



2021

AWARDS FOR **excellence**



LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MANAGERS AUSTRALIA
QUEENSLAND INC.

LEADING PROFESSIONALS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The LGMA Awards for Excellence
recognising outstanding achievement
in Queensland local government

President's Message

Welcome to the 2021 Local Government Managers Australia, Queensland Awards for Excellence publication. This is our eleventh year of celebrating the achievements of Councils and their teams in Queensland.

There is no doubt that the last year or so has been a trying one for local government across Queensland. If you sat down and thought about it, you could not come up with a more challenging set of circumstances! On a global scale, we have a once in hundred year pandemic, essentially closed international borders, new ways of working, challenging economic conditions and of course, local communities that are on edge.

But I have always believed that tough times bring out the best and worst in people...but mainly the best. And I think that this year's awards have certainly highlighted that for local government, it definitely brings out the best.

We have had outstanding entries into the Excellence Awards once again this year. This reflects both the incredible work that staff have been doing in their Councils to provide great service to their communities while at the same time responding to the worldwide health crisis at a local level. It also reminds us that in difficult times, it is important to pause and celebrate. From looking at the award entries, there is much to celebrate across our sector. I don't think we do that enough as a sector and we should be proud of the quality of the nominations for these awards.

LGMA aspires to support a professional and highly-skilled local government sector. In seeking to make this vision a reality, I would like you to join with me in celebrating the professionalism of local government and to inspire our people to even greater levels of excellence in leadership and management across Queensland councils.

The Awards for Excellence is a special occasion for us all to recognise the innovative, creative, impactful and outstanding work of our colleagues. I have always thought that recognition by your fellow professionals is one of the most powerful forms of recognition that you can get.

Many professional development services and programmes offered by LGMA Queensland complement the work being done by Councils across Queensland to challenge current thinking and look for alternative ways of delivering service. That is even more relevant at this time and importantly, it helps to share the ideas and solutions across the sector. Helping colleagues is ingrained in the DNA of local government professional staff. Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and reach out to another Council if you see a nominated project that might be helpful in your own Council.

I look forward to seeing you all at your Council events as you host your own Awards for Excellence Gala event.

I also thank our valued corporate partners: LGIA Super; Yurika; King and Company Solicitors; Preston Law; the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and JLT. We sincerely appreciate your ongoing support to celebrate Excellence in Local Government in Queensland. This could not happen without you.

I trust that you enjoy reading about the nominations in this publication and hope that it inspires you to submit a nomination for the 2022 Local Government Awards for Excellence.



Brett de Chastel
LGMA Queensland President

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The Local Government Awards for Excellence 2020

The Awards for Excellence nominations magazine showcases all the projects nominated by Queensland local governments in the 2021 Local Government Awards for Excellence.

As the Awards for Excellence have gone from strength to strength since their inception a decade ago, it is no longer possible to highlight all the quality nominations during the Awards Gala. In 2021, all nominees have been outlined in this publication which will be made available in advance of the Gala function and the associated announcement of winners and finalists. Nominees and councils can peruse each nomination and follow along as the exciting announcements are made.

The magazine also serves as a useful resource for councils and officers interested in finding out more about particular projects. Please feel free to contact LGMA for nominator information if your council is keen to adopt any of the initiatives listed.

Award Categories

The categories are designed to be flexible – recognising that local government is at the forefront of innovation and operates in a rapidly changing environment. Categories do not apply to particular areas of local government activity and are applicable to activities across the whole of local government.

Above and Beyond

This individual has gone 'above and beyond' their stated duties to deliver added service to their community or council. This will be work for which they have not received additional remuneration and is most likely self-generated, showing genuine initiative for the benefit of the organisation and, ultimately, its customers. Above and Beyond nominees generally do not know they have been nominated. To maintain the suspense, their names are not listed in this Awards nominations listing.

Collaboration

This project or initiative involved genuine collaboration with multiple parties (internal and external to council) in order to implement more effective service delivery models for the benefit of the organisations and the community. This may have been through an informal agreement or a more formal legal structure.

Community Shaping

This project or initiative has influenced community behaviour and practice. It has educated and informed community opinion leading to sustainable, positive changes in the community. There is clear evidence of its success in enhancing community wellbeing, understanding and/or awareness and in engendering behaviour change.

'Doing more with Less'

This award category recognises projects or initiatives undertaken by Category 1 councils that showcase the philosophy of 'doing more with less'. Lateral thinking, creativity, increased productivity and simplicity are the drivers of this successful project or initiative that is an aspirational model for other small councils.

Innovation

This project or initiative has adopted a new and different approach, leading to improved (or new) service delivery and/or performance. This initiative is cutting-edge and has probably not been seen in Queensland councils before, certainly not in this format.

Sustainability

This project or initiative has enhanced the long-term sustainability of council and/or the community. It may be through more sustainable use of human, financial and other resources or it may be related to environmental sustainability.

Teamwork

This team is an internal council team or a team involving multiple areas of council. The manner in which it has utilised resources, collaborated and communicated proves the adage that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It has contributed, in a measurable way, to enhanced service delivery within or external to council.

Workplace Wellbeing

Workplace health and wellbeing programmes have real potential to positively influence the health of councils' workforces while making good business sense through increasing employee engagement and team cohesiveness and leading to reduced absenteeism and increased productivity in the long-term. This project or initiative demonstrates evidence of fostering healthy workplace policies and supportive environments that promote healthy lifestyles that enhance positive social conditions.

2021 Nominations

(in alphabetical order by Project Name)

2021 Online Sports Expo and Sign-On

Mackay Regional Council

Category: **Innovation**

Like many organisations, Mackay Regional Council faced the challenge of delivering for its sporting community in a non-contact world. Coming off the back of the February 2020 Sports' Expo and Sign-On Day, the biggest sporting event in the Mackay region in over a decade attracting about 9,000 residents and over 120 sporting exhibitors, in 2021 Council sought ways to connect community to important sporting activities which are critical for health and wellbeing.

Mackay Mayor, Greg Williamson said that COVID-19 restrictions meant a physical expo was unable to be held in 2021 but Council was still determined to support the local sporting community.

"COVID-19 restrictions meant we just couldn't host a crowd of that size, but our organising committee put together an interactive online expo that had more than 4,000 visits," Mayor Williamson said.

The webpage, macaky.qld.gov.au/onlinesportexpo included a virtual map of the MECC and booths with information about 100 sports and recreation clubs and organisations. The online site also included the Gold Coast Suns and Brisbane Heat Active Zones, with videos of eight demonstrations that were viewed more than 12,000 times.

Clubs and groups that registered and provided details for booths at the online expo were also encouraged to stage come-and-try days throughout February. The site included a calendar with details for more than 30 come-and-try or sign-on days throughout the region that people could attend.

Arts Dinner Live and Online

Scenic Rim Regional Council

Category: **Collaboration**

There's plenty of food for thought in Scenic Rim Regional Council's Arts Dinners online, which are now connecting creatives and community members across South West Queensland.

A popular feature of the cultural calendar for 13 years, Scenic Rim's Arts Dinners pivoted to an online forum in March 2020 in response to COVID-19 and are now serving up a smorgasbord of topical discussions.

A partnership with the South West Queensland Regional Arts Service Network saw the trial of Arts Dinners 'home delivered' through livestreaming from April to July 2020, thanks partly to the creative community's appetite for the project which was crucial in securing further funding from Arts Queensland.

Arts Dinners Live and Online are now being delivered across South West Queensland in a collaboration between Scenic Rim Regional Council, the South West Queensland Regional Arts Network, The Empire Theatre Toowoomba, Western Downs Regional Council, Goondiwindi Regional Council and Southern Downs Regional Council.

The project has also brought together Indigenous artists and dancers from each region and seen the collaboration between Mununjali Traditional Owners and Traditional owners from Toowoomba and Southern Downs.

While catering for these uncertain times, the livestreaming of in-venue Arts Dinner events is also providing a seat at the table for many who would not otherwise be able to attend in person.

Be Healthy and Active

Scenic Rim Regional Council

Category: **Community Shaping**

Scenic Rim Regional Council's *Be Healthy and Active* programme has gone from strength to strength, building a healthier and more engaged community along the way.

Since its inception in 2014, the programme has grown to deliver free and low-cost activities for a range of ages, interests and abilities year-round, with environmental activities such as gardening, tree planting and Bush Kindy for young children.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 saw *Be Healthy and Active* pivot to deliver an online programme, enabling Scenic Rim residents to stay connected and continue to improve their health and wellbeing. The programme has not only encouraged health and fitness across all age groups and abilities, but also helped to strengthen community connections and support local providers.

Through promotion via Council's networks, *Be Healthy and Active* providers can raise their business profile, all while helping to boost the health and wellbeing of Scenic Rim residents. The programme's success in positively influencing community wellbeing is clear, with 93 per cent of *Be Healthy and Active* participants surveyed reporting that they have become more motivated to live a healthy and active lifestyle.

Cedar Grove Environmental Centre

Logan City Council

Category: **Sustainability**

The City of Logan is one of Queensland's fastest growing local government areas and with this growth, comes the need for significant investment in infrastructure. To meet the needs of this community, Logan City Council has created the Cedar Grove Environmental Centre (CGEC).

The Centre covers a 204 hectare site and boasts a broad range of facilities including a sustainable wastewater treatment plant, which is a Queensland-first and the culmination of two years of construction and a decade of planning. Unlike conventional wastewater treatment plants, the CGEC benefits the Logan River and its catchment through low levels of nutrients in reclaimed water and catchment restoration projects.

Other features of the centre include solar power array, environmental education centre (planned for the future), Landcare facility (including a nursery, volunteer and trainee training area and onsite office), environmental reserve for the community and a centre for research, seven hectares of wetlands, environmental (vegetation) offset plantings including 120,000 native trees and shrubs, some of Logan's oldest recorded Queensland Blue Gum trees and more than 20 bird species, walking trails, picnic shelters and amenities.

Formed in partnership with a Community Reference Group to ensure decisions aligned with community expectations, Logan City Council, and Economic Development Queensland, worked together to fund and deliver the \$53.7 million project.

City of Gold Coast - Disaster Management Unit

City of Gold Coast

Category: **Teamwork**

For the past 18 months, the City of Gold Coast Disaster Management Unit has been continuously dealing with significant disasters and emergencies.

These adverse events have ranged from extensive bushfires, several flooding events and most notably the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, the Unit surpassed previous records for the consecutive number of days conducting disaster response.

The COVID-19 response lasted over 310 consecutive days and involved more than 100 individuals working together to mitigate the impact on the community. This work included distributing vital information, implementing restrictions and conditions, implementing border controls and providing support to hotel-based quarantine.

The Local Disaster Coordination Centre was also activated for two weeks in September 2019. This was in response to bushfires in the Gold Coast hinterland. More than 80 individuals were involved in the response including city staff and emergency services personnel. During this response, a portion the Lower Beechmont community was evacuated, numerous properties were threatened by fire and large amounts of vegetation were burned.

The length of the identified activations for a Disaster Management Unit to be activated has never been seen before, allowing Queensland and the team to take away many lessons and learnings which will add significant value to future response efforts in other locations and councils.

City of Gold Coast and the Griffith Centre for Coastal Management - Coastal Research Collaboration

City of Gold Coast

Category: **Collaboration**

For more than 20 years the City of Gold Coast has partnered with Griffith University's Centre for Coastal Management to deliver innovative research projects and achieve best practice coastal management outcomes.

The collaboration has contributed to projects including construction of the world's first artificial reef from sand-filled geotextile containers and a comprehensive Surf Management Plan for the Gold Coast. For the avid surfers out there, this means that future beach protection projects are informed by world's best practice for surf amenity.

Recent activities have included an extensive education programme to build understanding across the region of waterbody matters and impacts of poor controls as well as initiatives to increase the collaboration between internal stakeholders including water catchment managers and environmental health officers.

There is plenty of important work for the collaboration moving forward, particularly as the impacts of climate change are being realised.

Current and future work will include understanding how to manage this ecologically important coastline to be resilient to climate change, managing Gold Coast waterways to reduce the frequency and duration of water quality issues and ensuring future coastal engineering works meet best practice standards for protecting surf amenity.

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governments enables us to characterise and resolve, more effectively than any other legal service provider, the legal difficulties that those issues generate.

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COVID-19 Community Grants Programme

City of Gold Coast

Category: **Sustainability**

COVID-19 had a significant impact on valued and vital community organisations and sporting clubs. These organisations are the heart of the Gold Coast's community connection and wellbeing.

Recognising the impact, the City of Gold Coast developed and implemented the COVID-19 Community Grant programme to support community organisations and sporting clubs in their endeavours to respond to, and recover from, the impacts of COVID-19. The City offered two grant programmes: the COVID-19 Community Organisation Hardship Grant; and the COVID-19 Community Organisation Recovery Grant.

These grants programmes provided critical financial assistance to eligible organisations providing support services to vulnerable residents impacted by COVID-19 and assisted with COVID-19 financial recovery and re-establishment activities. They were pivotal to the self-driven recovery of largely volunteer run groups in challenging times.

COVID-19, Grants and Conflicts of Interest: Finding solutions to support community

Western Downs Regional Council

Category: **Collaboration**

To address the urgency of pandemic recovery, Western Downs Regional Council created two new grant and funding programme streams. Under guidance of Council's Economic Development department, the Business Recovery Planning Initiative and the Buy Local Platform Initiative, funding streams were created to support local businesses.

These were aimed at local community not-for-profit organisations through an Infrastructure Grants Programme and the Community Organisation Hardship and Assistance Programme.

To guarantee rapid and smooth rollout of the grants, purpose-designed programme guidelines and supporting online application forms were developed. Collaboration between the Corporate Governance, Legal Counsel, Economic Development, Infrastructure Services and the Grants and Funding teams ensured all necessary considerations were addressed and that Council received all the information required to make prompt and well-informed decisions. To offer simplicity for both businesses and staff, all applications for assistance went through Council's online "Smartygrants" platform.

Utilising the knowledgeable workforce, technology capability and allocating resources across the organisation, resulted in a whole of council approach to ensuring funding was reaching the community in a timely manner.

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Creating a sustainable future for the Rockhampton Region

Rockhampton Regional Council

Category: **Sustainability**

In 2018, Rockhampton Regional Council embarked on an ambitious journey to begin creating a more sustainable future for the Rockhampton Region. Just a few years on, Council's approach is driving outcomes that have seen the Rockhampton Region being crowned Queensland's overall winner in the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Communities Awards 2020 and a finalist in the National Awards to be announced in June 2021.

Council has come a long way in just three years. Rockhampton Regional Council has implemented a coordinated approach to sustainability through their first Environmental Sustainability Strategy and governance framework to drive awareness and action across Council and the Rockhampton Region.

Water and Environmental Sustainability portfolio Councillor, Donna Kirkland says that their commitment is now delivering real results for Council and their community - and there's more to come!

"We know the future isn't just somewhere we're going... it's something we're creating," Cr Kirkland said.

Councillor Kirkland is delighted that the approach has fostered a culture of collaboration, innovation, wise resource use and accountability within Council. She added that Council is extremely proud of the outcomes achieved so far but recommends community watch this space because this is only the beginning for this initiative!



Do it in Douglas

Douglas Shire Council

Category: **Community Shaping**

Located north of Cairns in Far North Queensland, Douglas Shire was one of the hardest hit regions during the lockdown period with 80% of its economy reliant on tourism activity. Responding to community need, Douglas Shire Council launched the cheeky, *Buy Douglas: Build Douglas* campaign to encourage the local community to 'Do It In Douglas' during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020.

Through various popular platforms - website and Facebook pages - local businesses were promoted in a way that appealed to the local audience, encouraging people to help fill some of the void left by the dramatic reduction in tourists to the area, who would otherwise be keeping the region thriving.

Douglas Shire Council established media partnerships and collaborated with local tourism bodies, the Douglas Chamber of Commerce and Jabalbina Aboriginal Corporation to keep the concept of supporting local businesses front of mind.

Understanding the importance of story-telling, the *Buy Douglas: Build Douglas* website added value through story-telling – celebrating each participating business through video content and short stories, capturing the personal/local spirit and the uniqueness of each business/story.

Draft Sunshine Coast Recreation Parks Plan 2021-2031

Sunshine Coast Council

Category: **Community Shaping**

Whether you're picnicking with pals, exploring playgrounds with little ones, connecting with nature, improving your fitness or celebrating a special occasion – the array of Sunshine Coast parks connect, and connect with, residents in many different ways.

Sunshine Coast Council has developed the draft Sunshine Coast Recreation Parks Plan 2021-2031 to serve as a roadmap for parks on the Sunshine Coast. The document is a planning tool that supports Council's commitment to preserving spaces and parks that promote healthy lifestyles and enhance the natural character of the Sunshine Coast's environment.

Once endorsed, the Recreation Parks Plan will assist the local community in understanding how, why and where Council locates park activities and the infrastructure that supports them. It will also assist policy makers and park planners within Council and the development industry to design and deliver recreation parks that achieve Council's strategic goals.

The Recreation Parks Plan is one of many ways Council is delivering on its Environment and Liveability Strategy, providing long-term direction to guide growth and shape the future of the region. The plan demonstrates Council's intention to enhance the variety of services that recreation parks provide for Sunshine Coast communities to complement the region's character.



LGIASuper Chief Growth Officer, Andrea Peters presents the Above and Beyond award at the 2019 LGMA Awards for Excellence

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Congratulations to all the nominees.

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Drone Operations South Burnett Regional Council

Category: **Teamwork**

Recognising the benefits of drone utilisation for council operations, South Burnett Regional Council became the first council in Queensland to train and operate under a Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) issued licence. Today it is one of only five councils in Queensland to be registered with CASA.

Over the past 4 years, South Burnett Regional Council has led the way in developing effective applications of drones (Remotely Piloted Aircraft: RPA) technology and training ICT staff to properly conduct multiple jobs throughout Council's departments. These include:

- Building and asset condition assessments;
- Dam silt surveys;
- Promotional photography and videography, showcasing the local region; and
- Local Disaster Management assistance, when required.

South Burnett Regional Council has brought the region to the forefront of technological advances while reducing overhead costs to achieve common goals and delivering benefits to local residents at the same time.



Employee Value Proposition and Values

Redland City Council

Category: **Teamwork**

Great service to the community is delivered by great, engaged staff. To ensure they achieve this, Redland City Council decided to develop an employee value proposition, revising its organisation's values.

The subsequent development of the employee value proposition was not simply a branding exercise but the result of genuine engagement, true teamwork and collaboration as Council embarked on a journey to develop a shared identity, that aligned with employees and community. Following a call for expressions of interest in October 2019 and nomination of peers and colleagues, 80 employees from across the organisation engaged in workshops and one-to-one interviews to discover Redland City Council's employee value proposition.

Understanding that Redland City Council is a diverse organisation, both from a service delivery and people perspective, gaining agreement on values invariably presented challenges. The working group's strength was true teamwork, demonstrated through listening to the wider participant groups and each other's views, being open to diverse perspectives and constructively challenging ideas.

For the values to be authentic, relatable and to drive behaviours, the active participation of Redland City Council's people was essential. It also required balancing the 'people's perspective' and the 'leadership perspective'. This involved true engagement and many discussions, as well as openness to debate and review of detailed wording. Following a number of variations, the outcome presented a balanced view of employee and leadership perspectives and thus a true representation of Redland City Council's culture and ethos.

First Nations at Bankfoot House

Sunshine Coast Council

Category: **Innovation**

Built in 1868, State heritage-listed Bankfoot House was once a lunch stop and staging post for Cobb & Co coaches. Today it is home to a virtual experience that allows visitors to immerse themselves in the world prior to European settlements.

Bankfoot House was chosen as the location for this virtual experience as it is situated alongside an ancient pathway that for tens of thousands of years was used by First Nations peoples. This pathway is now called Old Gympie Road in the Glass House Mountains.

A collaboration between Sunshine Coast Council and Bilbie Labs (Virtual Songlines), Australia's leading First Nations social impact cultural design company, the Bankfoot House virtual experience takes visitors on a journey through the Glass House Mountains region where they follow cultural stories and tracks walked by the Kabi Kabi and Jinibara peoples.

Participants learn knowledge and wisdom from virtual Elders with voices and language of Kabi Kabi traditional custodians. Programmed tags help players pick up items to hunt, gather bushfoods or participate in cultural activities.

Virtual sound, light, movement, native species and First Nations peoples voices and images ensure this experience is both interactive and unique. No two participants have the same experience.

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Food Truck Friendly Council

Ipswich City Council

Category: **Teamwork**

As food trucks become increasingly popular across urban communities, Ipswich City Council has responded, cutting red tape that Food Truck operators must meet.

Feedback from vendors identified that Council's existing Mobile Food Permit and separate situational licence process was a barrier to operation and took over 4 weeks to complete. Today, the approval process can be accomplished in 48-hours.

"Council supports local food and beverage providers of all types", Mayor Teresa Harding said.

In a process improvement that brought 20 people from five departments together, the working group identified and implemented changes to streamline food truck licensing and approvals, enabling barriers to be removed.

The new Food Truck Friendly Council process features an online application platform that saves weeks in processing time. By combining multiple processes into one, vendors can bring creative food experiences to residents sooner. The policy includes pre-approved food truck sites that allow safe operation and don't compete with existing businesses.

Council views food trucks as a critical nursery for future 'bricks and mortar' establishments, allowing vendors to craft their offering while activating public spaces, promoting community engagement and providing employment and skilling opportunities to residents. Over recent years, there has been an 11% increase in active food trucks and a 65% increase in food establishment enquiries recorded by Council.



Groovin' in the Garden 2021

Western Downs Regional Council

Category: **Community Shaping**

A stellar line-up of local and regional musical talents has serenaded nearly 1,000 visitors at Western Downs Regional Council's award-winning Chinchilla Botanic Parkland during *Groovin' in the Garden*.

This event offered hours of musical entertainment and a range of local food and drink vendors, giving residents an opportunity to enjoy the Parklands with friends and family.

Council spokesperson for Community and Cultural Development, Cr Kaye Maguire, said the event was about getting involved in the active and vibrant Western Downs community and enjoying music from some fantastic local musicians.

"With food, drinks, live music and a beautiful atmosphere, *Groovin' in the Garden* had all the ingredients for a fabulous summer afternoon and evening, bringing families, our community and visitors together," Cr Maguire said.

After a difficult year for performers everywhere, Council was pleased to give talented local and regional musicians the opportunity to take the stage and do what they love. The artists were a key feature of the *Groovin' in the Garden* initiative which was about supporting musicians through the pandemic. The programme even included a song competition on social media. A huge crowd came together to enjoy the music, scenery and rejoice in being able to get back together as a community.

Ground-Up Covid Recovery Plan Reaps Multi-Billion Dollar Reward

Sunshine Coast Council

Category: **Teamwork**

In response to the impacts of COVID-19, Sunshine Coast Council has successfully delivered the Sunshine Coast Investment Attraction Program (SCIAP). SCIAP is forecasting an economic impact of \$1.74 billion and will create 5,765 full-time equivalent jobs for the region.

An integral part of the Sunshine Coast Council's COVID-19 stimulus package, SCIAP was developed to support economic recovery and accelerate shovel-ready projects.

With a focus on long-term job generation, Sunshine Coast Council has been working with local firms to ensure there is a pipeline of quality development to create future jobs.

To support the collaborative approach required to deliver SCIAP, Council established a Business Response Champions Group of senior managers from within various areas of Council including Development Services, Economic Development, Transport and Infrastructure Planning, Strategic Planning, Urban Growth, a group chaired by the Director, Major Projects and Strategic Property. The Group was tasked with investigating opportunities, responding to SCIAP proponents quickly and providing account management assistance on projects.

Collaboration between Council and industry was also critical to the successful delivery of SCIAP.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Health and Safety Leadership and Culture Initiative

Cook Shire Council

Category: **Workplace Wellbeing**

When a safety audit identified an extensive list of over 47 high risk hazards, Cook Shire Council's Executive Leadership Team stepped up to work with staff and the Workplace Health and Safety Committee to eliminate these risks.

Initially, a two-month plan to carry out remedial work was designed. As is the nature of Cook, the hazards extended across departments, work areas and distant geographical locations. Council soon realised they needed a wide-reaching, systematic approach to address all the identified hazards.

Through the assistance of the Safety Committee, the Leadership Forum and the Executive Leadership Team, Council created a risk register prioritised in order of the hazard risk versus the complexity of the controls to be put in place. Council then worked together with QWHS inspectors to find the best controls and most practicable outcomes for the identified hazards.

Two of the main initiatives carried out as part of this process included a depot clean-up and a remote workers' procedure. Feedback received and confirmation of rectified hazards from QWHS were the primary measure of success for this project.

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Hear Here Council e-Learning Training Package

Redland City Council

Category: **Collaboration**

Investigating the barriers for older people in its community in active ageing, Redland City Council's survey of residents revealed people with hearing loss were among the most isolated group of adults in the community.

To combat the impacts, Redland City Council partnered with Better Hearing Australia, Brisbane (BHA Brisbane) and Council of the Ageing, Queensland (COTA Qld) to develop, implement and distribute the Hear Here Council e-Learning Training Package – a workforce learning module to improve local government's communication with customers affected by hearing loss.

The Hear Here Council e-learning Training Package reflects best practice and contemporary research. It was also informed by the lived experience of residents with hearing loss and council officers in a variety of customer service roles to ensure the content accurately reflected typical scenarios in a local government setting.

Funding was gained through the Queensland Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors' Advancing Queensland Age-friendly Community Grants Program, with additional contributions from the project partners.

Once developed, the training was piloted for a period of four weeks. Forty-six officers from the Customer Contact Centre, Redland City Libraries, Redland Performing Arts Centre and the Community Development Team took part in testing and evaluation. All participants reported increased awareness and understanding of hearing loss, knowledge of communication techniques, and improved ability to communicate effectively.

The Hear Here Council e-Learning Training Package now forms part of Redland City Council's corporate training program and is available to all staff. BHA Brisbane and COTA Qld are making the training available to interested councils, with no ongoing costs.

Innovative Bushfire Decision Support Tool

Scenic Rim Regional Council

Category: **Innovation**

Leading edge technology has enabled Scenic Rim Regional Council to enhance its ability to manage the risks of fire while better prioritising and delivering meaningful bushfire management outcomes across its network of more than 200 bushland reserves.

Council's development of an evidence-based risk management tool in 2020 was driven by the devastating loss of lives and property across Australia as a result of extreme bushfires. The impact of these were exacerbated by factors including the increasing number of people living in high-risk areas, prolonged fire seasons and increased frequency of bushfires.

The newly developed, Decision Support Tool, takes a holistic approach to identifying bushfire threats, enabling Council to ensure the best use of resources to manage the risks in its bushland reserves.

By applying key risk criteria, Council can carry out annual assessments of the fire hazards across its reserves and prioritise programmes to reduce the risks. The tool also allows for a range of bushfire management solutions to be tested to ensure they deliver best value for the community before being implemented.

The Decision Support Tool takes risk assessment to the next level, enabling Council to input new information such as prescribed burns, wildfire events or a proposed fire trail into its decision-making modelling.

Ipswich Trekker 2.0

Ipswich City Council

Category: **Innovation**

Ipswich has taken virtual visitation to a whole new level. Ipswich tourism operators and local businesses have signed up to offer an inside view of the heritage city to viewers anywhere in the world. More than 80 local businesses and organisations have taken the opportunity to sign up to have the Ipswich Trekker showcase the inside of their venues on Google Maps.

Two years ago, Ipswich City Council, through its Discover Ipswich - Destination Development team, partnered with Google to map more than 50 of the city's best locations, clocking over 3 million steps in the process. Ipswich City was one of only 200 organisations globally to be invited to participate in a special programme to map venues with 360 degree footage - supporting local businesses to enhance their Google Maps, Google My Business and Google Street View listings in order to support way-finding in the city.

This time around, Trekker traded in the 18kg Google back-pack, now capturing internal locations with a much smaller, sleeker, lighter camera, weighing under 182g. Small but mighty, this camera can create an immersive, 360-degree, panoramic view of internal spaces.

Sixty-one sites have been completed, including the Llama Farm, Ballistic Brewery, Watercross Creek Olives and Limes, the Ipswich Antique Centre and Rafter and Rose to name a few. Hundreds of 360-degree images have been uploaded garnering over 400,000 views on Google.

Regional Planning Scheme 2021 and Coastal Planning Provisions

Isaac Regional Council

Category: **Community Shaping**

Isaac Regional Council has invested over five years in the development of its new planning scheme undertaking a pioneering journey of natural hazard planning policy review, community consultation and technical investigations. The result is the development of a 21st century planning and development assessment framework that provides for sustainable outcomes on the Isaac Coast.

The project has replaced outdated planning strategies, updated mapping and addressed public perceptions of reduced development rights. Gaining public support through multiple rounds of face-to-face public consultation, Isaac Regional Council now boasts a modern and robust planning scheme supported by advanced informatic digital mapping and data analysis.

The project has demonstrated dedication to meeting community expectations and community-first project management processes, while communicating risk hazard mitigation and protection measures.

The project is an exemplar for smaller councils demonstrating how to embark on a fit-for-purpose risk assessment process and generate significant community knowledge, understanding and resilience to coastal hazards.

Karalee Library Pod

Ipswich City Council

Category: **Innovation**

Ipswich Libraries has rewritten the book with an innovative self-service Library Pod at Karalee Shopping Village.

In an Australian first for public libraries, the pod allows members to use a mobile phone or library card to browse, borrow, return and reserve books. The pod opened in October 2019 with 163 books borrowed in its first week of operation. Interest has grown significantly since then and a total of 26,264 books have been loaned between opening and 7 April 2021.

Since its opening, the pod has handled more than 56,586 customer transactions including 9,821 book reservations and 20,501 book returns.

Mayor Teresa Harding said Council was delighted the library's state-of-the-art library facilities are improving access for the community. "System innovation, enhanced service consideration and meaningful community outreach; this is the 21st century approach behind the Karalee Library Pod," Mayor Harding said.

"It's wonderful to see this innovative approach translate to more books and media for residents. The self-service library pod at Karalee is a first of its kind and an extension of Ipswich Libraries' successful Marketplace collection model."

The Marketplace model includes presenting a curated collection of books in a retail-style display – front cover out instead of spine-out – and has been a big success at the city's libraries. The Karalee pod offers various popular and trending books in self-serve cabinets. It also has a large touchscreen where customers can browse e-books, e-magazines and downloadable audio content and borrow immediately.

The pod can also be used to collect library items reserved online and to return pod books.

"It is our priority to meet changing community expectations and deliver more opportunities for residents to borrow library items when they want, and how they want," Mayor Harding said.

The pod is at Karalee Shopping Village, outside the Coles supermarket, and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Library Takeaway Service

Western Downs Regional Council

Category: **Innovation**

Forget Uber Eats - there's a new takeaway service dishing up literary treats to residents of the Western Downs.

Western Downs Regional Council's 'Library Takeaway' service, managed by Western Downs Libraries, is delivering an innovative library experience for residents still hungry for the offerings of their local branch during the COVID-19 lockdown. Just like ordering your favourite pizza, customers can go online and choose from the library's vast selection of books, DVDs, magazines and audiobooks. These orders are prepared and delivered straight to residents' doors or made available for pickup at one of the Western Downs Libraries' eight local branches.

And for the picky reader, librarians are on standby to hand-pick items based on preferences such as genre, author and subject – aptly named the 'Chef's Suggestion' option.

Locals have been quick to devour the service, with 2,185 takeaway items (653 individual packages) amounting to a 170% increase in library membership and 163% increase in new online users compared to the previous quarter. Collection usage has also skyrocketed, with a 358% increase in eAudiobook and 74% increase in eBook downloads respectively.

While the statistics speak for themselves, it's the response from customers that's been the cherry on top. Librarians have been gifted with notes, flowers and even handmade cards in response to keeping this vital community service running in times of fear and uncertainty. And for the most vulnerable, Library Takeaway continues to be a source of human connection and support.

Logan Safety Camera Programme and QPS Logan District Tasking and Coordination Centre partnership

Logan City Council

Category: **Innovation and Collaboration**

In late 2019, the Logan District Tasking and Coordination Centre (DTACC), the second of its kind in the state, was set up to better coordinate Queensland Policy Service (QPS) resources and deliver a more efficient and effective response to calls for service. In early 2020, the Logan DTACC had to relocate. Logan City Council recognised this as an opportunity and approached QPS with a view to collaborating on future services.

As a result, DTACC moved into, now operates from, and works in conjunction with, the Logan Safety Camera Program (LSCP) Monitoring Room and its monitoring officers.

The benefits from this partnership to date have been significant in several ways. The partnership makes the real-time analysis of intelligence easier and ensures a strong focus on proactively targeting people, places, and crime types that pose the greatest harm to the community.

Other regions are now seeking to replicate the success of this partnership using the framework put together by both QPS and Logan City Council.

Murphy Street Port Douglas

Douglas Shire Council

Category: **Collaboration**

After a torrential downpour in March 2018 causing three significant landslips, Douglas Shire Council (Far North Queensland) was faced with a challenging reconstruction task.

Damage from landslides above the popular Murphy Street required \$3.1 million worth of emergency works to stabilize the area within four weeks, with more than 1,500 cubic metres of debris required to be removed after the 600mm downpour.

Significant geotechnical investigations were required at the site, which is aptly known as "Millionaire's Row", due to the number of multi-million-dollar properties which sit on the hill.

Through collaboration with nearby residents, holiday homeowners and other stakeholders, Council sought detailed feedback on the design of the repair project and the schedule of construction activities to minimise disruption.

Consultation was vital with several emails, website updates, face-to-face meetings, and letters to ensure happy holiday makers and landlords.

Open Ipswich - Transparency and Integrity Hub

Ipswich City Council

Category: **Community Shaping**

In a first for local government in Australia, Ipswich City Council has given ratepayers unprecedented access to the City's finances with the launch of the Transparency and Integrity Hub.

Council has taken bold steps to set a new benchmark for transparency in government and will continue to publish council data under the principles of open data. The intent of this proactive disclosure model is to inform and empower the Ipswich community.

To date, more than six gigabytes of data have been published to the Hub, providing the community with direct access to council financial information as well as information on council-controlled entities, procurement activities and project initiatives.

Mayor Teresa Harding said the Hub's launch was an important moment for the City of Ipswich. "Our community's trust in Council was heavily shaken in recent years as damning examples of maladministration and misuse of public monies came to light," Mayor Harding said.

"This is a major change for how Ipswich City Council conducts business and will put a renewed focus on the way Council manages data and information," Mayor Harding said.

"This is bigger than simply publishing data, it's also about driving effective decisions through a more accountable organisation and more informed community."

Palm Beach Shoreline Project

City of Gold Coast

Category: **Innovation**

Palm Beach on the southern Gold Coast is historically one of the City's beaches most vulnerable to the threat of coastal erosion. Data collected since the 1960s showed that this vulnerability was a result of Palm Beach having the lowest volume of sand compared to other Gold Coast beaches backed by beach-front infrastructure.

In seeking to protect the valued amenity of Palm Beach for locals and visitors alike, the Palm Beach Shoreline Project was developed. A two-phase project, it was designed to reduce the threat of coastal erosion on one of the City's most loved, but also most vulnerable, beaches – Palm Beach.

In 2017, phase one of the project was delivered in the form of offshore sand nourishment, with more than 470,000 cubic metres of clean sand delivered along the shores of Palm Beach. In 2019, phase two of the project was completed with the construction of a one-of-a-kind artificial reef.

Located approximately 270 meters offshore from Nineteenth Avenue between the beach and the existing natural reef, the artificial reef consists of approximately 60,000 tonne of rock boulders and has been meticulously designed and constructed to provide coastal protection outcomes, with the added bonus of enhancing surf amenity too.



Queensland Border Closure

City of Gold Coast

Category: **Collaboration**

In March 2020, Queensland's Chief Health Officer declared a public health emergency to contain the spread of COVID-19 within the community. One of these measures was to impose state border restrictions and close the Queensland border.

Planning and implementing the logistics of closing the border, particularly where the state border bisects the City of Gold Coast communities of Coolangatta and Tweed Heads, was a logistical challenge not faced in Queensland for over 100 years.

The City of Gold Coast was called upon to assist the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) in undertaking a rapid, strategic planning process to analyse and review all current crossing locations, communities and properties that would be directly impacted and unable to access facilities such as healthcare after the border was closed. They also considered the impacts on local bus routes which are integrated to serve both Queensland and NSW communities, and issues of retaining access to properties.

Following the strategic planning phase, which assessed network implications as well as permeability and connectivity concerns, City of Gold Coast and TMR were required to design and implement the physical road closures at 11 locations. This required collaboration to balance the requirements of QPS in addition to road safety concerns.

By closely working together and sharing resources, the City and State were able to help contain and slow the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) from New South Wales into Queensland.

Regional Skills Investment

Scenic Rim Regional Council

Category: **Collaboration**

Hundreds of Scenic Rim employers have been provided support to find, train and upskill the workers they need to prosper and grow via Scenic Rim Regional Council's Regional Skills Investment Strategy (RSIS) project.

Since the project commenced, Council has collaborated with 520 employers across the Scenic Rim's agriculture, health and allied services, tourism and hospitality sectors, securing 330 local participants engagement in educational programmes that support their employment outcomes.

The RSIS Project closely aligns with the workforce development focus outlined in the Scenic Rim Regional Prosperity Strategy 2020-2025 which exists to drive significant economic outcomes, job containment, growth, lifestyle and liveability outcomes for the Scenic Rim.

Through the programme, Council has shown its commitment to the region's small businesses by becoming the second Council in Queensland to sign up to be a Small Business Friendly Council.

Other actions to engage and collaborate with the region's business operators include providing guidance to access funding for business development, securing apprentices, assisting displaced employees affected by fires, floods, and COVID-19, staging the Scenic Rim Jobs and Skills Fest event, delivery of the Scenic Rim Business Breakfasts and the World of Work event.

The creation of an RSIS Reference Group, which includes representatives from businesses across the region, has facilitated genuine collaboration and the launch of a dedicated Scenic Rim Jobs portal has also proved successful in connecting local employers with employees.

The Regional Skills Investment Strategy project is proudly supported and funded by the Queensland Government.

Planning Scheme - Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Scenic Rim Regional Council

Category: **Teamwork**

Established as a regional council in 2008 following state wide council amalgamations, Scenic Rim Regional Council adopted its first, unified, region-wide planning scheme in 2020. This landmark moment for the region introduced a consistent approach to development across the Scenic Rim in full alignment with the community's shared vision.

The project required the small team of town planning officers to work together with multiple areas of Council and the Queensland Government to deliver the first region-wide planning scheme that reflected both the aspirations of the community and legislative requirements.

The framework for community consultation and subsequent feedback was developed in a way that maximised engagement and enabled Council officers to provide detailed, individualised town planning advice in relation to the policy proposed in the planning scheme.

Although the tailored responses took more time, this approach helped submitters understand the issues more clearly and boosted community support for the planning scheme overall.

As a result of its success, this new engagement framework has already been applied to upcoming planning projects to further strengthen Council's engagement with the community and increase knowledge sharing.

The preparation and adoption of the new planning scheme was an immense achievement for Council's Strategic Planning Team.

Shaping Stronger, More Resilient and Productive Communities

Western Downs Regional Council

Category: **Community Shaping**

For the past seven years Western Downs Regional Council has been actively working to improve pest management practices at local, state and national levels by influencing community and Council behaviour and practice. Its work has sought to forge change in the delivery of pest management and monitoring through partnerships, strategic planning, coordinated programmes and an established Vertebrate Pest Monitoring Programme.

Council has always had the belief that three 'C's of collaboration, coordination and commitment when combined with the use of monitoring and technology serve to shape stronger, productive and more resilient communities.

Critical to the success of this programme has been the use of Artificial Intelligence technology which allows land managers to rapidly identify pest activity, illustrate long-term trends, predict potential future pest activity and assess effectiveness of control activities.

Since 2014, Council has delivered \$1.5 million of coordinated pest management activity across 2,000,000 hectares, collaborating with 1,500 landholders and industry and government bodies. These efforts have included the erection of 130 kilometres of exclusion fencing and destruction of over 30,000 feral pigs, 10,000 wild dogs and 1,500 hectares of priority weeds.

They have empowered landholders with knowledge and experience to prevent or reduce pest impacts and shift decision making from a reactive to proactive approaches.

Smart Catchments Saltwater Creek

Cairns Regional Council

Category: **Innovation**

Mobi the Mudskipper is the lead character in a series of free online education tools, initially developed by James Cook University IT students as part of a work placement with Cairns Regional Council for the Smart Catchments: Saltwater Creek Pilot Program.

Educational tools, access to live data and use of innovative technology to measure real time water quality on Saltwater Creek were the key programme aims. The programme encourages the community to identify how they can avoid and reduce pollutants entering waterways and take actions that support sustainable, healthy water in the region and reduce environmental impacts on the Great Barrier Reef.

Using smart sensors, cameras and a gauging station, the quality of water flowing through one of Cairns' major urban catchments, Saltwater Creek, is continually monitored and data is accessible in real-time via Council's website.

Innovation in catchment water quality monitoring is new to Council and working in close collaboration with James Cook University, Wet Tropics Waterways and Itron Australasia, is key to the ongoing success.

Stay Connect Create

Sunshine Coast Council

Category: **Teamwork**

Sunshine Coast Council's '*Stay, Create, Connect*' programme was created to help keep the community informed, inspired and entertained during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The programme featured a series of online programmes, workshops and videos created by Council's Caloundra Regional Gallery, Horizon Festival, Cultural Heritage, Living Smart, Customer Engagement and Planning, Built Infrastructure and Sunshine Coast Libraries teams.

To help keep people engaged and entertained at home, a variety of adult and children's online workshops, kids' art activities, early literacy, rhyming, science activities, virtual tours, historical stories, online exhibitions, documentaries, gardening how-to videos and more were on offer.

This new digital service attracted over 5,000 attendees from April to May 2021 and has resulted in Council now currently developing and delivering online digital programmes as a standard service offering.

Sunshine Coast Economic Resurgence Plan - 2020/2021

Sunshine Coast Council

Category: **Collaboration**

The Sunshine Coast Economic Resurgence Plan addresses investment, employment, infrastructure provision and overall community prosperity to support a rapid recovery from the COVID-19 economic crisis.

An Economic Resurgence Plan, guided by a taskforce of business and industry leaders, is supported by an investment assistance program that includes fast tracking shovel-ready projects and financial support.

The plan's key priorities are to re-energise the region's economy, support shovel-ready projects and back local businesses to return to the level of economic growth pre-COVID.

To help the region bounce back, Council has focused on actions that: win back consumer trust and confidence; connect the labour market and opportunities; support business assistance and renewal; enhance digital connectedness, and support supply chains.

Two key components of the plan are the Economic Resurgence Taskforce and digital skills collaboration with Amazon Web Services. The role of the Taskforce is to provide advice and guidance to Council on the tactics to employ to deliver the highest value results in the shortest timeframe.

So far the following milestones have been achieved in 2020/2021:

- \$268 million spent with local suppliers in line with Council's buy-local policy.
- Faster payments to 7,200 suppliers, injecting money into the local economy sooner.
- Jobs Now: Radio and social media campaign promoting vacancies within specific industries facing workforce and skilling shortages.
- Local business champions series acknowledging local businesses working hard to meet changing demands to prosper in the region.
- Investment assistance program attracted 25 applications for shovel-ready projects with an estimated economic impact of \$1.74billion and 5,765 new jobs.

The Automated and Integrated Defect Hunter

Moreton Bay Regional Council

Category: **Innovation**

Maintaining stormwater pipes is costly and time consuming. Moreton Bay Regional Council has mitigated this through the successful implementation of a state of the art, fully integrated stormwater pipe inspection system.

This sophisticated inspection system leverages an AI-trained image detection model to identify structural and service defects in stormwater pipes using camera zoom technology. The data is then automatically transferred into the enterprise asset management system where the defects are prioritised for renewal and maintenance works.

Persisting with the traditional CCTV methods would have added a further 40 years to the stormwater network survey process. Under the new initiative, network inspection has been reduced to only 6 years with a 36% cost saving.

An increase in timely and quality asset data is better informing Council planning, maintenance and renewal programmes as well as asset lifecycle decisions across the 2,800km stormwater pipe network valued at \$1.6 billion. Council benefits from an improved asset performance knowledge base that services the community across the Moreton Bay region.

This innovative solution will help Council to better understand how the stormwater network is performing, provide better quality data to proactively alleviate flooding concerns within the community, all while saving time and money.

Tourism and Events Recovery: The Road Ahead

Mackay Regional Council

Category: **Collaboration**

An incredible array of events call the Mackay region home and when COVID-19 made its impact on the world, their future seemed glum.

Thanks to quick-thinking, fast action and a collaborative approach, Mackay Regional Council was able to retain and reschedule more than 35 events or conferences that were originally planned for 2020. This was due to the initiative of an "Events - The Road Ahead" recovery programme.

While this period of uncertainty presented an enormous challenge to local event organisers, it also provided a moment in time to pause, reflect, upskill and innovate. Through the programme, an online event health check of over 40 event organisers was delivered, followed by eight targeted webinars that attracted 157 participants and 40 one-on-one mentoring sessions.

The programme attracted wide-spread interest from neighbouring and inter-state councils looking to replicate the success in their areas and support their events and tourism industries.

Virtual Festival

Burdekin Shire Council

Category: **Doing More with Less**

When it became apparent that three major annual events to mark the launch of the sugar cane crushing season (First Fire, the Burdekin Cultural Fair, and the Australian Hand Cane Cutting Championships) had to be cancelled in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Burdekin Shire Council were quick to come up with an alternative and the virtual *Sweet Days Hot Nights Festival* was born.

Run throughout July 2020, the event provided the community with a more in-depth look at each event than had ever been seen before. With history given by local farmers, cooking lessons by local families, entertainment by local artists and dance groups, chats with cane cutting champions and the popular councillor cane cutting showdown, the virtual festival was a huge success.

In prior years, the festival attracted a maximum in-person audience attendance of roughly 2,500 people; whereas the virtual festival's three weeks of content reached more than 120,000 viewers and brought more attention to the Shire and the festival than ever before.

Special mention must be made of the virtual First Fire. Using drone technology First Fire showcased a live cane field fire from more angles than any one person could ever experience. This was witnessed all over the world, with over five thousand views and people watching from not only different states such as Victoria but other countries such as Canada, Alaska and the Netherlands.

Despite not costing anything apart from the time of several Council employees, the virtual festival was a huge success, demonstrating that with minimal resources and budget, small councils are still able to produce innovative content not yet attempted by larger councils to improve community wellbeing in times of hardship.

Water Cooling Project

Bulloo Shire Council

Category: **Sustainability and Innovation**

Continuing their commitment to being a 'Green' council, in 2020, Bulloo Shire Council commissioned solar installations across 23 council facilities. This strategic and significant investment in solar energy and a new water-cooling system will deliver long-term financial and social benefits, reduce risk to Council and maximise renewable energy use across the community.

Project-managed by Peak Services, supported by Council, and with a 60% funding boost from the Queensland Government, the water-cooling system was delivered in 2021 and now provides a continuous supply of cooled water to the community.

The town of Thargomindah relies on bore water for its potable supply – water that comes out of the ground at 72 degrees. Previous reliance on cooling towers and ponds to marginally reduce the temperature delivered to the community incurred significant cost in power and ongoing renewal and maintenance.

The new, innovative water-cooling system uses reliable technology that is easy for Council to maintain. The entire system is now powered by solar and includes battery storage to maximise the use of renewable energy and minimise grid reliance, which is particularly important in remote communities where supply can be unreliable. The design incorporates redundancy to ensure the community has certainty of water supply at a refreshing 35 degrees Celsius.

Water Industry Worker Programme

Mackay Regional Council

Category: **Collaboration**

A collaborative water industry worker development programme is helping councils unlock untapped training and career opportunities for their employees.

The programme began in February 2019 and was a joint initiative between Whitsunday, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns and Burdekin Councils. It was developed to solve issues associated with sourcing training at a regional council level by providing great economies of scale.

By working in collaboration with other councils, this programme has been able to facilitate training opportunities that staff from multiple locations can attend, with minimal impact on day-to-day operations at each Council.

It has provided staff with fantastic networking opportunities and exposure to a range of different work environments and infrastructure. It also provides neighbouring councils with the ability to train each other so they can confidently provide support if they are short-staffed or experience a natural disaster.

To date, this project has enabled 28 staff from five Councils to obtain a qualification. It is currently in its second round and expanded during 2020 to include Isaac, Bundaberg, South Burnett, Fraser Coast and Cherbourg Councils.

This project is a 50-50 joint funded initiative between the Queensland Water Regional Alliance and each of the Councils involved.

Water Quality Management Programme

Cassowary Coast Regional Council

Category: **Innovation**

With significant seasonal rainfall across the region, boil water alerts (due to water contamination) were a regular occurrence each wet season on the Cassowary Coast causing frustration for residents. During the wet season of 2017/18, residents experienced 18 boil water alerts.

To address this issue, team members at Cassowary Coast Regional Council came together to innovate the region's water supply and deliver a series of water infrastructure projects providing improved security of water quality. The solution includes the automation of water flow based on real-time data analysis. It actively adjusts flow valves within a scheme to stop dirty water from contaminating water in reservoirs when turbidity levels increase.

The system has proven effective in managing water quality and supply at existing reservoirs, along with the new storage facilities at Nyleta, Wheatley's Hill and Bulgun. It was a celebration for all residents that boil water alerts were eliminated in the 2020/21 wet season.

While being a showcase for successful innovation, Council is continuing to refine the system's ability with future plans looking at ways to apply the system smarts to other uses within the network. This is all part of Council's asset sustainability strategies and maintaining high water quality goal.

Western Downs Arts Online

Western Downs Regional Council

Category: **Innovation**

Western Downs Regional Council wanted to find an exciting and innovative way to enable local artists to exhibit their creations online after COVID-19 restrictions lead to the temporary lockdown of the local gallery. Using a unique 'remote' gallery experience for visitors with bespoke programming and user interface, the Western Downs Arts Online platform offers a completely new opportunity for regional artists in which to curate, catalogue and display artworks.

Featuring an interactive gallery, 3D exhibitions and regional artist profiles, this initiative adopts a new approach to harness the strong shift towards the online environment reimagined through a first of its kind virtual gallery. Viewable on a range of devices, including mobile phones and tablets, the technology extends the reach and regional connectivity of regional Queensland artists to potentially engage in a more global audience.

The unique online initiative is a fantastic new addition to the arts and cultural practices of Regional Queensland, with Western Downs Regional Council leading the way in shaping the digital future and capacity of local government regions.

Western Downs COVID-19 Recovery Package

Western Downs Regional Council

Category: **Sustainability and Community Shaping**

Western Downs Regional Council has delivered a once-in-a-generation COVID-19 Recovery Package, offering targeted support to where it was needed most in the community, while also delivering a range of projects to look after the future needs of the region.

Council put everything on the table to support its local community through the pandemic, delivering a Recovery Package focused on securing and creating local jobs for local people and delivering defining projects for the region to generate economic growth.

Some of the initiatives in the package included targeted rates, fees, and charges relief for businesses, households and industry, new grants programmes for sporting and community groups and business recovery support programmes.

The package was equally about delivering landmark projects to enhance liveability and shape the future of the region. Several major upgrades of prominent regional locations were fast-tracked along with various community infrastructure upgrades such as footpaths, halls, showgrounds, and other community facilities.

Workforce Sustainability

Scenic Rim Regional Council

Category: **Sustainability**

An increased focus on improving the capability of their people has successfully sustained the Scenic Rim Regional Council through several recent local disasters, including the challenges of COVID-19 and recovery from the 2019-2020 bushfires.

The Scenic Rim Regional Council's 'Enhancing Workforce Capability' programme was designed to extend Council's learning and development programme in order to nurture and build a sustainable workforce to serve the community long into the future.

This multi-dimensional initiative has acted as an employee attraction tool, has delivered sector-wide transferable skills to benefit both Council and other local government areas and has improved community confidence in Council.

Capability initiatives have included the New Start and Community Traineeship Programmes; training associated with technical skills, customer-oriented service delivery and mental health wellbeing for staff and the community; online learning solutions; forging inter-Council collaboration; and environmentally sustainable projects including conservation land care.

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THANK YOU

LGMA would like to thank all councils who have nominated projects, teams or individuals in the 2021 Local Government Awards for Excellence.

We thank the corporate partners for their support of this initiative which seeks to recognise the hard, and often ground-breaking, work Queensland councils undertake to support their communities.

We look forward to seeing you at the Gala event in your Council on Thursday 27 May 2021 from 3.30-5.30pm.

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