



Australian Government



NATIONAL AWARDS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT



About the Awards

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

In 2015 the Australian government called for entries in eight categories: arts, productivity, regional growth, disability access and inclusion, multiculturalism, Indigenous recognition, road safety and youth employment. Entries received showcased a wide range of projects that are pertinent to Australian Government national priorities, are tailored to support diverse communities and deliver direct benefits to local regions.

Thanks to our sponsors and judges

The National Awards for Local Government is coordinated by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development with sponsorship provided by Australian Government departments.

Involvement in the Awards by sponsors enables a better understanding of the issues and challenges that our governments face.

Sponsors are an integral component of the Awards programme, from the judging process to liaison with category winners through to sharing the excitement of the National Winner. The sponsor's ongoing support reinforces the importance of their role.

We would like to thank the judges and sponsors for their efforts in this year's awards.

Sponsors

Attorney-General's Department through the Ministry for the Arts

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Department of Social Services

Short films on each category winner can be viewed on the awards website – www.infrastructure.gov.au/nalg



Winner—2015 National Award for Excellence in Local Government

Maroondah City Council, Victoria

Congratulations to Maroondah City Council, winner of this year's National Award for Excellence in Local Government.

The council's *Changing Places – Changing Lives* project promotes installation of accessible toilets that meet the special needs of people with a significant disability. This is vital to their participation in everyday activities.

The project originated with the council convening an Access Focus Group of local people with a disability and their service providers to work with Queensland Investment Corporation on redevelopment of Eastland Shopping Centre. Leveraging off the success of this project, the council established relationships with organisations and professionals in the disability and building sectors. Working together, they developed a design that sets a national benchmark for Changing Places toilets. The design has received the backing of the Australian Institute of Architects and Changing Places UK. The design includes an automated universal door key that can be used in any Changing Places toilet across Australia.

Several developers have committed to install the toilets in shopping centres. The Western Australian and Victorian Governments have also committed to installing them in parks, sporting venues, tourist attractions and other community facilities. Maroondah City Council also led the development of the Changing Places Information Kit to help councils and builders build Changing Places toilets.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT – BUILDING AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES

For more information visit infrastructure.gov.au/nalg





Arts Animates—excellence in community engagement and participation

Sponsored by the Ministry for the Arts in the Attorney-General's Department

Barkly Shire Council, Northern Territory

Barkly Desert Cultures

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The Barkly Desert Cultures project bridges a gap between Indigenous Elders and younger generations to help them deal with substance abuse and domestic violence. Re-engaging young people with their Elders also encourages retention of traditional cultures.

The project, an ongoing multimedia youth engagement strategy, provides the opportunity to jointly explore local identity and social issues through song, hip hop, storytelling, film, posters

and animation. The innovative use of technology helps overcome geographic barriers. The project supports sustainable cultural development, including by developing local skills and offering employment for artists.

After extensive consultation with community members throughout 2013, Barkly Shire Council secured funding from various sources, including the Australian Government and Catholic Care NT. The council appointed a sound engineer, a filmmaker and a representative from the Sista Sounds Music NT Program to collaborate with local youth and Elders. A selection of the songs, films and stories has been compiled into DVDs and CDs.



Boosting Productivity through Infrastructure

Sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development

Central Desert Regional Council, Northern Territory

Creating great landfills in central Australia remote Aboriginal communities

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This project demonstrates the on the ground benefits of local governments working together on service delivery. Three councils are involved – Central Desert Regional Council, MacDonnell Regional Council and Barkly Regional Council – along with the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory Health Department.

A Regional Waste Management Coordinator was engaged to lead audits and upgrade plans at participating waste disposal sites. Upgrades then commenced, including excavation of new best practice landfill pits, site clean ups, installation of perimeter fencing, isolation fencing around pits, public drop off bays, return of recyclables to Alice Springs, general community education and training of staff. Participation by local Indigenous staff has been strong.

Despite a limited budget, the project has greatly improved waste management, resulting in improved safety; less poisons and asbestos exposure; reduced need for new pits, equipment repair and maintenance; and cleaner and safer communities.



Contributing to Regional Growth

Sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development

Northern Grampians Shire Council, Victoria

From Italy to Stawell – the Stawell Underground Physics Laboratory

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This project makes highly creative use of large-scale infrastructure affected by major change in a regional economy. After more than 30 years of operation, the Stawell Gold Mine is transitioning to closure. In response, the council has worked with the mine's owners, business, research, training and regional development organisations to identify new opportunities for the mine site. The result is the Stawell Underground

Physics Laboratory, a partnership between the council, the ARC Centre of Excellence for Particle Physics at the Terascale, the Italian National Institute for Nuclear Physics, Crocodile Gold and other Australian and international organisations.

This will create the first underground dark matter detection laboratory in the Southern Hemisphere, forming part of a network of major research laboratories around the globe. The council has been heavily involved in guiding the project, and has engaged the local community throughout. The project will bring new jobs, economic activity and opportunity to Stawell.



Disability Access and Inclusion

Sponsored by the Department of Social Services

Maroondah City Council, Victoria

Changing Places – Changing Lives

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Changing Places – Changing Lives promotes provision of public toilets accessible to people with significant disabilities. These toilets include tracking hoist systems, height-adjustable adult-sized changing benches, access ramps, curtains for extra privacy and larger interiors for wheelchair manoeuvrability.

This initiative began after an Access Focus Group noted that many people

with significant disabilities were unable to access services due to lack of suitable toilet facilities, adding to social isolation. The council established a consortium of organisations and researched best practice in the United Kingdom. The resulting design set the benchmark for Changing Places toilets nationally. With funding from stakeholders, the council also developed a Changing Places Information Kit.

Maroondah City Council promotes the initiative through presentations, submissions and news stories. The Victorian Government has invested \$750,000 used to build six Changing Places toilets including at the MCG, Rod Laver Arena and Melbourne Zoo.



WINNERS

2015 Category Award Winners



Multicultural Australia — Strength in Diversity

Sponsored by the Department of Social Services

Shire of Kulin, Western Australia

Camp Kulin

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Camp Kulin began in 2013 to provide programmes for children aged 8–12 from across Western Australia, primarily those who have been affected by disadvantage and/or childhood trauma. The aim is to teach life skills in a fun setting and which provides positive role models as mentors, enabling children to build resilience.

Camp Kulin works with over 500 families each year. Parents, case workers and parents report increased self-esteem, self-confidence and respect, better

behaviour and increased school marks. The short and long term benefits and behavioural changes effectively reduce the cost and necessity of many of these children undergoing intervention programs at a later age. Local businesses are providing services for the Camp, which is bringing significant additional economic diversity to the town.



Promoting Indigenous Recognition

Sponsored by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Parkes Shire Council, New South Wales

Bushman's Hill Indigenous Precinct

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This project has rejuvenated Bushman's Hill Reserve by establishing an Indigenous cultural precinct with an amphitheatre and associated facilities. The local Aboriginal community had long been advocating the development of an Indigenous cultural precinct on the site. Working bees brought together school children, volunteers, local Aboriginal people and artists to develop and paint the new facilities. It also fostered a

partnership with local community service agency Centacare so as to provide 'work for the dole' clients with skills and experience.

The project has fostered social cohesion by providing a place where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can meet culturally and socially, as well as serving as a venue for functions and events.



Excellence in Road Safety

Sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development

South Gippsland Shire Council, Victoria

Gippsland Safe Freight Network

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The Gippsland Safe Freight Network project involves development of an effective mechanism for engaging stakeholders in road safety.

It addressed an increase in heavy vehicle crashes in South Gippsland by adopting a unique broad-based round table approach. After analysis of crash data to identify causes, key stakeholders including 'industry champions' were

invited to discuss the problem. Local action plans were developed. The focus was on adopting the Safe System approach to develop local solutions, which could potentially be applied state-wide and are consistent with nation road safety objectives. This is being achieved through engagement initiatives such as campaigns and training opportunities which include both the drivers and members of the public.

The project has developed partnerships based on a mutual desire to improve safety. This simple but effective model of engagement has been embraced across several local government areas.



Youth Employment

Sponsored by the Department of Education and Training

Mildura Rural City Council, Victoria

Flexible Learning Options (FLO) Connect

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The FLO Connect project is a strategy to address the issue of disconnected secondary school age people. It is an innovative approach to improving the retention of vulnerable students through flexible learning options at six local secondary schools. Young people aged 13–19 who have been out of school for three months or more are provided with individualised learning

programmes based on their strengths and interests. The retention rate for these young people has increased by over 75 per cent.

The project optimises the roles, skills and resources available from schools, training, and employment and community services. Assessment and monitoring processes are used to regularly review progress. Programs on offer are mapped to VET modules students are undertaking, so that student activities contribute to their assessment portfolio. Students are provided extended transition support as they take their next pathway step into school, further education or employment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – BUILDING AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES

For more information visit infrastructure.gov.au/nalg



Arts Animates – excellence in community engagement and participation

Sponsored by the Ministry for the Arts in the Attorney General's Department

Ballarat City Council, Victoria

Rebel Elders

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The Rebel Elders project is an innovative means of engaging seniors and youth in cultural intergenerational activities. The project was funded in partnership with the council and the Victorian Seniors Festival (Victorian Department of Health).

Artists and community members aged from 15 to 94 collaborate to develop public presentations of stories and musical compositions focused on rebellion, a key concept in Ballarat's history. Nine older members of the community shared personal stories of rebellion with artist Rose Turtle Ertler. Young people were invited to musically respond with soundscape pieces or descriptive songs. Musical styles ranged from heavy metal to waltz.

The music and stories formed the basis of a physical theatre piece developed by the older community members and choreographer Michelle Heaven for performance at the 2014 Seniors Festival. With arts grant funding and council support, cast and crew are developing a series of short musical films.

City of Melville, Western Australia

PHAZE Youth Urban Art Project

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The PHAZE Youth Urban Art project creates opportunities for youth to work with professional street artists to create quality street art at skate parks across Melville. Urban art is an accessible and powerful medium for young people. PHAZE capitalises on this popularity by using urban art as an engagement tool focussed on building resilience, positive relationships and constructive social activities.

The PHAZE project is the only ongoing and regular Youth Urban Art project of its kind in Perth, providing participants with a safe and supported space where they can create their art and develop their skills while working with a professional mentor. PHAZE is also a relatively inexpensive way of reducing illegal graffiti. It is now developing beyond skate parks to graffiti 'hotspots.'

Northern Grampians Shire Council, Victoria

St Arnaud Street Museum – pride of place in the regeneration of St Arnaud

Contact: Mrs Justine Linley
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The St Arnaud Street Museum uses shop windows and wall spaces to display artworks created by visiting artists. With strong community collaboration, the Street Museum project has created a 'buzz' within the town and the arts community. It is possibly the first museum of its kind in Australia.

This is the first stage of the St Arnaud Civic Precinct Project that aims to enhance the town's liveability and promote tourism. Council funding and a Regional Arts Victoria grant has enabled employment of a curator and four artists-in-residence to create installations based on sculpture, photographic works and other mixed media in shop windows and along a central mural wall in the main street.

Boosting Productivity through Infrastructure

Sponsored by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development

Townsville City Council, Queensland

Lifecycle Cost Asset Management Plan

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Townsville City Council has developed and implemented a Life Cycle Cost Asset Management Plan model that revolutionises asset management. This model brings together three previously disparate strategies – capital works, operations, and maintenance and service levels – to quantify the interdependencies of these strategies and the impacts on decisions in terms of risk, cost and customer service.

The model's reporting is presented on 'dashboard' worksheets using visual indicators. One provides a whole-of-council summary and 'scoring', while others drill down into service asset classes. The model's functionality allows the council to compare alternative asset management planning scenarios.

The model empowers the council to make financial and operational decisions that achieve optimal financial sustainability. The impact of decisions is shown against agreed service levels and acceptable levels of risk. Key decision makers can now endorse asset management plans from a position of understanding of the whole-of-council impact.



Disability Access and Inclusion

Sponsored by the Department of Social Services

East Gippsland Shire Council, Victoria

East Gippsland All Abilities Playground

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The East Gippsland All Abilities Playground is an innovative, fully accessible play space that allows everyone, regardless of physical and psychological abilities, to experience outdoor play. It was developed by community members and business leaders who worked in partnership with the East Gippsland Shire Council and the Victorian Government over ten years. This infrastructure is vital to helping members of the community with disabilities participate in the social and recreational life of the community.

East Gippsland Shire Council consulted with key stakeholders in the planning and delivery of a high-quality fully accessible facility. The result is an inclusive, state-of-the-art play-space. A Liberty Swing enables people in wheelchairs to experience the simple joy of swinging at a playground. Six accessible toilet cubicles, one with a washing facility and hydraulic hoist, are in close vicinity.

Multicultural Australia – Strength in Diversity

Sponsored by the Department of Social Services

Melton City Council, Victoria

Melton City Council Community Partnership Program

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Melton City Council's Community Partnership Program is a community development and health promotion initiative. Its focus on skills sharing, mentoring and the sustainability of outcomes all make this program highly innovative.

The Program fosters cross-cultural connections by providing a framework

for community groups to work in partnership. The first iteration of this program involves nine projects, each coordinated by two or more community groups of different backgrounds to meet a common self-identified need. These include creating sound-scapes of local Aboriginal women's personal histories (Marla Aboriginal Women's Group and Melton Historical Society); Adults Learn to Swim (Melton Chin Group and St George Iraqi Group); and Active Multicultural Seniors: Tai Chi and Zumba (Caroline Springs Macedonian Fishing Club and Chinese Friendship Group). The Program is overseen by a consortium of stakeholders and aligns with Federal, State and local government strategies.

Youth Employment

Sponsored by the Department of Education and Training

Maroondah City Council, Victoria

Work Inspiration – Transitioning from School to Work

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The Work Inspiration program transforms traditional work experience to make young persons' first experience of work more meaningful. It helps them identify pathways towards employment, emphasising motivation and encouraging planning for the future.

The program uses a flexible format which encourages employers to tailor the program to suit their needs, including employers who cannot offer individual work experience placements but would still like to be involved in career path development. The project can be negotiated with schools so that it can form part of their careers curriculum.

The council's pilot program included council staff providing an overview of the diverse work carried out at Maroondah City Council; the mapping of each student's personality type and discussion of relevance to career aspirations; a tour of council sites; a student-based project to produce an advertising campaign promoting council services; and matching students with council mentors. The council promotes the initiative to local governments and small businesses throughout Australia.

