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Minister’s Message

As a proud former local government representative for the Toowoomba region in Queensland, I know first-hand the critical role local governments play in Australia’s communities.

Local Government has always been a key partner of the Australian Government. I am proud to support councils around Australia and recognise the best of the best through the National Awards for Local Government.

The Awards celebrate local government projects that demonstrate leading practice, deliver better outcomes for communities, have the potential to be rolled out across the country and make a meaningful difference.

All award entries are high-impact initiatives that are changing people’s lives and delivering great outcomes for communities and businesses. Faced with entries of such a high calibre, it is all the more difficult for our judging panels to choose a winner.

This year’s National Winner, the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council’s Emergency Management Network project successfully established a freely available, weather resistant, independently solar-powered telecommunications backup ‘hot-spot’ system for locals to use during emergencies. This allows this remote Cape York Aboriginal community and emergency services to access reliable telecommunications links during major weather events.

I’d also like to make a special mention of Ms Ashleigh Tapper who is the winner of the Next Gen Government Leader Award. Ms Tapper is an inspiring young woman and an outstanding example of someone who understands the value of community development. She applies leadership, passion and innovation in making a difference in her community, changing lives and futures for disadvantaged young people in the Armadale region.

This year, alongside the 10 category winners, the judging panels have also highly commended 13 extraordinary projects. This recognises the outstanding quality of applications received, and the difficulty in choosing between exceptional examples of local government practice and ingenuity.

I congratulate and celebrate our 2018 winners. Your hard work and success engaging your communities is a tribute to local government across Australia.

The Hon Dr John McVeigh MP
Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government
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About the National Awards for Local Government

The National Awards for Local Government celebrate Australian local government achievements each year. 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 make a meaningful difference to their regions. The Australian Government recognises that local governments play a critical role in maintaining and developing the nation’s social and economic fabric and building stronger communities into the future, as the closest tier of government.

The National Award for Excellence in Local Government is chosen by a national judging panel from the winners of the following ten categories:

- **Achieving Big Things in Small Communities**
  Sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities

- **Arts Animates—excellence in building vibrant and resilient communities**
  Sponsored by the Department of Communications and the Arts

- **Boosting Productivity through Infrastructure**
  Sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities

- **Contributing to Regional Growth**
  Sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities

- **Disability Access and Inclusion**
  Sponsored by the Department of Social Services

- **Excellence in Road Safety**
  Sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities

- **Innovation to Create More Liveable and Collaborative Communities**
  Sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities

- **Next Gen Local Government Leader**
  Sponsored by LG Professionals Australia and the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities

- **Prevention and Community Safety**
  Sponsored by the Department of Social Services

- **Promoting Indigenous Recognition**
  Sponsored by Woodside Energy Ltd.
National Award for Excellence Winner
Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council, QLD

Ngana Muruku Jundkurrijku Janay Wujal Wujal Emergency Management Network and Community Forum

In taking out the 2018 National Award for Excellence the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council shows how a small council with limited resources can resolve a local and important emergency management issue, through outstanding, innovative use of technology.

The remote Cape York Aboriginal Community of Wujal Wujal is vulnerable to severe weather events that can cause loss of landline and mobile 3G telecommunications, main power and road access. Telecommunications have failed on several occasions for periods in excess of 48 hours.

The project is an Australian first. The Wujal Wujal valley-wide Emergency Management Network and Community Forum enables the Council to communicate with the community during natural disasters when both telecommunications and power supplies fail.

The Council is able to batch issue warnings and notifications to network users and groups of users. This also enables the Council, police, health services and volunteers to manage conditions before and after emergency events, if normal telecommunications fail. Council staff can view and operate infrastructure including water and wastewater treatment and storage.

Non-emergency uses of the network are important in building familiarity with its operation, reflecting a highly inclusive approach. The system is tailored to the needs of the local Indigenous community. Soft interfaces ensure community engagement, with a local forum, a web manager, community messaging and user documentation in a form appropriate for Wujal Wujal. Users can also chat on forum-style communication pages similar to Facebook Messenger.

This project addresses the unique needs of a remote community, demonstrating a high degree of innovation and a highly inclusive approach that ensures all community members can use the facility. It is well designed, replicable and scalable for other councils.
Special Mention
Ashleigh Tapper, the City of Armadale, WA

Next Gen Local Government Leader

This Award is a new category for 2018 and recognises the contribution of an individual leader. Ashleigh Tapper was nominated by her supervisor as an outstanding example of an inspiring young leader who demonstrates strong leadership skills and enjoys great success in her role as the Community Development Officer for Youth in Armadale Council.

Ashleigh is a passionate and optimistic local government professional, driven by determination to make a difference. She has an impressive list of accomplishments to her credit in this area, including the establishment of the Armadale Aspire, Armadale Youth Network, Perfection Imperfections and Kinetic programs.

Ashleigh stepped into a space not usually filled by local government in bringing Armidale Aspire to life. This initiative attacks unemployment by partnering high schools with local businesses to help young people to gain career development and work experience. Ashleigh also chairs and coordinates the Armadale Youth Network – a group of more than 200 members from local agencies, community organisations, government officials and youth representatives.

Her leadership has encouraged collaboration between members to coordinate projects addressing social issues throughout the community. Stakeholders are now working together to help disadvantaged young people and hear their voices.

Ashleigh is an outstanding example of someone who understands the value of community development. She applies leadership, passion and innovation in making a difference in her community, changing lives and futures for disadvantaged young people in the Armadale region.
The Achieving Big Things in Small Communities Award category is sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities.

The Australian Government, through the Department, contributes to the prosperity of the economy and the wellbeing of all Australians by helping local governments to manage their own futures. The Australian Government recognises that local governments provide essential services and planning for their communities, and accordingly it provides local governments with $2.4 billion annually in untied funding through the Financial Assistance Grant program.

About the category

The Achieving Big Things in Small Communities Award category recognises excellence from local governments in providing infrastructure and services to communities of 5,000 people or less, who are:

- discovering innovative ways of providing essential local government services to a small community
- collaborating with their local communities in growing the local economy
- working in partnership with other local governments, the private sector or others, to provide local government services that may not have been otherwise available
- developing inclusive programs that support youth in finding meaningful opportunities to contribute to their local community, and
- using technology to connect disparate members of their community.

The important role of local governments in building vibrant and resilient small communities

Local governments are accomplishing big things for small communities. There are over 500 local governments around Australia, providing a broad range of economic and community infrastructure essential to the livelihood of local residents and industry participants. Almost 200 of these local governments are responsible for delivering infrastructure and services to communities with populations of less than 5,000 people.

Despite the challenges they may face, local governments in our smallest communities are taking big and innovative steps to achieve positive outcomes.
Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council, QLD

Ngana Muruku Jundkurjiku Janay Wujal Wujal Emergency Management Network and Community Forum

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Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council is an Indigenous Community on Cape York serviced by fragile landlines and a mobile 3G system that does not work in adverse weather. Severe weather events can also cause loss of mains power and prevent access for periods in excess of 72 hours.

A new communication system was designed for Council and volunteers to communicate within the community to manage conditions both pre and post-event, even when normal telecommunications are compromised.

Connection can be made with users’ existing devices including smartphones, VoIP phones and computers. The community and visitors can use voice and video calls, text messaging and emails at no cost via free apps. Controlled internet access is also available but limited to authorised users.

The Council, Police and Community Health Services can issue messages and alerts to community and visitors as text messages, emails or automated voice calls. Messages can be issued to ‘all users’, or to selected individuals or groups.

The Queensland Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning funded the innovative project as an Australian ‘first of type’. The design, construction and commissioning work was completed by an engineering and project management firm experienced in delivering infrastructure projects into regional and remote areas.

The Network is built on a microwave radio backbone linking two servers and access points which form a ‘service dome’. Network equipment operates independently of energy supplier Ergon, with each access point powered by solar and battery systems or backed up by an automatic generator. It operates parallel to the Council’s existing server and is firewalled to protect from unauthorised external access.

The servers share operations. Each is capable of automatically taking over and serving all operations should the other fail. The system automatically redistributes operation on failure of an access point. Council holds a set of spare critical Network ‘plug and play’ components, and remote access by technical support ensures quick rectification of any problems without attendance.

‘Free to Users’ is the critical feature of the system. Free usage encourages familiarity with the system in advance of an emergency event. This is particularly significant, as the use of prepaid phones is the norm and recharge is not possible when ordinary communications systems have failed. An important driver of success was effective community engagement. Every household has at least one person registered. User guides were prepared with culturally sensitive material, and made attractive and engaging by incorporating local artwork and images to support the understanding of the service.

The system has already proved its worth, having been utilised following a series of tropical storms that isolated the community.
Arts Animates—Excellence in Building Vibrant and Resilient Communities

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

The Department develops and administers programs and policies that encourage excellence in arts, support for cultural heritage and public access to arts and culture. The funding and support provided by the Australian Government 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 in capacity building and innovation by local governments to:

- leverage arts and culture to improve community sustainability and increase local economic opportunity
- create vibrant, liveable communities that use arts and culture to support community wellbeing
- celebrate local identity to both grow and attract creative talent and investment
- embrace diversity and encourage social inclusion through community participation in artistic activities, and
- support new arts or cultural activities that encourage commercial success for artists and arts organisations, including promoting cross-sector partnerships, networks or collaborations.

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 artists, arts and cultural organisations can inspire and challenge us, provoke new thoughts and ideas, and give us fresh perspectives on the world.

In sponsoring this Award category, the Department recognises the important role local government has in creating vibrant local communities through arts and cultural activities.
Gannawarra Shire Council, VIC

Gannawarra Performing Arts Partnership
Delivery Model

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Gannawarra Shire Council developed an innovative delivery model for a performing arts program, partnering with local communities. It is an excellent example of how local communities can achieve sustainable, social and economic outcomes through small financial investments.

Prior to 2016, the Council’s Arts and Culture Officer (ACO) delivered a mainly visual arts program. The Council identified a need for a diverse performing arts program delivered across the Shire, but was unable to deliver it on its own.

The project plan identified the need to work with the community to build capacity and offer a quality program. The project was underpinned by a mix of funding from Creative Victoria Small Regional Presenters grant, the Go Pitch fund managed by Showcase (Victoria’s performing arts marketplace), Gannawarra Shire Council, and a formal partnership with Regional Arts Victoria.

The model promoted sustainable growth by helping communities to reinvigorate public spaces for the ongoing delivery of performances. This not only provided new employment opportunities, but allowed local neighbouring community members to participate in arts activities that they would not otherwise experience. The project also helped empower local community leaders in the presentation of a unique performing arts program, in which community members are presenters in their own communities.

Project managers worked with communities through Council-wide Art Salons that provided regular forums to bring people together. The Council also reached out through newsletters, email, social media and focus groups.

Desk-based work was handled by the ACO, freeing up community volunteers to concentrate on creative direction and local engagement. Communities were included in all aspects of planning and delivering the annual program. Budgets, logistics and documentation was shared by the ACO, building the management capacity of community leaders.

The project tailored programs to community aspirations, drawing on the Council assets of dynamic community leaders, small but unique halls and enthusiastic audiences. The result was that the ACO delivered an outstanding program in very small communities, with populations ranging from 168 (Leitchville) to 3,893 (Kerang).
The Boosting Productivity through Infrastructure Award category is sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities.

The Department 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 Australian 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, including:

• enhancing infrastructure service delivery through the use of pricing mechanisms, technological solutions and/or regulatory changes
• providing innovative delivery options which support greater private sector involvement in public infrastructure provision
• improving understanding of sustainability, liveability and productivity in investment strategy and planning
• developing clear economic productivity benefits which address identified long-term infrastructure priorities to strengthen and diversify the regional economic base
• building capacity and diversity of regional economies, including facilitating local partnerships between all levels of government and local communities
• planning and coordinating transport and other infrastructure
• making better use of existing infrastructure, and
• ensuring delivery of high-benefit infrastructure projects with sound governance.

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.
Sunshine Coast Regional Council, QLD

Sunshine Coast Solar Farm

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Sunshine Coast Regional Council aims to be Australia’s most sustainable region. It has established the Sunshine Coast Solar Farm as the first utility scale solar farm in Australia constructed by a local government. This 15MW facility is the largest in South East Queensland and is accredited under the Australian Government’s Large-scale Renewable Energy Target.

This infrastructure project is an outstanding example of a forward-thinking local government actively investing in modern infrastructure and maximising opportunities for the future wellbeing of its community.

The Council is Australia’s first local government to offset its entire electricity consumption from renewable energy that it generates itself. The project employs an innovative business model in which project value is underpinned by extensive business case development and robust financial analysis. The key objective is to provide a renewable source of electricity to Council sites at a lower ‘whole of life’ cost than that of traditional retail electricity supply. It also helps develop a clean technology industry hub on the Sunshine Coast.

The Council’s project partners include: Downer Utilities Australia, contracted to design, construct and operate the solar farm; Energex, a distribution network service provider that built the 33 kV switchyard connecting the solar farm to the electricity grid; and Diamond Energy, the electricity retailer that buys and sells electricity for the Council in the National Electricity Market.

A team was established to manage project design and construction, with representatives from Downer and the Council. Another team coordinated the grid connection process including the Council, Energex, the Australian Energy Market Operator and Downer. A third team monitors operations and maintenance, and manages the on-going performance.

The Council was very proactive in engaging the local community. Communication tools used to ensure information reached stakeholders in a timely manner included community forums, print, radio, television and a page on the Council’s website. The Council hosted barbecues on site for local residents. Online materials included the planning application, business case summary, factsheets and FAQs, media releases and live data feeds.

The output from the 15MW solar farm has been steadily increasing since its commissioning in July 2017. The Council considers the Pool Price Pass-Through electricity pricing strategy to be well suited to any council looking to build renewables.

This project is replicable and scalable. There is strong interest in the Solar Farm, and the Council provides local and state government agencies with detailed briefings on the project and retail model.
City of Armadale, WA

50 Year Asset Management Plan

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The City of Armadale’s infrastructure assets, valued at approximately $1.35 billion, have been a significant investment over many generations. Based on current growth projections the population of 90,000 is forecast to reach approximately 165,000 by 2045, with its asset portfolio set to grow to approximately $1.9 billion by 2039.

The lack of sufficient asset data for some asset classes made it difficult to accurately project the requirement for renewal funding over the medium to longer term. This prevented the City from developing a long-term funding strategy for asset renewals and ensure a sustainable asset infrastructure portfolio.

The high growth rate experienced over the years and the expected future growth has highlighted the importance of having more accurate asset data.

The approach to asset management includes the use of advanced asset registers and prediction modelling software, as well as a tool developed in-house to predict the projected increase in the quantity of assets because of future growth. Asset registers were updated for all asset classes where asset attributes were collected at component level. The City has

invested in creating a staff structure and training staff to the appropriate level to ensure the asset management system and processes are embedded in the ongoing operations of the City.

The City now applies ‘whole of life’ asset management principles to maintain its growing asset portfolio and provide for funds beyond its Long Term Financial Plan period for infrastructure renewal. In developing Long Term Financial and Asset Management Plans to 2031–32, the City modelled the requirement for renewal funding for existing and future assets to 2066. The model includes potential income from rates, grants, etc. The City is aware that the economic and political climate could change, and this could have an impact on outcomes of the model. However, the City is determined to ensure its asset portfolio is sustainable over the longer term and service delivery at the highest possible affordable level is available to current and future generations.

The 50 Year Asset Renewal Model projects the requirement for renewal funds across all asset classes up to 2066, enabling the City to develop an appropriate funding strategy to address any identified gaps in renewal funding.

The long-term renewal funding methodology can be applied to other local governments to assist with asset planning and the creation of reserves to fund future asset renewal and protect ratepayers from sudden increases in rates.
In 2009, Wagga Wagga City Council identified Bomen Business Park, north of central Wagga Wagga, as a preferred location for industrial development. Core features of its Strategic Master Plan to attract industry to the Park are the Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics Hub (RiFL Hub) and the High Productivity Freight Route (HPFR). These will provide significantly improved road access and access to an efficient intermodal terminal.

The RiFL Hub and the HPFR provide an integrated freight and logistics solution to dealing with significant constraints on the local supply chain. The RiFL Hub involves the construction of new major rail and road infrastructure and a freight terminal on 95 hectares of land at Bomen to cater for predicted increases in truck traffic and rail freight. The Council has also rezoned large portions of land to industrial to support Bomen Business Park.

Stage One of the RiFL Hub was construction of the HPFR between the Sturt Highway and the Olympic Highway via Bomen. Road construction and the reconstruction of Eunony Bridge to allow for increasing heavy vehicle movements will enable the closure of the Bomen rail level crossing. Construction of a grade separated underpass of the main rail line and of the Olympic Highway to Sturt Highway link will create a heavy vehicle bypass of Wagga.

The RiFL Hub has been designed to integrate within the broader land freight network to provide critical infrastructure at a strategic location. It will leverage other transport investments, including the Australian Rail Track Corporation’s expenditure on the North-South Corridor and proposed capital city terminals at Truganina and Moorebank.

The RiFL Hub will be the first intermodal facility designed to take advantage of high productivity road freight vehicle access, which will be critical in securing the required freight loads.

The RiFL Hub will increase capacity and efficiency in rail and road service access for local businesses linking to Sydney, Melbourne and beyond. This development will be undertaken in partnership with the private sector, and is made possible by all three levels of government working together and contributing funding.
The Contributing to Regional Growth Award category is sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities.

The Australian Government, through the Department, contributes to the prosperity of the economy and the wellbeing of all Australians by helping 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 to strengthen investment and development opportunities, share resources, build regional competitive advantage and create jobs. This can include activities that:

- demonstrate strong partnerships with the private sector, local, state and territory government, community and not-for-profit organisations and other regional development organisations
- maximise economic growth and development opportunities, progress infrastructure and other investment
- harness regional competitive advantages, physical assets, transport linkages, amenity and human capital and drive region-specific innovation
- empower vibrant and connected regional communities that promote diversity and inclusion
- improve productivity, employment and workforce skills within the region, and
- leverage funding from additional sources, including state governments, local governments and local businesses to implement regional plans and priorities.

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 collaborating with other councils in the region.
Contributing to Regional Growth

City of Melbourne, VIC

The Melbourne Renewal Energy Project

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The Melbourne Renewable Energy Project (MREP) is an outstanding example of a local government-led collaboration between the public and private sector to deliver electricity cost certainty and to drive regional investment in renewable energy. It provides a model for large-scale renewable energy contracting that other local governments are already replicating.

MREP is a partnership led by the City of Melbourne, with four inner city councils, two universities, cultural institutions and corporations. It is the first time such a diverse group has collectively purchased renewable energy from a newly built facility.

With renewable energy developers facing barriers in securing finance, the City found that it could use its purchasing power and that of other large energy users to provide sufficient certainty to enable the construction of a large-scale renewable energy project.

MREP has awarded a tender for construction of a new 39-turbine 80 MW capacity wind farm at Crowlands, a small agricultural community north-east of Ararat. The contract agreement provides Pacific Hydro with revenue certainty, enabling construction and contributing to employment in Ararat Rural City and Pyrenees Shire. The wind farm also funds the Crowlands Sustainability Fund, which will disburse funds to community groups in Western Victoria.

Customers can hedge their electricity costs over a 10-year period. This is expected to deliver a competitive product and provide a cost saving. MREP seeks to develop a model by which customers can drive investment in renewable energy generation.

The City has shared their knowledge with other councils with the publication of a procurement manual to help with developing business cases and project management from inception to close.

Partnering with large customers has helped the City to build scale, gain the perspectives of a diverse customer group and encourage replication of the model across a wide range of sectors. Already, numerous councils across Victoria are forming a renewable energy working group to undertake procurement processes along similar lines to MREP.
In November 2016, the Latrobe City community heard that the Hazelwood Power Station would close on 31 March 2017. Almost immediately, business leaders reported a decline in trading incomes. It has been estimated that the impact on the Latrobe City Gross Regional Product will be nearly $340 million. The protected loss of 750 jobs in less than five months from a community already experiencing unemployment well above the state average gave the community little time to transition. The Council decided to try a new approach and co-design an economic transition strategy with the community. This was designed to help the community regain belief in its strengths and assets.

The engagement process involved a community visioning and prioritisation forum, business and industry workshops, a community forum to refine the draft strategy, submissions and feedback in writing.

At the initial community visioning and prioritisation forum, community members were invited to ‘pitch’ their ideas for transformational projects that could move the community on from its industrial past and leverage community assets. The Council proudly built ‘Strength-Led Transition’ around community priorities. It gave the power and agency for transition to the community, trusting in the wisdom of those who partnered with the Council in this work.

The Council developed a Transition Advocacy Plan to support ‘Strength-Led Transition’. The Plan sought to galvanise every member of the community as an advocate and lobbyist for the community vision. Calls from the community sought government assurances for a respectful long term bipartisan transition.

This ‘Strength-Led Transition’ has facilitated the securing of some $800 million in investment funding from the Victorian and Australian Governments. It has been widely accepted as the community’s vision for an economic transition for the Latrobe Valley and a central foundation for the work of the Victorian Government’s Latrobe Valley Authority.
The Vibrant and Active Towns and Villages (VATV) initiative is a long-term program for the social and economic revitalisation of Scenic Rim towns and villages. The region has long been renowned for its ecological, agricultural and scenic values but is also gaining recognition for its community and cultural life.

The VATV strategy is based on achievable plans for the revitalisation of town centres through enhancements to the built environment and partnerships between the community, all levels of government, business, not-for-profit organisations and Indigenous and arts community members.

The town centres of Boonah, Beaudesert and Tamborine Mountain were chosen for the VATV project for their importance as economic and social centres. The Council commissioned John Mongard Landscape Architects to prepare plans for the town centres and identify catalyst projects.

The project scope includes master plans for town centres and streetscape improvements that reflect the unique character and needs of each town. The initiative links infrastructure - such as cultural centres, shops, libraries, services and town squares – within communities to provide an integrated approach that considers the value of these towns both individually and collectively.

A key element of the VATV planning was community consultation involving public workshops, footpath engagement, door-to-door surveys and engagement in public places. The Council liaised with local artists, poetry groups, traditional owners, the Scenic Rim Arts Reference Group and the Heritage Network in the development of art and cultural elements that are woven into the project.

This grassroots involvement in the planning process has supported local decision-making and action to help build community capacity and leadership.

The VATV program has been co-funded by Queensland Government grants. In 2016–17 the first stage of the master-planned precinct was completed in Boonah. In March 2018 the Tamborine Mountain Village Greens project was completed, having transformed a series of median strips on Main Street into attractive and usable public spaces complementing the surrounding area.

The Village Greens hosted the crowds which gathered for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Queen’s Baton Relay as it passed through the Scenic Rim and have been embraced as inviting spaces by visitors and local community members.

Scenic Rim towns are already experiencing increases in activity following the VATV project. Accessibility has been improved through signage, markers, footpaths, parking and casual seating provided in public spaces. Community safety has been enhanced by upgraded lighting and increased social activity, while the movement of vehicle and pedestrian traffic has been improved on the towns’ main streets.
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, programmes and infrastructure so that people with disabilities can participate in all areas of life and have the same opportunities as other Australians to fulfil 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:

- 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, programmes 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, support and infrastructure for people with disability. Local governments play a vital role in implementing the Strategy within local communities.
City of Stirling, WA

Recycling Centre Balcatta – New Model for Operating a Tip Shop

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The City of Stirling in northern Perth has for many years operated a tip shop at its Recycling Centre in Balcatta. In August 2016, the City introduced an innovative operating model to improve customer experience, create a social benefit focused on the disabled, and maximise opportunities to divert waste from landfill.

The original contract to run the Tip Shop at the Recycling Centre ended in August 2016. The City sought Expressions of Interest and invited ideas from members of Western Australian Disability Enterprises for a new style of operation.

Workpower, a Western Australian disability employment service provider, was offered the opportunity to operate the facility. A total revamp of the Recycling Shop area has transformed it into a safe shopping area and workplace that can accommodate any employee or member of the public with a disability.

Workpower was also given responsibility for receiving cardboard, metal, plastics and glass for recycling outside of the shopping area. Other charities are allowed to place clothing bins in this area to accept any overflow items. These services are all offered free of charge by the City to encourage reuse and recycling.

Staff members with varying degrees of disabilities were trained to operate the counter, coffee shop, sales areas and machinery for moving heavy items.

The Recycling Centre is an integrated self-sustaining social enterprise, receiving no funding other than through sales of recyclables. People with disability make up 50 per cent of the full time equivalent workforce, and 16 have benefited from employment at the centre. All employees are paid the full award rate for the industry type. This is a positive example of promoting an inclusive community and demonstrates how a council can support shifts in community attitudes in recognising people with disabilities as valuable employees who contribute to the workplace.

The project is an excellent demonstration of how to work in a collaborative partnership with charitable organisations, to provide a safe, clean and environmentally friendly workplace for people with disabilities, and a safe and pleasant facility for visitors.

The City, in collaboration with Workpower, has demonstrated a model that is easily replicable by other local councils. Several councils have already visited the centre and expressed interest in developing a similar program.
The City of Cockburn is the first local government known to have achieved Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA compliance on two websites: www.cockburn.wa.gov.au and www.cockburnarc.com.au.

Just over 20 per cent of Cockburn residents identify as having some form of disability. Community consultation, statistical analysis and anecdotal feedback established that the City’s old website lacked useability for people with disability.

Making the digital world universally accessible and using technology as an enabler was a critical goal for the City. Appropriate technologies, including screen readers, access switches, voice recognition, magnification and captioning, empower people with disability in the digital world.

The City formed an internal project management group and employed a team of external web designers, developers and a digital strategist, as well as an independent Digital Accessibility consultant.

From 2015 to 2017, the City invested significant time and resources in developing its new web service. This project also offered the City the opportunity to review core services that could be digitalised and made available to all sectors of the community.

Data shows users are finding information easily and more efficiently since the launch in 2017. Many of those now using the website come from other sectors of the Cockburn community, which may previously have experienced barriers to accessing public services online.

With the opening of the City’s new $109 million Aquatic and Recreation (ARC) facility, a second accessible website was developed. The ARC itself has outstanding disability access features, so ensuring that its website also met this standard was crucial.

For this website, the City first built a mobile platform, then adapted it to a desktop format. This ensured the experience would be both seamless and responsive, regardless of the device used and with or without assistive technology.
City of Greater Geelong, VIC

Tactile Symbols for Domestic Waste Bin Lids

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The City of Greater Geelong’s tactile bin lid project is an ingenious yet simple way of improving the lives and independence of people who are blind or who have low vision. It provides an inexpensive but powerful means of sorting recyclables, green waste and rubbish into the correct bins, by using different tactile symbols for each type of bin.

The project originated from the Disability Access and Inclusion Reference Group, which identified the difficulties faced by people who are blind or with low vision in differentiating between the three types of bins. The Council’s Access Project Offers consulted with the Environment and Waste unit, and it was agreed that the tactile symbols would be developed.

The tactile symbols are discrete, and can quickly and easily be fixed to the bin lid by council staff. This is a cost-effective strategy with broad community benefits. It can be readily replicated by any other organisation or council.

A specific ‘Request for Service Number’ was created, so that customer service staff can place orders on the spot.
The Excellence in Road Safety Award category is sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities. The Department 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. This can include 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, being estimated at $27 billion per year with devastating social impacts. Local governments can improve road safety through local community initiatives.
Yarra City Council, VIC

Yarra’s Road Safety Innovation Project

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Yarra City Council faces a number of road safety challenges. It has a growing population and needs to accommodate the competing needs of high vehicle, cyclist and pedestrian use on its streets.

Road management strategies widely used elsewhere do not always work well in this inner-city environment, so the Council developed its own Road Safety Innovation Project (RSIP). This is an annual rolling project that explores creative solutions to local safety issues through low cost infrastructure trials and education initiatives.

Working within an annual budget of just $20,000–$40,000, the RSIP goes beyond traditional engineering-based approaches to encourage the development of safe and attractive walking and cycling alternatives to car travel. It makes a local contribution to the national Safe System approach through research, evaluation-based innovation and community education. This includes collaboration with other councils and non-traditional partners.

The council and its delivery partners have explored the use of various products, via off-road test sites and through trial-and-error testing on the road. Typically, two to three trials or initiatives are delivered each financial year.

The RSIP includes an online education campaign, traditionally viewed as the domain of state rather than local government. It also brings in fresh ideas from partners not typically involved in road safety, such as local artists and media consultants. Painting streets to impart underlying cultural, artistic and historical meaning has encouraged community buy-in.

Some trials are the first known applications of new approaches in an urban road environment in Australia. The use of solar-powered LED lights to alert drivers in advance of pedestrian crossings was borrowed from overseas. Painted on-road pedestrian crossing symbols have improved compliance with road rules.

The success of RSIP initiatives is measured by the reduction in community complaints, stakeholder recognition and contribution to national Safe Systems principles. The RSIP initiatives are also replicable, as other councils take up the ideas.
Strathfield Council, NSW

Road Safety – An Amalgamated Approach

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Strathfield Council’s amalgamated Strategy for Road Safety targets as many factors as possible. Road Safety Initiatives in 2017–18 were decided upon with reference to the Strathfield LGA Crash Analysis Report, informed by a five-year incident history.

Priority targets cover young drivers, speed, fatigue, alcohol, pedestrians, occupant restraints and schools. A Safe Systems approach of community-based action includes a mix of education, enforcement and engineering initiatives. A dedicated Road Safety Officer delivers road safety projects. The Road Safety Officer’s activities are supported by funding from NSW Roads and Maritime Services.

In October 2017, the Council held a Free Child Car Seat Safety Check, in which 49 car seats were checked and re-installed, and gated buckles were given away.

A workshop in February 2018 also targeted young drivers indirectly by providing parents and carers with the knowledge and skills needed to help teach learners.

Young drivers were directly targeted by the provision of strategic information and liaison at relevant Council events, such as Youth Week and Council Fairs, and by an innovative multimedia campaign.

Other projects addressing safety include “Look Out Before You Step Out”. The Road Safety Officer speaks to school assemblies and attends Liquor Accord meetings. All activities are well publicised in the community through weekly newsletters, newspapers, the Council’s website and direct interaction with schools and childcare centres.
Innovation to Create More Liveable and Collaborative Communities

The Innovation to Create More Liveable and Collaborative Communities Award category is sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities.

The Australian Government, through the Department, contributes to the prosperity of the economy and the wellbeing of all Australians by helping local governments to manage their own futures. The Australian Government recognises that local governments provide essential services and planning for their communities.

About the category

This Award recognises local governments that have introduced customer-focussed, innovative initiatives to collaborate actively with members of the community, and to improve the design and implementation of public services. This can cover projects which involve:

• providing services that connect the community and enable feedback mechanisms
• creating opportunities that improve the accessibility and use of public data and encourage collaborative community networks
• implementing platforms for collaboration and engagement with the community that promote knowledge sharing and improve service delivery

• collaborating with local businesses to develop innovative solutions to communicate with and empower members of the community, and
• creating spaces for members of the community to connect effectively and collaborate with each other.

The importance of local governments in innovating to create more liveable and collaborative communities

Local governments face the challenge of creating meaningful dialogue as they engage with members of the community. This is essential to improving public services and empowerment of the community.

Australians are increasingly choosing to interact with communities and organisations through digital and smart technology. Consequently, local governments that take up the opportunity to use innovative avenues, such as digital services to enhance their customer focus, are able to better communicate, engage, and meet everyday needs.
City of Ballarat, VIC

Geo-spatial Collaboration to Improve Community Safety

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The Right to the Night is a project to gather data and ideas from local women and girls to inform decision-making around the design of safer and more inclusive public spaces in Ballarat city centre.

The Council brought together a Project Steering Group that includes the Centre for Multicultural Youth, Federation University, Ballarat Community Health, Victoria Police, Women’s Health Grampians, Australian Catholic University and several Council departments. A project outline and monitoring framework were developed, and roles and responsibilities agreed.

An innovative and cross-sector approach employing new technologies and marketing platforms was used to engage the community in a collaborative conversation. This project uses an online geo-spatial platform for women and girls to share their experiences with designers and developers, and to contribute to a flooding marketing strategy across the city centre.

Project technology solutions drew on existing capacities. During the three-month project period, the Council worked with women and girls to: develop an interactive map identifying problem sites, gather optional short narratives of actual experiences, and share the project link on social media within female friendship groups.

The project communications strategy includes a pre-launch, postcards, advertisements in local publications, footpath decals, QR codes, bus-stop signage and media coverage. Local business owners, particularly from the late-night entertainment industry, have also been involved.

Facilitated urban walks targeted community groups which may have difficulty engaging with the online platform or participating without support, including disadvantaged young women, newly arrived migrants and culturally and linguistically diverse community members.

The City of Ballarat and partners have also developed a local engagement platform to share information and ideas between community and local organisations. The project aligns with regional and state violence prevention priorities, and supports many other local health, education, and regulatory organisations.

At the national level, the project supports the Regions 2030 approach.
Innovation to Create More Liveable and Collaborative Communities

City of Greater Geelong, VIC

Park Your Pet Digital App

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As a growing city with over 40,000 registered cats and dogs across a total area of 1,250 square kilometres, the City of Greater Geelong lacks the resources for animal management officers to be in certain places at all times. It focuses on preventative work and educational programs where possible, including the Park your Pet digital application.

Digital technology is a cost-effective and innovative method of ensuring compliance with dog orders. The Park Your Pet application was developed through a partnership with a digital marketing agency, Red Herring. It is available for download through the Apple App Store and Google Play, and is an easy-to-use tool that can be readily updated.

As a community-based platform, Park Your Pet’s objective is to protect, educate and connect, by allowing councils and dog lovers to communicate in one place. Park your Pet provides access to: compliance information on dog control rules, event listings, articles on animal care and management, alerts and notifications to owners, links to the City website for pet registration, and a means for residents to contact the City on any animal-related queries. It also features articles and notifications on cat issues, such as feral cat trapping.

Articles convey specific messages in an informal yet readable way, rather than using a punitive approach. The Council acknowledges the danger of compliance fatigue. It provides for push notifications and messages to be sent only when an issue becomes relevant.

The Park Your Pet community profile recognises that connecting residents with each other is also important. A further feature will be developed allowing residents to post details of lost pets. Based on community feedback, other features under consideration include listings of dog-training facilities or pet-friendly businesses, found pets, and pets available for adoption.

Park Your Pet is currently in the process of introducing the app to other municipal bodies that would like to offer the application to their communities. Red Herring will also assist in obtaining users through digital advertising. For more information, please visit www.parkyourpet.com.au.
Innovation to Create More Liveable and Collaborative Communities

City of Wanneroo, WA

Alkimos Pop-Up Project

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The City of Wanneroo in suburban Perth is the fifth fastest-growing local government in Australia. Its suburbs are expanding at a rate which makes it difficult to keep up with the community infrastructure and services needed by a growing population.

Residents currently have access to limited community facilities. The nearest conventional public library is located 12 kilometres away. The Alkimos Pop-Up Project provides a library and meeting space where people can connect with fellow residents, host activities and access services. Alkimos is a master-planned community of just over 10,000 people, being developed through a partnership between Lendlease Communities Pty Ltd and Landcorp.

Ecorp provided a 63-square metre shopfront in the newly opened Gateway Shopping Centre to Lendlease, free of charge for 12 months from November 2016. The shopfront was initially used as a sales office. The City was approached to collaborate on use of the building to help meet the need for a community space. An independent consultancy report confirmed the need for a local library.

This pop-up model offers affordability and flexibility to quickly develop a sense of connectedness and community. The Alkimos Pop-Up strengthens local partnerships, pilots a new model of community-led library services and programs, provides a vibrant community space, and raises awareness of library and cultural services. Although small, it has a stock of 1,000 books. It offers an automated self-check loan service, free Wi-Fi, an activity area and a quiet working space.

The developer partnership and use of a community-led model with effective volunteer support has been integral to its success. Progression towards a more formalised lease arrangement for 2018–19 is testament to this success and highlights the prospect of engagement with other emerging communities.

City of Wanneroo
The Next Gen Local Government Leader Award category is co-sponsored by LG Professionals Australia and the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities.

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

LG Professionals Australia represents local government professionals, senior managers and emerging leaders across Australia. With a national perspective and network, it supports programs to attract and develop the best people and facilitate connections between professionals and local governments around Australia and internationally.

About the category

The Next Gen Local Government Leader Award aims to recognise and celebrate young leaders who have successfully delivered innovative solutions to challenges faced by their local communities.

This Award category receives entries from young leaders who nominate themselves, and nominations from organisations or individuals seeking to recognise the efforts of young leaders who have demonstrated strong leadership skills to achieve positive outcomes within their communities. Such young local government leaders have experience in leading, designing, or delivering innovative and successful programs, projects, processes or practices. Nominees must be aged 35 years or under and work within the local government sector, having had two years’ experience as a young professional.

The winner of the Award has the opportunity to attend the LG Professionals National Congress and Business Expo and the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly, with travel, accommodation, and registration expenses covered by the Department and LG Professionals Australia.
Ashleigh Tapper is a passionate and optimistic local government professional driven by determination to make a difference. She has a passion for human rights, and for working with communities to deliver sustainable transformations. Ashleigh enjoys great success in her role as the Community Development Officer for Youth, achieving positive outcomes, and helping change lives and futures for disadvantaged young people in the Armadale region.

Ashleigh Tapper improves opportunities for young people and the wider community in many different ways. Her ability to be innovative helps her to nurture solid working relationships and gain the respect of her peers and local community. She forges strong collaboration between organisations, successfully coordinating projects addressing social issues experienced by disadvantaged young people in the Armadale community.

Ashleigh’s greatest accomplishments are found in the Armadale Youth Network (AYN), Armadale Aspire, Perfect Imperfections and Kinetic. She chairs and coordinates the AYN, a network of more than 200 representatives of local agencies, community organisations, government agencies and youth representatives, working to enable better outcomes for youth.

Armadale Aspire is Ashleigh’s brainchild. This youth career development program partners with several internal City departments, high schools and local businesses to provide young people with career development, upskilling, industry excursions and work experience. It has had tangible results in reducing youth unemployment and increasing work readiness.

Perfect Imperfections was a program for local girls aged 13 to 15 who were identified as experiencing low self-esteem and body image issues. The girls often had further social or mental health issues. The holistic program empowered them through workshops which included such topics as self-esteem, better nutrition, positive mental health and service to their communities.

Kinetic is a two-part youth engagement program designed and delivered by Ashleigh. The program helps local youth become active citizens in their communities. It provides them with platforms that give them a voice with which to help build city-wide youth friendly communities.

The news articles and recommendations accompanying the entry provided overwhelming evidence of the positive impact Ashleigh is making in her local community.
Mark Dicker is the Director of Planning and Environmental Services at Blayney Shire Council (since March 2014). He has facilitated unprecedented economic growth opportunities for the region, through a combination of traditional strategic planning studies and innovative problem solving.

Mark’s innovative leadership has overseen the completion and implementation of two key strategic town planning studies, the 2016 Employment Lands Study and the Blayney 2020 MasterPlan. These required significant stakeholder engagement with industry, business, community groups and NSW Government agencies. In 2016, the Blayney 2020 MasterPlan was a finalist in the Planning Institute of Australia (NSW) Awards for Planning Excellence.

Mark has demonstrated strategic foresight and business acumen in identifying two significant employment opportunities for Blayney Shire.

One is the McPhillamys Gold Mine project, owned by Regis Resources Pty Ltd. Until 2016, McPhillamys had no secure water source. This barrier prevented the project from proceeding to financial feasibility and the preparation of an environmental impact study. Mark demonstrated to Regis Resources, Centennial Coal and the NSW Government that there was a coal mine in Lithgow experiencing issues associated with discharging water into Sydney’s drinking water catchment; and that there was a potential gold mine in Blayney seeking to secure a water source. McPhillamys Gold Project now has a secure and reliable water source and is in the final stages of preparing its environmental impact study.

The other employment opportunity identified is that of the Nectar Farms Smart Farming project. Nectar Farms specialises in smart farming, using hydroponics to establish a 40-hectare smart cropping project near Sydney that will replicate an operation currently under construction at Stawell in Victoria.

Mark advised Nectar Farms that Blayney has a site which meets its site and utility requirements. Nectar Farms is now in touch with the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet on the potential of the development to be located in Blayney.
The Prevention and Community Safety Award category is sponsored by the Department of Social Services. The Department provides leadership in Australian Government policy to ensure all Australians are safe in their communities and live free from violence. Through the 12 year National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010–2022, the Department works with other Australian Government agencies, state and territory governments, as well as the non-government sector, business and communities, to deliver a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children in Australia.

About the category

The Prevention and Community Safety Award recognises local governments undertaking projects to prevent and reduce domestic and family violence and/or sexual assault. This involves:

- relevance to the local community and how it addresses the community’s specific needs, composition and diversity
- the local community’s engagement with the project, including the establishment and maintenance of cross-community partnerships
- innovation and/or best practice

- positive impacts on the local community in regards to addressing domestic and family violence and sexual assault, and
- strategies to maintain these impacts into the future.

The important role of local governments in prevention and community safety

Local government can:

- drive sustainable change in community awareness, attitudes and behaviours related to the prevention of domestic and family violence and/or sexual assault
- promote local cross-community leadership and engagement in prevention and community safety, and
- provide support for those who are at risk of experiencing or have experienced domestic and family violence and/or sexual assault.
Cardinia Shire Council, VIC

Together We Can

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In 2013–14, Cardinia Shire Council recorded the second highest rate of serious family violence in Melbourne’s southern region. Nearly half of the reported incidents involved children. This led to the Together We Can (TWC) initiative. TWC focuses on building respectful relationships, intervening when violence occurs, and upholding the right of all residents to feel safe.

The TWC initiative focuses on the voices and experiences of children and young people affected by domestic and family violence. The approach also includes widespread consultation and collaboration across the community, which has helped contribute to a positive response to the TWC project from Cardinia residents.

The initiative is based on a collective impact model, and is guided by a local Community Advisory Committee and a senior Governance Group formed from Cardinia Shire Council, Melbourne University and Victoria Police. The community organisation, Family Life, serves as a backbone organisation.

TWC began with the Council allocating funds to Family Life and supporting Family Life’s successful grant applications to the Australian Department of Social Services and the Victorian Government. With in-kind support, total estimated investment is over $1.5 million over three years.

The Council’s approach to multi-disciplinary collaboration, Collective Impact (CI), provides a conceptual framework for action. CI is a systematic strategy that encourages all stakeholders and community to work together. It builds community awareness of the impact of family violence through the voices of children. Activities include regular community consultations, forums, presentations, professional development, summits and community campaigns.

Family Life engaged the Tamarak Institute of Canada to develop the skills needed to deliver CI projects. This inspired development of a recording tool to measure TWC’s effectiveness. Learnings have been shared widely, including with the Local Government Professionals Health Promotion Community of Practice, the Mornington Frankston Primary Health Partnership and Kingston City Council.
The Rural Challenge Gender Equality Leadership Program empowers Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigades and rural football and netball clubs in promoting cultural change that helps prevent violence against women and embed gender equality. Its community development approach uses discussion-based workshops and mentored action planning to help community leaders develop gender equality action plans.

The Program is delivered by the Rural Challenge Partnership. The lead agency in the partnership is Macedon Ranges Shire Council, working with the City of Greater Bendigo, Women’s Health Loddon Mallee, CFA District 2, Sports Focus, the Centre for Non Violence, AFL Central Victoria and AFL Goldfields.

The Program is structured around two four-hour workshops for the leadership groups of the CFA and sports clubs. The first addresses drivers of violence by discussing gender equality, prevention of violence against women, gender stereotypes, masculinities, and unconscious bias. Participants are provided with the tools needed to consult with their members and to conduct a gender audit.

The second workshop involves working with specialist mentors to develop action plans. The draft plans are reviewed before finalisation by a Women’s Advisory Panel made up of women in regional leadership roles. The plans are structured around five key areas: governance and leadership, facilities, participation, promotion and recruitment, and culture.

The leadership groups are essential, as they influence the shaping of gender relations and behaviours, particularly in rural areas. A key objective is to go beyond increasing the number of women in clubs and brigades to building a culture of gender inclusiveness. The Rural Challenge Toolkit provides a replicable model for evidence-based good practice.

Cultural change takes time, but initial structural changes include: introduction of women’s-only training days at CFA brigades, the development of club codes of conduct, establishment of a women’s CFA network, provision of sanitary products and disposal bins for CFA brigades, increased representation of women players, improved lighting in car parks, and gender education workshops for members.
Promoting Indigenous Recognition

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, developer, producer and supplier.

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

Woodside’s operations are characterised by strong safety, environmental and social performance in remote and challenging locations. It recognises that meaningful long-term relationships with communities are fundamental to maintaining its licence to operate. It works to build mutually-beneficial relationships across all locations where it is active.

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.

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

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.
Elliston is a township on Waterloo Bay on the Eyre Peninsula within the District Council of Elliston, one of the smallest councils in South Australia. The agreement to the wording on the Reconciliation Monument on the Coastal Trail at Waterloo Bay is a powerful story of how this small community came together and engaged in a true attempt at reconciliation.

In 2011, the Council began a project to construct a walking trail along the cliff tops at Waterloo Bay to showcase the dramatic scenery surrounding the town. With the agreement of the Wirangu people, and after consultation with the wider local community, the Council determined that this would include a reconciliation monument.

Elliston and Waterloo Bay have a significant place in the history of frontier conflict in South Australia. Although the details are complex, the essential, incontrovertible truth is that a punitive raid organised by a local pastoralist in 1849 ended on a cliff near Elliston. Local indigenous people were shot or forced over the cliff.

A design by Penong Miller, a Wirangu Elder, comprised three granite structures, two depicting representations of the Wirangu people and the other depicting Aboriginal people of the West Coast. The centrepiece included wording recognising the massacre. This presented today’s Indigenous residents and descendants of later settlers with an opportunity for reconciliation.

The Council demonstrated a strong commitment to the resolution process, drawing in expertise to assist with consultation and community engagement, and engaging an anthropologist to research the events and negotiate respectful wording for the Monument, with the Wirangu people’s agreement.

The mix of digital media accessible to the wider community via a Facebook page, together with face-to-face meetings, helped the wider community to be part of important ongoing conversations that were engaging and more importantly, respectful. The willingness to listen respectfully to the Wirangu people is testimony to the level of engagement achieved. This approach resulted in a deeply-informed, civil and widely-publicised resolution of their own history of frontier conflict. The community acknowledged the massacre at Waterloo Bay in 1849, the ongoing trauma for the Wirangu Indigenous community and the need to find a way to move forward together.

On 17 October 2017, the Council decided by an overwhelming majority to endorse the Wirangu’s wording. This quote from the application captures the transformative effect: “The most notable impact of the resolution between the Wirangu, District of Elliston and our locals is the Wirangu now know they are welcome in the District. The healing process between the traditional owners and their land has begun”.

The Council now has deeper relationships with the Wirangu people and their representatives, and also with the Barngala and Nauo.
Alexandrina Council has a proud and long history of acknowledgement of South Australia’s first people. In October 2002, the Council entered into the Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement (KNYA) with the Ngarrindjeri Nation. This included a sincere expression of apology and a commitment to work together.

The Council was the first level of government in South Australia to enter into such an agreement and the first nationally to make a ‘sorry’ statement to Indigenous people. As Ngarrindjeri Elder Uncle Darryl Sumner said at their Native Title Consent Determination in December 2017, “Alexandrina Council is a template organisation for how to engage.” The KNYA came about as the local community wanted to come together to find a common pathway forward. The Council and Ngarrindjeri are now acknowledged leaders in finding ways to integrate Aboriginal engagement into local government business. The Council has also funded a Ngarrindjeri administrative trainee, Ashleigh Darrie.

The Council and Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA) have delivered on the KNYA by building relations culturally and through governance practice. The Council has regular leader-to-leader meetings with the NRA, and working group meetings at a more operational level. The Council also liaises with Ngarrindjeri to maintain a cultural presence at community events, including the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) and the South Australian Wooden Boat Festival.

The Council Arts Project Officer worked with the local Indigenous community to create art features for the Bristow Smith Nature Playspace project. Indigenous artist Damien Shen collaborated with the Ngarrindjeri community to create designs that reflect the area’s Indigenous cultural significance.

The Council and the NRA have recently worked together on building three whale viewing platforms that enable the protection of sensitive heritage and cultural sites, while accommodating growing visitor numbers.
City of Port Adelaide Enfield, SA

2018 Walk of Awareness

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The Walk of Awareness, hosted by the City of Port Adelaide Enfield, began in 2015, as a unique way for the local community to acknowledge the Aboriginal Stolen Generation and commemorate the Australian National Apology.

This annual event involves: a symbolic and reflective walk across a local bridge, a Kaurna Smoking Ceremony, speeches from members of the Stolen Generation sharing their stories, and local dignitaries acknowledging the hurts of the past and recommitting for a better, shared future. It culminates in a shared meal involving some 250 community members on the fringe of the Port River.

Attendees reflect the diversity of the Port Adelaide Enfield community and include young and old, Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. The City of Port Adelaide Enfield manages the Walk in partnership with a neighbouring Council and eighteen local organisations, ranging from the Main Street Association to not-for-profit organisations, schools, Aboriginal services and the local Grannies Group.

The Walk of Awareness has grown each year in popularity and partnerships. The event provides an important opportunity for local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young people to connect with older Aboriginal people, and for local organisations and volunteers to demonstrate their support.

Each year the Walk welcomes new partners and volunteers. This helps ensure that it is sustainable and well run. In a tangible way, it supports the City of Port Adelaide Enfield’s goal of being ‘a City that supports community wellbeing’ by being inclusive, cohesive, accessible and engaged.

The Council also holds an annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awards Night, participates in NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week, and supports Survival Day on its Semaphore foreshore. It offers scholarships to Aboriginal students, employs Indigenous trainees, provides support to local Aboriginal-run organisations, and celebrates local history through Aboriginal cultural trails.
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