

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Awards

FOR EXCELLENCE 2023

The Awards for Excellence recognising
outstanding achievement in
Queensland local government



LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MANAGERS AUSTRALIA
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LEADING PROFESSIONALS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

President's Message

It is my pleasure to introduce the 2023 Local Government Managers Australia, Local Government Awards for Excellence publication. My congratulations to all the Council teams and individuals who are profiled, and my thanks to those mentors and managers who have provided encouragement along the way.

These awards again demonstrate the capability and out-of-the-box thinking that runs deep in our sector.

This publication is one you will want to share. In it, you'll find examples of great innovation with a particular focus on wellbeing, employees working together and initiatives designed to improve communities and our workplaces.

We know in our recent survey Members listed professional development of individuals, support, advocacy and leadership, the development of the profession and networking as the top five purposes of LGMA. This read is a great demonstration of bringing all this together in the one place.

My thanks again to our corporate partners who help make these awards possible.

I hope you enjoy reading the nominations and take at least one idea back to your Council which might answer the question to a problem you have or be the catalyst of idea which progresses as a nomination for the 2024 awards.



The Local Government Awards for Excellence 2023

The Awards for Excellence magazine showcases all the projects nominated by Queensland local governments in the 2023 Local Government Awards for Excellence.

In 2023, there were many achievements and successes to celebrate and, as always, widely diverse projects covering the varied activities that Queensland local governments undertake. From dealing with disasters to community engagement, from sustainability initiatives to youth services or from mental health to economic development, local governments do it all – and that is certainly evident from the 2023 Award nominations.

Winners and finalists of the 2023 Local Government Awards for Excellence will be announced at the Awards Gala event on 25 May 2023. During the Awards ceremony, nominees and councils can peruse each nomination and follow along as the exciting announcements are made.

The purpose of the Awards programme is not only to recognise and celebrate incredible achievements by Queensland local government, but also to facilitate the sharing of ideas and successes. The Awards programme allows local governments to identify best practice, learn from colleagues who have solved problems or innovated and to apply those lessons to their own environment for the benefit of their community and organisation.

Not all of the many, many nominations received will get a mention at the Awards Gala, however, each nomination is featured in this magazine as a 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 learn more about any of the initiatives listed.

Award Categories

The award 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 relevant to activities across the whole of local government.

Nominations are presented in this publication by category.

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.

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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.

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Building Better Blocks

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

In August 2022, Ipswich became the first city in Queensland to be chosen by the USA organisation, Better Blocks Foundation, to host an international placemaking event designed to empower people to make positive change through arts, cultural activations and city greening.

Ipswich City Council partnered with international experts, Better Block Foundation and Town Team Movement, to showcase its process for activating public spaces, bringing people together and making cities more liveable. Over 24 hours, hundreds of Ipswich residents, visiting council employees from across the state and planning students attended a thought leadership summit with interstate and international speakers to hear about how city centres can be reinvigorated for improved liveability.

Participants then put words into action and helped transform Ipswich's d'Arcy Doyle Place with colourful recycled furniture, a beautiful block-letter 'Ipswich' sign, directional street stickers and pop-up art installations.

To conclude the day, the community took charge and ran their event 'Unlock the Block' with a talent show, kid's games and temporary furniture adding life and vibrancy to the space.

This event demonstrates how simple collaboration can allow communities to take placemaking into their own hands and bring pedestrian activity back into city centres, making them more liveable and profitable.

Cuppa in the Communi-Tea

SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL

Scenic Rim's Cuppa in the Communi-Tea is not your average blend. Using a localised outreach service delivery model, Scenic Rim Regional Council has engaged with over twenty community organisations and more than thirty local and outreach service providers to connect the Scenic Rim community. Support services included Council's mobile library, disaster preparedness information and health and wellbeing providers.

Cuppa in the Communi-tea events aim to address the impacts of social isolation, loneliness and accessibility across many rural and regional communities to improve health and wellbeing. They also support environmental health, acting as a drop off point for the recycling of electronic devices (mobile phones, tablets, batteries).

Expanding from 8 to 13 locations within its first year of operation, Council has plans to expand the initiative to 26 events in 13 locations across the Scenic Rim region in 2023.

Cuppa in the Communi-tea is an initiative funded by the Queensland Government, Mental Health and Wellbeing Community Package under the Queensland Economic Recovery Strategy.

Customer Request Effectiveness Review Project

SOUTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL

This project is nominated in two categories. Please see the Teamwork category for a project description.

Economic Transition Roadmap

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Gladstone Regional Council is set to tackle once-in-a-generation changes to the energy sector head-on, thanks to its 10-year Economic Transition Roadmap. Developed in partnership with The Next Economy, the roadmap is setting the benchmark for shifting away from fossil fuels and managing the impacts associated with new energy industries.

The roadmap will guide Gladstone towards becoming a renewable energy superpower. It is the result of two years of research and extensive engagement involving 220 community, government and industry stakeholders. This makes it the most comprehensive engagement and planning initiative of its kind in Australia.

Focusing on transition instead of energy industry closure, the roadmap sets the Gladstone community up for success. The roadmap's strategy ensures that regulations, planning, funding, training and

infrastructure are all in place to meet the challenges of the transition and ensure the community is well-prepared.

This game-changing roadmap has transformed the conversation around shifting from fossil fuels; showcasing to the community and industry how the region can leverage future economic growth and position itself as a leader in renewable energy.

It is a clear path forward for Gladstone to navigate the changing energy sector, support industry and protect its community.

Flinders Community Dashboard

FLINDERS SHIRE COUNCIL

Flinders Shire Council and the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) entered a collaborative partnership to address community concerns regarding where ratepayer money was being spent, and to improve data quality, understanding and transparency of council data. The collaboration led to the delivery of ten, highly visual, informative, interactive and easy-to-read community dashboards on Flinders Shire Council's website.

Like many small-to-medium sized councils, Flinders Shire Council's lean workforce meant there were limited internal skill sets available to proactively deliver a solution robust enough to deliver the breadth of available data in a format that delivered insights that were easily understood by both the community and Council itself.

LGAQ collaboratively worked with Council to deliver a range of community dashboards that offered insights related to contentious community topics raised at regular council meetings. The community dashboards are available on the Flinders Shire Council website, providing real-time overviews for a range of topics of interest to the community, including council procurement, financial sustainability measures, local facility usage and more.

Through this engagement, not only did the community benefit from improved transparency of data, but internally, staff were upskilled, data quality was improved, and business processes were automated. The collaboration has led to ongoing further improvements.

Food Tourism and Scenic Rim Eat Local Month

SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL

Scenic Rim Regional Council has spent over a decade building foundations to present and promote the region as an accessible, authentic and much-loved food tourism destination. Proactive partnerships between farmers, producers, tourism operators, retailers, chefs and entrepreneurs were initially established through a collaborative, albeit small, food festival in 2012. From there, expanding relationships have seen food tourism in the Scenic Rim become a sustainable, increasingly valuable, and flourishing component of the local economy.

This collaborative food 'movement' includes: the delivery of an annual Scenic Rim Eat Local Week, which is now regarded by Tourism and Events Queensland as the most authentic food and farming festival in the country and which attracts 40,000 visitors a year; a separate partnership with a local horticultural producer that delivered a 'farm to front door' start-

up championing local produce 365 days a year and making it available outside the region, Scenic Rim Farm Box; and collaboration and support of a local tourism organisation, Destination Scenic Rim, that assists this organisation to deliver regular Farm Gate Trails profiling between 25 and 30 farm gates, that bring visitors to the region to experience the authentic farm experience and purchase direct from the farm.

Additionally, Council has pursued an economic development strategy that includes mentoring and developing the region's agritourism sector through provision of a business development programme.

In recognition of its achievements in this area, Scenic Rim Regional Council was awarded a Silver Award at the Queensland Tourism Awards in 2022 in the 'Food Tourism' category, for its Scenic Rim Eat Local Movement.

Gateway to Cape York

COOK SHIRE COUNCIL

The Gateway to Cape York precinct is a new, unique tourism development that entices travellers and tourists to stop and view information and educational displays about Cape York Peninsula. It includes the 'Thoughtful Travellers' tips' which educate visitors about caring for the environment and keeping themselves safe. The precinct is a fusion of art, identity and culture which provides an avenue for information about the region.

In order to deliver the project, the Thoughtful Travelling Cape York Alliance was formed with stakeholders from across 19 agencies including regional councils, natural resource management groups, indigenous land and sea rangers, traditional owner groups and creative consultants. The alliance worked to develop information and messaging which is displayed through signage to influence visitors' environmental attitudes and encourage responsible behaviour.

In addition, the alliance also developed and produced the booklet "How to be a Cape York Thoughtful Traveller", which was distributed at popular locations across the Peninsular Development Road and promoted through national media channels. Each organisation from the alliance worked together to make a guide on low impact travelling throughout Cape York.

The pathways throughout the park represent major roads in the Cape and each community is symbolised by a sculpture. Councils, Traditional Owners and artists from across 16 Cape communities were engaged in the planning, design and fabrication of the public artwork sculptures and interpretive signage, each representing culture, spirit and aspirations of community.

The project honors the connection to culture and Country for the Cape's Traditional Custodians and shares the collaborative spirit of the Cape communities.

Habitat Logs Project

MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Moreton Bay Regional Council worked collaboratively with representatives of the Kabi Kabi traditional owners' group and the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads to salvage and repurpose culturally significant trees that were cleared as part of a major highway upgrade.

The project provided an opportunity to pioneer a new approach to reusing felled trees identified by Kabi Kabi senior cultural representatives as having importance in caring for Country.

While not sacred trees, the species and age of the trees involved made them of particular significance to the Kabi Kabi. Through this project, Kabi Kabi and Council have advanced the shared commitment to reconciliation, biodiversity conservation and Kabi Kabi's commitment to caring for Country.

The project also relied on a high level of collaboration across Council, with officers from cultural heritage, environmental services, media and communications, arboricultural services, pest management and parks asset management teams all contributing to the planning and execution of the project.

A key learning from the project has been that incorporating innovative sustainable outcomes into infrastructure projects is more likely to be successful if there are strong partnerships with traditional owners.

Mackay Region Recreational Fishing Strategy

MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Mackay Regional Council's vision to make the region one of Australia's premier recreational fishing destinations resulted in the development of the Mackay Region Recreational Fishing Strategy, a five-year, collaborative, innovative and stakeholder driven strategy.

Representation from a broad range of stakeholders across the recreational fishing sector was crucial to the success of the project, with the formation of the Mackay Region Recreational Fishing Steering Group.

Mackay Region Recreational Fishing Steering Group Chair, Councillor Belinda Hassan, said outcomes of the Mackay Region Recreational Fishing Strategy had included everything from innovative artificial reef deployments in the town reaches of the Pioneer River to a successful brand to market the region, Hooked on Mackay.

"The Strategy had 46 actions and the vast majority of these have been completed, or are ongoing, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the recreational fishing stakeholder groups," Cr Hassan said.

Mental Health Localised Initiative

TABLELANDS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Community mental health and wellbeing are being carefully considered through a Tablelands Regional Council initiative in conjunction with organisations, service providers and community groups.

The Mental Health Localised Initiative is addressing the effects of isolation and loneliness in members of the community, especially the elderly and people with a disability and/or chronic pain.

Tablelands Regional Council collaborated with North Queensland Primary Health Network, the Mental Health Subgroup of the Tablelands Interagency Group and community stakeholders to develop a range of initiatives including an Aging Well Expo, Mental Health and Volunteerism Expo, Mental Health Week Primary School Programme and Adult and Children Mental Health Service Map.

Although the funded project is complete, the Mental Health Subgroup continues with collective accountability and a focus on collaborative relationships. The networks, initiatives, professional development and events are now embedded in community and will continue to evolve for many years.

My Future in Moreton Bay

MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Moreton Bay Regional Council has created a free virtual career experience programme in response to industry feedback about the difficulty of sourcing and retaining workers.

Council partnered with The Forage, an international leader in virtual work experience programmes, to develop My Future in Moreton Bay, a first for an Australian local government. The programme gives potential workers a step ahead by providing them with suitable skills for a career in Moreton Bay long-term, while addressing talent shortages.

Industry representatives, including local companies and TAFE Queensland helped inform the relevant topics, themes and tasks. Participants can complete the modules anytime, at their own pace, and share

their digital certificate online, on their resume and with employers.

The programme will help transform and modernise the region's economy and help it stand out in a crowded marketplace where talent is scarce and mobile. It matches people to priority industry needs and enables businesses to interview potential recruits already pre-disposed to their industry.

Resolve - Online Meeting and Agenda Platform

CHARTERS TOWERS REGIONAL COUNCIL

An online meeting management system has enabled Charters Towers Regional Council to move from an all-manual meeting management system, where there is so much more room for error, to a contemporary online system. The lack of automation and duplicate effort has always been time consuming for staff responsible for the preparation of the meeting agendas in recent times and in bygone years.

The automation has improved workflows and removed many of the manual processes involved in management of Council meetings. The templates have enhanced quality and reduced the time taken to complete them. Deadlines are now consistently being met and there has been a shift in the team as they are not having to rewrite or start from scratch each month.

The principles of change management have been integral to this project and the importance of open communication to all stakeholders was imperative to ensure that everyone from the CEO, executive leadership team and management leadership were on board for the move from manual to digital.

Council's Executive Services Manager has said it's a delight to witness Councillors using their devices during a Council meeting and it reinforces how user-friendly the new online system is.

Sports Field Maintenance Funding Program

SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL

Sunshine Coast Council has supported a community-led team to maintain a competition standard for sports fields on the Sunshine Coast. Council's Sports Field Maintenance Funding Program provides consistent, equitable and appropriate support for sports field maintenance across the Sunshine Coast local government area.

By Council sharing the burden of costs and enabling volunteer skills development, clubs are able to lead their field maintenance priorities and scheduling in a way that optimises their playing surfaces to meet their needs.

There are currently 48 sporting organisations with 114 fields funded by the programme, which is jointly managed within Council by the Economic and Community Development Group and Built Infrastructure Group.

The genuine collaboration and partnership between multiple stakeholders and the community sporting organisations results in a more effective service delivery model and an upskilling of community sport volunteers which benefits the organisations, Council and the community.

The Swim Logan Project

CITY OF LOGAN

The City of Logan, in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Health, The Aqua English Project, Aqualogan and the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, delivered the Swim Logan project across 2 years.

The Swim Logan project was a free, learn to swim and water safety awareness programme for migrants, refugees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 16 years and over living in the Logan City Council area. The project taught 1,979 individuals how to swim by delivering 432 swimming lessons and 95 water safety awareness sessions in 6 different languages. Swim Logan also trained 13 participants as lifeguards and swim teachers who now teach others from their communities how to swim.

The Swim Logan project is a powerful testament to the impact that local government and non-for-profit community organisations can achieve when all parties involved are passionate about working toward a common goal and best serving the needs of the community.

Toogoolawah Swimming Pool and Community Gym Precinct

SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL

In 2019, Somerset Regional Council endorsed an internal business case to develop a new Toogoolawah community gym adjacent to the Toogoolawah swimming pool. Concurrently, Council was seeking opportunities to reinvigorate and encourage greater patronage of the swimming pool with the approval of the installation of a zero-depth splash pad and electric heat pumps for the pool.

Council collaborated with the Queensland and Australian Governments to build a new, 24-hour gym complete with modern equipment, a bespoke children's splash pad, electric heating of pool and several other enhancements, making the new, combined Toogoolawah Swimming Pool and Community Gym precinct a space that the community flock to.

The combined pool and gym entry, increased area of the buildings and grounds, pool heating, aesthetics and new extended carpark have created a space that all members of the community can access and enjoy. In addition to the infrastructure improvements, Council was able to streamline management services and offer greater hours of access to the community, seeing a historic increase in patronage since re-opening as a single facility, whilst significantly reducing Council operating costs.

The project was funded by the Queensland Government through the Active Community Infrastructure programme. The Toogoolawah Splash Pad project was funded by the Australian Government (managed by Sporting Australia).

Waraba (Caboolture West) Place Naming

MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

By initiating the Caboolture West Place Naming Project, Queensland's largest local government-initiated collaborative place naming process, Moreton Bay Regional Council has taken the important step of considering the names and boundaries for the new city and its suburbs.

Over the next 40 years, semi-rural paddocks will transform into a community of 70,000 – roughly the size of the city of Mackay. Council collaborated with the State Government, Traditional Custodians, developers, local residents and the broader community to find names the emerging communities could build a strong identity around.

Endorsed by the Kabi Kabi Traditional Custodians, the new city centre will be Waraba (WA+RA+BA). The Kabi

Kabi word, waraba, means 'burn' and refers to the traditional land management practices that brought new life and maintained the health of the land and its people. The first of the surrounding suburbs, Wagtail Grove, Corymbia, Lilywood and Greenstone have taken names that reflect the local environment.

By working with the State Government to formalise the suburbs ahead of large-scale development, Council has kick-started community identity from the beginning. Certainty of addresses will ease the transition for postal/delivery and emergency services as the community grows.

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.

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Business Improvement Scheme

BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL

Balonne Shire Council's Business Improvement Scheme has taken a multi-faceted approach to business resilience, sustainability and future growth with a three-year programme of practical improvements and customised business mentoring and workshops.

Council's approach aimed to build resilience into the fabric of the business community, which directly impacts on the economic sustainability and mental health of the community as a whole. Building resilience while encouraging businesses to look at ways to be more sustainable and enable growth into the future were key motivations in offering this business improvement programme.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole said the programme looked different for each business, and their specific needs and operational gaps determined what outcomes to aim for.

"By giving our community the tools and information, they need to grow and move forward, we've empowered businesses to create positive change that impacts everyone in our Shire, and that's a win for all of us," said Cr O'Toole.

Construction Management and Waterway Protection Taskforce

SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL

Sunshine Coast Council's Construction Management and Waterway Protection Taskforce incorporates a programme designed to improve construction management practices and levels of compliance regarding erosion and sediment control.

This programme aims to improve Sunshine Coast waterways, wetlands and ocean health through a comprehensive engagement, education and regulatory approach. The programme is funded through the Sunshine Coast Council Environmental Levy.

Sunshine Coast Council Environment and Liveability Portfolio Councillor, Maria Suarez, said Pumicestone Passage, Mooloolah River and Maroochy River were all highly valued and enjoyed by the community. Cr Suarez said everyone had a role to play in keeping them ecologically healthy – including the building industry.

"Over the next three years, Council has committed to this special team to focus on a comprehensive education and regulatory approach across all parts of the construction section from residential builders through to contractors and developers," Cr Suarez said.

Flood Gauge Super Network

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Flood Gauge Super Network is the founding project of Central Highlands Regional Council's overarching 'Our Region, Our Resilience' programme, comprised of more than 40 Council projects dedicated to protecting and preserving life across the community.

A demonstrated, world class monitoring and information system, the super network of gauges is unrivalled in size and community impact, working across the region to strengthen ongoing community resilience, wellbeing and awareness for when extreme weather events occur. Council has worked tirelessly for over ten years with the commitment and foresight to increase gauge counts across the region, taking the count from two to 99 gauges and creating a state-of-the-art, interconnected network now covering a land expanse the size of Tasmania.

With every flood varying in nature, the ability to predict how water may fall and flow is a complex science and communities, council and even the Bureau of Meteorology are currently operating off-the-back of the vital data, warnings and insights that the network is providing.

The Flood Gauge Super Network is setting a new state benchmark, making communities safer and more educated about the risk and impacts of flooding and enabling every community and resident to enact better decisions and behaviours around their own self-preparedness and responsiveness.

Health Services Transaction

WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

A landmark agreement between Western Downs Regional Council and Southern Cross Care Queensland (SCCQ) has ensured a stronger, more sustainable outcome for the region's health services.

Western Downs Regional Council successfully transferred its aged care homes and community services to accredited aged care provider SCCQ in April 2022. This project has directly improved Council's financial sustainability and has drastically improved and secured the long-term sustainability of the community.

The collaboration and precision involved in making sure the over 80 Council staff could retain their positions at their respective facilities as part of that agreement was second to none. Council is proud that its staff members have improved career and learning opportunities since becoming part of the SCCQ team.

Transferring Council's health services to an organisation with a relevant core business has significantly improved the community sustainability of the Western Downs. The transfer means residents can feel confident about the region's health services and will be far more likely to remain in their communities.

Although the initial financial cost to Council's budget was significant, the long-term economic investment has secured the future of the Western Downs. Importantly, Western Downs ratepayers are no longer bearing the financial cost of recruiting and retaining staff at the rural health services facilities. The transfer has been an excellent result for the financial sustainability of Council's budget.

Kids in Action Program

SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL

Pioneered by Sunshine Coast Council as a local government project, the unique and innovative 'Kids in Action' (KIA) Program is an environmental education initiative that has been operating since 2012. Aimed at students aged between 8 and 15 years, the programme helps to shape positive community behaviour by building leadership and active citizenship skills in environmental management through peer-to-peer learning experiences.

Each year, an environmental theme provides the impetus for school engagement and project work where students explore and express their learnings and teachings through three key annual events – an Environmental Projects Day, a Kids Teaching Kids Conference and a KIA Roadshow.

Financed through Council's environmental levy with additional contributions by external sponsors and partners, the programme is a true environmental legacy initiative.

To date, over two-thirds of Sunshine Coast schools have participated in the programme, providing the experience to over 3,500 students. Thousands more teachers, adults and community members have attended KIA events over the years.

The programme has, and continues to, deliver profoundly positive environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes for the Sunshine Coast community, and will do so for years to come. The programme is not only shaping the Sunshine Coast community, but also transforming it.

Logan Eco Forum

CITY OF LOGAN

The City of Logan has strengthened its commitment to community environmental engagement through the enhancement of the Logan Eco Forum and Eco Survey.

Since 2017, the programme has promoted environmental awareness, built relationships through collaboration and created capacity for positive action across the city. Critical to the success of this ongoing programme is the broad community environmental engagement that guides Council in shaping and improving future environment capacity building opportunities.

Community feedback influenced a review in 2020 which led to significant changes for future programming. Improved community experience, delivery methods and environmental outcomes saw an exponential increase in attendance with over 1,100 participants taking part in the

series of events relating to the Eco Forum last year.

Logan City Council is looking forward to another year of environmental capacity-building and fun activities for the Logan community in June 2023 during the annual Logan Eco Forum and Eco Survey.

Lowood Futures Strategy

SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Lowood Futures Strategy adopted by Somerset Regional Council in December 2022, is an urban renewal project for the Lowood community – one that harnesses bold and ambitious thinking, aims to enhance community wellbeing by amplifying the town's identity and competitive advantage, and provides a pragmatic road map for delivery.

The development of the strategy relied on community, business and government working together and co-designing a shared vision and design concept plan for the town centre. The plan includes improvements to public space including a green botanical core, lighting, art, community and commercial facilities and opportunities for new car parking.

The four key aspects of the vision include:

- Green and botanical character
- Destination with genuine experiences
- Friendly vibe
- Community pride and ownership.

The strategy was developed by Council with funding support of the Australian and Queensland Governments through the Queensland Reconstruction Authority under the 2019 Local Economic Recovery Programme.

Now I Can Swim

CITY OF LOGAN

This project is nominated in two categories. Please see the Innovation category for a project description.

Park(ing) Day

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

Turning parking spaces into people places is bringing pedestrians back into the city centre of Ipswich. Ipswich City Council converted multiple parking spaces in the heart of the city into spaces for people, instead of cars, by adding trees and greenery, live music, outdoor dining as well as art and culture.

While the shift in city centre infrastructure was only for three days, as part of an international event called Park(ing) Day, local business owners and event attendees alike are calling for the changes to be made permanent. According to some cafe owners, the weekend saw their best trade to date as locals and visitors took to the sidewalks and spent quality time, and money, in the temporarily revitalised street.

During the three-day event, the Ipswich community was invited to give its feedback on different uses of the parking spaces based on their experiences at the event. The project identified trees and greening as the most desirable change they wanted to see, followed by live music with outdoor dining and more art and cultural activations coming in third and fourth respectively.

Events such as this offer local governments the opportunity to 'try before they buy' with expensive infrastructure use changes and witness firsthand the impact of pedestrianised city centres. They also offer residents and businesses the opportunity to provide their input and preferences to help shape future infrastructure decision making.

Scenic Rim Growth Management Strategy 2041

SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL

A Council-led planning strategy developed with comprehensive community input, the Growth Management Strategy demonstrates innovative and proactive planning to support the Scenic Rim Region's growing population into 2040 and beyond.

The user-friendly strategy shows a clear (and evidence based) picture of how growth is envisaged to be directed and managed for the Scenic Rim region over the next 20 years, showing indications around employment, housing and land use, and with consideration given to the region's unique and diverse growth issues at key localities.

A stakeholder engagement strategy for the project was developed with public consultation of the Growth Management Strategy the first project to use Council's new online engagement platform, 'Let's Talk Scenic Rim'.

A blueprint for Council's future roll-out of planning actions, the strategy is the first regionwide strategy of this nature in Queensland to demonstrate achievement of the dwelling and employment supply benchmarks of the 'ShapingSEQ' Regional Plan.

Tablelands 2030+ Community Plan

TABLELANDS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Tablelands Regional Council worked with a focus group, partner organisations and the broader region to create the community roadmap that now guides Council decision making, services and priorities. Tablelands 2030+ is the Atherton Tableland region's new Community Plan, presented to Tablelands Regional Council by the community in July 2022 following an extensive period of discussion and collaboration.

Tablelands 2030+ is centred on five priority areas — environment, community, healthy lifestyles, infrastructure and economy. Within each of these are six key aims and from these key aims, 114 desired outcomes have been identified.

The process of engaging with passionate community members as lead focus group participants has created ownership and drive from these individuals. They

are leading community change and driving initiatives including establishing community gardens and environmental projects, working to improve First Nations peoples' recognition and value-adding to the local agriculture sector through agri-tourism.

The Tablelands 2030+ Community Plan is referenced in grant applications and project proposals and ensures the community has a deeper understanding of the overlaps between their town and others, including environment, economy, infrastructure and health. Continual strengthening of the practical use of Tablelands 2030+ will ensure sustainable and positive change for the community.

The Human Library Project

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

The Human Library Project was implemented at Brisbane City Council libraries to foster the adage that Brisbane is an inclusive city, providing the community an opportunity to learn and connect across the diverse population.

The project was delivered in partnership with The Human Library Organisation in Copenhagen, which has led The Human Library movement for social change for over 20 years and is respected worldwide. An immersive reading experience, attendees borrow a 'Human Book' – volunteers who have been stereotyped, marginalised or faced stigma or prejudice.

The first Brisbane event was held at Brisbane Square Library in 2022, where readers sat down with a Human Book to engage in safe and open dialogue, challenging their own personal biases and to learn about diversity in their community through stories of lived experience.

Since then, Brisbane City Council has hosted events in multiple libraries across the city in small, medium and large branches, highlighting versatility to adapt to different audiences and communities.

With an extensive event design, Brisbane Libraries have customised a global programme to create a bespoke event for the community; a model that has been shared with colleagues across Queensland; so other councils can implement and deliver their own human library events.

Waste Smart Kindy Program

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

Brisbane City Council's Waste and Resource Recovery Services Branch has developed the Waste Smart Kindy Program to tackle waste reduction practices in the early learning sector with their innovative initiative for early learning centres.

Since 2018, the Waste Smart Kindy Program has positively encouraged early learning centres, their staff and families to find ways to reduce waste to landfill and embed sustainability into every day. The programme provides early learning educators with a free, online, professional development course and offers high-performing centres the opportunity to become a recognised Waste Smart Kindy.

Children benefit from learning new habits and fun ways to reduce waste and recycle, proving small actions can make a big difference. Council provides practical tips to Brisbane early learning centres to help increase recycling, reduce food waste through composting or worm farms and explore wonderfully creative reuse options.

Over 1,000 educators in Brisbane have completed the online professional development, receiving tools and resources to use in their rooms, and Council have just celebrated the 25th early learning centre to become a Waste Smart Kindy.

Welcome to Cloncurry-Wood

CLONCURRY SHIRE COUNCIL

Look Out Hollywood, Here Comes Cloncurry-Wood.

The tale of a lone survivor, a legendary bank robbery and the mishaps and mayhem of two rejected city detectives are just some of the stories that are being told thanks to the unwavering support of a Cloncurry Shire Council under the Cloncurry Film Incentive Program.

Cloncurry in outback Queensland is rolling out the red carpet for filmmakers encouraging producers, filmmakers, directors and more to consider the region as the backdrop for their next project.

Council's Film Incentive Program aims to foster Cloncurry's growing reputation as a film-friendly location. On the back of being the spectacular location for Channel 10's Survivor in 2021, this small outback Queensland town of some 3,700 people has supported

a further two productions under the Film Incentive Program with discussions in place for a number of future productions.

"It's quite revolutionary what Cloncurry Shire Council is doing with their film incentives. It's been a collaborative approach from the very beginning. Their willingness to pivot and adapt is a huge incentive for filmmakers. This problem-solving attitude, along with the region's diversity of architecture and landscapes, makes it the perfect filming location," said filmmaker Luke Chaplain.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT *Awards* FOR EXCELLENCE 2023

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.

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AI Flood Detection

CARPENTARIA SHIRE COUNCIL

Carpentaria Shire Council can now automatically detect flooding over roads using innovative artificial intelligence methods that significantly reduce cost, increase council efficiency and provide new communication methods to residents and regional road users.

Carpentaria Shire Council approached the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) to assist in the deployment of a self-managed camera network to monitor road conditions.

The Shire had watched as surrounding council regions were left with dead camera hardware assets after camera providers exited the industry. Carpentaria understood that a self-managed camera network was key to minimising costs and improving long-term asset

management efficiencies but needed a new method for monitoring high-risk roads for flooding. LGAQ offered to build an AI supervisor agent that automatically notifies Council when flooding is detected.

While email notifications are one of many automation types, this cost-effective solution has the potential to undertake additional automations at Council's request and be easily adapted to detect other issues of note, including graffiti.

Where flood assessments would previously take up to 10 hours of travel time to undertake, the automated assessment of flooding over roads returns full days of productivity to council officers to attend to other high-priority tasks during times of natural disaster.

Ask Morty – Data Concierge

MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Moreton Bay Regional Council has taken its small-business-friendly-council obligations to a new level by providing a solution that provides useable data for small business owners to help them make evidenced-based, business decisions and better plan for growth by putting the power back in their hands.

Council partnered with TechConnect IT Solutions to develop *Ask Morty*, a free, automated data concierge service.

This chatbot takes complex 2021 Census data and Queensland Government population projections and provides easy-to-use, curated demographic data. It identifies suburbs in the region with the largest number of people that match the business's key characteristics now and into the future, such as age, gender, home ownership, work status, industry and income levels.

The chatbot's easy customer interaction, simple question and answer design, and instant results make it an accessible and valuable tool for any small business. No technical skill or data literacy is required.

Draft Planning Scheme Amendment for Floodplain Management

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGIONAL COUNCIL

The long-term innovations delivered by the Central Highlands Regional Council Draft Planning Scheme Amendment for Floodplain Management have created significant change, collaboration and growth for community and Council alike.

Together with specialist consultancy teams, Council's Strategic Planning Team set new, 'whole of organisation' buy-in and benchmarks, with long term transferability and added improvement to processes, new programmes and information tools, broad buy-in, stronger community relationships, and increased cross-departmental support for meaningful, long-term change, resilience and growth.

The project approach exceeded statutory requirements, executing the most far-reaching, deeply immersive, hyper-localised engagement process in the history of Council and receiving overwhelming support and praise from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, Steven Miles MP, and State, community and Council departments alike.

Together with close support from the community, Council elevated their ability to provide innovative, empowering and life-enhancing solutions for more prepared, protected, responsive and resilient communities when natural disasters occur across the highly flood-prone Central Highlands region.

Human Rights Implementation Project

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

Ipswich City Council's Human Rights Implementation Project seeks to embed human rights across the organisation. Following the introduction of the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) in 2020, Council has implemented a range of initiatives to put human rights 'front and centre' in its decision-making and the services it provides to the community.

Council created a cross-departmental working group to oversee the implementation of Council's human rights implementation action plan with one of the key early actions of the project being the appointment of human rights champions in each department. Council's decision to share tasks across the organisation, rather than have one area or department perform all implementation activities, resulted in the timely completion of action items and also raised awareness of human rights generally across Council.

The project focussed on the development of customised training, templates and facts sheets, along with a range of initiatives to raise awareness of human rights across the organisation and in the community, several of which have been recognised by the Queensland Human Rights Commission.

By ensuring decisions protect and promote human rights, Ipswich City Council aims to deliver better outcomes for individuals and the community.

Just One Moment – Revitalising Health and Safety

CHARTERS TOWERS REGIONAL COUNCIL

In September 2021, Charters Towers Regional Council undertook to review how Work Health and Safety obligations were managed, focusing primarily on the important Safety Management System (SMS) and development of people managers.

These two elements were chosen to establish a strong foundation for health and safety performance, including a renewed focus on reduction of downtime due to injury and ill health and costs associated with treatment and insurance and retraining, backfilling and replacement of injured staff.

As a result of the project, 84 procedures, guidelines and safe work method statements were revised or created. Days lost to injury and the injury duration rate reduced by 96% and 85% respectively over two years. Reporting

of near misses and hazards increased by 100% and injury reporting increased by 50%, along with an overall increased knowledge of SMS and due diligence across Council.

While it is acknowledged that health and safety is not a new concept, the implementation of the initiative, titled 'Just One Moment', encouraging all employees to question practices and provide ideas to improve health and safety, has certainly played an integral part in seeing Council achieve demonstrable improvements.

Landholder Support Program

ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Rookwood Weir Landholder Support and Grants Program was the first business support programme in Queensland to connect, develop and build comprehensive agricultural business plans with landholders who would benefit from the construction of Rookwood Weir by Sunwater, on the Fitzroy River.

Advance Rockhampton, a department of Rockhampton Regional Council, played a crucial role in the implementation of the programme. They assisted landholders in the region with access to the programme's financial and technical resources, including outreach and engagement, technical assistance and collaboration with stakeholders.

The novel and distinct method used in this programme has created new service delivery standards for high-stakes engagement, with complexity, attention to detail and 12 months' consultation across multiple stakeholders required.

Overall, Advance Rockhampton played a leading role in ensuring that landholders in the region were able to access the resources and support they needed to make the most of the new water storage facility.

Mooloolaba Foreshore Revitalisation Project

SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL

Sunshine Coast Council's Mooloolaba Foreshore Revitalisation Project demonstrates how innovative technologies can be employed to reinvent the community engagement process. The multi-stage revitalisation project is transforming Mooloolaba's foreshore; increasing public beachfront parkland by 40% and providing new community spaces, enhanced family facilities and accessible amenities.

As part of planning for the next stage of delivery, the project team developed ground-breaking virtual reality tools, far beyond the 'standard' community engagement approach. Innovative 3-D technology allowed the community to immerse themselves within two distinctly different designs for stage two of the project.

Distilling complex ideas into clear and immersive virtual tours, the community was able to explore the future of Mooloolaba foreshore like never before. Accessible via QR codes, the Sunshine Coast-first strategy melded traditional techniques with brand new technologies.

Supported by Council's high-tech 'HIVE' online survey platform, the cutting-edge community engagement programme has been recognised as an outstanding success. The innovative approach ensured Council could make an informed decision about endorsing the community's chosen design - and progress the next stage of this region defining project.

Now I Can Swim

CITY OF LOGAN

The City of Logan is home to more than 327,000 people from around 217 different cultures. More than 83,000 of the city's residents were born overseas. Many speak their native tongue at home.

The City of Logan has embraced its proud cultural diversity by producing an historic, multi-lingual video that encourages migrants and refugees to learn to swim. The trailblazing video from Logan City Council includes messaging in seven languages; Burmese, Mandarin, Swahili, Arabic, Dari, Somali and English.

Since November 2020, 788 refugees or newly arrived migrants have taken part in the classes. The awareness campaign highlights the importance of water safety and features two refugees who not only learned to swim but have now graduated to become swim instructors.

The 'Now I Can Swim' awareness campaign uses activities including going to the beach, water parks, pools and fishing to explain the safety benefits of knowing how to swim and also offers free swim lessons for the city's First Nations people and other community groups.

Open Space Landscape Infrastructure Manual

SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL

Sunshine Coast Council has developed an Open Space Landscape Infrastructure Manual (LIM) which is an innovative, on-line reference document, updated annually.

The LIM illustrates Council's best practice guidance for the selection and installation of open space embellishments. It is an important asset management tool for parks and gardens, ensuring that embellishments (including materials, fixings and finishes) provide for durable and robust assets that meet useful life expectations.

The LIM has been well used since endorsement by Council in 2013 and has grown to cover over forty

categories. These include guidance for playground and skate park design, irrigation and site set up and embellishments such as bins, seats and bike racks.

The LIM is referenced in the Sunshine Coast Council's Planning Scheme and is directed towards developers, designers, project managers, construction and maintenance staff.

The LIM is a unique, well researched, trusted source of advice which benefits the community by assisting to develop well designed, managed and maintained open spaces, providing enjoyable user experiences and durable facilities for future generations.

Performance Agreements and Strength Based Performance Program

WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Western Downs Regional Council has taken an innovative approach to employee appraisals and performance management through a recent revamp of its programmes. The traditional format in which these initiatives are delivered has been challenged with a new focus on accountability, growth and individual strengths, promoting high performance and generating a shift towards a positive workplace culture.

The Performance Agreement Period Employee Review, 'PAPER', system is about creating a safe space for more meaningful conversations around key performance objectives, career goals and ambitions, and partnering opportunities to improve skills and professional development.

This innovative system supports employees in their progression and enhanced performance and enables alignment between their individual successes and the successes of the organisation as a whole. These cutting-edge initiatives promote a culture that holds a strong focus on wellbeing, satisfaction, productivity and innovation.

The Strength Based Performance Programme has challenged the traditional methods of performance management and is structured to identify and build the best in employees by focusing on their personal strengths. The new approach to performance management promotes developing connections, engagement and accountability.

SEAL Pool Safety Program

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

Ipswich City Council's SEAL Pool Safety Program seeks to address the alarming statistics around drowning as one of the leading causes of death for children under the age of five in Queensland.

Council educates the community on the benefits of water safety through various free, educational and skills-based activities for adults and children, including learning to swim, supervision, CPR and pool regulation compliance information. The programme also uses a gamified learning experience to encourage children and their parents/guardians to continue their understanding of pool safety through the creation of bespoke educational resources.

SEAL comprises four key water safety actions:

- Supervise around the pool
- Enclose the pool with a fence
- Actively check the pool gate and fence
- Learn CPR and how to swim

In conjunction with qualified swim instructors from the Royal Life Saving Society of Queensland, operators of council swimming pools and Queensland Ambulance Service, more than 350 adults and children have undertaken the programme in the last two-years.

TEMPO an Innovative Recruitment Campaign

FRASER COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

With no sign of labour and skills shortages ending, Fraser Coast Regional Council came up with an innovative solution to increase the skills of the local workforce and widen the opportunities available to disadvantaged members of the community.

TEMPO is an initiative that commenced in 2021 with the aim to: build a skilled and engaged in-house workforce to cater Council's contingency labour requirements; to service the community by providing a pathway to employment for disadvantaged job seeker groups in the Fraser Coast region; and to deliver an efficient and financially sustainable temporary workforce resourcing model through a reduction in the use of external labour hire agencies.

Fraser Coast Regional Council's TEMPO recruitment campaign is in direct contrast to the usual 'in the box' recruitment campaigns which primarily target experience and qualifications. The TEMPO recruitment campaign is actively directed at attracting candidates who are immediately available, and motivated to work and recognises not having the qualifications and/or experience should not be a barrier.

The TEMPO campaign has redefined what attracting the 'best employee' means at Fraser Coast Regional Council and is reflective of Council's culture and employee values: trust, respect, accountability, initiative, service and teamwork (TRAITS). The focus is attracting candidates who have the willingness to learn and demonstrate a TRAITS attitude.

Transforming Our Workforce Operations Making Working with Council Easy

TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL

Townsville City Council like most councils and business in the post-COVID world, faced difficulties in attracting skilled and experienced people to fill vacant positions. Delays with recruitment practice and processes also meant Council sometimes missed the best candidate due to the length of time the recruitment and onboarding process took.

Council's People and Culture team's e-Recruitment initiative was enacted to reduce the number of days taken to fill vacant roles. This team has introduced an e-Recruitment initiative that has reduced the average time taken to fill vacant roles from 78 to 43 days. The 35-day improvement returned up to 3,850 days of

activity back into the business, with every day of activity returned to the workforce supporting the delivery of Council services on time and on budget, and therefore benefiting the people of Townsville.

The e-Recruitment initiative uses technology, contemporary work practices, employee training and engaging processes. It ensures candidates are not only identified but also employed as quickly as possible.

As a testament to the success of the initiative, Council has found new employees from as far away as Western Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand.

VK4KSS Kairi State School Amateur Radio Club

TABLELANDS REGIONAL COUNCIL

'CQ, CQ, this is Victor Kilo Four Kilo Sierra Sierra, VK4KSS, over.'

This is the voice of students from the Kairi State School confidently operating their school amateur radio station. They don't know it yet, but this innovative programme is preparing them for rewarding careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and contributing to the resilience of the Tablelands community.

The project, conducted by a small rural school of about 100 students on the Atherton Tablelands, followed a similar project to fund 35 adults to obtain their foundation level amateur radio licence. Thirteen, year five and six students passed the Amateur Radio

Foundation Certificate of Proficiency to become some of Australia's youngest licensed operators.

A permanent school amateur radio station, donated by Tablelands Regional Council, has enabled the school to establish a School Amateur Radio Club, the only one of its kind in Australia. This asset enabled students to expand their horizons, build their confidence, harness their creativity and develop new skills.

Amateur radio operators have continued to provide emergency communications following disasters across Queensland and Australia and this programme promotes and encourages the sharing of responsibility for disaster communications. Resilient kids build resilient communities, creating a bright and resilient future for all.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT *Awards* FOR EXCELLENCE 2023

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.

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Cairns – Australia’s Green Capital

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Recognising the need for strong action on climate change, the Cairns Climate Change Strategy 2030 will build on the achievements and actions of previous strategies and will guide Council’s climate actions for the next decade. The new strategy will also support the community to progress towards Queensland’s emissions reductions target of 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.

Mayor Bob Manning said Cairns was particularly vulnerable to climate change’s potential impacts, and it was important that Council took the lead on action. “We all recognise that our natural environment is the region’s greatest asset, but it is under increasing pressure from climate change,” Cr Manning said.

Cairns Regional Council’s strong action on climate change is demonstrated by a 46% emissions reduction

and 2.8 megawatts of on-site solar already in operation, with a commitment to net zero emissions by 2030 and 100% renewable energy for its 80 largest facilities from 2024.

The tropical city’s position between World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics rainforest gives it a natural advantage when it comes to claiming the title of Australia’s green capital, and by integrating climate action, environmental stewardship and economic development, Cairns Regional Council is strengthening the linkages between people and planet to accelerate the regions transition to a low carbon, renewable energy and nature-based future.

Coconut Reduction Strategy

HINCHINBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

While coconut palms may reel in tourists and beachgoers with their promise of the laid-back lifestyle of the tropics and a romantic ambience, in some communities, these humble palms are at the centre of bitter debates. Coconut palms pose serious liability risks, are highly invasive, displace native vegetation and promote shoreline erosion.

Hinchinbrook Shire Council undertook a review of the current (and emerging) coconut palm situation as part of its financial and foreshore management planning process. As a result, Council adopted a strategy to reduce the ongoing maintenance costs and public liability associated with this introduced species.

With consultation open to the community and feedback taken into consideration, Council endorsed and implemented a coconut palm removal strategy.

This strategy has achieved positive financial and environmental sustainability outcomes for the Shire, reducing ongoing maintenance costs from \$120,000 per annum to approximately \$33,000 per annum. As Council progressively replaces removed coconut palms with native vegetation, habitat will be provided to assist in shoring up the coastal dunes along Hinchinbrook’s scenic foreshores to reduce evident and potential erosion at local beaches.

Development Workforce Strategy Plan

CHARTERS TOWERS REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Workforce Strategy Plan is a first by Charters Towers Regional Council and has been developed to articulate the organisation’s strategic response to the challenges and opportunities associated with the recruitment and retention of council employees.

A high-level and holistic review of Council’s current workforce informed the development of the plan, so as to enable Council to focus on the medium and long-term objectives while also providing a framework for dealing with immediate challenges in a consistent manner.

The aim of the plan is to support long-term workforce strategies in response to community priorities and the changing requirements of the local government sector. As such, it is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

The ongoing focus of the plan is to ensure that Council has the right people, right skills, doing the right jobs, at the right time. This will require strategies, actions and systems to attract, develop and support employees with achieving Council ambitions and objectives.

Council is regarded as the largest employer within the Charters Towers Region, employing over 200 people providing over 100 different functions and services.

Health Services Transaction

WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

This project is nominated in two categories. Please see the Community Shaping category for a project description.

Resilient Coast Strategic Plan 2019-2029 Implementation

DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL

Douglas Shire Council was the first local government in Queensland to complete and endorse a Coastal Hazard Adaption Strategy with Council's Resilient Coast Strategic Plan 2019-2029 developed to proactively manage and mitigate the impacts of coastal hazards to the Douglas community, environment, infrastructure, liveability and services.

Council undertook various methods of implementation including prevention, strategic planning, on-ground works, education and engagement. These methods focussed on dune protection and maintenance, community stewardship, knowledge sharing, monitoring, land use planning, disaster management and building resilience initiatives.

A combination of human, financial and natural resources have directly supported the local economy, social wellbeing, cultural heritage and the environment throughout the process, with coastal rehabilitation a huge part of the strategic plan.

The Douglas coastline is highly valued by locals and visitors to the area and is a key reason why people choose to live, work and visit the Shire. The project has resulted in the revegetation of 70,000 native plants and 92 hectares of weeds treated along the Douglas Shire coastline to date.

Smart Irrigation System

SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL

Sunshine Coast Council implemented a sustainability initiative to improve environmental, financial and resource sustainability of the region and the organisation by investing in a smart irrigation system. Already, this system has saved over 55 million litres of water through four years of operation, generated over \$481,000 in cost savings, ensured less time and resources are spent on routine inspections and improved presentation of community open spaces.

The Smart Irrigation Systems uses data sensors and past and future weather data to adjust watering as needed to ensure that water is used in the most efficient way possible, while also improving the overall health and

appearance of local green spaces. This means that plants receive the right amount of water, without waste or negative environmental impacts.

By implementing this innovative system, Sunshine Coast Council has taken a significant step towards achieving their sustainability goals and reducing their environmental footprint.

Smart Water Metering Program, Strategic Plan and Community Engagement

ISAAC REGIONAL COUNCIL

Isaac Regional Council is working hard to reduce the impact of limited availability of raw water within the region, with most townships either relying on bore water or water sourced from outside the region.

Isaac Regional Council has found success in reducing the total water consumption of the region while educating the community about being water wise through their innovative Smart Water Metering Program, Strategic Plan and Community Engagement.

Although many Queensland local governments have introduced, or are working towards, smart metering, the driving force which led to behaviour change for prolonged sustainability for Isaac Regional Council was not the initiative itself but the promotion and influence the programme instilled within the community.

Since its inception in 2016, this project has helped Isaac Regional Council and the broader community meet short

and long-term water saving goals, with increased water efficiency, reduced water wastage through undetected leaks, effective management of water restrictions and increased community knowledge of best practice water conservation measures.

A *Save Water Save Money* campaign, coupled with a broad education approach and mandated MiWater registrations for concealed leak remissions, gave residents the ability to track their water usage, recognise quickly if there was a leak and helped them control their consumption and costs.

As a small council of fewer than 25,000 people serving an area the size of Tasmania, the success of the Smart Water Metering Program, Strategic Plan and Community Engagement is a testament to innovative and out-of-the-box thinking.

Tuan Reserve Cultural Burn Program

SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL

Sunshine Coast Council's vision to be Australia's most sustainable region: *Healthy. Smart. Creative.* is demonstrated through its Tuan Reserve Cultural Burn Program. Now in its third year, the annual three-day programme is an important cultural learning event and pathway for fire and land management.

The 200 hectare Tuan Reserve is on Kabi Kabi Country and was acquired through Council's Environment Levy. Council worked with a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from Kabi Kabi and Jinibara Traditional Owners, Indigenous rangers from South East Queensland (including Butchulla, Bunya Bunya, Wurrinyah and Gidargil Traditional Owners), Firesticks

Alliance Indigenous Corporation, other fire practitioners and council staff.

The programme delivers on multiple levels of sustainability; environmental, cultural and economic and continues to heal the land and its people through an ongoing commitment to sustainability and reconciliation.

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.

The Gadens difference



- ✓ Proudly operating in Queensland for over 30 years with 25 partners and more than 280 staff, with offices in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and an associated office in Perth
- ✓ Experienced representing local government clients to manage priorities, minimise risk and achieve their objectives
- ✓ We are relationship orientated, committed to gender equity and driving our First Nations' initiatives. We have an extensive pro bono program and are passionate supporters of emerging and established artists.

OUR EXPERTISE

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
|
Mixed use and urban renewal issues |
Government owned and social infrastructure |
Water and waste infrastructure |
Parks and recreational areas |
|
Transportation |
Health facilities |
Energy and power networks |
Technology |
|
Prosecution and investigations |
Integrity and compliance |
Employment, industrial relations and WHS |
Litigation and debt recovery |

SUPPORTING



2022 Flood Response and Recovery

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

Despite more than 5,000 insurance claims, 6,000 tonnes of landfill, 101 road closures, 600 homes and 300 businesses being impacted, the Ipswich community is well on the road to recovery. 25 percent of environmental rehabilitation projects are complete and nearly 30 percent of asset recovery projects have been completed, and this has all been achieved since the devastating floods of February 2022.

The region's ability to bounce back stems not only from its acquired resilience owing to a long history of natural disasters, but also from the region's ability to coordinate response and recovery efforts as a team. Council employees, state government representatives and agencies, community organisations, volunteers and the Local Recovery and Resilience Group all focussed their combined efforts on supporting the community.

Council volunteers managed the evacuation centre coordinating community groups, charities and local businesses to provide shelter and facilities to more than 400 people at the peak of the floods. From the

community, more than 930 people registered through Volunteering Queensland to support the city clean-up with Council coordinating where to focus recovery efforts. The Australian Defence Force also committed more than 450 personnel to support the clean-up operations, again coordinated by Council.

Council has also been recognised by the Inspector General of Emergency Management (IGEM) for leading the state with the implementation of a new Australian Warning System, bringing consistency and clarity to the way warning messages are delivered to the community and to stakeholders.

Buderim Village Park

SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL

Over 10 years in the making, Sunshine Coast Council's Buderim Village Park project began in 2010 when Council purchased a significant, 3.4 hectare land parcel atop Buderim Mountain for the purpose of creating a community parkland. In 2016, Council purchased an adjacent 4.8 hectare land parcel, linking previously disconnected environmental areas to create a 17 hectare biodiversity nature corridor leading from the park.

Community engagement and stakeholder partnership management took place throughout the life of the project and have been key elements in shaping and defining the long-term vision and successful outcome for the park.

Completed in late 2022, the mountain-top park area now includes an expansive village green, event and social gathering spaces, seating nooks, a playground and meandering pathways and revegetation, all boasting spectacular, elevated views to the coast. The adjacent biodiversity nature corridor has created a significant environmental legacy.

Council and community teamwork has enabled Buderim Village Park to deliver on the park's vision of being – A place of spectacle, nature, tranquillity, peace and activity. A parkland of varied landscapes and leisure experiences to be enjoyed by everyone.

Customer Designed Systems Solutions to enhance workforce management capability and functionality

SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL

Scenic Rim Regional Council has significantly improved internal service delivery and enhanced user experience for every employee through the implementation of the human resources and payroll solution within Council's enterprise resource planning software and the creation of online workflows across a broad range of functions.

The project required cross-departmental collaboration for process mapping, process improvement, user acceptance testing and change management. With just two dedicated project officers, the project intent was to 'tap into expertise' from human resources, payroll, work health and safety and information services and technology as the various stages of the project were completed.

Mayor Christensen said to implement a much-needed integrated workforce management system, Council's project team sought expertise from the people who had most to gain – its employees. With a very small team in place to deliver the project at minimal cost, Council's new human resource and payroll system was designed by the customer for the customer. This resulted in improved reliability of information, reduced risk and both time and cost savings for Council.

"These efficiency gains can now be passed on to ratepayers in the form of enhanced services to our community," said Cr Christensen.

Customer Request Effectiveness Review Project

SOUTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL

South Burnett Regional Council is leading the way in customer engagement with the exciting creation and implementation of the innovative portal request platform 'Council Connect'.

A review of Council's customer service processes saw unprecedented engagement and collaboration by staff from all departments including external stakeholders working together to deliver the corporate vision of improved internal controls, service delivery and enhancement of connectivity with the community.

Staff across the organisation were engaged and challenged to fully review and rethink current business

processes and assist in designing a user-friendly request system which would streamline processes, find efficiencies in service delivery, be user friendly and encourage accountability.

'Council Connect' enables customers to submit and track requests online, 24 hours per day while receiving acknowledgements, updates and resolutions via their preferred method of contact. Weblinks, forms and pertinent information concerning the specific request enquiry are available to the customer throughout the request lodgement process.

Delegations Review

CITY OF LOGAN

The City of Logan advanced a project to update its suite of delegations and authorisations and to review how legislative powers are exercised, all in order to improve Council's governance practices and allow for the efficient operation of the organisation.

The project team undertaking the review comprised technical staff (experienced in managing delegations), a project manager, a change manager and a learning and development expert. The project team undertook regular liaison with key branch stakeholders to ensure the delegations were accurate and role relevant, and they concurrently tested and refined the software solution through to implementation.

The introduction of a software solution to automate data on legislative powers into a single place provided ease of access for staff to enable each officer to quickly understand what powers have been delegated to their position. Improved accessibility of delegations and authorisations will improve the understanding of staff and improve the culture of quality decision-making.

A holistic communications strategy was rolled out which comprised regular updates and information, e-learning modules, software demonstration sessions and leader-led briefing sessions.

Excellence in Workers' Compensation Management

TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL

Townsville City Council is a self-insured workers' compensation entity. In November 2022, the Workers' Compensation Regulator issued Council a new Self-Insurer licence for the maximum term of four years. Council's previous licence was also for four years.

In issuing the renewal, the Regulator highlighted Council as a high-performing self-insurer. This acknowledges Council, and the People and Culture Workers' Compensation team, as performing better than industry and scheme averages in every area of workers' compensation claims management.

Close and collegiate working teams, focussed on mutual outcomes, allowed the Workers' Compensation team

to balance employee welfare outcomes adequately and appropriately with Council's duty of care and risk management responsibilities.

Without strong and collaborative working relationships, teamwork and a focus on duty of care and best practice, this careful balance of outcomes could not be achieved and could lead to unsatisfactory treatment, response and results for injured employees.

Human Rights Implementation Project

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

This project is nominated in two categories. Please see the Innovation category for a project description.

Libraries as a Place of Refuge

MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

As the devastating weather in 2022 lashed Moreton Bay Regional Council's communities with phenomenal storms and flooding, Council's Library Services stood up and provided places of refuge as alternative or additional safe havens for the community to shelter. As libraries were already open and active, they were able to offer support before evacuation centres were opened.

Council's ten libraries provided safe and dry venues, shared their books, games, toys and technology as well as food, drinks, towels and blankets. Libraries provided a friendly face, an ear and links to vital services, enabling people to charge devices or access Wi-Fi and computers so that stranded community members could contact family, friends, neighbours and services.

This initiative established libraries and Council as community carers, providing enhanced service delivery at a critical time and demonstrating the role of libraries as trusted community pillars with a can-do attitude.

Community response and support for this library initiative was overwhelming – Council's website and Facebook page was full of positive responses reflecting the value the community placed on this service. The community loved the kindness and community spirit demonstrated by libraries being a place of refuge and welcoming everyone in a time of great need.

Moreton Bay's Community Engagement Team

MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Two years ago, Moreton Bay Regional Council created a new Community Engagement Team to deliver on their promise to improve consultation, transparency and accountability. The new team went hard, achieving in two years what some teams take ten years to do.

By working strategically and collaboratively, the team has built relationships and processes to embed meaningful engagement outcomes in Council decision-making. Not just a survey – really meaningful, best practice, award-winning engagement.

Council's Community Engagement Team worked with internal council departments, key external stakeholders, communities and residents to strategically improve

community engagement and Council's reputation. Four key pillars of this strategy drove the approach: community understanding, building trust, one council one voice and delivering on our promise.

The Community Engagement Team has achieved and embedded its commitment to improving engagement, transparency and accountability creating a new era of partnership between Council and its communities, improving the outcomes of decision-making for everyone.

Whitsunday Disaster Coordination Centre Team

WHITSUNDAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Whitsunday Disaster Coordination Centre Team successfully responded to the severe weather event 'Nimbusus' on 15 January 2023. The team worked together to coordinate and staff the coordination centre and two places of refuge in Bowen and Proserpine, responding to the flash floods that inundated the area with record rainfall.

As a result of the rainfall, 52 local and state roads were closed, leaving both residents and travellers stranded on the Bruce Highway for up to three days. Despite the challenges, the team ensured that residents and visitors were aware of the situation and potential impacts, releasing timely and appropriate information to the public to keep them informed and safe.

Working in a disaster coordination centre can be stressful and emotionally taxing. Team members showed support by always checking in on each other and demonstrated empathy and compassion for those affected by the disaster.

The successful response of the team is a testament to the importance of teamwork and effective communication during emergencies. The team's contributions have made a significant impact on the community and their safety.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT *Awards* FOR EXCELLENCE 2023

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.



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Care for Council Campaign

WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Western Downs Regional Council is putting workplace wellbeing first with the innovative 'Care for Council' Campaign driving positive behavioural change within the workforce.

This multifaceted, internal communications campaign centres around the key areas of People, Property and Place, with the aim of creating a positive safety and wellbeing culture across the organisation; aligning with council values. With the programme now incorporating community wellbeing events, the campaign has expanded to include Care for Council – *Communities*.

The campaign features a holistic approach, blending the social, emotional, mental, physical and financial

wellbeing of the workforce while also addressing the big picture of driving the culture and values of Council.

The programme was introduced in October 2022 and has already delivered a range of initiatives, with the most recent being a community event with media personality Gus Worland, the founder of Gotcha4Life, delivering an engaging presentation on building mentally fit communities.

While in its infancy the 'Care for Council' campaign has already yielded fantastic results with increased conversation, participation and cohesiveness reported across the region.

Inspiring Leaders

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

Ipswich City Council has taken a bold new approach to supporting the wellbeing and professional development of its leaders by designing an 18-month programme called Inspiring Leaders.

More than 100 employees have engaged in the in-house designed and facilitated course, developed to provide leaders with the confidence and capabilities to improve overall employee experience, wellbeing and performance.

Leaders undertake six-week challenges based around the topics of understanding leadership, quality conversations, performance planning, developing others, change leadership and safety leadership.

The course encourages leaders to apply the learnings from each topic to real-life situations they encounter

and present their learnings and experiences to their own leaders, course facilitators and other participants, showing how they applied the learnings and the outcomes achieved.

With the first course cohorts finishing this year, the programme is already yielding promising results with metrics extracted from the annual employee experience survey indicating strong positive shifts in employee satisfaction and the feeling of being supported since the programme commenced.

As an internally designed and facilitated course, held over an extended time frame, Council is ensuring the long-term sustainability of the programme and ability to ensure learning is cycled back into the programme for continuous improvement.

iThrive

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

'Healthy bodies, healthy minds, provide the tools and take the time' is Ipswich City Council's holistic new approach to health and wellbeing through its innovative new programme called iThrive.

Having studied a suite of existing health and wellbeing programmes in the market and identified the common gaps limiting their success, Council developed its own programme that went beyond simply providing information. iThrive focuses on skill development and behaviour modification along with strategies to ensure long term change can be achieved.

Delivered through individual assessment, face-to-face engagement and support as well as progress monitoring, the iThrive programme encompasses three health areas: physical activity; nutrition and weight management; and mental health.

With more than 83% of participants reporting improved general health following the programme and up to 80% of participants reporting improved mental health, iThrive is making a very real difference to the daily lives of Council employees and their families.

Wellbeing through Adventure

REDLAND CITY COUNCIL

Redland City Council has demonstrated commitment to one of its organisational values – safety at heart – by putting their biggest asset – their people – first so everyone is healthier, happier and more productive. This was achieved through the successful development and delivery of a 12-month wellbeing programme for all Council employees. The Wellbeing through Adventure programme was designed with the worker in mind, to help them focus on their health and wellbeing at work and in their personal life.

Participants embarked on a fun adventure via 11, monthly destinations, each with its own wellbeing related theme, information and activities. A 'choose your own adventure' approach maximised access by allowing Council staff to participate in the destinations that resonated with them. Whether that was a group challenge, yoga class, undertaking health screening or

joining a book club, employees gained access to a wide range of resources and support to help them achieve their wellness goals.

The results speak for themselves with Wellbeing through Adventure generating more than 400 interactions on Council's intranet and 200 views for each Yammer post. Several social events were attended by between 10 and 300 employees.

The programme appears to have sparked a longer-lasting cultural shift, with a surge in the uptake of other health and wellbeing programmes offered by Council, including the Employee Assistance Programme (up from 2% to 10%) and wellbeing and career coaching (increasing by 100%).

Wellbeing Wednesday

HINCHINBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

Hinchinbrook Shire Council is striving for greatness and committed to letting go of the shame and stigma associated with mental illness. During 2021 and 2022, Queensland Health offered a Localised Mental Health Grant Initiative that predominantly focussed on employee training and programmes, and funding of resources to bolster employee and community resilience programmes.

Council took a dual-pronged approach to distributing the funding and engaged the community post-pandemic, through a very successful, family-oriented event to stimulate economic growth and create social connectedness after lockdowns. Council's second stage was to address identified risk factors within the workforce regarding suicide prevention and mental health awareness specifically.

To launch into the community and the workforce, Council took all these elements and joined them

together in an inaugural market style day known as Wellbeing Wednesday. This was just one event that will be sustained through ongoing commitment to Wellbeing Wednesday team-based events at a local level.

Wellbeing Wednesday was also the official launch of 15, newly accredited Mental Health First Aiders at Council, presentations from keynote speakers, a major collaboration with local community groups and support networks providing exhibitions and resources, and an opportunity for downtime to network about psychological health, safety and wellbeing at work.

Hinchinbrook Shire Council and their local community are taking a step together towards mental health for a better world and a better tomorrow.

Workplace Wellbeing

QUILPIE SHIRE COUNCIL

Quilpie is renowned as one of the friendliest towns in Outback Queensland and, four years after putting the spotlight on Health and Wellbeing, Quilpie Shire Council now boasts being one of the happiest workplaces - with survey results revealing that 98% of employees are happy with their 'safe and healthy' workplace.

This workplace happiness has translated to low staff turnover and ongoing low levels of absenteeism, despite COVID.

The health and wellbeing programmes offer staff subsidised gym memberships, annual flu vaccinations, advice regarding superannuation, salary packaging and insurance, and an annual staff Wellbeing Week with free skin, hearing, blood pressure and blood glucose checks, healthy cooking workshops, the Seven Habits of Healthy People course and mental health driven laughter clinics.

'Feel Good Friday' with Trademutt shirts and limited edition Beyond Blue aerials for vehicles, have been introduced to support workplace mental health.

Initiatives such as the 10,000 steps programme have been undertaken along with annual charity fundraising resulting in Council donating \$189,796.23 - with \$50,871.41 donated to local charities. Quilpie's community has also benefitted through access to specialist appointments as well as being invited to events like the Wellbeing Week free dinner and comedy night.

Workplace Wellness

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

Brisbane City Council's wellness programmes deliver targeted health and wellbeing activities to work areas across all departments, supporting their wellness, safety and physical and mental health needs.

Employees are offered a range of in-house wellness services which can be accessed virtually or face-to-face, at a variety of work locations and at times that suit them. There have been more than 36,000 visits to wellness centres and depot gyms in the last 12 months and more than 2,000 wellness service appointments attended per year.

Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner said maintaining wellbeing practices for employees influences motivation, resulting in a more productive workplace and improved workplace culture. "Council will continue to deliver

support for our employees that encourages healthy lifestyles and creates supportive work environments", Cr Schrinner said.

As a result of implementing these workplace wellness strategies, Brisbane City Council has seen improvements in leadership capability, employee engagement and team cohesiveness, which positively contribute to delivering the future workforce to achieve the Brisbane Vision.

Zest4Life

MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Many individuals experience the impacts of stress, conflict, illness and other challenges in professional and personal lives. Being empowered to identify these challenges and manage them appropriately is paramount.

Mackay Regional Council embarked on a goal to empower all employees to be more aware and have more control over their health and wellbeing inside and outside the workplace and, as a result, in January 2022, the Zest4Life total health and wellbeing online platform was provided to all employees.

The Zest4Life platform focuses on the five main pillars of physical, financial, emotional, career and social health. The platform provides information and resources including articles, podcasts, videos, interactive learning programmes, on-demand workouts, recipes, social

walks, wellbeing pulse checks, workplace competitions with opportunities to win prizes, booking pages for flu vaccinations and ordering of merchandise.

Zest4Life is a support system and safe space for people to embrace the journey of total health and wellbeing. Since launching 16 months ago, more than 70% of employees are actively using the platform. Zest has proved to be an engaging initiative that positively influences Mackay Regional Council's workplace culture.

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Thank You

LGMA would like to thank all councils who have nominated projects, teams or individuals in the 2023 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 in Brisbane at the Gala event on Thursday 25 May 2023 from 3.30pm - 7.30pm.

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