

2015 Leadership Excellence Awards

Compendium of Finalists

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About This Guide

As the aim of the LG Professionals SA Leadership Excellence Awards is to both celebrate and promote excellence in local government, this compendium has been designed to give you an overview of all the finalists. Should you wish to get in touch and learn more about their projects and initiatives please contact our office on 8291 7990.

About LG Professionals SA and the Leadership Excellence Awards

LG Professionals SA is a not-for-profit member based association representing professionals working in local government in South Australia. Our mission is to create the environment and development opportunities that guarantee our members thrive as professionals working in local government in South Australia and to promote excellence in local government management. The Leadership Excellence Awards program is an annual program which recognises outstanding achievement and innovation in local government.

Overview of the Judging Process

The independent judging panel consisted of: John Coombe, former Local Government CEO, Jane Gascoigne, Grants Commissioner, Ray Pincombe, former Local Government CEO. In addition, the following people joined the panel for the Award which they sponsor: Adan Kennedy from AME Recruitment, Lisa Tiburea from the LGA, Justin Lang from Zero Waste SA; Adrian Rose from Solo Resource Recovery, Debbie Sterrey from Statewide Super, Alex Hart from Office of Local Government; Jeanette Walters from Office for the Ageing; Julia Grant from the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.

All submissions were written. All nominations were considered by the judging panel and a shortlist of 27 entries across the eleven categories was arrived at. All shortlisted candidates then had a phone interview with the judges, addressing a series of questions provided to them in advance. The panel then met again to make the final decision in each category. The winner of the Management Challenge was determined through a national scoring system and the process in South Australia was managed by Chief Facilitator, Terry Bruun.

Further Information

For further information about this publication, finalists and winners, the Leadership Excellence Awards Program or sponsorship opportunities, contact Taryn Sexton on executive@lgprofessionalsa.org.au or 0400 429 003.

Outstanding Contribution to Local Government

Thanks to LG Professionals SA
Winner

Mark Withers, CEO, City of Charles Sturt

Mark is a highly respected local government executive who seeks to provide the absolute best to his community in all of its services and interactions. He recognises and is a keen student of politics at all levels and holds dearly the relationship between the political body, the Mayor, and the CEO and his staff. His career has covered all areas of council management including community services, field operations areas and over the last 15 years he has held the position of CEO at both Unley and Charles Sturt where he has been both popular and highly respected by his staff.

His mayor says Mark's most valuable quality as an exceptional leader is his ability to create collaboration amongst a diverse group of people. Residents and business people, councillors, visitors, staff, governments and their representatives have all experienced his ability to understand their hopes and dreams. He uses language that evokes what's meaningful to others. More often than not, those who have had dealings with him know that he is open to their thoughts and ideas, however, in disagreeing with them, they walk away knowing that Mark's wisdom has been crafted through real experiences with people and situations over many years in this sector. He has shaped his vision of the future for the City of Charles Sturt based on his accumulation of wisdom. Mark has that rare gift of persuasion and clarity when it comes to complicated issues – never taking a personal slant on issues, but bringing to the conversation wisdom combined with common sense.

Leadership in Financial Management

Thanks to LGFA Financial Services

Winner

Adelaide Hills Council Service Improvement Team

The Adelaide Hills Council's Service Improvement Program, is innovative in the way it pulls together multiple elements into one service improvement 'brand'. The framework is used to both forecast and measure investment, once-off and recurrent savings and productivity gains. Reporting on the benefits realised, helps the council demonstrate that it is committed to continuous improvement and providing value for money services to the community.

City of Tea Tree Gully Management Change Journey

In February 2012, following a significant increase in council's operating expenditure over the previous five years, the finance team commenced a process to reform the City of Tea Tree Gully's finances from a path of debt, to a path of financial sustainability. To date, with the finance team's leadership Tea Tree Gully has reduced its cost base by a staggering 15% over a 3 year period. Council's financial reform was underpinned by a strong long term financial plan.

Excellence in Environmental Leadership and Sustainability

Thanks to Zero Waste SA

Winner

Eastern Region Alliance Stormwater Harvesting and Reuse, Stage 1 & 2 Steering Group

The project steering group has oversight for Stage 1 & 2 of the Waterproofing the East – Eastern Region Alliance Stormwater Harvesting and Reuse Project. When delivered, this innovative project will capture, store and distribute recycled urban stormwater within a region that has traditionally been considered unfavorable for stormwater harvesting, due to the steep terrain, lack of open space and the underlying fractured rock aquifers. The outcome for the five participating councils, as well as the wider community, will be a reliable, economical and environmentally sustainable secondary source of water.

City of Onkaparinga Urban Creek Recovery Team Project

The nature conservation team at the City of Onkaparinga is in its second year of the five-year Urban Creek Recovery Project which is improving the ecological health of waterways across the council region. Activities are focussing on the protection of native vegetation, control of exotic weeds and habitat creation by planting more than 50,000 native seedlings to help re-introduce species back into these creeks and stabilise some areas.

City of Holdfast Bay Waste Education Team

Since 2012, the City of Holdfast Bay has been conducting on the ground community recycling behaviour change programs incorporating bin inspections, bin tagging, data compilation, prizes and publicity. Jetty Road was chosen as the pilot area due to the area's high contamination rate. The campaign was extremely successful and by the end of the campaign, the number of recycling bins with contamination present had reduced by 60%.

Excellence in Risk Management

Thanks to LGRS

Winner

City of Onkaparinga Cliff Stability Long Term Action Plan

Spanning 31km, the pristine coastline of the City of Onkaparinga is a nationally-recognised premier tourist destination. Approximately 12km are highly erodible and unstable cliffs which are easily accessible. Council is committed to protecting, preserving and improving this exceptional natural area, including managing the risks associated with this long stretch of coastline. Our Cliff Stability Long Term Action Plan aims to prioritise the implementation of risk controls, focusing on high to very high risk sites and any immediate risks to public safety.

City of Salisbury Volunteer Work Health & Safety Framework Project Team

The Volunteer Workforce Health and Safety Training Framework was developed following the City of Salisbury identifying the need for a systematic approach to health and safety training for volunteers. Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012, for the first time, volunteers were considered 'workers' in the eyes of the legislation. This has required considerable re-work of the council's current health & safety processes which previously had a focus on paid workers.

City of Burnside Environmental Risk Management Team

City of Burnside has taken a whole-of-business approach to risk management. All three divisions work closely together to ensure a strategic approach has been undertaken to identifying, documenting and mitigating risk, and that risk management is core to business. Environmental risk as represented by trees and vegetation is one area of particular work. Council's approach is underpinned by a geospatial asset mapper, dubbed 'BAM!' (Burnside Asset Mapper) which enabled up-to-date risk rating and works-scheduling for each tree. This enabled depot operations to have a pictorial to-scale map of risk across the city and of their response to the risk.

Leadership in Community Services

Thanks to Statewide Super

Winner

Renmark Paringa RiverLife: Get into it! Team

The Renmark Paringa Council has a long and committed history to improving the health and wellbeing of the residents of the district and the region as a whole. In December 2011, council embarked on a social inclusion program entitled 'RiverLife: Get into it', focused on physical activity and healthy eating. The program has been a resounding success with over 1,600 unique registered participants. 50% of the participants were aged 40+, the group at the highest risk of chronic, lifestyle-related diseases.

Whyalla Wetlands Team

In 2014, council developed a masterplan for the Whyalla Wetlands site, while simultaneously developing a five year remedial works program to address post-construction erosion issues and implementing a re-vegetation and habitat enhancement program. Both projects involved working closely with the community to develop the plans and ensure community needs were met. Upon completion council has now embarked on beautification and recreational amenity.

Campbelltown Council's Social Development Team

As part of Campbelltown Council's Social Plan consultation, during 2013/14, one of the most consistently raised themes was that people wished they knew their neighbours better. Council used three strategies to encourage this to happen; 'In your street' which focuses on Sunday tea parties; in 'Street Play' where the street is closed to traffic; and 'Neighbourhood BBQ's' involving utilising a local park as a place for people to gather and meet over a free healthy BBQ.

Community Partnerships and Collaboration

Thanks to Office of Local Government

Winner

The One Card Local Government Implementation Team

In 2009, the Libraries Board of South Australia funded a business case to explore the possibility of developing a single, state-wide integrated Library Management System (LMS). The business case encouraged collaboration and shared decision-making across the entire State-wide public library network. The outcome; the One-Card project (so called because of its capacity to allow library borrowers to use a single library card in any South Australian library) was rolled out. While participation was optional, every council in the state has chosen to participate.

Highly Commended

Mid Murray Family Connections

Recent census data demonstrates the Mid Murray Council area has the second highest proportion of children in South Australia who are developmentally vulnerable. In response, the Family Connections Network was formed, which has led to an increase in the level of awareness and communication around developmental needs in the Mid Murray community. Agencies and organisations servicing the district have been encouraged to initiate various activities to improve people's understanding and awareness, and effectively target developmental needs of children.

City of Onkaparinga's Local Industry and Employment Participation Alliance

The Southern Adelaide Region has faced significant economic challenges over the last decade with closures and downturns in its traditional industry based sectors, resulting in over 4000 blue-collar job losses between 2004 and 2008. To address this, the Cities of Marion and Onkaparinga collaborated to establish the Local Industry and Employment Participation (LIEP) Alliance. This acts as a primary 'entry point' for local businesses and job seekers to be involved in major private and public sector projects in Southern Adelaide.

City of Charles Sturt Employment Works Project Team

The Employment Works Project in the City of Charles Sturt, works collaboratively across relevant council business units, to identify opportunities for local unemployed people (of all ages) to develop 'employability skills' primarily through establishing live training sites. Property management & maintenance have identified 31 potential live training sites (painting work); with 10 live painting sites delivered per year, providing 100 participants (ten participants per site) with accredited training (theory and practical experience). Cost saving to council has been estimated at \$5K per site/project, which is a projected saving to council of \$50K per year for three years.

Excellence in Water Security

Thanks to Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources

Winner

City of Holdfast Bay Water Plan Team

While the drought of 2006 to 2010 brought significant change to local government with respect to the way open spaces were managed, it was the marked short term impact on residents and local amenity which has led to the City of Holdfast Bay's Water Plan.

The plan looks to waterproof council from future projections of climate change by utilising the sources of water (mains, stormwater and waste water) available within the region to provide a sustainable and integrated source of supply for irrigation for council's open spaces, while also ensuring other tangible benefits such as improved amenity and water quality improvements, prior to the waters discharge into the gulf.

Innovative Management Initiatives - Metropolitan Councils

Thanks to Solo Resource Recovery

Winner

City of Burnside Executive Rotation

As the result of a request from the elected body of council for a succession plan for the CEO, the three general managers undertook a rotation of roles over the 2014 calendar year. Each rotation was for four months, in order for each GM to gain in-depth experience in the role and to ensure that the business of council continued uninterrupted. The resulting better relationships - tighter teams - and understandings have led to better, more integrated decision making across the executive and the three divisions.

City of Salisbury Organisational Development Unit

The City of Salisbury's annual employee and volunteer (worker) recognition program commenced in 2007. Workers are recognised for displaying leadership at all levels of the organisation. The nomination is by peers, based on organisational values and behaviours. Worker excellence is celebrated at an all staff event with every nomination recognised and celebrated in its own right. The Program's intent is to facilitate a practice of recognition, to improve the culture at the City of Salisbury.

Innovative Management Initiatives- Rural Councils

Thanks to Office of Local Government

Winner

Alexandrina Council Work Health & Safety and Procurement Intranet Teams

Following the introduction of a corporate intranet based on sharepoint, opportunities were identified to optimise this technology for key corporate processes – work, health and safety and procurement. In the lead up to an audit by Workcover, the WHS team prepared a ‘one stop shop’ intranet site covering various requirements of the legislation. The site gave easy access to controlled versions of all endorsed policies, procedures and risk assessments. It also included a series of interactive flow charts to guide staff step-by-step through procurement process for all types of procurement.

Highly Commended

Alexandrina Council Food Surveillance Training, Induction and Mentoring Program

A review of council's environmental health team resulted in the development of a training, mentoring and induction program for an environmental health paraprofessional to transition to undertaking food surveillance activities. The program is multifaceted in that it includes a formal study component and completion of a Certificate IV in Food Surveillance and focuses on experiential learning for the paraprofessional under the guidance of the senior environmental health officer. This provides skills development for both the paraprofessional and the senior EHO.

Excellence in Age Friendly Communities

Thanks to Seniors Card

Winner

Noarlunga Library Memory Hub Team

Through a unique partnership with the Southern Services Reform Group (SSRG) and Alzheimer's Australia SA (AASA), the City of Onkaparinga libraries have established a Memory Hub, an innovative initiative providing access to dementia and memory loss support and education. This initiative is the first of its kind in Australia and has already shown to be a valuable way of assisting and engaging people affected by dementia and broadly raising community awareness.

City of Playford Community Inclusion Team

The City of Playford is providing excellence in age friendly communities through the development and implementation of its healthy ageing strategy. With a motto of 'living life to the fullest' council works alongside older residents to provide an inclusive community. The focus is on supporting positive health and wellbeing outcomes through encouraging and enabling active, valued civic and community participation and an approach to service delivery that is highly innovative, pushing boundaries and challenging stereotypes of ageing.

Excellence in Sustainable Infrastructure and Asset Management

Thanks to Tonkin Consulting

Winner

City of Prospect Asset Implementation Team

In 2012 the City of Prospect embarked on a project to establish the lowest 'whole of life' cost for road surface renewal planning and road surface asset accounting. This helped refocus council's approach to treatment selection and demonstrated the cost effectiveness of using spray seals. The project has brought together the performance information of over 20 years of history to enable plans, funding scenarios and information for works scheduling, to drive a sustainable approach to road network management for improved asset management and therefore improved financial outlay of council, for the overall benefit of the community.

City of Whyalla Airport Upgrade Project Team

In 2013, the Whyalla City Council embarked on a major redevelopment of the Whyalla Airport, with the project construction commencing in January 2014. The project involved expanding the existing terminal to increase capacity by 100%, significant redevelopment of amenities and facilities; and extensive landscaping works surrounding the terminal. The risk paid off for the council with significantly increased income in the present financial year and the commencement of a second airline carrier (QantasLink) from April 2015.

Emerging Leader of the Year

Winner

Alexander Poulton, City of Whyalla

Alex has been working for the City of Whyalla for the past year. During this time he has successfully negotiated a second airline to Whyalla, a 2.5 million dollar turnaround in the waste and resource recovery centre and delivery of a new kerbside collection contract. From his initial employment, he has shown adaptability, initiative, foresight and strategic thinking as well as day to day practicality.

Daniel Baker, City of Mitcham

Daniel joined the City of Mitcham in October 2012 as Principal Engineer in the Project Delivery Team. Within a year he was promoted to Manager Engineering where he is heavily involved in a number of high priority council-wide strategic programs. Daniel has played a significant role in the development of the organisations ongoing Culture and Leadership Brands.

Elena Pereira, City of Holdfast Bay

The City of Holdfast Bay employed Elena Pereira in 2011, as the Community Engagement and Information Officer. Shortly after, she became the Digital Communications and Engagement Coordinator. Since taking on this role her achievements have included implementing the Digital Media Strategy, the Jetty Road Mainstreet Social Media Campaign, managed an online community of over 24,000 people and increased the city's digital media following, by 107%.

2015 Management Challenge

Sponsored by Civica

Winner

City of Salisbury 'CoSMosis'

Second Place

City of Onkaparinga 'Onkaparinga Coast Crew'

Third Place

City of Burnside 'Burnside Ignite'

Teams

Alexandrina Council 'Alexandrina River Crew'

Adelaide City Council 'Adelaide 175'

City of Charles Sturt 'Best in the West'

City of Charles Sturt 'Captain's Crusaders'

The City of Holdfast Bay 'Bay Scorchers'

City of Marion 'Geronimo'

City of Mitcham 'Community Insight'

City of Playford 'Playford Pieces'

City of Prospect 'Prospect Pioneers'

City of Tea Tree Gully 'Knights of the Gully'

City of Unley 'The Unley Collective'

Town of Walkerville 'Three.52'