areas of Australian life and have the same opportunities as other Australians to fulfill their potential as equal citizens. The Strategy was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments in 2011.

About the category

The Disability Access and Inclusion Award recognises local governments that have applied the principles of the Strategy by engaging with people with disability, their families and carers to develop and implement innovative services, practices and/or policies that provide greater opportunities for people with disability to participate in local community life.

This may include access and inclusion in any sphere or capacity, including but not limited to:

- removing barriers to participation of people with disability in the community;
- strategies and actions that give people with disability a voice in the community and the capacity to influence the design of services, programs and infrastructure that impact their lives;
- greater access to mainstream services and support; and
- improved access to:
  - the physical and built environment;
  - information technology;
  - social and cultural activities;
  - arts, sports and recreational activities; and
  - employment or other economic opportunities.

The important role of local governments in disability access and inclusion

The successful implementation of the Strategy is the responsibility of all levels of government. A focus of all governments under the Strategy is to improve the accessibility of mainstream services, supports and infrastructure for people with disability. Local governments play a vital role in implementing the Strategy within local communities.
Kiama Municipal Council, NSW

Kiama Dementia Friendly Project

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Kiama Municipal Council has worked innovatively over many decades to meet service delivery needs identified by its community. This has included working through the Kiama Age Friendly Project that researched how to support the active involvement of older residents in community life over the longer term.

The Dementia Friendly Kiama Project builds on this. This project commenced in July 2014 when Kiama Municipal Council was approached by Alzheimer’s Australia and the University of Wollongong to take part in an innovative pilot to work towards becoming one of Australia’s first dementia-friendly communities. Working together, the three organisations leveraged complementary skills with community knowledge that resulted in a multi-faceted approach that has gained broad community participation and global recognition.

A collaborative project approach is driven by people actually living with dementia. It uses a participatory action research model and a community development framework to build individual and group skills and achieve sustainability. In the project’s initial stage, qualitative research addressed attitudes to dementia, aspects of the physical environment that require change and generally what it is like for dementia sufferers to live in Kiama.

Drawing on findings, an Action Plan was developed in consultation with members of the Dementia Friendly Alliance and advisory groups. Activities include: community events to raise knowledge of the project; education for the general community and health providers; the Ourplace interactive online map of dementia-friendly places; inter-generational work with the Council’s Youth Service; a business seminar on the benefits of being dementia-friendly; and the launching of the Dementia Illawarra Shoalhaven website (dementiaillawarra.com) to provide a one shop stop for professionals and the general community.
City of Greater Dandenong, Vic

Walkfest Disability Inclusion Project

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The Walkfest project is a community-based initiative celebrating and promoting integration and social inclusion of people with disability. Participants work in partnership with young people from mainstream education settings to develop and deliver a large scale community event.

Utilising a youth participation framework, the project encourages young people with disability to participate in their community while building social networks, independence and transferable life skills. They are encouraged to participate as co-organisers to build their confidence and a sense of pride in their abilities.

The Walkfest event provided an opportunity for the entire community to come together to celebrate diversity and inclusion while engaging in activities including sports and dance. Walks to the event were organised from a number of points around Dandenong to promote the health benefits of walking, and concluded at Hemmings Park where all participants met up to celebrate the event.

The Council’s Youth Services team also partnered with Dandenong High School and The Bridge disability service to engage community participation via an eight week Walkfest Mentoring and Training program. In 2015, after two years of success with existing partners, Emerson School and Noble Park Secondary College also showed interest in participating. Expansion of the program provided an opportunity for them to work in partnership to deliver all aspects of the event including catering (working with The Lions Club), sports activities, stage management of performances and a talent quest.
The Excellence in Road Safety Award category is sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, contributes to the wellbeing of all Australians through planning and investing in infrastructure, and by fostering safe and efficient transport systems. The Department also supports a strong and liveable Australia by facilitating local partnerships between all levels of government and local communities.

The Department has a range of specific functions that support the Australian Government’s role in road safety. These include: administering vehicle safety standards for new vehicles, administering national road investment programs, administering the Keys2drive learner driver program, producing national road safety statistics, and coordinating the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020.

About the category

The Excellence in Road Safety Award recognises councils that have implemented effective and innovative initiatives to improve road safety in their communities.

Councils may enter any road safety project in this Award category including, but not limited to, projects that:

- improve road or roadside infrastructure with a focus on safety benefits;
- address the specific safety needs of vulnerable groups such as older road users, motorcyclists, cyclists or pedestrians;
- target specific risk factors such as drink/drug driving, speeding, non-usage of seatbelts/helmets, fatigue, distraction or pedestrian intoxication;
- improve road safety for Indigenous Australians;
- address safety issues relating to heavy vehicle transport; and/or
- improve emergency medical response services for road crash victims.

The important role of local governments in road safety

The annual economic cost of road crashes in Australia is enormous – estimated as $27 billion per year – and the social impacts are devastating. Local governments can improve road safety through local community initiatives.
The Backpackers and Seasonal Workers Road Safety Campaign project was initiated in 2015 after Southern Downs Regional Council identified an increasing number of fatalities and road accidents involving foreign backpackers and seasonal workers who come to Southern Downs Region to harvest fruit and vegetables. The Council recognised that further road safety education was needed.

The project used a multilayered approach to improve road safety in the region. This included the establishment of a taskforce with representation from Southern Downs Regional Council, Stanthorpe Police, employment agencies, fruit and vegetable growers, RACQ, the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, Stanthorpe Road Safety Committee, Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce and accommodation providers.

Working through the taskforce, the Council identified a series of activities they could implement that would raise awareness of road safety. This included the use of hard infrastructure such as innovative multilingual signage and road markings, road safety marketing materials in the form of banner pens and flyers, community events welcoming backpackers and seasonal workers to the region, and online materials that provide information on road safety and driving conditions unique to Queensland and Australia.

In order to have broader reach, the content of the brochures and website are produced in four different languages.

The project supports key objectives of the National Road Safety Strategy, including its provision for developing road rules and enforcement strategies to encourage compliance and manage non-compliance with the road rules. Early indications of the success of the project are supported by a decrease in the accident rate by 15 per cent.

The Campaign has received two Safer Queensland Community Grants awarded by Suncorp to Southern Downs Regional Council and to Stanthorpe Police.
Innovation to Create More Liveable Australian Cities

The Innovation to Create More Liveable Australian Cities Award category is sponsored by Optus Business:

“Optus Business is the business navigator driving innovation and thought leadership and helping local governments deliver smart city solutions that ultimately improve citizen experiences. By leveraging our heritage in providing leading telecommunications and ICT solutions, Optus Business is developing humanistic customer-centric solutions to deliver business outcomes. Optus Business recognises that local governments make a significant contribution to addressing citizens’ needs regarding engagement and connectivity through mobile and social networking platforms.”

About the category

Cities and communities today face complex challenges to positively impact the lives of citizens and to transform public services to a customer focus. The concept of smart cities is a response to these challenges.

For this Award, councils could enter projects which involve:

• providing services that connect the community and enable citizen feedback mechanisms;
• delivering a suite of solutions to strengthen safety and security within the community;
• creating applications that leverage available data feeds and provide new information services;
• implementing a holistic WiFi capability that integrates community with external services e.g. retail;
• providing smart lighting and/or smart waste services to improve efficiencies;
• light up the community with digital signage and way-finding for tourists and visitors;
• creating a living lab environment to foster innovation in the entrepreneur and development community;
• opening up data feeds for start-up application development; and/or
• running hackathons or data type programs to foster innovation and excite the community.

The important role of local governments in promoting more liveable Australian cities

Rapid urbanization, demographic changes and the heightened awareness of safety and security is driving a need for better and more efficient urban services. This Award recognises local governments that plan and deliver a customer-centric suite of solutions to their citizens that embrace community feedback and deliver outcomes that enable everyday life.
Over the past 18 months, Mackay City Centre has experienced a complete makeover of its physical infrastructure, aesthetics, services and image. This $18 million revitalisation was completed in November 2015 and drew upon a flow of information and ideas between the public and private sectors.

The City Centre Revitalisation Project (CCRP) is the first stage of an overarching strategy to revitalise Mackay City Centre with a view to cementing Mackay as a destination of choice. This has covered streetscapes, restoration of the former council building and public art. Mackay Regional Council’s goal is to create a revamped hub of activity, and to implement new and exciting events and services that encourage city visitation, expenditure, employment and investment.

In an effort to ‘freshen up’ building exteriors and align them with the city’s more modern look and feel, the Council also introduced the successful Facade Improvement Scheme under which it has approved over 30 grants, with owners contributing significant resources of their own.

Finalisation of this important initiative, co-funded by the Council and the Australian Government, was celebrated by a rebranding and reactivation strategy. This commenced with the Twilight City celebration that attracted more than 25,000 people and served to rebrand the city centre. It simultaneously provided a platform for launching new marketing materials, including free WiFi for city-goers and a new-look website (mackaycitycentre.com.au).

Mackay’s City Centre is now a revamped hub of activity that offers new events and services. The entire CCRP is anticipated to return more than $110 million in economic benefit to the region over the next decade.
The Multicultural Australia Award category is sponsored by the Department of Social Services. The Australian Government, through the Department of Social Services, works to improve the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia, responding to needs across people’s lives, encouraging independence and participation, and supporting a productive and harmonious diverse society. The Department’s services are delivered through offices in every state and territory. The Department manages a range of projects that assist migrants to settle into life in Australia and promote respect, fairness and a sense of belonging for everyone.

Further information on these projects can be found at www.dss.gov.au.

About the category

The Multicultural Australia Award recognises local initiatives that promote the benefits of and/or respond to opportunities and challenges arising from Australia’s cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

For example, councils could enter projects for this Award which involve:

- improvement of local employment outcomes and opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
- innovative approaches to bring people together to build local social cohesion and community harmony;
- promotion and celebration of local cultural diversity, such as through multicultural policies, interfaith/intercultural initiatives; and/or
- development of inclusive programs which engage and support youth throughout their community.

The important role of local governments in promoting a multicultural Australia

Local governments can provide a supportive community for migrants by promoting cultural diversity through multicultural policies, inter-faith initiatives, celebrations, and citizenship and affirmation ceremonies. Local governments need to consider the prospect of employment opportunities and programs to engage and support young migrant refugees and to be mindful of improvements required for migrants, such as interpreting, aged care and childcare facilities.
The City of Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse municipality in Victoria, with residents from over 150 different birthplaces and well over half of its population born overseas, including refugees and asylum seekers. Around 46 per cent of young people in the municipality were born overseas.

The Council actively seeks to build a socially cohesive community through delivering a range of innovative and inclusive services and programs.

The Council’s Youth and Family Services Department developed the Creating Change program to help strengthen social cohesion by providing opportunities for young people to make meaningful connections across diverse cultures. One aspect the program wanted to address was to build resistance to all forms of extremism.

It is an innovative initiative which seeks to engage young people as active agents in strengthening diversity and community resilience. Its three-part approach enables it to be flexibly delivered and ensures young people’s engagement. In developing the program, a broad range of stakeholders were consulted, including universities working on counter-terrorism, religious councils and the Victorian Department of Education.

Part 1 teaches effective self-resilience strategies, peace building and conflict management skills by providing information and activities that explore identity, what contributes to a harmonious community and how to create an inclusive community. Part 2, Building Bridges, is a follow-on full-day module that extends the group’s thinking and combines participants from across participating schools to further discuss and share interfaith and intercultural experiences. Part 3 involves training the participants as Youth Ambassadors to enable them to deliver school-based projects. This further empowers young people to take a lead in tackling issues relating to social cohesion.

The program is open to all public, private and independent schools irrespective of faith, and is led by the Youth Ambassadors. The Creating Change program is aligned with the Victorian Government’s Essential Learning Standards, to enable the program to be embedded in the school curriculum.
Multicultural Australia – Strength in Diversity

Alice Springs Town Council, NT

Big Day Out in Harmony and Citizenship Ceremonies

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The 2011 Census reported that 29 per cent of Alice Springs’ population was born in a country other than Australia; not captured by census data are the many foreign workers, including tourists and backpackers, employed in Alice Springs’ service industry. Alice Springs Town Council identified a need to welcome and be inclusive towards overseas-born residents.

In concert with Multicultural Community Services of Central Australia (MCSCA), the Council developed a strategy to improve Citizenship Ceremonies and implement a day celebrating the cultural diversity of overseas-born residents called ‘Big Day Out in Harmony’.

In collaboration with MCSCA, the Council held this event on 9 May 2015. An estimated 500-600 people attended. Approximately 120 people born in countries such as Zimbabwe, the Philippines, Fiji, Malaysia, India, Sudan, Malaysia and Turkey performed traditional cultural acts, dance and music, supplemented by 40 stall holders selling traditional food, art and craft.

Citizenship Ceremonies were performed on Harmony Day, Australia Day, Territory Day and Australian Citizenship Day. By incorporating ceremonies into traditional Australian and Territorian celebrations, the Council was ensuring these days were also able to be celebrated by new citizens.

This event is intended to be held annually.
The Promoting Indigenous Recognition Award category is sponsored by Woodside Energy Ltd:

“Woodside is an Australian oil and gas company with a global presence, recognised for its world-class capabilities – as an explorer, a developer, a producer and a supplier.

Underpinned by 60 years of experience, we are Australia’s most experienced liquefied natural gas (LNG) operator and largest independent oil and gas company. Wherever we work, we are committed to living our values of integrity, respect, discipline, excellence, working together and working sustainably.

Our operations are characterised by strong safety, environmental and social performance in remote and challenging locations. We recognise that meaningful long-term relationships with communities are fundamental to maintaining our licence to operate, and we work to build mutually-beneficial relationships across all locations where we are active.”

In general terms, this Award involves acknowledging in local communities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are the first inhabitants of this nation, that their unique culture and history is valued and recognising their contribution.

Meaningful engagement involves listening to Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the community, bringing them together to discuss the best way of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and history in the community, and implementing this together.

The important role of local governments in promoting Indigenous recognition

Local governments have the potential to inspire individuals and groups to strengthen relationships with each other and to promote Indigenous recognition. Engaging through local government is about meaningful two-way interaction, including bringing together Indigenous people and the wider community.

About the category

The Promoting Indigenous Recognition Award acknowledges local government initiatives that promote recognition of the unique place and contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia (such as through Constitutional recognition), through engaging Indigenous peoples in local communities.
City of Stirling, WA

Stirling Aboriginal Engagement Project

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The City of Stirling, one of the most diverse local government authorities in Australia, identified a pressing issue of conflict between Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities, particularly newly arrived migrants. Community consultations were held with a wide range of people, from which it was found that Aboriginal people felt that they were not acknowledged or respected in the community and that a lack of appreciation of the history of Aboriginal culture was a factor in this.

To build understanding and tolerance, the City introduced Cultural Orientation Tours and Mooro Country Tours – providing the public and new migrants with the opportunity to learn more about the local Noongar people. The tours include visiting significant Aboriginal sites within the City to provide a positive experience of Aboriginal people and their contribution to the community. Participants learn about traditional medicine, bush tucker, the cultural aspects of dance and language, and the commitment of the Noongar people to land, animals and water. This provides participants with a better understanding of Aboriginal culture and history. A booklet on the Mooro People’s Knowledge Trail has also been produced using a storytelling mosaic to identify the dream story and its importance to the area.

The City of Stirling has worked in partnership with Wadjak Northside Aboriginal Community Group to develop an Aboriginal Resource Centre in Balga as a celebration of culture, and as a place for education and skill development. Oral history interviews from the Noongar people were also captured and the collection is held within the City of Stirling Museum.

The tours are delivered in conjunction with Wadjak Northside Aboriginal Community Group, with support from the City of Stirling, to build the capacity of the Wadjak Group. As a result of the success of the tours, the City of Stirling is extending Mooro Country Tours to the wider community and anticipates that these tours will eventually be managed by the Aboriginal community, creating significant opportunities for further training and employment.
Mosman Municipal Council, NSW

Bungaree’s Farm

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Bungaree’s Farm is a cutting edge cross art form program for the development of contemporary Aboriginal art practices, consisting of research, residencies, workshops and exhibitions. The program provided new models for the development and presentation of contemporary Aboriginal arts.

Bungaree’s Farm developed into an exhibition of contemporary Aboriginal audio, video, performance and installation art. This explores Bungaree’s legacy arising from his prominence as an Indigenous identity in early colonial Sydney and marks the 200th anniversary of the establishment of Bungaree’s Farm by Governor Macquarie. The exhibition was the result of a series of intensive residency workshops held on-site and led by renowned Aboriginal curator Djon Mundine OAM.

Working on the site of Bungaree’s Farm, the first land grant to Aboriginal people by colonial authorities, the project aimed to conceptually reclaim this area for Aboriginal people. The works were showcased in the T5 Camouflage Fuel Tank, a WWII naval fuel tank on the site. The exhibition addresses core issues of Aboriginal Australian identity and unresolved historical issues in a contemporary art context. It is designed to appeal to general audiences, with particular relevance to school students and audiences interested in Aboriginal and contemporary arts.

Bungaree’s Farm was successful in breaking new artistic ground, re-establishing Aboriginal arts practices, providing new venues for the presentation of artwork and in resurrecting the story of a prominent Aboriginal leader from the past.
The Youth Economic Participation Award category is sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, contributes to the prosperity of the economy and the wellbeing of all Australians by assisting local communities to realise their potential and manage their own futures. To do this, the Department works in partnership with regional, rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

About the category
The Youth Economic Participation Award recognises local governments that assist young people to become engaged in their local communities and/or engaged in the workforce; offer flexible services to assist young people to further their education or training; and offer activities for young people who are disengaged from education, training or employment to better support them in their local communities.

The Youth Economic Participation Award is for local governments that:
• provide support for young people who are unemployed, underemployed or disengaged from their communities;
• provide training, education and opportunities for young people; and
• implement innovative solutions between local businesses and young job seekers, including mentoring.

The important role of local governments in youth employment
Local governments play an important role in connecting young people to their communities and helping them achieve their potential.
The Yarra Young Entrepreneur program was a joint collaboration between the Youth Services and the Economic Development Units of the City of Yarra, developed in response to increasing levels of youth unemployment and requests from young people for assistance in pursuing small business ideas.

The program was designed as an alternative to funded mainstream employment programs by providing viable options for young people aged 16-25 to create their own employment opportunities. The City of Yarra felt that this program presented a point of difference in addressing youth unemployment.

The program was delivered over July-December 2015. In partnership with Enterprising Partnerships and other members of the local business community, the Youth Development Officer Education, Training and Employment Pathways, led a series of training workshops for eight young people to discuss and develop business ideas.

Participants were then connected to local mentors in their field of interest, who provided ongoing support to further develop business ideas and facilitated connections with local businesses and industry. All eight graduated from the program, receiving certificates from the Mayor in January 2016. As a result of the program, two of the participants have started their own businesses, five have found employment, two have commenced in the Victorian Government’s Getting Down to Business initiative and three have found subsidised work premises.

The Yarra Young Entrepreneur program recognises the role of local governments in delivering projects that create jobs which benefit both local communities and the nation. It assists unemployed young people to become engaged in their local community and the workforce by offering an innovative solution that links local businesses and young job seekers.

The City of Yarra has since joined forces with the City of Darebin and the City of Moreland to create the Young Entrepreneurs in the North program.
Sponsors

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