



**Australian Government**

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



# **NATIONAL AWARDS**

FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**2024 WINNERS AND  
HONOURABLE MENTIONS**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.





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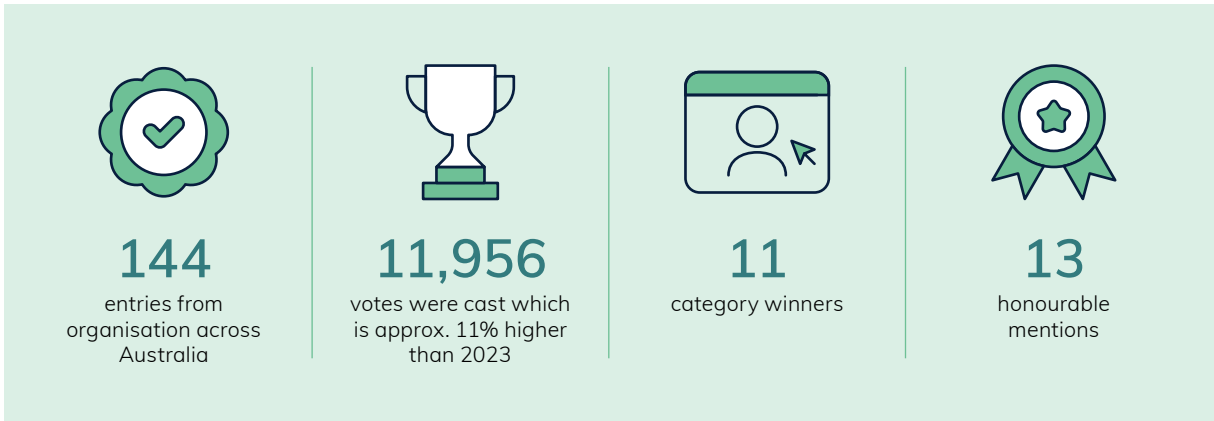
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# ABOUT THE NATIONAL AWARDS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT





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

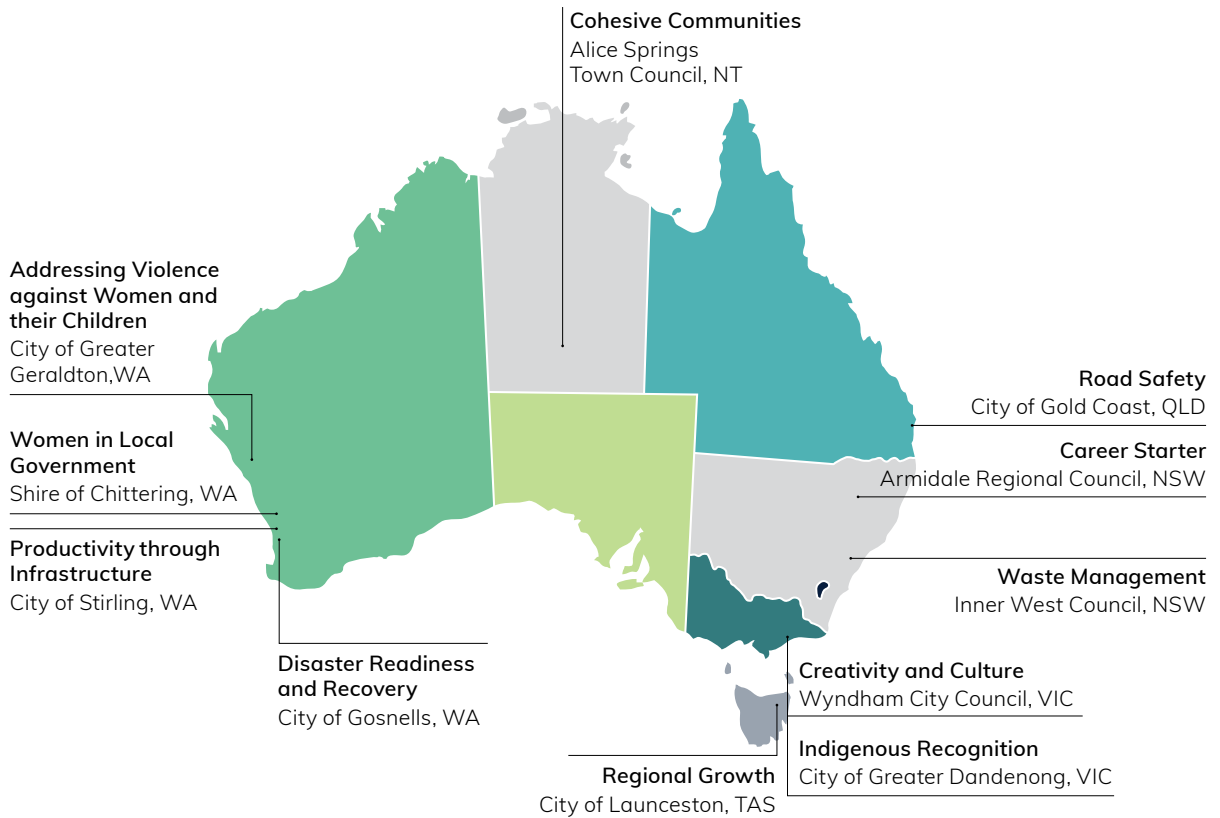
Now in its 38th year, the National Awards highlight initiatives implemented by local governments that are innovative, make a difference to their local communities, display excellence, and have outcomes that are replicable across the country.

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

For the 2024 National Awards, there were 144 eligible entries across the 11 categories from 121 councils. Councils and communities were encouraged to vote for projects across each of the categories that celebrated the strength of local government, their ability to deliver positive outcomes, and their role in building stronger cohesive communities. There were 11,956 votes cast by 8,443 voters.

The profiles, descriptions and images of each winner and honourable mention in this report are those provided by the council itself in its submission for the 2024 National Awards.

**2024 Category Winners**



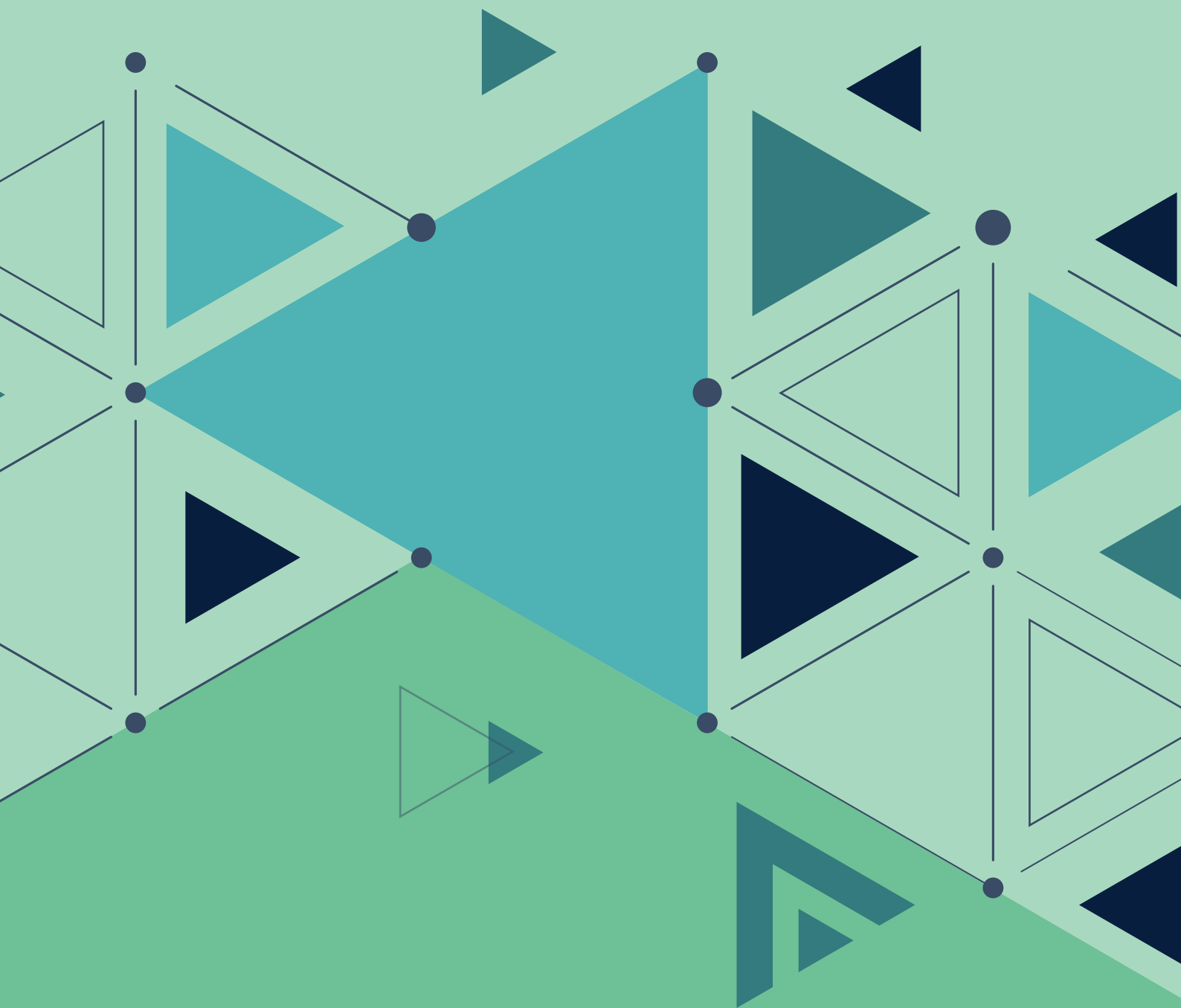
# 2024 WINNERS AND HONOURABLE MENTIONS







# WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT



## About the category

The **Women in Local Government** category recognises initiatives and female leaders in local government that:

- ▶ support local women to stand for elected roles to represent their communities;
- ▶ help to improve the progress and representation of women in leadership positions;
- ▶ establish programs to support and recognise women as current and emerging leaders, including mentoring, networking and training opportunities; and/or
- ▶ showcase an outstanding female leader who is making a positive difference to their local government and community.

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

- ▶ promoting greater roles for women in leadership, both as elected representatives and officers;
- ▶ developing gender equality strategies and programs to support women of all ages to participate and become leaders in their workplace and community; and/or
- ▶ advocating for gender equality, women's rights and representation in the workplace.

### 2024 entries

**Armidale Regional Council, NSW** – Compass, Women in Leadership Program

**City of Gold Coast, QLD** – Renee Wise

**Western Downs Regional Council, QLD** – Inspiring Leadership, Western Downs Regional Council CEO, Jodie Taylor

**Shire of Chittering, WA** – Mentoring, Training and Career Development Program



## Category Winner 2024

### Women in Local Government Shire of Chittering, WA Mentoring, Training and Development Program

**The Mentoring, Training and Development Program aims to improve progression, mentoring, accessibility, and career development for women at the Shire of Chittering.**

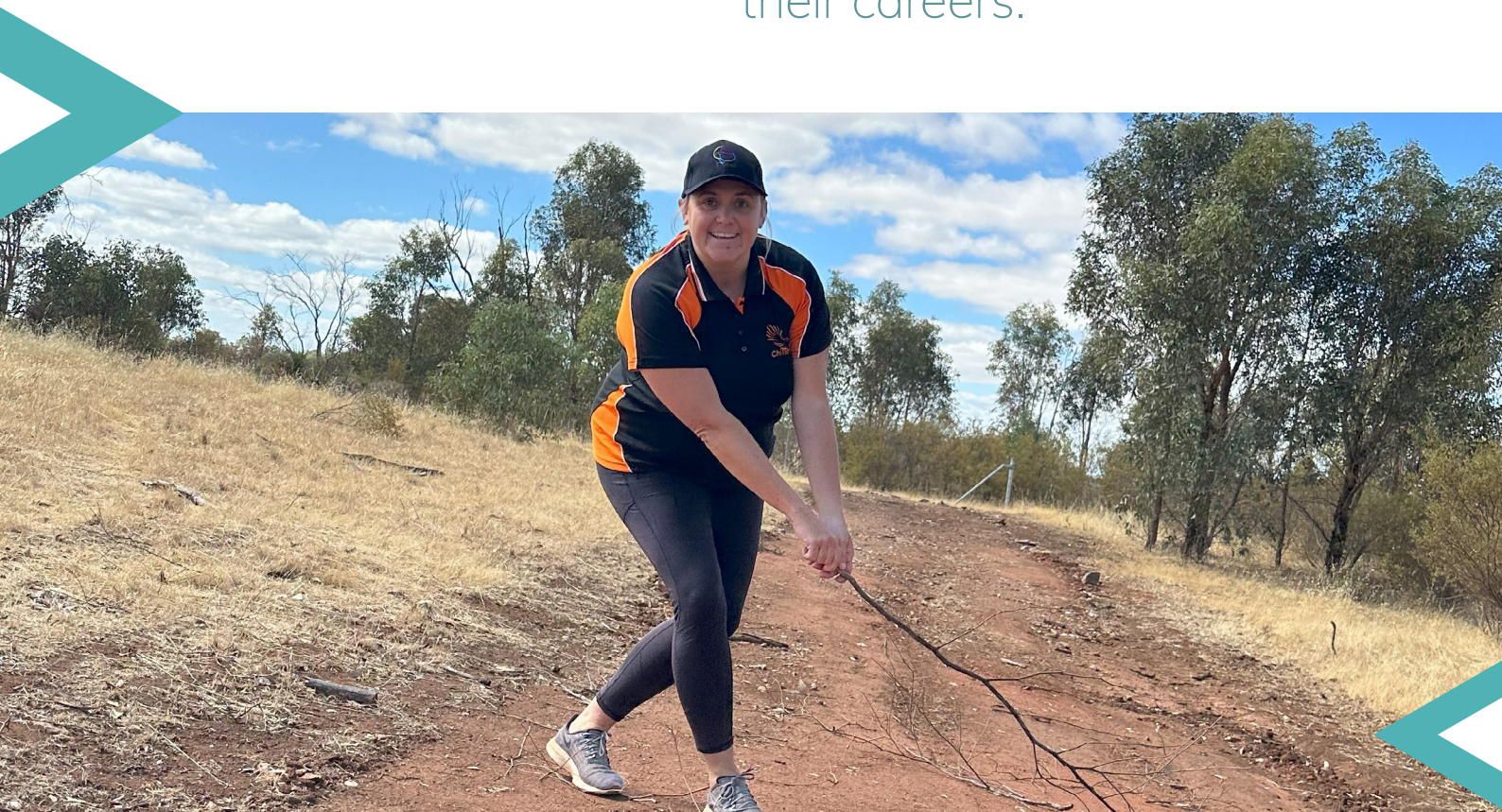
Shire of Chittering CEO, Melinda Prinsloo, has demonstrated exceptional leadership by implementing initiatives that actively support and empower women to advance in their careers. One notable initiative is the employment of four female trainees across various roles in administration, tourism, and roads maintenance. Through this program, these trainees have been provided with valuable opportunities for professional development and growth. Most of them have already completed their first TAFE qualification and are progressing towards the next level, including attaining the relevant tickets and licences to operate construction plant and equipment, all thanks to the support provided by Melinda and her staff.

In addition to the trainee program, the Shire has appointed two young women as practitioners in planning, and public health services, partnering them with more senior young women with leadership potential to learn from. This has the added benefits of honing these young leaders' mentoring skills and preparing them for future senior management roles. The appointments include comprehensive career development plans that enable the women to progress, through the attainment of several milestones. By providing clear pathways for advancement and investing in their professional development, the Shire is empowering these women to reach their full potential and excel in their respective fields.

Furthermore, Melinda has created a supportive and flexible work environment that accommodates the needs of working mothers within the Shire. Recognising the importance of work-life balance, she has granted the freedom for mums to work from home when children are ill, or to work reduced or alternate hours to accommodate school pick-ups and drop-offs. This flexibility not only supports the well-being of employees, but also ensures that talented women can continue to develop their careers while fulfilling their caregiving responsibilities.

In summary, the Shire has implemented initiatives in the workplace that have significantly improved the progression, development, leadership and representation of women throughout the Shire of Chittering.

“Shire of Chittering CEO, Melinda Prinsloo, has demonstrated exceptional leadership by implementing initiatives that actively support and empower women to advance in their careers.”



## Women in Local Government Honourable Mention

### Armidale Regional Council, NSW Compass, Women in Leadership Program

The Women in Leadership Program gives learning and development opportunities for women to drive positive change across the organisation. It is a transformational program that links women's ambition with their deepest sense of purpose and core values.

Following the commencement of the new General Manager (GM), James Roncon in January 2021, he quickly realised that there were very few women in middle or senior leadership roles within Armidale Regional Council (ARC) and wanted to correct this imbalance by developing ARC women for the opportunities that would inevitably present moving forward. To address this, James implemented the 'Compass – Women in Leadership' program, facilitated by Dattner Group, which was rolled out across the workforce to ensure personal and professional growth opportunities for female staff. This program aims to ultimately help to increase the number of women leaders in the organisation to occupy middle and senior leadership roles.

The Compass program works on the premise that you have to know yourself before you can lead others. It is designed to bring out women's unique strengths and qualities in a supportive environment that fosters collaboration, ultimately increasing leadership capability at all levels.

An extension to the Compass – Women in Leadership program was introduced in 2022. The Compass Advance program provides another level of professional and personal development opportunities for women wanting to elevate and increase their influence within the council.

“This program aims to ultimately help to increase the number of women leaders in the organisation to occupy middle and senior leadership roles.”

### Western Downs Regional Council, QLD Inspiring Leadership, Western Downs Regional Council CEO, Jodie Taylor

Western Downs Regional Council CEO, Jodie Taylor, is an exceptional leader with relentless commitment to staff empowerment and delivering legacy community outcomes.

When Jodie was appointed CEO in December 2021, the Council had a poor organisational culture.

The first woman appointed to a Western Downs Regional Council Executive Leadership role, Jodie has been the catalyst for meaningful staff engagement to deliver a modern management structure based on inclusive leadership, professional development, staff retention and recruitment around cultural fit.

Jodie's commitment to professional development is reflected in the introduction of leadership training for managers, including participation in the Design CEO “Intensive Leadership Masterclass”. Through this approach, Jodie sets a high standard of professionalism, values, and conduct, fostering a culture of growth and continuous learning within the regional council.

The Council has a senior leadership team of 18 managers; roles filled by nine men and nine women – achieved organically by Jodie's commitment to recruit and remunerate based on skillset and cultural fit.

Guided by Jodie, the team have implemented a modern, innovative approach to professional development. Employees can access free personal, professional, and technical development courses through the Council's new “One Council” Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system.

Employees can partner with a mentor manager under the Council's revolutionary “Level Up Mentoring” program or the “Grow@Work” program which allows employees to undertake a 4 to–12–month placement in a different department to explore new council career pathways.

Jodie's “Postcards to the CEO” initiative has fostered an environment of honest communication, holding the Council's senior management team accountable to internal stakeholders. Her commitment to community is exemplified through monthly “Connect with Council” public barbecues in regional centres, where she actively engages with residents and addresses their concerns with sincerity.

Her “One Organisation” approach has unleashed the potential of the regional council teams, encouraging them to create vibrant strategies that elevate the region's liveability and attract new business and investment opportunities.

By implementing the ground–breaking “One Council” ECM system, Jodie has amplified transparency, visibility, and collaboration across the expanse of the local government region.

As the Local Government Manager Australia (LGMA) Queensland 2023 Manager of the Year for Leadership/ Management Excellence, Jodie stands as a shining example of visionary leadership for women in local government.

# WASTE MANAGEMENT

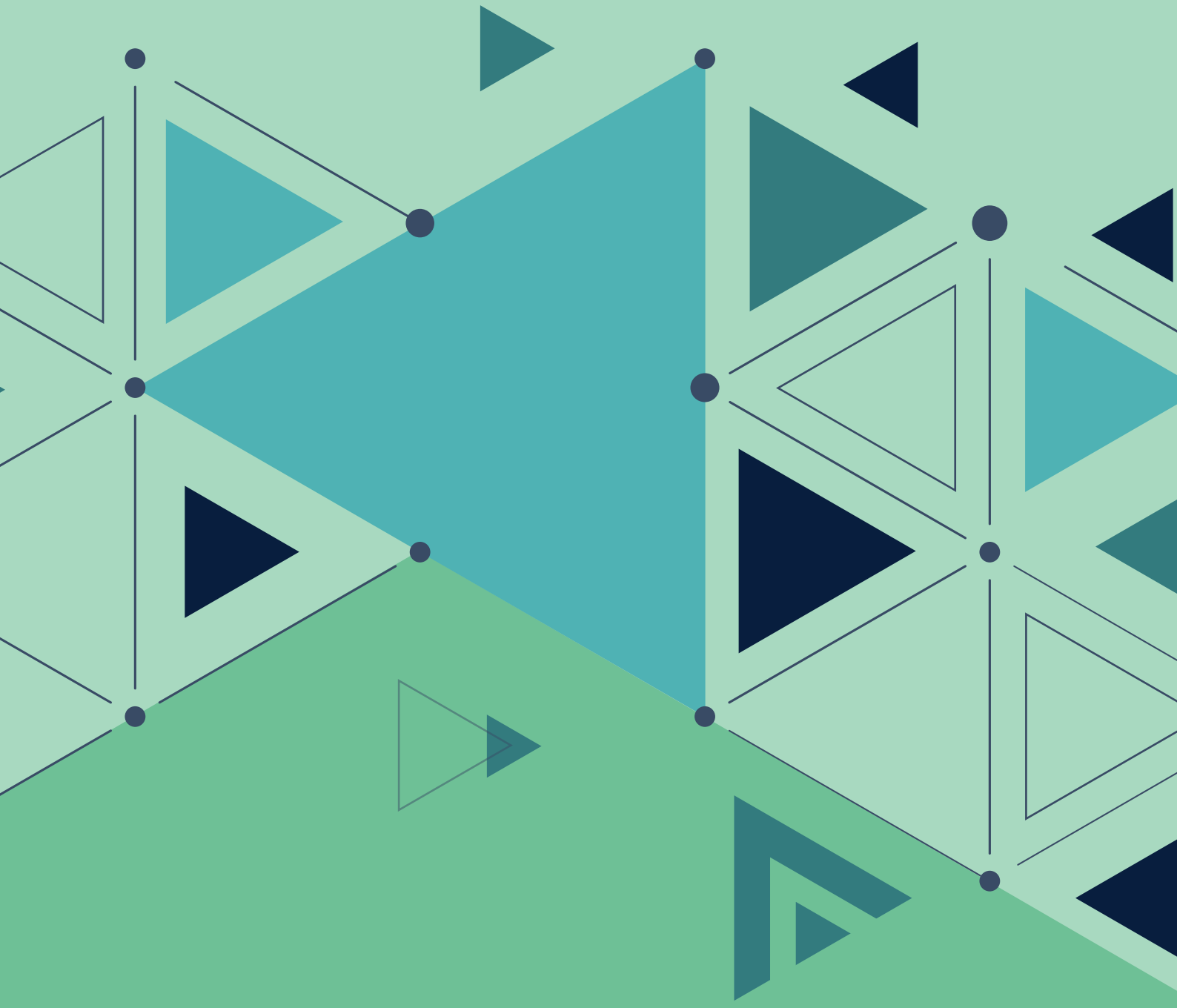
## About the category

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

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

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

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



**2024 entries**

City of Marion, SA – Valuing Marion's Waste

City of Swan, WA – Avon's Descent 2023, Single use plastic free event

Northern Beaches Council, NSW – Transition to a Circular Economy – Let's Give Our Engineered Timber A Second Life!

Northern Beaches Council, NSW – Scaling up Reuse and Recycling on the Northern Beaches

City of Gold Coast, QLD – Green organics bins accelerate the recovery of resources

Inner West Council, NSW – CRC Rap Video Project

Randwick City Council, NSW – Correcting waste issues in Multi Unit Dwellings

Armidale Regional Council, NSW – Bringing Best Practice by Going Back to Basics in Waste Management

Yarra City Council, VIC – Food Waste Challenge

Yarra City Council, VIC – My Smart Garden

Yarra City Council, VIC – Community Growing Spaces Program

Yarra City Council, VIC – Small Communal Growing Spaces Trial

City of Joondalup, WA – The Joondalup GREAT Waste Challenge

Toowoomba Regional Council, QLD – Turning Landfill Gas into Energy at the Toowoomba Waste Management Centre

Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, QLD – The bush is not your bin

Gannawarra Shire Council, VIC – Strengthening the Gannawarra's Road Network





## Category Winner 2024

### Waste Management Inner West Council, NSW CRC Rap Video Project

Concerns about truck and community recycling centre (CRC) facility fires are escalating across the waste industry as they create a significant risk of harm to people, property and 'business-as-usual' waste operations. Between August 2022 and February 2023, waste collection contractor Cleanaway reported that there were 180 fires in garbage trucks and waste facilities in NSW, all linked to lithium-ion batteries in household bins.

In response to the limited data captured across many CRCs, on four separate occasions between 2018 and 2022 the NSW Environment Protection Agency engaged IPSOS, a marketing research company, to conduct a satisfaction study. Comprising only 18 per cent of total visitors, the study results demonstrated that the Inner West needed to target people aged between 18 and 34.

In response the Council created a CRC rap music video to raise awareness of the free drop-off service and increase the responsible disposal of problem wastes. The NSW Environment Protection Agency provided funding support to create the video. The video was designed to target the 18-34 year old group. It has been published on popular social media platforms and features Inner West Council waste management staff and encourages young residents to use the free and easy service.

This catchy, fun and informative rap video was a huge hit, viewed 17,330 times across Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formally known as Twitter) and YouTube, attracting 1,163 likes, 53 comments and 199 shares up to 31 July 2023. This equated to a spend of \$1.06 per engagement, providing excellent value for money.

The campaign has strengthened the council's Zero Waste Strategy 2021-36 and exceed council expectations. Between April/May and June/July 2023, traffic in the St Peters depot increased by more than 70 per cent (significantly higher than the campaign's 20 per cent target).

“This catchy, fun and informative rap video was a huge hit, viewed 17,330 times across Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formally known as Twitter) and YouTube, attracting 1,163 likes, 53 comments and 199 shares up to 31 July 2023.”



## Waste Management Honourable Mention

### City of Marion, SA – Valuing Marion’s Waste

As a key service provider of waste and recycling services to ratepayers, The City of Marion has the imperative to demonstrate best practice and show leadership in waste minimisation.

In 2020, the City commenced a detailed review of its operational waste management facilities with the aim to reduce waste and implement circular economy principles in council operations.

The City’s Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Guidelines for council facilities, developed in the same year, also require new developments to incorporate waste separation into at least three streams (waste, co-mingled recycling and organics).

In 2023, the City completely transformed its indoor bin systems with new, well-designed bins, educational signage and comprehensive back-end systems to support effective diversion.

A total of 222 new waste, recycling and organics bin hubs were installed inside eleven council facilities including offices, libraries, and community, cultural and recreation centres.

This new indoor bin infrastructure contains at least 324kg of recycled plastic.

Contamination in the yellow bins (items that don’t belong) has decreased from 30 per cent to less than 10 per cent at the Council Administration Centre and City Services depot.

Following a staff survey, the extensive ‘Be a good sort’ staff and community education campaign was developed, comprising print and digital posters, Marion Libraries social media, an internal online information hub for staff, ‘Which Bin Wednesday’ quizzes on Microsoft Teams, and 15 ‘Which Bin Recycling Roadshow’ face-to-face education sessions for community groups and facility cleaners. The Recycling Roadshows attracted 228 participants.

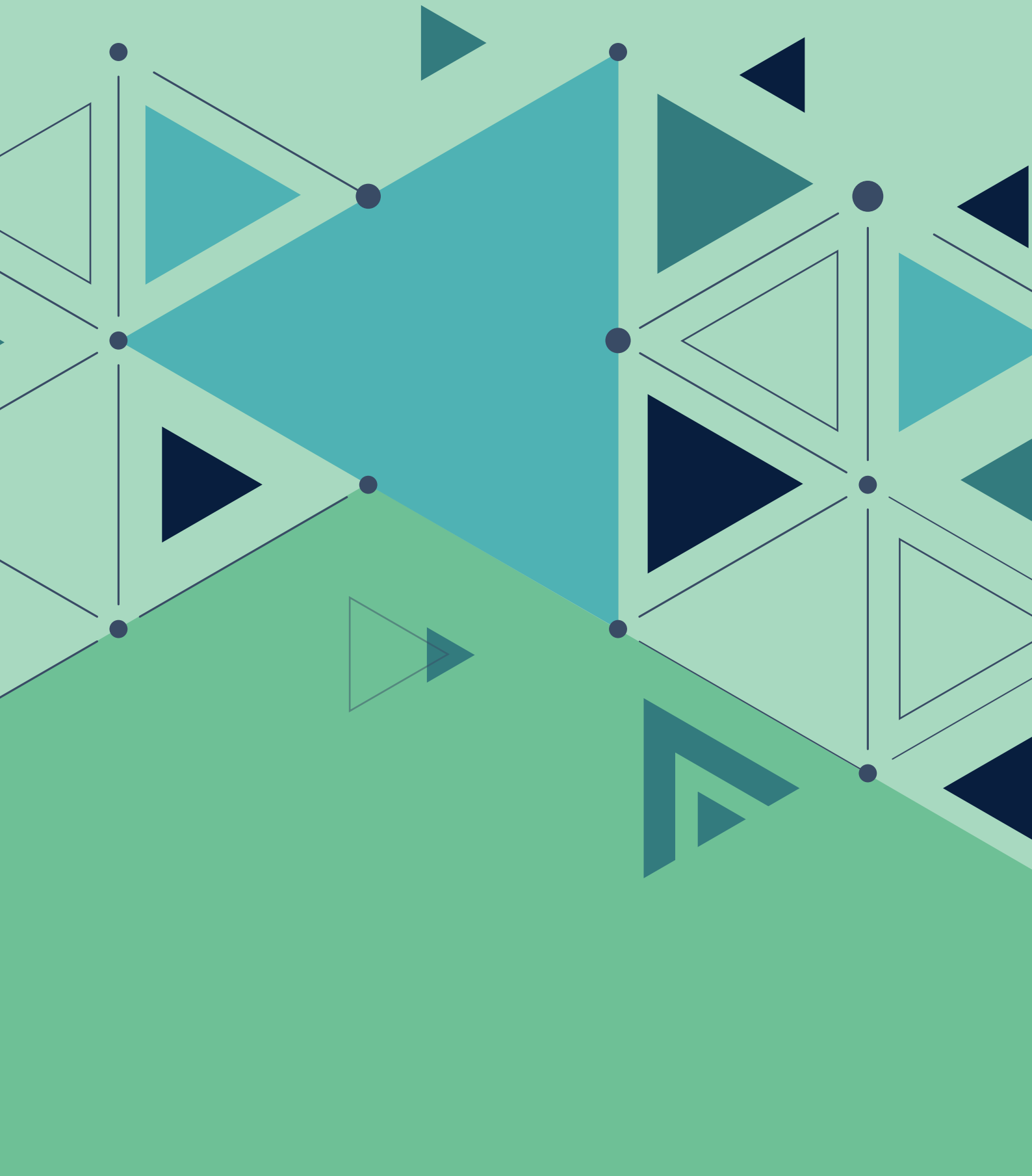
Staff have indicated that they love the clear signage and user-friendly bin systems, and the cleaners love how easy it is to sort bags correctly for recycling.

Council has successfully achieved the main aims of the project:

- ▶ Reducing waste to landfill
- ▶ Increasing operational waste diversion,
- ▶ Reducing recycling and organic bin contamination
- ▶ Ensuring all council-run facilities have organics recycling available,
- ▶ Consistency across bin systems and ‘which bin’ signage at all sites,
- ▶ Significantly increasing the disposal of waste materials in the correct bins by cleaners, and
- ▶ Increasing ‘which bin’ awareness among staff, community groups and visitors using council facilities.
- ▶ Month placement in a different department to explore new council career pathways.



# ROAD SAFETY



## About the category

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

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

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

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

### 2024 entries

**Murrindindi Shire Council, VIC** – Murrindindi Council Road Advisory Group

**Mornington Peninsula, VIC** – Towards Zero Road Safety Education Initiatives

**City of Gold Coast, QLD** – Making our road safer – Wildlife Vehicle Collision Mitigation Program

**City of Gold Coast, QLD** – Active School Travel Program

**Shire of Pingelly, WA** – Great Southern Highway Safety

**Carpentaria Shire Council, QLD** – Safer access for a remote Gulf Community

**Lachlan Shire Council, NSW** – Condobolin Improved Freight Logistics and Visitor Information Centre Project





## Category Winner 2024

### City of Gold Coast, QLD Active School Travel Program

The City of Gold Coast, Active School Travel (AST) program, established in 2012, is an innovative behaviour change initiative dedicated to fostering safe and active travel for primary school students.

The City has partnered with over 50 Primary Schools, equipping children and school communities with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate their journeys to school safely.

The key road safety initiatives the AST Program delivers are:

1. Zero the hero: The program's road safety mascot is, Zero the hero - his name derived from the program's aspiration: zero road fatalities around schools.
2. Road safety animations: The program has developed two road safety animations to be shown at school assemblies. These educate children on the best way to cross the road when actively travelling; STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK, and were designed to be both educational and engaging
3. Riding Rulz: This program was developed by the City and is delivered specifically to AST schools on the Gold Coast. The 5-session program is aimed at students in years 5 and 6 teaching them skills to cycle safely and effectively in a road environment
4. Ashmore Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) partnership: The AST program provides funding for year 4 students at participating schools to attend cycle workshops at the Ashmore PCYC's specialised road cycling training facility, and
5. Other road safety initiatives in the program include:
  - a) Variable Messaging Signs (VMS) during school holidays at AST schools promoting road safety
  - b) Traffic Counts and baseline surveys for schools joining the program
  - c) Safe routes to school investigations for potential Park and Stride locations
  - d) Partnership with the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Delivering Community Outcomes:

Aside from environmental and health benefits, the program has a strong focus on building community capability for active travel. By 2040, the population of the Gold Coast is expected to exceed 1 million residents. The skills the children develop throughout their tenure in the AST program will foster self-reliant, skilled active travellers, taking the pressure off our roads and improving the liveability of the city.

“Aside from environmental and health benefits, the program has a strong focus on building community capability for active travel.”

## Road Safety Honourable Mention

### Lachlan Shire Council, NSW Condobolin Improved Freight Logistics and Visitor Information Centre Project

This road safety project was first identified by the Lachlan Shire Council in 2016/17. The aim was to assist both the travelling public and truck drivers during harvest, as well as the broader transport industry by having a safe and visible rest area facility.

The project included work to improve the flood resilience of 9 km of roadway adjacent to the Newell Highway, which is used as an alternate traffic route when the highway is closed by flooding. In 2016 and 2022, flooding closed the Newell Highway and many drivers seeking alternate routes were travelling via Condobolin and driving through closed roads – something that is ultimately unsafe and caused road damage.

An alternate heavy vehicle route was identified and road improvements made to link the Newell Highway south of Gilgandra through Narromine then Condobolin and onto the Newell Highway at West Wyalong or to the Mid-Western Highway through Hay. As part of these improvements the project to improve the flood immunity of the Lachlan Valley Way and the Gipps Way was also proposed. The flood immunity improvements allow the roads to remain open for up to a one-in-20-year recurrence interval flood event. The project involved the construction of two large drainage structures that increase the capacity for flood water to pass under the road without increasing the flood impacts on the surrounding properties.

This project had a positive local and regional economic impact by reducing transport costs because of lengthy road diversions. The roads upgrades in the project have a high percentage of heavy vehicle traffic and are popular tourist routes for grey nomad travellers looking for off-highway experiences. Lachlan Shire is RV friendly and has established stop over points for tourists at key visitor locations. To assist people driving long distances manage driver fatigue, 24-hour accessible toilets and showers and the new visitor information centre were constructed. These have been welcomed by truck drivers and travellers alike.

“This project had a positive local and regional economic impact by reducing transport costs because of lengthy road diversions.”



# REGIONAL GROWTH

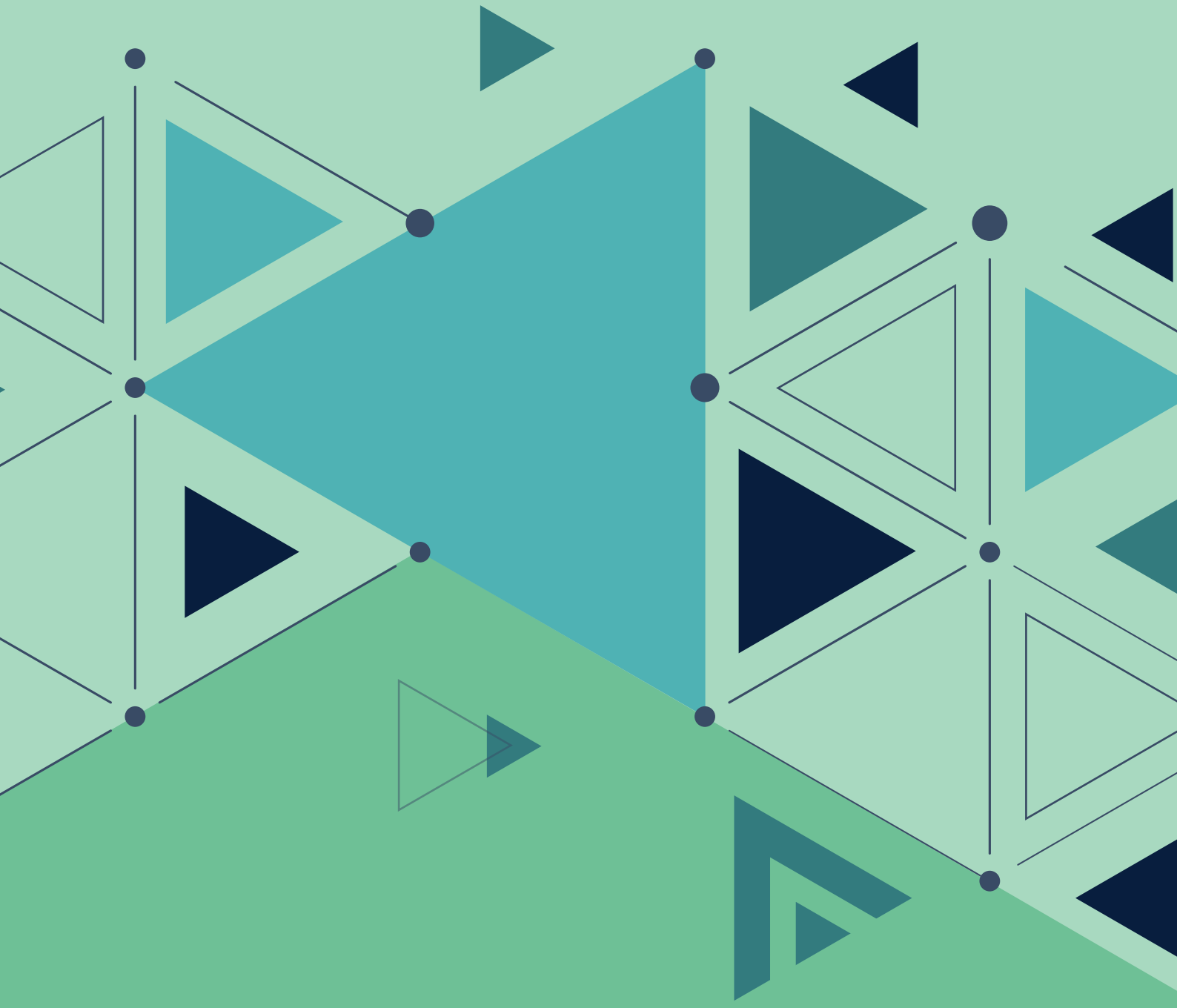
## About the category

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

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

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

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



## 2024 entries

City of Launceston, TAS – Connecting Communities – Launceston's Public Wi-Fi Network

Lachlan Shire Council, NSW – Condobolin Improved Freight Logistics and Visitor Information Centre Project

City of Whyalla, SA – City of Whyalla Economic Development Strategy 2022–2030

Ipswich City Council, QLD – Leveraging 2032: Our Roadmap to the Olympic and Paralympic Games

South Burnett Regional Council, QLD – Kingaroy Memorial Park and WJ Lang Memorial Pool Master Plan

District Council of Kimba, SA – Revitalising Healthcare: A Comprehensive Approach to GP Attraction and Retention through Medical Centre Modernisation and Promotional Outreach

Lake Macquarie City Council, NSW – Delivering the New Economy for Lake Macquarie City

City of Mount Gambier, SA – Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre

Clarence City Council, TAS – Championing Water Quality: A Collaborative Effort

Coffs Harbour City Council, NSW – City of Coffs Harbour's Yarrila Place

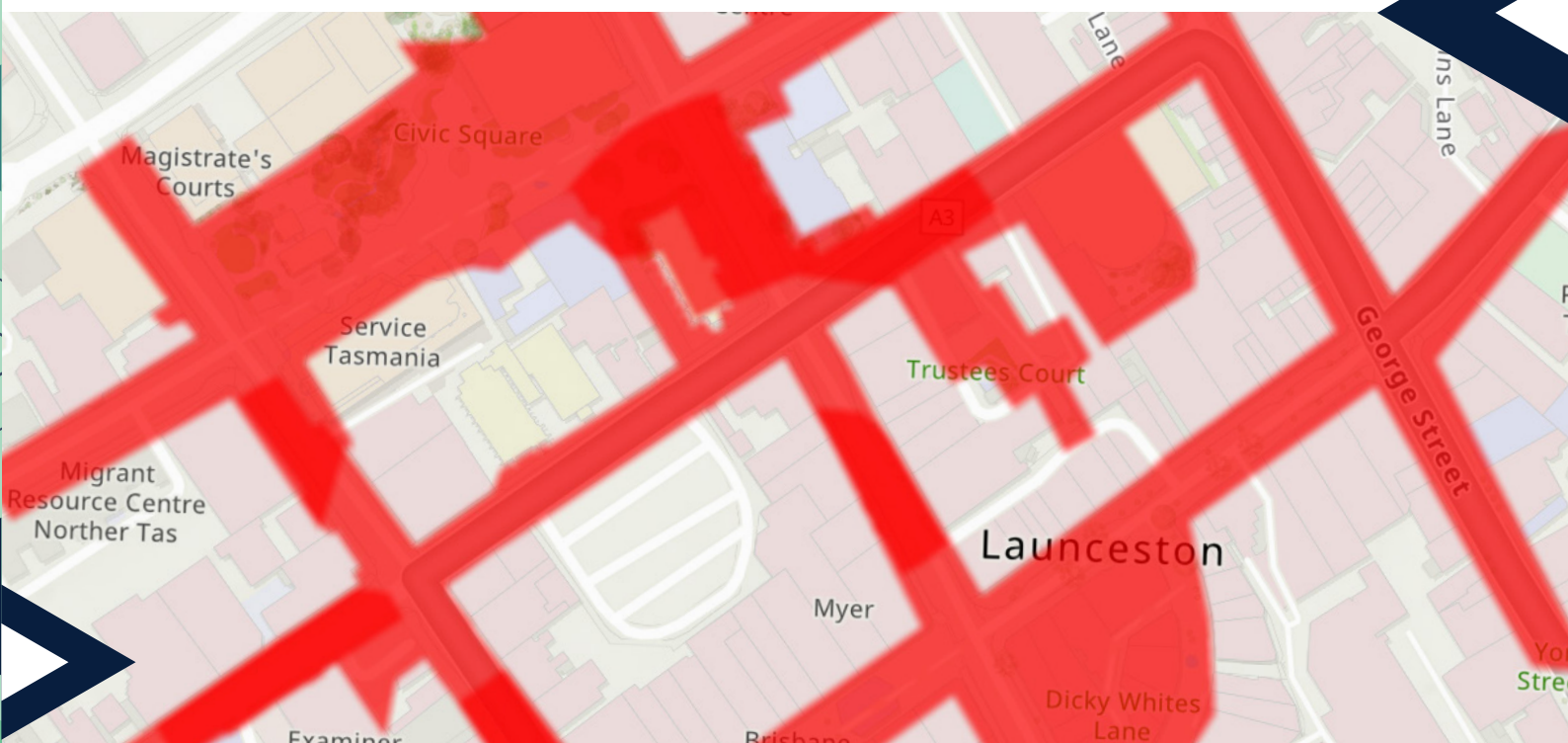
District Council of Peterborough, SA – Landmark Community Memorandum of Understanding Signed with Razorback Mine Project

Mitchell Shire Council, VIC – Pioneering Regional Partnership and historic Joint Council Meeting redefining Melbourne's North!

Mitchell Shire Council, VIC – Unveiling the Future: needs assessment sets the stage for regional infrastructure to be in place when community arrives

Devonport City Council, TAS – LIVING CITY – Devonport

Gannawarra Shire Council, VIC – Diversifying the Gannawarra





## Category Winner 2024

### City of Launceston, TAS Connecting Communities – Launceston’s Public Wi-Fi Network

The City of Launceston Public Wi-Fi initiative started as a service supporting tourism, as many similar initiatives do. However, over the last decade it has expanded to cover some of the most disadvantaged suburbs in the country, providing them with vital services and helping to bridge the digital divide.

The initiative began a decade ago as a small-scale, low-budget trial in the central city area, with a focus on activating community spaces and supporting tourism.

In 2018 the project received a significant boost with grant funding secured via The City Heart Project, a Launceston City Deal Commitment. The City Heart Project allowed for network coverage to be extended across the whole CBD including paths that visitors may take to the CBD. The network was made more robust, applying project learnings and community feedback.

In 2020 the network was further extended with support from the My Place My Future program, also a Launceston City Deal Commitment. The My Place My Future program has a goal of improving the liveability of the seven northern suburbs in Launceston through infrastructure, public spaces, transport and supporting improved lifestyle, social and economic outcomes for the community.

Launceston’s northern suburbs include some of the most disadvantage areas in Australia, with low rates of connectivity, high unemployment and other challenges<sup>1</sup>.

A hallmark of the initiative is the continuous engagement with the community, and the My Place My Future expansion enabled 10 new hotspots to be deployed in areas the community deemed there was the most need. Throughout the deployments, the ongoing partnership between the community and the council led to extensive promotion, feedback, and shared learnings.

A recent survey found that the top four purposes for using Public Wi-Fi include searching for employment, accessing government services (e.g., MyGov), connecting with family, and engaging in education or training. These activities rank higher than streaming services, online shopping, and general web browsing. The Public Wi-Fi network has grown to include in excess of 50 wireless access points, averaging over 1,500 unique devices connecting each day.

<sup>1</sup> Three Launceston suburbs have Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) disadvantage scores in the lowest 2% in the entire country

“Throughout the deployments, the ongoing partnership between the community and the council led to extensive promotion, feedback, and shared learnings.”



## Regional Growth Honourable Mention

### Lake Macquarie City Council, NSW Delivering the New Economy for Lake Macquarie City

The Lake Macquarie City Council recognised change was coming more than a decade ago and began proactively working to diversify the city's economy. Historically dominant manufacturing and coal mining sectors contracted from 37% of local output in 2011 to 23% in 2022.

Usually, economies plateau at best during periods of rapid transition, or more often decline, but Lake Macquarie's economy has continued to thrive, adding 22,000 jobs, with in-migration driving population expansion, and economic output increasing by 7% annually between 2013 and 2023.

The University of Newcastle's Institute for Regional Futures was commissioned to analyse economic changes over the past decade, evaluate the Council's role in leading efforts to adjust to these changes, and assess what future changes could and should lay in store.

This research drew several conclusions on recent change, one being that industries that have filled the gap in jobs and output are driven by high rates of population growth, chiefly construction and the expansion of the care economy. Secondly, many key indicators are exhibiting increasingly positive trends. These include the attraction of younger workers, the realisation of aspirations to establish a visitor economy based on the city's natural assets, more jobs for locals, and a slowing rate of contraction in manufacturing.

The Council has been a key driver of these outcomes. Recognising the need for a demographic shift in the city's population profile, the Council devised a marketing strategy designed to lure capital-city millennials looking to relocate, build a business or enter the property market. Multiple 'Make your move' campaigns targeted 25-to-35-year-olds in Sydney's west, highlighting the city's affordable, stress-free lifestyle and natural assets.

As Lake Macquarie's profile has grown, so too has private investment. More than \$1.3 billion in development applications is processed annually with many city-shaping projects approved or in the pipeline including the \$235 million, 30,000-person, Cedar Mill event space, the \$750 million Trinity Point resort, the \$120 million Lake Macquarie Private Hospital, and the \$85 million BlackRock Motor Resort.

Through innovative partnerships with external thought-leaders and novel approaches to economic challenges, the Council is ensuring the city continues to thrive well into the future while tackling the challenges of a rapidly diversifying economy.



# PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE

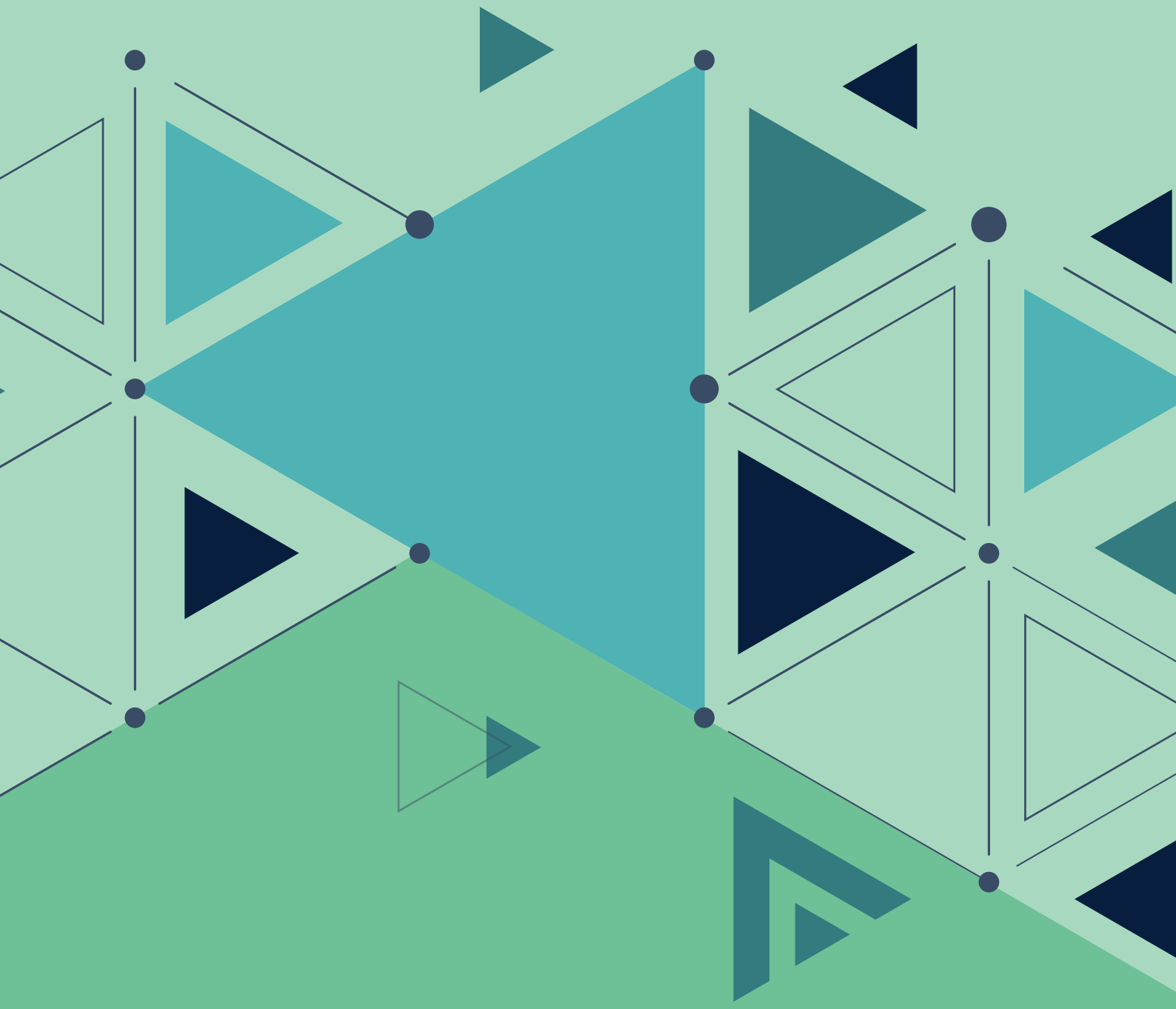
## About the category

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

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

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

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



## 2024 entries

**Shire of Dardanup, WA** – Shire of Dardanup – New Administration, Library and Community Building

**Blacktown City Council, NSW** – Shared User Path – Mavis Street to Blacktown International Sportspark

**Brisbane City Council, QLD** – Brisbane Metro – A New Era of Connected Travel

**City of Prospect, SA** – Creation and Implementation of a S221 Permit Developer Incentive Deed – A big win for Residents, Developers, and Council

**City of Stirling, WA** – City of Stirling Trackless Tram Trial

**Burwood Council, NSW** – Bridging Cities and Cultures: The Transformation of Clarendon Place from Lane to Landmark

**East Gippsland Shire Council, VIC** – Shared Datacentre – Innovative Management (shared services project)

**Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, QLD** – Concrete batching plant

**Hume City Council, VIC** – Shaping the Future Together: A Landmark Regional Partnership and Historic Joint Council Meeting for Melbourne's North's New City

**Hume City Council, VIC** – Unveiling the Future: Regional Needs Assessment for Cloverton MAC Sets the Stage for Melbourne's North!

**City of Burnside, SA** – Magill Village Redevelopment

**Shire of Pingelly, WA** – Pingelly Recreation and Cultural Centre

**City of Victor Harbor, SA** – Mainstreet Precinct Upgrade (Stage Four)

**Gannawarra Shire Council, VIC** – Brand Gannawarra

**Moreton Bay Regional Council, QLD** – City of Moreton Bay – Supporting Public Safety and Productivity through Technology





## Category Winner 2024

### City of Stirling, WA Trackless Tram Trial

The City of Stirling is developing a Trackless Tram Business Case to assess a range of technology to support the implementation of a Trackless Tram system from Glendalough Train Station to Perth's premier tourist beach, Scarborough.

During peak hours the current road network in the city centre is at capacity, and congestion and parking around the Scarborough beach precinct is a challenge. This major urban regeneration project is part of the City's broader vision to revitalise the city centre to become Perth's second CBD and transform it into a vibrant, urban area reducing congestion and increasing jobs and housing.

As part of this business case, a partnership was formed between the City, Curtin University and the manufacturers of the Trackless Tram. This partnership aimed to undertake research to inform the business case and determine if a permanent Trackless Tram system could support urban regeneration right along Scarborough Beach Road, creating a vibrant and connected community.

For this to become a reality collaboration across community, business and government sectors is required. To make this happen, the City went above and beyond to import a trackless tram from Shanghai, China so that the community and stakeholders could explore what this innovative technology could achieve and provide feedback as part of the trial. The trial also allowed a range of experts to identify the benefits that this type of public transport could provide and to examine how this technology could be implemented across Australia.

Over 1,200 people attended the community open day to ride on the Trackless Tram and provide feedback which was overwhelmingly positive. A Net Zero Transit Symposium was held in conjunction with the trial where over 150 transport and planning experts from across Australia were also able to discuss the latest in mid-tier net zero transit options and provide the opportunity for attendees to see the Trackless Tram in action.

This ground-breaking trial has provided us with valuable insights into the benefits that this public transport can provide. The results aim to revolutionise Australia's mid-tier transport system showcasing this innovative and sustainable technology.

“This ground-breaking trial has provided us with valuable insights into the benefits that this public transport can provide.”

## Productivity through Infrastructure Honourable Mention

### **Blacktown City Council, NSW Shared User Path – Mavis Street to Blacktown International Sports Park**

**Blacktown City Council's commitment to providing 'productivity through infrastructure' is exemplified in the recently constructed shared user path from Mavis Street, Rooty Hill to Blacktown International Sports Park (BISP). The Council aims to strengthen the health and sporting industries by better connecting the customers with new transport links.**

The newly constructed shared user pathway connects Rooty Hill train station to the BISP. It builds on existing infrastructure, such as the Mavis Street shared user path and BISP as well as the recently opened Blacktown Exercise and Sports Technology (BEST) Hub, and the future Disability Sports Centre of Excellence within the BISP. The pathway provides BISP users and visitors with the shortest route, improving movement while also accommodating future growth.

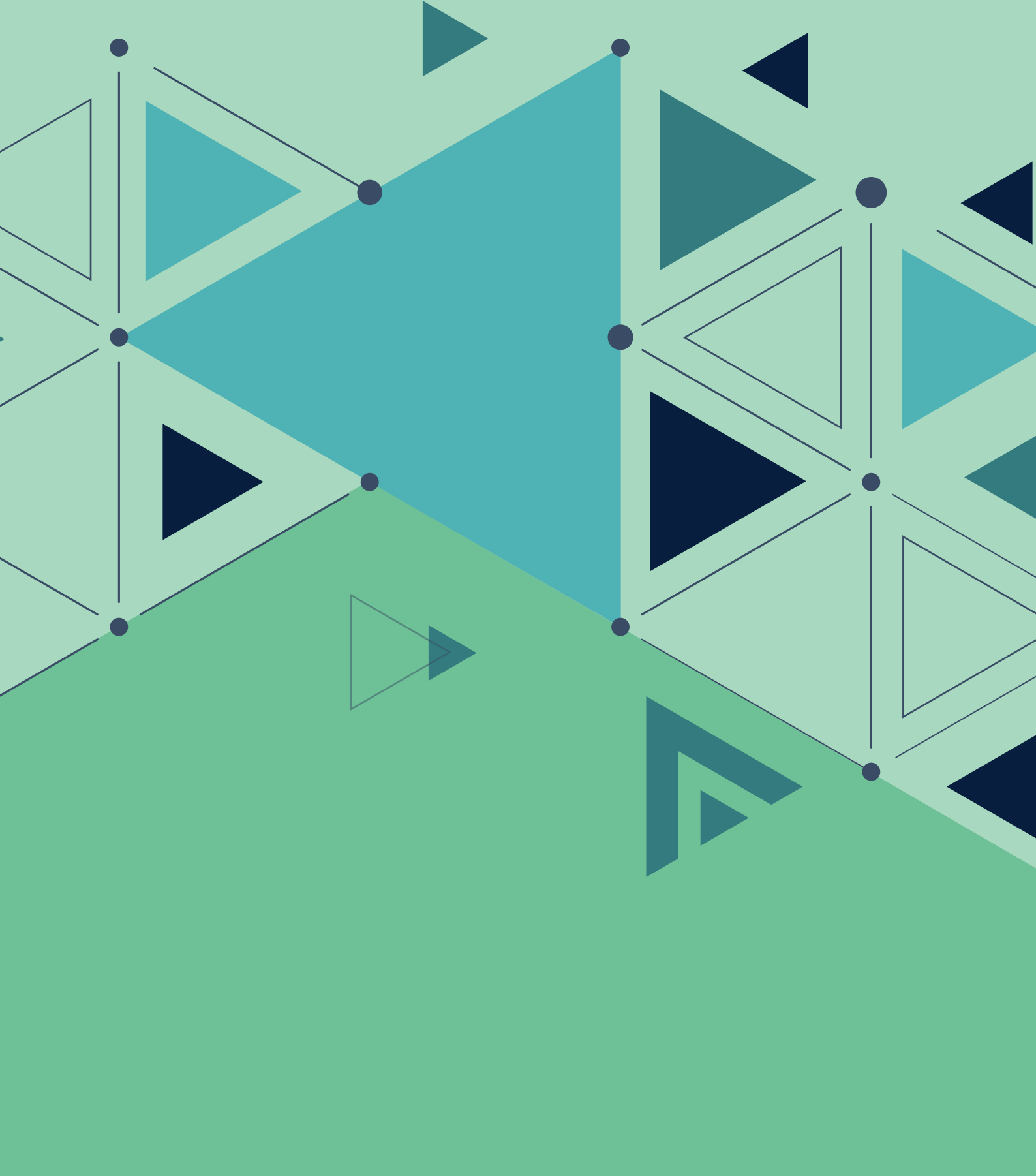
This initiative clearly demonstrates the Council's commitment to sustainable transport options, liveability and the wellbeing of council residents and visitors, and productivity in investment strategies such as our partnership with the Australian Catholic University. The university has established a campus in the Blacktown CBD and will commence its sports and exercise science education courses in 2024 in the BEST Hub.

The shared user pathway also provides an alternative route through the BISP as part of The Great West Walk, and access to the BISP for local residents. In addition to this, the pathway also provides improved access to the Sports Park for M7 cyclists. BISP has a café, so the new shared path also attracts the M7 recreational cyclists thus increasing the traffic flow and economic growth in the suburb.

The shared user path includes a 15-metre-long curved pedestrian bridge with council approved handrails to cross Angus Creek, and a fibreglass reinforced plastic grated deck, which has a long design life, high strength, low weight, corrosion and slip resistant, meaning a low maintenance cost. Lighting is provided along the length of the pathway at 20 metre intervals to provide a safe and secure environment for the users and residents. Reflective paint is used to support the lighting during night to add to the safety of the users.



# INDIGENOUS RECOGNITION



## About the category

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

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

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

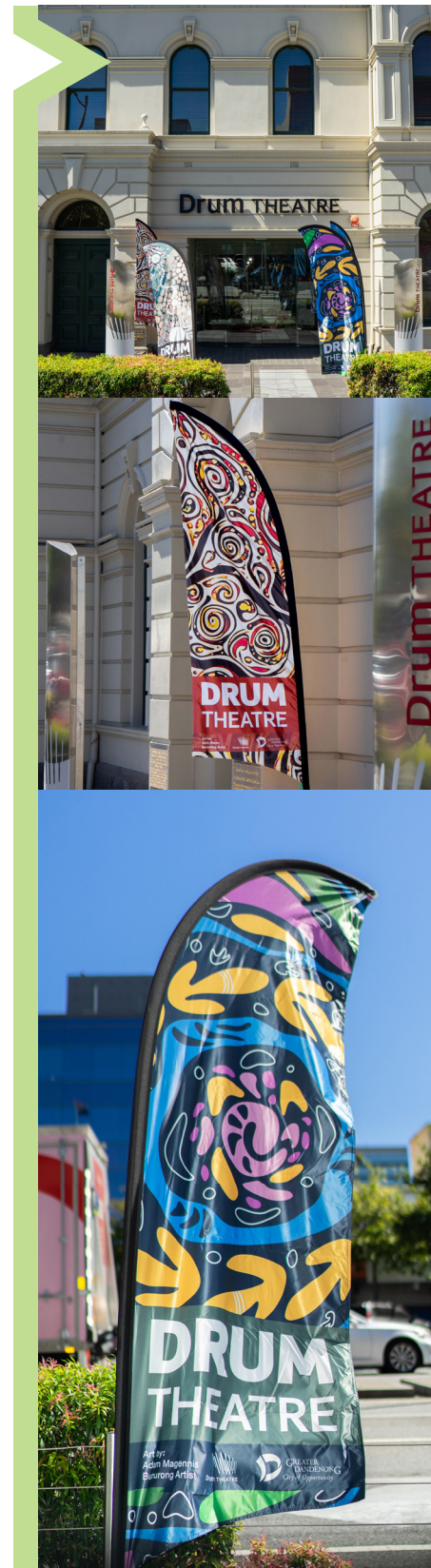
- ▶ bringing together Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and communities to share skills and experiences;
- ▶ undertaking initiatives that reinforce, strengthen, and promote Indigenous culture, traditions and languages;
- ▶ raising awareness and understanding of the importance of Aboriginal and Torres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

### 2024 entries

City of Swan, WA – City of Swan Community Calendar

City of Greater Dandenong, VIC – Wominjeka Project

Melton City Council, VIC – Melton Cemetery Reflective Space





## Category Winner 2024

### City of Greater Dandenong, VIC Wominjeka Project

The Wominjeka Project is driven by a commitment to fostering cultural inclusivity, bridging communities, and nurturing a profound understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture. The project collaborated with four artists, three Bunurong and one Arrernte, to create original welcome flags for Dandenong's Drum Theatre.

Designed to visually convey a heartfelt 'Welcome' message, these flags are prominently displayed at the theatre's entrance and along the footpath, providing a warm embrace for Greater Dandenong, Victoria's most diverse community, particularly the Bunurong community. The flags serve as powerful symbols, diminishing the perceived barrier associated with the building's historical Victorian façade. Through unique colours and symbols, the flags reflect the meaning of performing arts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture, deepening the venue's identity as a performing arts hub and celebrating Bunurong Culture.

The project was celebrated at a special event on 21 March 2024, where the original artworks were exhibited in the theatre, and aligned with National Close the Gap Day and Harmony Day. This event provided a platform for the community to directly engage with artists and Bunurong Land Council representatives, aiming to foster meaningful conversations and develop a more inclusive and culturally enriched community fabric.

Filed interviews with participating artists during the event provided deeper insights into their stories. Distributed through the theatre's social channels and the Council's two outdoor screens in public squares, these interviews will contribute to ongoing dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture to a broader audience.

The project's impact extends beyond its immediate scope, symbolising a strengthened collaboration between the City of Greater Dandenong and the Bunurong Land Council. This collaboration transcends Wominjeka to larger public art projects like Muderra Way, a railway mural celebrating Bunurong culture and the renaming of Council's Link Road to Muderra Way. Muderra means torrential rain in Boonwurrung language and provides a platform for visual storytelling.

By fostering cultural exchange, combining physical and digital engagement, and reinforcing positive relationships, the Wominjeka Project stands as an outstanding example of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives in local government, contributing to the well-being and recognition of the Indigenous community.

“The project's impact extends beyond its immediate scope, symbolising a strengthened collaboration between the City of Greater Dandenong and the Bunurong Land Council.”



## Indigenous Recognition Honourable Mention

### Melton City Council, VIC Melton Cemetery Reflective Space

**The Melton Cemetery Reflective Space is a newly constructed culturally sensitive space that honours Aboriginal ancestors and early settlers who were laid to rest in the oldest section of the cemetery dating back to 1861.**

This section of the cemetery was devoid of any beautification and had no markers or acknowledgement that this was a place of rest. Over time and through bushfires, all of the early memorials were destroyed.

Records indicated this section contained the exhumed remains of Aboriginal ancestors found on Greenhill Station in Toolern Vale. A geophysical survey completed in June 2020, identified the existence of 112 unmarked graves and four unknown soil disturbances, treated as unmarked graves.

The Council resolved to establish a commemorative space to ensure the site be formally protected, beautified and acknowledged as a place of rest for Aboriginal ancestors and early settlers. The Council resolved that the design be informed through consultation with traditional owners and the Melton Historical Society.

Over many months, a co-design process was enacted, with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Melton Historical Society having significant influence over the design outcome, landscaping treatment and wording on the commemorative sign.

This included many discussions and meetings, including at the cemetery, where valuable insights and perspectives have carefully and respectfully shaped a collaborative and meaningful place of reflection.

The Melton Cemetery now has a space that celebrates Indigenous connection, its history and stories. The Melton Cemetery Reflective Space pays respect so that the lives of the earliest settlers and Aboriginal ancestors and their stories can be shared and remembered. The design is centred around a landscaped hearth – a central point around which we can gather, talk and share stories.

This was a sensitive project and the partnership co-design approach undertaken in a sensitive and culturally appropriate way with Indigenous voices being heard has laid a foundation for stronger, more respectful and trustworthy relationships.

The Melton Cemetery Reflective Space was officially opened on Thursday 19 October 2023 with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Melton Historical Society, community members, Mayor and councillors celebrating this new addition to the Melton Cemetery.



# DISASTER READINESS AND RECOVERY

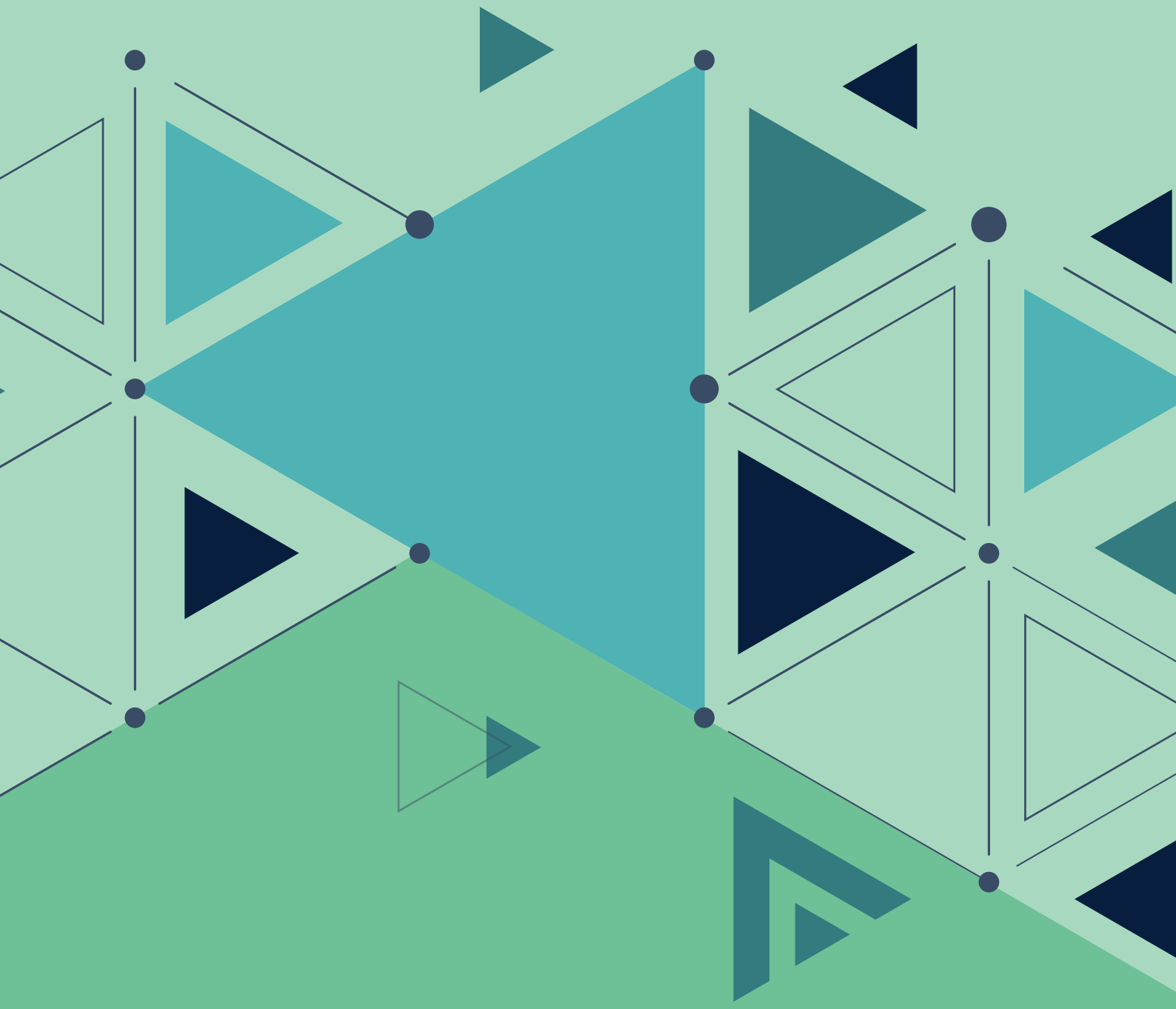
## About the category

The 'Disaster Readiness and Recovery' category recognises local government initiatives which:

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

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

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



## 2024 entries

City of Gold Coast, QLD – Disaster and Emergency Management Centre

City of Gold Coast, QLD – Tallebudgera Training Wall

City of Gold Coast, QLD – City of Gold Coast Disaster and Emergency Management

Western Downs Regional Council, QLD – Tara Accommodation Recovery Park

City of Gold Coast, QLD – Operation Clean Up

Hawkesbury City Council, NSW – Prepared, Informed and Ready

Hawkesbury City Council, NSW – Upper Colo Bridge

Hawkesbury City Council, NSW – Greens Road Embankment Stabilization Work

Hawkesbury City Council, NSW – Hawkesbury Disaster and Emergency Dashboard

Cabonne Council, NSW – “Building Back A Better Cabonne” – Cabonne Recovery Plan

City of Gosnells, WA – Tackling Flood Prevention and Response through Smart Engineering Solutions at the City of Gosnells

Mitchell Shire Council, VIC – Seymour Community Flood Recovery

City of Launceston, TAS – #ReadyTogether – Emergency Management Hub

Murrindindi Shire Council, VIC – Community outreach hubs to foster community resilience

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, QLD – Palm Island Disaster Management Plan

Moreton Bay Regional Council, QLD – Right Time, Right Info: Preventing business closures after disasters

Gannawarra Shire Council, VIC – Connecting the Gannawarra Following the 2022 Floods





## Category Winner 2024

### City of Gosnells, WA Tackling Flood Prevention and Response through Smart Engineering Solutions at the City of Gosnells

**The City of Gosnells is at the forefront of proactive flood risk reduction within our local community, leveraging innovative drainage solutions and cutting-edge technology.**

From flood sensor alerts to a state-of-the-art drainage CCTV robot, in-house pipe relining, and deep ground-penetrating radar, the City has implemented a diverse array of measures to mitigate blockages, repair pipes, and address sinkholes with minimal disruption. These initiatives ensure the efficient functioning of over 900 km of drainage infrastructure, safeguarding roads, residences, and businesses and protecting the lives and livelihoods of the 130,000-strong population.

Since the 1920s, impermeable soils and a high groundwater table have contributed to persistent drainage challenges, resulting in recurrent flooding during storms and a history of sinkhole incidents in the region.

Recognising the disproportionate impact of extreme weather events on the most vulnerable segments of the community, particularly in light of worsening climate conditions, the City has proactively developed a best-practice approach to drainage maintenance and emergency response.

Upon discovering that 22% of the drainage network data was in poor condition, the City prioritised proactive inspections and updated asset data. This initiative led to the introduction of a custom, off-grid, mobile surveying and CCTV unit operated by skilled personnel. Equipped with laser scanning capabilities to detect deformed pipes and a CCTV crawler for comprehensive footage and condition reporting, the unit significantly enhances inspection efficiency. Its submerged operation capability and 400 metre range, along with its 360 degree camera, reduces the need for personnel to enter confined spaces, thereby enhancing safety. This innovation is projected to save the City \$125,000 annually in external contractor expenses.

In a bid to bolster flood emergency response capabilities, the City deployed digital rain gauges and flood sensors across vulnerable sections of the network. These devices trigger programmed alerts sent via text messages to dedicated response teams, facilitating timely intervention during storm events and pre-emptively addressing flood risks before they escalate.

By embracing cutting-edge technology and strategic planning, the City of Gosnells is setting a commendable standard in flood prevention and response, ensuring the resilience of its community in the face of environmental challenges.

“City of Gosnells is setting a commendable standard in flood prevention and response, ensuring the resilience of its community in the face of environmental challenges”

## Disaster Readiness and Recovery Honourable Mention

### Moreton Bay Regional Council, QLD Right Time, Right Info: Preventing business closures after disasters

Moreton Bay's business community endured a series of extreme disruptions, from rolling floods and acute workforce shortages in 2022 to further flooding impacts in December 2023 and January 2024. Timely communication of critical information was vital as businesses struggled to recover.

The City of Moreton Bay strategically integrated Australia Business Register (ABR) data into its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to identify and quantify the scale of impact.

By overlaying CRM business data with disaster mapping, (such as the buildings at threat dataset), the Council quickly and confidently determined:

- ▶ 18% of 3,000 buildings under threat were business premises
- ▶ one in five businesses were located within catchment alert areas
- ▶ almost 2,000 businesses were in upstream Catchment Alert Group areas, and
- ▶ over 100 businesses were in the highest impacted areas.

Business Resilience Officers could then be deployed in a targeted way. This also enabled the Council to comprehensively understand the impact of weather events on businesses indirectly impacted and target relevant information to them.

In 2022, more than 15,000 business owners received personalised information after the initial disaster, including a two-page flood recovery-business support document by personalised email. Of these businesses, over 6,500 engaged with this communication (equating to a 43% open rate compared to the 19.6% industry benchmark for government).

In response to the 2023-24 summer floods, the Council rapidly deployed the same approach and identified 781 businesses in the impacted area. Personalised communication was sent to 730 businesses, and more than 40%, 315 businesses engaged with the assistance provided.

Previously, the Council's primary information source on potentially affected businesses has been a rates database, which often fails to include those operators who are not property owners.

The Council's new approach has reduced the economic impact of disasters. There has been no significant increase in GST cancellation rates in the region. Pre-covid the region experienced a 3.23% business exit rate; this exit rate was 3.53% in 2021-22 and 3.18% 2022-23.

These outcomes are exceptional as the projected closures could have been as high as 21% according to these outcomes are exceptional as the projected closures could have been as high as 21% according to Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities, which reported that 80% of businesses affected by a natural disaster do not reopen or fail within two years.

### Cabonne Council, NSW "Building Back A Better Cabonne" – Cabonne Recovery Plan

In November 2022, the Cabonne local government area experienced one of its worst flood events. This catastrophic event directly impacted five towns, with 426 homes, and more than 100 businesses, rural properties, and infrastructure damaged, destroyed or lost.

Most devastatingly, this flood event also resulted in the loss of two Cabonne residents.

In the immediate aftermath of this event, the Council recognised the need to have clarity on the priority actions that were crucial in ensuring the successful rebuild of the local government area.

The Cabonne Recovery Plan (the Plan), Building Back a Better Cabonne, helps to identify the key elements required to rebuild and stimulate the local economy, as well as support efforts to secure additional investments in essential areas which underpin recovery.

The Plan prioritises infrastructure restoration and economic recovery across impacted towns and villages, and enables both the Council, community, and governments to monitor, record and report key achievements throughout our recovery journey.

The Plan was wholly Council-funded, taking time and resources that were already stretched. However, the Plan has also enabled the Council to prioritise the things that matter most to our communities.

Localised recovery plans are not mandatory under state or federal legislation; however, the Plan has been a catalyst for both Council and government decision making – providing a solid evidence base which demonstrates community support for recovery efforts.

Feedback from the NSW Reconstruction Authority and National Emergency Management Authority is that the Plan sets a benchmark for other local government authorities.

In consideration of the future of Cabonne, the Plan also outlines a strategy of action to 'build back better' ensuring the community is more resilient when faced with potential future natural disasters.

To date, the biggest achievement from the Plan is the announcement of a \$100 million Central West Resilience and Response Package, which includes funding for housing (buy-backs, retrofits and raises), a community assets program, and a road betterment program.

Less than 18 months on, and with 72% of actions under the Plan either complete or underway, funding for bridges betterment has been secured, flood mitigation, a new preschool, and reviews of flood studies, are demonstrations of the exceptional achievements in the aftermath of such a devastating event.

# CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

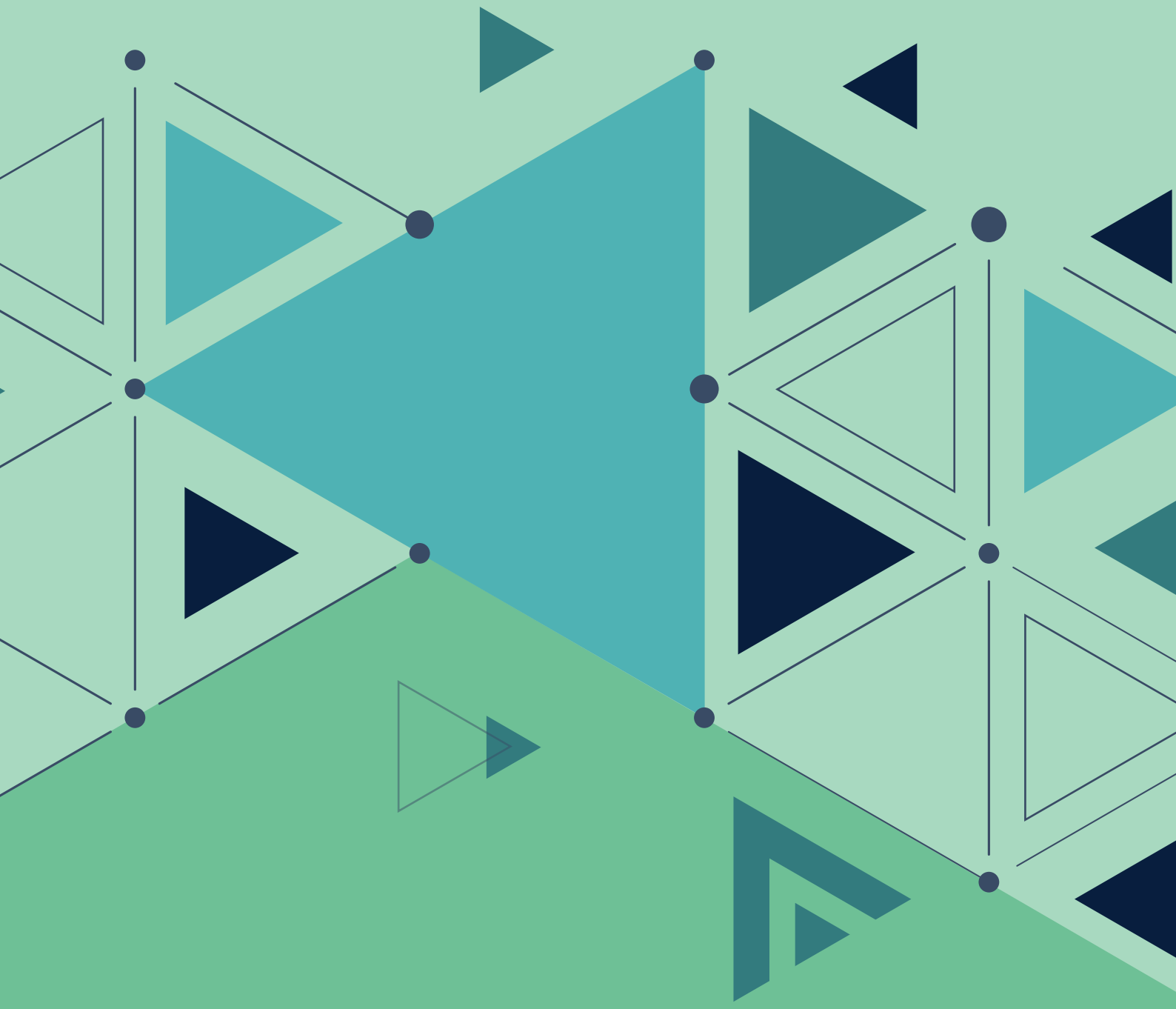
## About the category

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

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

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

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



## 2024 entries

City of Greater Geelong, VIC – Geelong Design Week 2023

Redland City Council, QLD – Redland Performing Arts Centre's (RPAC) Sing Sing Sing Choral Program

Wyndham City Council, VIC – Firefly Night Market

Wollongong City Council, NSW – Culture Mix 2023

Lake Macquarie City Council, NSW – Sugar Valley Library Museum, kirantakamyari

South Gippsland Shire Council, VIC – ArtCubes

Merri-bek City Council (Formerly Moreland City Council), VIC – Brunswick Music Festival

Armidale Regional Council, NSW – The Big Chill Festival

Shire of Mt Marshall, WA – Shire of Mt Marshall Centenary Celebrations 1923–2023

City of Greater Dandenong, VIC – Co-designing a Space for Arts Creation

Wyndham City Council, VIC – LIT – a light experience to build audiences for new arts experiences in the West

Wyndham City Council, VIC – Mooroop Yarkeen by Tom Day – The largest First Nations mural in Australia

Lane Cove Council, NSW – St Leonards Library – A new cultural hub for St Leonards

Coffs Harbour City Council, NSW – City of Coffs Harbour's Yarrila Place

Clarence City Council, TAS – The Clarence Jazz Festival stands as the longest-running music festival in Tasmania

Burwood Council, NSW – Burwood Summer: Bringing Arts and Culture to Our Community

Strathfield Council, NSW – The Powell's Creek Reserve Access and Connectivity Project

Shire of Pingelly, WA – Pingelly FAM Festival

Bathurst Regional Council, NSW – Central Tablelands Collections Facility – Bathurst NSW

City of Joondalup, WA – Joondalup Festival 2023

West Tamar Council, TAS – West Tamar Council's PAC-tivity Guide

Port Phillip City Council, VIC – St Kilda Festival

Randwick City Council, NSW – Best Gift in the World Sustainable Christmas Market

City of Swan, WA – Swan Writer in Residence

City of Swan, WA – Let's Make Magic Happen | Health and Fitness Motivation

City of Swan, WA – Midland Junction Arts Centre / City of Swan partnership

City of Swan, WA – Australian Rustic Farm Art Awards

City of Swan, WA – Singing Swans

Town of Claremont, WA – Annual Arts Program

City of Melbourne, VIC – Creative Spaces Guides

Flinders Shire Council, QLD – Hughenden Festival of Outback Skies

Yarra City Council, VIC – Peel Street Precinct

Armidale Regional Council, NSW – Halloween in the Mall

City of Victor Harbor, SA – Muwerang Mosaic Project



## Category Winner 2024

### Wyndham City Council, VIC LIT – a light experience to build audiences for new arts experiences in the West

The LIT light experience was first held in 2022 and attracted 28,476 people. In 2023, drawing people from across the Wyndham region, the event tripled its visitor numbers with a record 61,722 over the 10-day event. In March 2024, visitor numbers were set to triple again.

The event aimed to:

- ▶ Work with local creatives to showcase their work that aligns to the lighting/projection program
- ▶ Establish an annual lighting event with free, high-quality and family-friendly programming for the local community
- ▶ Build community pride and civic participation in Werribee City Centre, and
- ▶ Support the local business community and grow the appreciation for the role of the creative economy in increasing business patronage and attracting visitors to central Werribee.

The primary form of art showcased at LIT was light in its many forms. It was an exciting celebration of light and its artistic potential and the program provided interactive and passive light installations and local and global artists. LIT combined technology, creativity and illumination to create an immersive experience. The entire park had been transformed into a glowing landscape with brilliant lighting displays and interactive experiences.

The event attracts visitors who may not previously have been exposed to this form of artistic expression, it sparks curiosity, invites contemplation and a sense of wonderment and delight.

Wyndham is located approximately 35 km from Melbourne and covers an area of 542 km<sup>2</sup>, it is one of Australia's fastest growing municipalities. The community is diverse, with 47% of the population born overseas and a higher proportion of young people compared with Greater Melbourne, with 28.4% of residents under the age of 18.

LIT responds to the growing community needs for inclusive art spaces. It provides access to a free, high-quality event that appeals across cultural diversity and age groups, whilst also supporting local business and building community pride and appreciation for art in public spaces. It provides access to a free, high-quality event that appeals across cultural diversity and age groups, whilst also supporting local business and building community pride and appreciation for art in public spaces. Overwhelming feedback from audience surveys had 87% of visitors rating it 8 or higher as an event, with 45% rating it a 10 out of 10.

“The event attracts visitors who may not previously have been exposed to this form of artistic expression, it sparks curiosity, invites contemplation and a sense of wonderment and delight.”



## Creativity and Culture Honourable Mention

### Lake Macquarie City Council, NSW Sugar Valley Library Museum, kirantakamyari

**Sugar Valley Library Museum, kirantakamyari, is a converted library museum in Lake Macquarie City. One of only a few of its kind in the world and a first for the Hunter region, it combines creativity and culture through contemporary library services, technology, and community facilities.**

The unique space is a true partnership between Lake Macquarie City Council and the West Wallsend District Heritage Group (WWDHG). The WWDHG collection was founded at West Wallsend High School in the 1980s as an innovative initiative to develop students' museum skills and respect for heritage. Students collected, catalogued and cleaned items, recorded oral histories from long-term residents and developed a sense of community through understanding local history.

By 2017, population growth and access issues led to WWDHG approaching the Council to assist with relocating the collection to a new space. With the initial brief being formulated for a new library in neighbouring Cameron Park, the concept of converging the two initiatives, a library and a museum, was born.

Developed from the West Wallsend collection, the museum's debut exhibition, *Westy: We built this history*, presents the story of the region through enticing and immersive experiences, objects portraying the life and times of this unique township forged by mining, the Depression, community and geographical isolation. The exhibition contains stories of people who worked, lived and played in the shadow of Mount Sugarloaf, including through interactive elements like the Hunter's first virtual reality experience of an underground coal mine.

The museum is the city's first professional museum and the Council continues to partner with the WWDHG to provide training to the group's volunteers in cleaning objects, cataloguing, digitising records and establishing best practises.

The library hosts regular early literacy programs, art classes and books clubs, while the museum engages an active group of volunteers and provides public through tours and professional development programs. The facility provides an engaging, innovative space where people can come together to learn, create and connect.



# COHESIVE COMMUNITIES

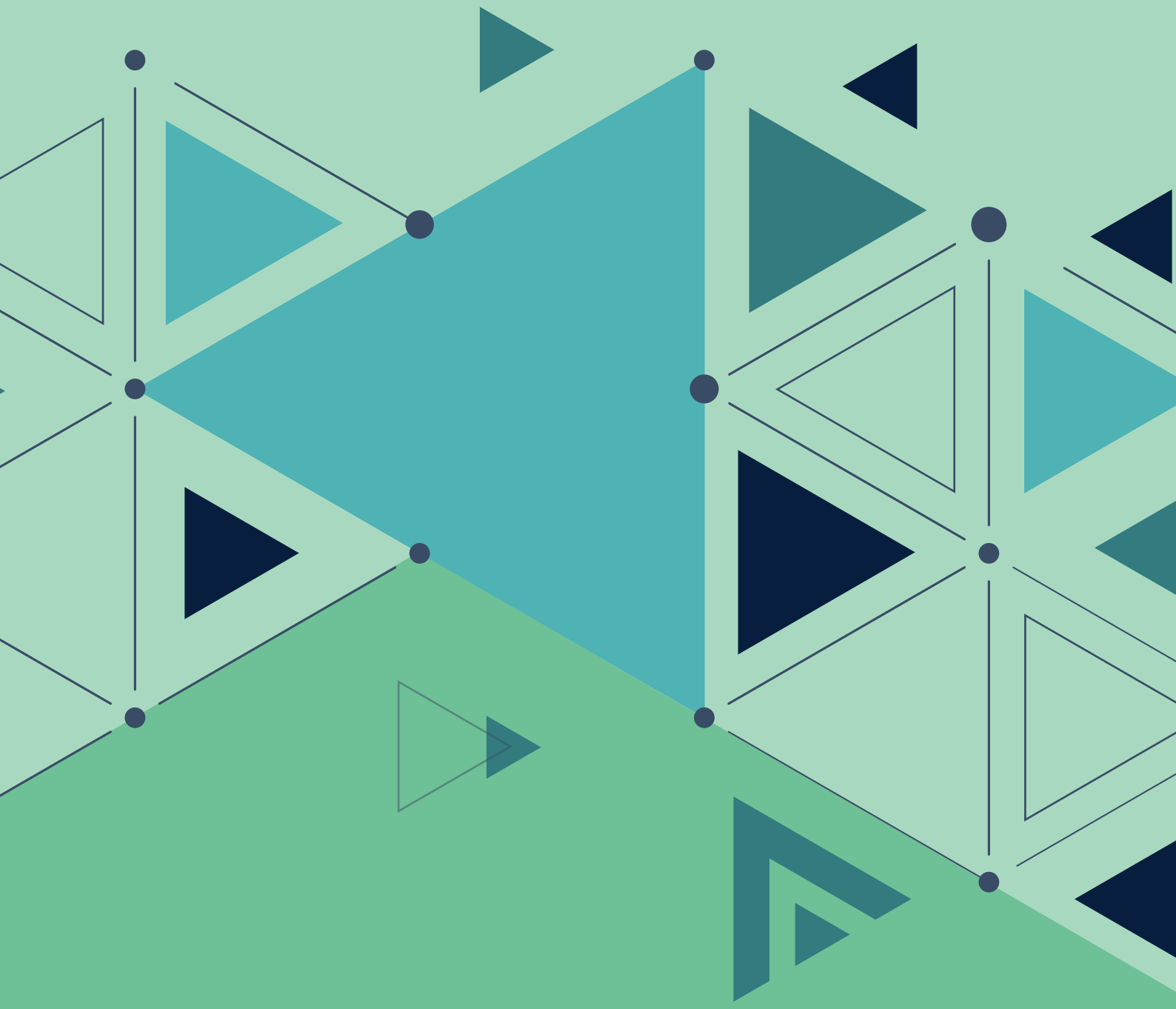
## About the category

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

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

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

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





## 2024 entries

**City of Onkaparinga, SA** – Cohesive, Inclusive and Accessible LG Customer Service Initiatives – Customer Liaison Officer

**Hindmarsh Shire Council, VIC** – Jeparit Riverbank Precinct Redevelopment

**Glen Eira City Council, VIC** – Our Priorities, Our Future

**City of Gold Coast, QLD** – Surfers South Oceanway Project

**Brisbane City Council, QLD** – Brisbane Metro Accessibility Working Group (BM-AWG)

**South Burnett Regional Council, QLD** – Kingaroy Memorial Park and WJ Lang Memorial Pool Master Plan

**Randwick City Council, NSW** – Randwick Comprehensive Planning Proposal – Community engagement

**City of Greater Geelong, VIC** – Geelong Nature Festival Our Backyard 2023 – A Community Collaboration

**Shire of Pingelly, WA** – Age is Just a Number

**City of Kwinana, WA** – Street by Street

**Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, QLD** – Palm Island Community Night Patrol

**West Tamar Council, TAS** – What's Best for The West Tamar?

**City of Launceston, TAS** – Reminder to be Kinder

**Melton City Council, VIC** – We Can All Eat Bread community book project

**Burwood Council, NSW** – Burwood Community Hub

**City of Burnside, SA** – Dulwich Community Centre Redevelopment

**City of Greater Geraldton, WA** – Seniors Week 2023

**Yarra City Council, VIC** – Bicultural Liaison Officer Program

**Katherine Town Council, NT** – Know Your Council

**Alice Springs Town Council, NT** – Diwali Night Market

**Shire of Narrogin, WA** – Best Practice in Volunteer Management Approach

**City of Victor Harbor, SA** – Connecting through the Art of Ageing

**City of Victor Harbor, SA** – Youth Climate Summit

**MacDonnell Regional Council, NT** – Healthy Community Events

**City of Kwinana, WA** – Kwinana Connect – Social Inclusion Forum

**Gannawarra Shire Council, VIC** – Celebrating All Abilities in Kerang



## Category Winner 2024

### Alice Springs Town Council, NT Diwali Night Markets

The Alice Springs Town Council's Diwali Night Market, supported by SBS, was the first of its kind in the Alice Springs municipality. 35 local businesses and over 70 culturally and linguistically diverse community members were involved in the event, which attracted approximately 2,000 attendees.

There was plenty to see and do including decorating your Diya candle, free henna tattoos, a bhangra dance class, and, over an hour of community performances and fireworks at the end. SBS also had a stall where they educated attendees about the meaning of Diwali and the history behind the celebration. Furthermore, Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents who had not heard about Diwali witnessed the beauty of the celebration and learnt about the significance of the event that approximately 10% of their community celebrate.

The theme of the Night Market invited people who may not have engaged in the Council's Night Markets previously, and attendees were extremely thankful to the event planners for having an inclusive event for their community. Additionally, the Chair of the board for Multicultural Community Services Central Australia and the President of the Alice Springs Malayalee Association supported the event and emailed their praises post event.

The Diwali Night Markets demonstrates to the Northern Territory the town's inclusivity and openness to support more culturally diverse celebrations. Thus, providing more opportunities for people to share their culture with their community members and promote community cohesiveness and harmony.

“35 local business’ stalls and over 70 culturally and linguistically diverse community members were involved in the event, which attracted approximately 2,000 attendees.”

## Cohesive Communities Honourable Mention

### Melton City Council, VIC We Can All Eat Bread community book project

The English Conversation Club at Melton City Library is an important community initiative established under the Adult Literacy and Learning Program at the library. It is an opportunity for adult migrants to not only enhance their English language skills but also to develop lifelong friendships.

In late 2022, the club embarked on a heart-warming journey when they decided to create a recipe book collating recipes from their combined cultures. This was a way the group could connect over the universal language of food and the stories that surround it.

The process of creating the book was incorporated into language learning by using food and cooking as a means to practice language skills. This creative approach made English language acquisition more engaging and effective, offering a fresh perspective on education.

Throughout this endeavour, the participants uncovered a treasure trove of personal stories and gained insights into the varied ways bread is perceived across the world. It was a truly eye-opening and heart-warming experience that transcended language barriers and brought them closer as a community.

The outcome was an extraordinary recipe book designed by the library team and professionally printed for the wider community. The recipes not only allowed individuals to share their cultural stories and traditions but also made these cultures accessible to a wider audience, contributing to cultural heritage preservation.

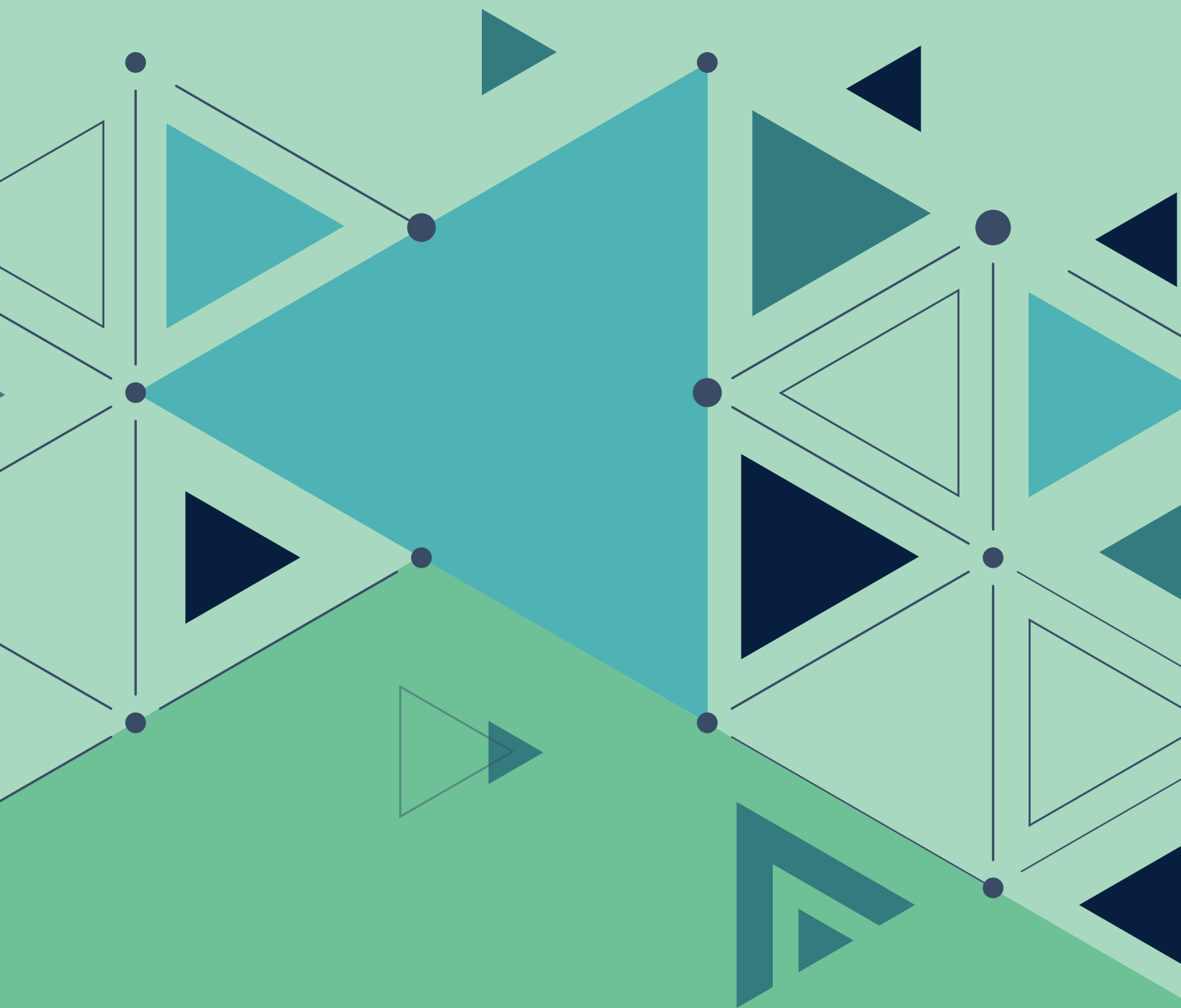
The Council printed 1,000 copies and distributed them freely within the community, with a second print run of 500 copies, quickly picked up from libraries and outreach events. Physical copies are still available for loan and a digitised eBook version is accessible via BorrowBox.

A joyous celebratory lunch to launch the recipe book was held in August 2023, where families, friends, and Councillors came together to celebrate. This gathering included participants from Egypt, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, Sri Lanka, Poland, Spain, and France, who all created an atmosphere of cultural appreciation, uniting people through their love for food and the stories behind it.

This project is an example of innovation in adult learning that generated engagement in language learning, built social connections and contributed to the Council's celebration of our diverse community.



# CAREER STARTER



## About the category

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

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

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

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

### 2024 entries

City of Gold Coast, QLD – Graduate Academy

Armidale Regional Council, NSW – Girls in Civil Program

Banyule City Council, VIC – Banyule City Council Inclusive Employment Program





## Category Winner 2024

### Armidale Regional Council, NSW Girls in Civil Program

Armidale Regional Council was proud to announce the launch of their innovative Girls in Civil program, the first initiation of its kind aimed at empowering female high school students to explore opportunities in the traditionally male-dominated civil construction industry.

Developed in partnership with Training Services NSW through their Regional Industry Education Partnerships, the program addressed the need to provide greater opportunities for women to enter non-traditional roles and promote gender diversity within the industry.

The Girls in Civil program gave female students hands-on experience in civil construction through activities like site visits, equipment demonstrations, and discussions with industry professionals. The goal was to inspire and equip young women with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to pursue successful careers in the field.

The program demonstrates the Council's leadership role in developing gender diversity in the civil construction industry, making a significant step toward fostering inclusion and breaking down barriers for women in the workforce. The three-week program has been run twice since July 2023 and delivered a comprehensive overview of civil construction, including operating equipment, safety protocols, site visits, and conversations with various industry experts to the cohort of young women who participated.

The Girls in Civil program is aligned with the Council's commitment to promoting diversity and equal opportunities in the workforce. By inspiring the next generation of female leaders, the Council aimed to create a more inclusive and prosperous community, opening doors in non-traditional roles and empowering young women through hands-on learning and industry connections.

“The Girls in Civil program gave female students hands-on experience in civil construction through activities like site visits, equipment demonstrations, and discussions with industry professionals.”



## Career Starter Honourable Mention

### Banyule City Council, VIC Banyule City Council Inclusive Employment Program

The Inclusive Employment Program is celebrating five years of success at Banyule City Council. Developed in 2019, the program is a place-based response to localised unemployment among vulnerable community groups in Banyule.

This innovative program is a leading example of the role local government can play in supporting people from diverse backgrounds who have faced challenges engaging in paid work.

The Inclusive Employment Program is a six-month paid employment initiative that supports local people experiencing barriers to employment to gain meaningful work experience within the Council. The initiative sees employment opportunities across all of the Council's work areas. Embracing diversity as a strength, each position is tailored to match an applicant's area of interests, career goals, abilities, and skills, as well as the needs of the Council. Participants gain local government experience and can access coaching and development opportunities to help build their core skills for work and networks.

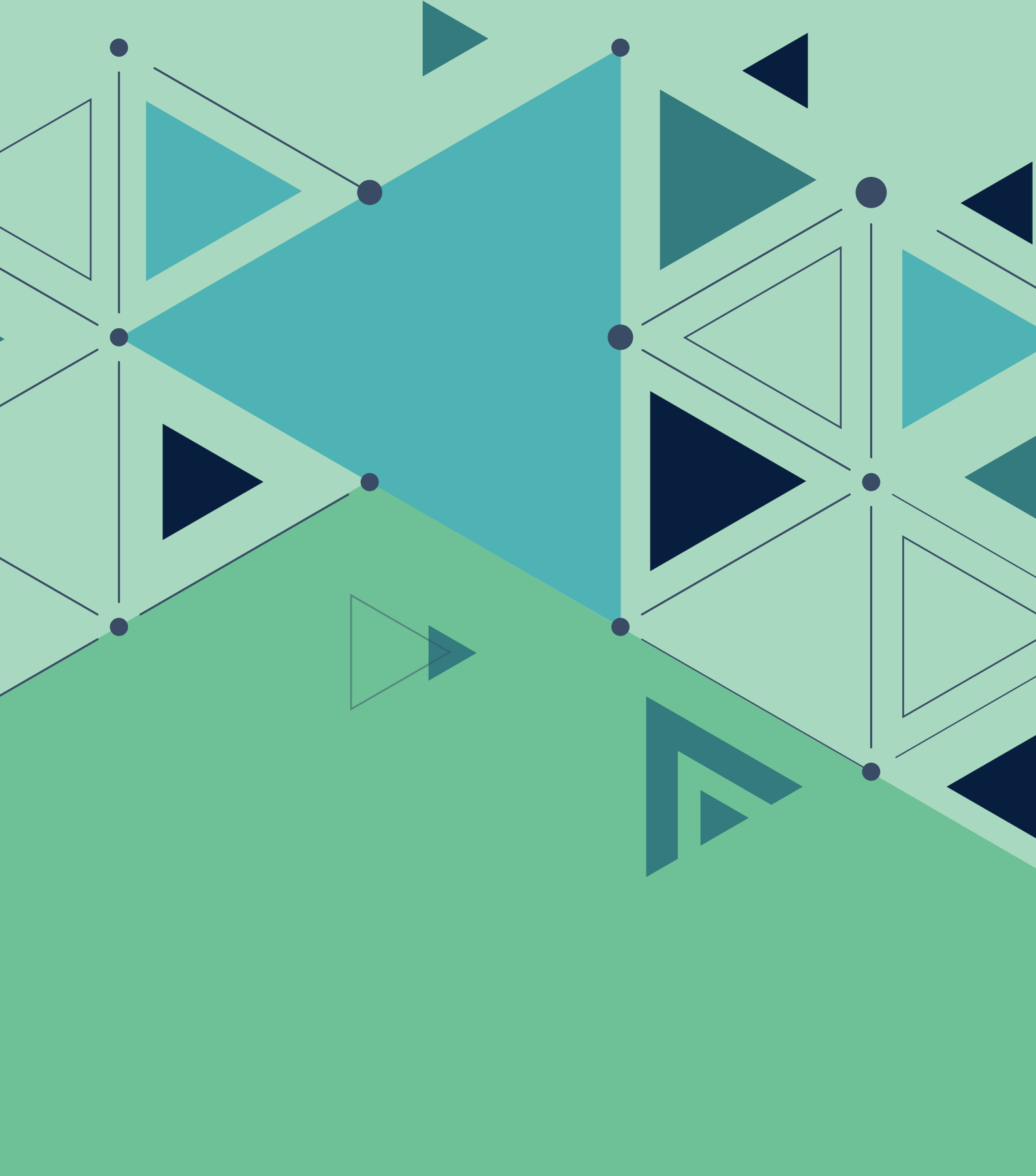
In the first five years, the program has employed 69 people, with 84% transitioning into further employment or education. Participants of the program reported increased confidence in workplace skills, expanded professional and social networks and a deeper understanding of the role of local government. Participants also expressed heightened motivation to work in local government long term and would recommend it to others.

The diversity of the roles on offer creates opportunities for young people, new entrants into the workforce and those seeking a new opportunity in local government. The program increases workforce participation for people facing barriers to employment and creates opportunity for local people to work in their community. Through this program the Council has increased access to diverse talent that enhances the diversity and inclusion of our workplace. This allows the Council to more accurately reflect and meet the needs of Banyule's diverse communities.

The Council is working with the Northern Council Alliance to expand the Inclusive Employment Program across the northern region. An open-source toolkit of the program framework and delivery materials has been developed and is available to other councils to support them to implement the program.



# ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN



## About the category

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

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

Successful initiatives in this award category benefit communities by:

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

### 2024 entries

**Adelaide Hills Council, SA** – Implementing Our Watch’s Prevention Toolkit for Local Government

**Mitchell Shire Council, VIC** – Gender Impact Assessment App

**City of Greater Geraldton, WA** – Active Bystander Training – Speaking Out Against Disrespect

**Gannawarra Shire Council, VIC** – Gannawarra Goes Orange





## Category Winner 2024

### City of Greater Geraldton, WA Active Bystander Training – Speaking Out Against Disrespect

The City of Greater Geraldton successfully delivered the Speaking Out Against Disrespect training through comprehensive face-to-face sessions across the organisation, addressing gender inequality and power imbalances to eliminate violence against women and children.

Preventing family violence is a priority for the City. In 2019, the City pledged to take action to prevent family violence through the adoption of the Community Respect Equality initiative, led by Desert Blue Connect.

Integral to this initiative, the Speaking Out Against Disrespect training, is a community-wide program designed to develop skills and confidence needed to speak up against disrespect, whether at work or within the community. Its aim is to promote gender equality and primary prevention by empowering individuals to take action when they witness or hear disrespectful behaviour.

Facilitated by the City's Community Development Team, the training is supported by the City's senior management and now forms part of the City's Key Services Induction, which focuses on cultivating behavioural skills, introducing new perspectives for thinking and acting, and enriching staff knowledge. Throughout 2023, the City conducted 18 sessions across all departments, successfully training over 250 staff members. The sessions are immersive, encouraging active participation, and providing opportunities for discussion, and critical reflection using real-life scenarios. The training is grounded in principles of safety, trust, and respect, ensuring a productive and supportive learning environment for all participants resulting in raising awareness about family violence and its impacts.

Continuous evaluation and receptive feedback mechanisms are essential to creating effective bystander training providing the opportunity for improvement. Of the 175 staff members surveyed, 87% strongly agreed that the training was exceptionally beneficial, with 91% acknowledging a substantial enhancement in their understanding of the topic. This feedback underscores the program's positive influence on altering perceptions toward gender-based violence.

By training a significant portion of the City's workforce and integrating this program into the induction process for new and existing employees, the City has initiated vital conversations and raised awareness. This widespread engagement serves as a catalyst, actively contributing to the development of a culture and community deeply rooted in respect, inclusion, and gender equality.

“This widespread engagement serves as a catalyst, actively contributing to the development of a culture and community deeply rooted in respect, inclusion, and gender equality.”

## Addressing Violence against Women and their Children Honourable Mention

### Adelaide Hills Council, SA Implementing Our Watch's Prevention Toolkit for Local Government

In February 2023, Adelaide Hills Council committed to implementing Our Watch's Prevention Toolkit for Local Government (the Toolkit), to prevent violence against women in its workplace and community.

As a first step, the Council made a Statement of Commitment to prevent violence against women and their children, adopted in July 2023.

Since July 2023, the Council has progressed several Toolkit initiatives. This has included establishing an internal Working Group dedicated to driving engagement across the organisation around activities to prevent violence and improve gender equality.

The first major Toolkit initiative, driven by the Working Group, was the Council's first-time participation in the United Nations (UN) Women's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. For the 2023 campaign, the Council partnered with the ZONTA Club of Adelaide Hills to deliver a range of activities including:

- ▶ Illuminating the Council's Coventry Library in orange on 25 November 2023 (Orange is the official colour for the global 16 Days campaign)
- ▶ Displaying 'orange ladies' in the Coventry Library along with educational materials about domestic and family violence (DFV) and services
- ▶ At a Council meeting on 28 November 2023 Council Members wore orange ribbons to call for the elimination of violence against women
- ▶ Working Group members organised morning teas across Council worksites
- ▶ Council staff donated Christmas gifts for women staying in domestic violence shelters
- ▶ Attending and promoting the Twilight Vigil organised by the ZONTA Club on 30 November 2023, to remember all women who lost their lives because of domestic violence.

In January 2024, the Council engaged the Our Watch Institute (OWI) to provide expert assistance in implementing Stage 2 of the Toolkit. In February 2024 the OWI delivered executive training with the Council's Chief Executive Officer and leadership team on 'leading the change to end violence against women.' Other initiatives in progress with OWI include a Gender Equity Audit to inform the development of a Gender Equity Action Plan.

Additional elements of this project include creating a new workplace policy and procedure for the Council's people leaders to respond to employee disclosures of DFV, in consultation with Women's Safety Services SA.

Adelaide Hills Council will continue to work with its partners to address and increase workforce and community awareness of the underlying drivers of DFV.



# NOTES

