

# Awards

FOR EXCELLENCE 2013

THE LGMA QLD AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE -  
RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN QUEENSLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



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Local Government Managers Australia Queensland Inc (LGMA Queensland) is the professional body representing the interests of local government officers across the state.



LGMA Queensland's mission is to lead, advocate for and support Queensland local government managers: providing relevant and quality professional development opportunities; and actively contributing to the advancement of local government in Queensland.

LGMA Queensland is a membership-based organisation comprised of officers from all technical areas of local government and all areas of the state. Programmes offered by LGMA Queensland are characterised by their practicality and real-life applicability, drawing heavily on the experience of exceptional local government officers from all areas of council activity.

The LGMA Queensland Awards for Excellence are one of the many initiatives developed to support the sector in Queensland.

## 2013 LGMA QUEENSLAND AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the 2013 LGMA Queensland Awards for Excellence publication; a celebration of another successful year of outstanding local government achievement.

I was honoured to host the 2013 LGMA Queensland Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner in Brisbane on 18 April. It was a night of celebration and camaraderie,

attracting over 160 guests to the stunning grounds of Hillstone St Lucia.

Established in 2011 to enhance recognition of exceptional Queensland local government projects and staff, the Awards for Excellence have gone from strength to strength. The LGMA Queensland Board is immensely proud of the impact the concept has had on councils across Queensland and of the overwhelming support we have received since inception.

Each year, the diversity of award nominations received from councils increases, as does the level of attendance to the annual Gala Dinner, announcing and celebrating the winners across the six award categories. The steady growth of the Awards for Excellence supports our view that more should be done to recognise the outstanding achievements of Queensland's local governments and we are confident this growth will continue.

The Awards for Excellence categories are designed to recognise the positive changes councils are making to secure both their organisation's and their community's environmental, social and economic future in a rapidly changing environment. The categories focus on the demonstration of leadership for the sector and community. They seek to identify initiatives which contribute to the profession of local government or have application beyond the initiating council. By not limiting the categories to particular areas of local government activity, the Awards for Excellence deliver a true reflection of the diversity, ingenuity and capability of Queensland councils, regardless of their location or the nature of their community.

Building communities and enhancing effectiveness were clear themes in this year's nominations. From backyard IT infrastructure developments to prehistoric visitor attractions, aspirational project models to inspirational service teams, the 2013 winners and finalists exemplified the incredible pool of talent local government produces. Local government's continued focus on community outcomes also featured heavily in each nomination, with cost-effective, customer-focussed solutions the foundation for some of the most impressive initiatives in the sector.

The high calibre nominations received this year were evaluated by the judging panel of Peter Stewart, John Brady and Alison Bray; all highly regarded members of the LGMA Queensland community and the Queensland local government sector. The judges volunteered their time and expertise to determine

the winners and finalists and LGMA Queensland greatly appreciates their efforts.

Of course, the Award's continued success would not be possible without the support of our valued Award Partners. Our sincere thanks go to Local Buy, Morrison Low, Technology One, Active Assurance and the Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience for their support of this year's award categories.

In addition to the announcement of the six category winners and finalists, the Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner also features the announcement of the state winner of the LGMA Australasian Management Challenge. Council teams from across Queensland competed in a series of challenges in March. The winning team will now progress to the national finals in June, competing against fellow state finalists in a bid to become the 2013 Australasian Management Challenge winner.

With the 2013 Awards for Excellence winners revealed and celebrated, the team at LGMA Queensland will soon turn their efforts towards the 2014 Awards. The Awards are an important local government initiative that has successfully lifted the profile of our councils' achievements to the level they deserve. It is our honour to bring the Awards to you each year and provide Queensland councils the opportunity to showcase the projects and people that enhance the wellbeing of council and communities across our state.

On behalf of LGMA Queensland, I hope you enjoy our special 2013 LGMA Queensland Awards for Excellence publication.

**John Oberhardt**  
President

# WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARD



The Women in Local Government Award seeks to recognise a project that has directly contributed to enhancing opportunities for women and responds to the on-going issues facing women seeking careers in local government.

This category was developed in response to issues identified during 2010: The Year of Women in Local Government. Forums, discussions and reports conducted during the year highlighted the need to actively support the career progression of female local government employees from middle management into senior management roles. A number of councils responded to the findings by implementing programmes and strategies to improve the advancement of female officers in their organisations.

Through this award, Queensland local government has the opportunity to promote those positive steps being taken to enhance awareness of the career options available to women in the sector across all council activities and at all levels of responsibility.

Past recipients of the Women in Local Government Award have included the establishment of a Women in Local Government Sub-Committee to expand training opportunities and increase female representation; and a Women's Development Programme aimed at fostering the personal and career development of female employees.

This year, the winning project was epitomised by an individual - Central Highlands Regional Council's, Anusha Jayawardana. Central Highlands Regional Council recognised that a lack of role models was one of the critical factors preventing women from aspiring to senior management roles. Through their support and development of Anusha, they have created such a role model.

Council identified Sri Lankan born, Anusha, in 2007 through an interview process for a graduate engineer position. Anusha was appointed to this role and Central Highlands has since been nurturing Anusha through the completion of her Engineering qualification and registration. During this time, Anusha has been supported in her progression through the council to a management role. She is now the Manager Compliance and Planning and a member of the Management Team.

While promoted on her own merits and in recognition of the excellent work she has done, the visibility that has been afforded to Anusha has ensured that her good work is not only benefiting her work area but has wider implications for the future workforce of council.

Anusha is a role model for women within the community, for women in local government and for women working in traditionally male roles. Her work has allowed her to develop a profile in the community and across council and to have a seat at the management team table – a position which is highly visible and encourages other women to aspire to senior roles.

Anusha was present on the night to accept her award from category sponsor Local Buy's Executive Client Manager, Debra Colledge.

Congratulations to Anusha and to Central Highlands Regional Council.



Anusha Jayawardana,  
Central Highlands Regional Council



Anusha Jayawardana, John Oberhardt (LGMA Queensland),  
Debra Colledge (Local Buy)

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# EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

The Teamwork Award was introduced as an award category in 2012 in recognition of the fact that exceptional teamwork can take a project from good to great. The Award celebrates a team that demonstrates a responsive and inspirational operational model which meets the needs of the organisation and provides positive outcomes for the community.

To be successful in this category, nominees must clearly display a sense of unity, open communication and effective resourcing to achieve enhanced service delivery.

This year, the team identified by our judges as the leading example in Teamwork was South Burnett Regional Council's Executive Support Team.

Nominated by CEO, Ken McLoughlin, the team, consisting of Administration officers Amanda Litfin, Bronwyn Barry, Kerrie Le Du and Lynelle Patterson, provides support services to the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and Manager Governance. The team was on hand to receive their award from category sponsor, Technology One's Customer Development Manager, Noel Briggs.

The self-managed team were recognised for their intuitiveness, flexibility and adaptability, particularly in the wake of challenging events such as the recent floods. The team's unified approach was particularly demonstrated through the establishment of the *Mayors Red Earth South Burnett Flood Appeal*; a fundraising initiative supporting the region's flood-affected rural landholders. The team were instrumental in the appeal's delivery, planning a range of fundraising activities with live radio broadcasts in affected areas of the community and an accompanying advertising campaign.

Amanda, Bronwyn, Kerrie and Lynelle have developed a high level of trust and a responsive attitude which has reduced

overlap between their areas of responsibility, created support mechanisms to allow excess workloads to be spread where required and ensured the smooth flow of information. The team's approach to their work has resulted in a more efficient Executive Office, increased customer satisfaction and a positive working environment.

Judges also recognised a finalist in this category - Lockyer Valley Regional Council's Green Army Natural Environment Recovery Project.

Following the decimation of Lockyer Valley's waterways in the floods of January 2011, the region faced a monumental clean-up task. It was critical that this be undertaken as a matter of urgency in order to ensure ecosystems and habitats were not permanently destroyed and that local aquatic and terrestrial wildlife was not lost to the area.

To address this, council sought to find cost effective and time efficient means of tackling the task. The answer was the creation of Green Army work crews. After obtaining funding from the Queensland Government, Lockyer Valley Regional Council created a 60-strong Green Army. The Green Army, comprising a team of long-term unemployed residents, was taught basic bush skills and learnt how to traverse often inhospitable areas to carry out the crucial waterways clean-up.

The Army's ability to work as a team, follow leadership, learn together and support each other was critical as the crew walked all of the region's 102 kilometres of affected waterways to undertake restoration and re-vegetation works. The works included the removal of over 1,750 tyres, 5000 metres of fencing, treatment and removal of over 52 square kilometres of weeds and replanting of 5000 trees.

Congratulations South Burnett and Lockyer Valley Regional Councils.

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John Oberhardt with Teamwork winners Bronwyn Barry, Kerrie Le Du and Amanda Litfin (South Burnett Regional Council) and Noel Briggs (Technology One)



Teamwork finalist Lockyer Valley Regional Council's Ian Flint and Leo Jenson

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# EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

In the category of Innovation, councils must develop a solution to a problem or issue that has resulted in an improvement in organisational performance or productivity, customer service or the provision of services to the community.

The Excellence in Innovation category attracts a high volume of nominations each year, reflecting the importance the sector places on the creation of new technologies and processes in the interest of improved operational performance.

This year's winning entry was Etheridge Shire Council for the Portable Satellite Communications Unit (PSCU). The Unit's inventor, Council IT Officer, Terry Walsh, was present on the night to accept the award from Innovation category sponsor representative Stephen Bunting, Director at Morrison Low.

Council created the PSCU to address the significant connectivity issues experienced at remote worksites across its 39,000 square kilometre area. With no affordable products available on the market capable of providing the manoeuvrability and sustainability required to resolve their connectivity issues, Terry Walsh constructed the Unit in his Georgetown backyard.

The Unit connects Etheridge Shire Council's remote worksites to the organisation's network via satellite and can be transported on the back of a Ute or a box trailer, making it easy to move from one remote site to the next.

The Unit's addition to council's IT infrastructure has resulted in a number of improvements across council including productivity, performance and service delivery. It has saved dollars, energy, time and reduced frustration for staff.

Two finalists were also recognised in this category – Logan City Council's Water Alliance Project and North Burnett Regional Council's ROC UP Concert.

Recognising the post-amalgamation challenges of increased population and the associated pressure on water and wastewater networks across the area, Logan City Council undertook a thorough investigation of options and identified

that a programme alliance would offer the best means of delivering the city's high-priority water and wastewater projects. The Water Alliance model was selected over conventional contract models as it could be used as a flexible, in-house vehicle for securing additional planning and capital works delivery support for council. The planning-led approach to the Alliance is a leading example in project innovation as it seeks to unlock value at every stage of the infrastructure delivery process.

The results of the model are clear, with costs savings including \$63m for the Slacks Creek to Loganholme wastewater network upgrade, a lost time injury frequency rate of zero, 92% stakeholder satisfaction with community engagement and project delivery and over 4,000 trees saved in construction corridors.

North Burnett Regional Council was recognised for their ROC UP Concert, a community event held in October 2012 to unite the region after the 2010/11 floods.

Community members of North Burnett and the surrounding regions descended upon the RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre in Eidsvold on 13 October 2012 for the concert. It attracted more than 1,800 people and marked the first opportunity for the community to formally recognise, acknowledge and thank the volunteers and emergency services personnel who supported the community during the floods.

While the event itself was a success in bringing the community together to celebrate its resilience, the follow-up activity conducted by North Burnett Regional Council made the event stand out in this category. Council's post-event activities included: media campaigns; on-going community consultation; the development and distribution of a multimedia CD covering the event; and the distribution of the Disaster Cookbook featuring recipes contributed by members of the community.

Congratulations to Etheridge Shire Council and the Excellence in Innovation Award finalists.



Innovation finalist  
Rajindar Singh  
(Logan City Council)



Innovation finalist Trisha Hansen, Pascal  
Kellenberg, Mark Pitt, Andrew Jackson  
(North Burnett Regional Council)



Innovation winners Terry Walsh and Cr Will Attwood (Etheridge Shire  
Council) with John Oberhardt and Stephen Bunting (Morrison Low)

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CMA Australasian  
Management Challenge



# EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY

To be considered for the Sustainability Award, nominees must demonstrate long-term solutions that have contributed to the sustainability of the council, an area or a project. The nomination must also demonstrate responsiveness to community, workplace or industry needs.

Our winner this year was Townsville City Council's CBD Development Incentives Program and was presented to Phillipa Maddocks by Tim Rose, CEO of award category sponsor, Local Buy.

Serving a rapidly expanding population approaching 200,000, Townsville's CBD is the natural heart of the region. However, urban decline had set in and diminished the role and function of the CBD. The oft-seen issues of inner city decline (including retail exodus, high vacancy rates, inactive spaces and public nuisance) were evident.

Visionary leadership and timely planning by Townsville City Council highlighted that public investment and private development was necessary to increase urban density and breathe life back into the city centre. The Townsville CBD Development Incentives Program offers a range of facilitative, financial and regulatory incentives and has stimulated private sector development – turning the CBD into an exemplar of vibrant, mixed-use urban life that reduces the need to expand the city's urban boundary.

Through the adoption of environmentally sustainable initiatives such as Ergon Energy's CBD District Cooling Master Plan, the Program is set to reduce Townsville's

inner city energy consumption, greenhouse emissions and customers' energy bills.

The CBD's medium to long term economic future is supported by CBD Development Incentives which offer concessions on fees and charges to support investment, including waived infrastructure charges.

For the individual, enhanced work-life balance is projected due to reduced commute time, alternative lower cost property options and cheaper public infrastructure, all made possible through a compact city model to support the growing population.

A higher population density in Townsville's city centre will also provide social sustainability, with the increase of social infrastructure including a greater choice of schools, doctors, public transport, retail and dining options.

The collaborative approach within council itself and between council and the development community has been crucial to the programme's success. By coordinating stakeholder activity and ensuring alignment with the CBD Master Plan's community and urban design goals for Townsville's future, the project has already sparked planning, building activity and refurbishments in the city centre across retail, office, recreational and residential uses.

Congratulations Townsville City Council.



Phillipa Maddocks (Townsville City Council), with John Oberhardt and Tim Rose (Local Buy)



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# ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARD

The Above and Beyond Award category is the only Award for Excellence recognising an individual. The Award seeks to recognise a council officer's demonstrated commitment and effort beyond their stated duties to provide exemplary service to their council or community.

The Award's universal appeal and inclusive selection criteria has given councils of varying size and location the opportunity to promote staff achievements. Past winners have included officers from Central Highlands Regional Council and Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council.

This year, Narelle Poole from Lockyer Valley Regional Council was the Above and Beyond Award recipient. Council's Community Development Manager and Award nominator Leo Jensen accepted the award on Narelle's behalf from award category sponsor representative Conrad Martens, Principal at Active Assurance.

A senior member of council's Community Development Team, Narelle was recognised for her display of strong leadership, compassion and excellent customer service in her role as Strengthening Grantham Project Coordinator.

The Strengthening Grantham Project provided flood-affected Lockyer Valley residents the opportunity to exchange their flood-ravaged properties for land on higher ground. As part of the project, Narelle provided high-level strategic advice in the areas of project management, planning and stakeholder management in order to deliver community focused outcomes for council. But beyond that, Narelle took a personal approach to supporting 85 families impacted by the floods; shepherding them through the process until she was able to see them settled in their new homes.

Narelle's calm and collaborative style led to the creation of a team that worked together effectively and compassionately for the benefit of the community and for the council as a whole. Narelle's managers reported that her approach inspired

others around her to work harder, show more empathy and focus on the successes rather than the impediments. She has had a positive impact across council, not just in her own area.

Narelle is regarded by her peers as a selfless individual with a priority to help others achieve their goals. She is considered a caring, resourceful person who values professionalism, trust and mutual respect.

South Burnett Regional Council's Human Resource Manager, Greg Lewis, was selected as a finalist in this category. Greg was nominated by South Burnett Regional Council CEO, Ken McLoughlin, in recognition of the exemplary manner in which he carries out his duties and for the time he has dedicated to the community on a voluntary basis.

In his role as HR manager, Greg constantly seeks to add value both to the role and the wider council. His efforts have directly contributed to cost savings for council and have created a sound organisational structure which will hold the organisation in good stead into the future. Greg has gone to great lengths to ensure that South Burnett Regional Council is a place where people enjoy going to work and that, as HR Manager, he is seen as approachable and available to listen to staff concerns and support officers and managers in their roles.

In addition to his tireless efforts within council, Greg volunteers his expertise to not-for-profit organisations in the area. The most striking example of Greg's community commitment is his recent collaboration with the region's largest employer during a downsizing exercise. Greg worked with the company to ensure every opportunity was given to those affected by the downsizing to gain alternative employment. Retaining these residents in gainful employment was of long-term significance to the region and Greg's willing assistance outside the requirements of his role was instrumental in this process.

Congratulations Narelle and Greg.



Leo Jensen (Lockyer Valley Regional Council accepting on behalf of winner Narelle Poole) with John Oberhardt and Conrad Martens (Active Assurance)



Above and Beyond finalist Greg Lewis (South Burnett Regional Council) with John Oberhardt

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# EXCELLENCE IN COLLABORATION

The use of collaboration in the successful delivery of services is rapidly evolving as councils partner with other organisations and community groups to provide services that are appropriately resourced, financed and implemented in the most efficient way possible.

The Excellence in Collaboration Award celebrates those councils who demonstrate genuine and effective collaboration with partners, resulting in better outcomes for their council and their community.

This year, it was a collaboration between three North Queensland Councils that achieved victory in this category – Townsville City, Cairns Regional and Mackay Regional Councils' CTM Water Alliance. Members of the CTM Water Alliance received their award from category sponsor Bill Gilmore, Director Finance and Funding at the Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience.

Recognising a need to improve efficiencies and cost savings for North Queensland water service delivery, the CTM Water Alliance was established in 2009 to share knowledge and resources across the three collaborating councils. Together, the councils developed a range of financial, environmental and technological strategies that benefit the region's water businesses and their communities.

The CTM Water Alliance project has demonstrated leadership in both water resource management and cross-council collaboration. It has achieved efficiencies and cost savings through the shared use of resources, improved communication and the development of stronger networks.

Through the alliance, member councils have been able to drive and influence initiatives that have application throughout Queensland, including the code of environmental compliance for sewerage pumping stations, best practice pricing and financial sustainability models.

Two councils were also recognised as finalists in the Excellence in Collaboration category this year – City of Gold Coast and Quilpie Shire Council.



John Oberhardt with Stephen Fernando (Mackay Regional Council) and Ray Burton (Townsville City Council) of the CTM Water Alliance and Bill Gilmore (Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience)

Recognising that transport was a critical impediment to becoming recognised as a world class city, the City of Gold Coast embarked on the development of the Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031.

The team undertaking this work knew that, for it to be successful, they would have to collaborate with key stakeholders, the community, industry experts and businesses.

In order to connect with the community and better understand their issues, council created the Kombi Konversation van. The van travelled to 32 locations in the area, conducting innovative community discussion and engaging with residents and visitors. The conversations attracted over 2,500 people and resulted in almost 1,000 written feedback responses. Through this collaboration, council has been able to create the Gold Coast City Transport Strategy 2031 which will put it on a path to create a robust and far-sighted strategy to secure the city's future.

Quilpie Shire Council was also recognised as a finalist this year for their Palaeontology in the Outback initiative.

In collaboration with the Outback Gondwana Foundation, the Queensland Museum, the state government, the mining sector and other far south western councils, Quilpie Shire Council has undertaken the Palaeontology in the Outback project to increase awareness and knowledge of the internationally significant paleontological resources of the region.

The initiative includes the development of a Natural History Museum and the Natural Sciences Loop. Bringing public and private sector entities and the scientific community together has been challenging, with differing priorities amongst the diverse interests hindering agreement. However, through consistent, pragmatic and cooperative approaches, the development of a world class research centre in outback Queensland now looks like a reality.

Congratulations to Townsville City, Cairns Regional and Mackay Regional Councils' CTM Water Alliance and also to the category finalists.



Collaboration finalist, City of Gold Coast's Alton Twine

# 2013 LGMA MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE - QUEENSLAND

The announcement of the Queensland LGMA Australasian Management Challenge winner also takes place at the Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner. A highly contested annual event, the Management Challenge pits council against council, carrying out a variety of tasks under tight deadlines to demonstrate teamwork, productivity and creativity. The challenge builds an understanding of issues facing local government, develops skills (particularly in project management), breaks down silos across council by expanding understanding and creates teams.

The 2013 Queensland LGMA Management Challenge was held at Shafston International College in Brisbane and featured challenges which included:

- A Pre-Challenge project on collaboration exploring – 'How can your council develop connections, networks and leaders who will work together towards a shared vision and joint action for the local area?'
- A visual presentation identifying why local government is important
- A report on community funding priorities
- Training for recently elected members

Tasks require the teams to brainstorm, report, design and role-play; with some tasks also necessitating collaboration

across teams in order to meet their objectives. Each team was supervised by observers and guided by mentors who play an important role in both the preparation of teams and in the post-event debriefing which is so critical to capturing the learnings from the event.

Representative teams from across the state were present at the Gala Dinner to hear the announcement of the Queensland winner of the 2013 LGMA Australasian Management Challenge, who will now go on to compete against interstate and New Zealand counterparts at the Australasian finals.

This year's Queensland Challenge winner was Townsville City Council's, Tokens Tribe. Proud members of the team collected their award from Management Challenge Facilitator, Peter Crockett. The Tokens Tribe will now go on to battle it out in the Australasian finals in Melbourne in June.

This year's runners up were Logan City Council's, Our Logan Rules in second place and Toowoomba Regional Council's, The Ring Leaders and Redland City Council's, Redland Wildcats, who shared third place.

Congratulations to Townsville City Council's, Tokens Tribe and to all of this year's Management Challenge Teams.

We wish the Tokens Tribe every success for the Australasian finals in June.



John Oberhardt and Challenge Facilitator, Peter Crockett, with Townsville City Council's Tokens Tribe



John Oberhardt and Challenge Facilitator, Peter Crockett, with Logan City Council's Our Logan Rules



John Oberhardt and Challenge Facilitator, Peter Crockett, with Redland City Council's Redland Wildcats



John Oberhardt and Challenge Facilitator, Peter Crockett, with Toowoomba Regional Council's The Ring Leaders



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