

# Awards

FOR EXCELLENCE 2014

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



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Local Government Managers Australia Queensland (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.

# 2014 LGMA QUEENSLAND AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the 2014 Local Government Managers Australia Queensland Awards for Excellence publication; the fourth year celebrating the achievement of local government in Queensland.

With this being my first year as President of LGMA Queensland, I was truly honoured to be part of the awards ceremony and hand over

the trophies to the winners. The enthusiasm generated by the groups and individuals waiting to hear if they would be taking home one of these fantastic awards was electric. The buzz and support that could be felt from colleagues and partners for the winners and finalists alike made this a great event.

The Local Government Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner is a special part of the local government calendar as it is a chance to come together to reflect on and celebrate the innovative, creative and otherwise outstanding work we have done in our organisations over the past year.

Business as usual is no longer an option for local government. Like many industries in the twenty first century, we need to look at other ways of delivering service to the customers of local government. Our communities are scrutinising our services more closely than ever and watching to see what you, their local government, will deliver; how effectively, at what cost and in what timeframe. Financial, resource and environmental constraints demand that we seek new ways of meeting their needs and, as I travel around the state, I see daily examples of councils doing just this.

Many professional development services and programmes offered by LGMA Queensland complement the work being done by councils to challenge current thinking and look for alternative ways of delivering service. As part of that endeavour, these Awards seek to acknowledge the successes and the delivery of exceptional services. Importantly, they also seek to share the ideas and solutions across the sector.

This year, we had a record number of people attending the Awards' Dinner and a great cross-section of nominees for each of the different award categories. It was clear from the nominations that Queensland councils shine in times of emergency, as many finalists nominated were recognised for their responses to natural disasters and community emergencies. Congratulations to all the nominees and a special mention to the category winners, well done and well deserved. The various projects presented in the nominations are testament to the dedication and innovation shown by council staff and teams working in the sector.

I know that there are many other projects and activities that Queensland councils are undertaking which were not nominated but which warrant recognition. So, I encourage you to submit a nomination next year, irrespective of how big

or small you think the outcome is – it may, in fact, represent outstanding achievement and receive recognition on the Awards' night in 2015.

Also announced on the night were the winners of the LGMA Australasian Management Challenge. Big congratulations to the winning team from Cairns Regional Council. A total of sixteen teams competed in the Queensland leg of the 2014 Challenge and a further 80 plus teams across the country. Every team member that participated in the Challenge should be so proud of themselves and their teams. Irrespective of whether your team won or not, you are encouraged to continue to focus on your learnings; as an individual and as part of the team. How will you translate the learnings about team process, relationships, interactions and tasks into your workplace? Can you present your lessons to others in the council? This shared learning is the true aim of the Challenge.

We wish the Cairns Regional Council team every success as they represent the state at the national challenge in Melbourne in June.

While the elected members are responsible for determining strategic intent for councils, it is our responsibility as senior executives and officers to ensure that this intent is put into action and outcomes are achieved for the communities that we serve. What the 2014 Awards for Excellence demonstrate is that local government in Queensland is diligent in its efforts to seek more innovative, more collaborative and more sustainable means of operationalising those strategic visions. Clearly, local government in this state is in the hands of dedicated individuals and teams, committed to excellent customer service and delivering on needs of their communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Crawley".

**Mark Crawley**  
President

# EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY

The Excellence in Sustainability Award seeks to recognise projects which have demonstrated long-term solutions that enhance the sustainability of the council, an area or a project.

This year's winning entry for the Award for Excellence in Sustainability was Gladstone Regional Council's Housing Affordability Response.

Resource communities across Queensland are susceptible to real estate market volatility during times when major resource projects are ramping up or shutting down. This can result in major fluctuations in rental and sale prices for residential property and have wide ranging impacts on the community.

Recognising the longer-term issues arising from this volatility, particularly to the sustainability of the region and to council's workforce, Gladstone Regional Council adopted an unusual response. Council brokered an agreement with the new LNG entrants to the marketplace whereby private company funds were pooled to deliver a council-administered rental subsidy programme for critical workers (such as emergency services personnel). Council also initiated a programme to identify affordable housing providers who would become custodian of almost \$20 million in LNG funds which they would use to establish a local affordable housing solution.

Through the Gladstone Affordable Housing Response, Gladstone Regional Council has stepped into a breach, showing strong community leadership and creating a sustainable programme for residents. Since its commencement, 441 households have received funding assistance through the programme, with a further 327 receiving budget counselling support. Approval has also been granted for three, mixed-density residential developments.

The award was presented to Cale Dendle by Deb Colledge from the award category sponsor, Local Buy.

## **Congratulations Gladstone Regional Council.**



Sustainability winner Cale Dendle (Gladstone Regional Council), Mark Crawley and Deb Colledge (Local Buy)



## Road and Civil Construction - Cost Benefits Analysis

Local Buy is establishing a Register of Pre-Qualified Suppliers (Contract BUS 242-1013) for the supply of Road and Civil Construction and Associated Maintenance Works within Queensland.

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- Use quotes for specific jobs
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- Easier evaluation process

### Cost reduction

- Cheaper for contractors – some have stated \$15,000-20,000 per quote
- Reduced Council staff time
- Overall time of engagement reduced

### Analysis of Tendering Timeline

Activity	Public Tender	Local Buy Panel Arrangement	Total savings
Specifications	8 weeks	8 weeks	
Tender Documents	10 weeks	2 weeks	<b>8 weeks saved</b>
Tender period	4 weeks	2-3 weeks	<b>1 week saved</b>
Evaluation	6 weeks	1-2 weeks	<b>4 weeks saved</b>
Contract finalisation	4 weeks	1 week	<b>3 weeks saved</b>
Approvals	6 weeks	6 weeks	
<b>Total tender time</b>	<b>38 weeks</b>	<b>22 weeks</b>	<b>16 weeks saved</b>

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# EXCELLENCE IN COLLABORATION

In the current environment of high community expectations, shrinking budgets and rapid technological change, Queensland councils are continually seeking means to collaborate with partner councils, other tiers of government, businesses or community groups. The end result sought is the delivery of services that have been appropriately resourced, financed and implemented in the most efficient way possible, leveraging all the expertise available both within council and the wider community.

In assessing the Collaboration Award nominations, Judges looked for demonstration of genuine and effective collaboration with partners, resulting in better outcomes for, not only the council, but also their community.

In 2014, Logan City Council's City of Choice Initiative was named the winner of the Excellence in Collaboration Award.

In early January 2013, street violence triggered by underlying social issues in the Woodridge area created unrest and generated significant negative media interest. Council responded immediately, working with the Premier and other stakeholders to deliver a three-day summit just 19 days later. In an unprecedented collaborative effort between many areas of council, all levels of government and the community, a series of 9 focus groups were held and a range of initiatives identified to address the city's challenges. The collaboration included 136 staff from across Logan City Council who donated their time and professional skills in order to deliver the summit. Over 850 people attended the summit which obtained strong support from Federal government MPs, State Government MPs and officers and business leaders.

The results have been innumerable and have included the contribution of significant funding from a wide range of sources developed through the collaborative process. Most importantly, these collaborative relationships are on-going and will continue to provide support for the continuation of the initiatives. The success of the Logan: City of Choice Initiative has demonstrated strong, dynamic and inclusive collaboration for the city of Logan.

Logan City Council manager, Jane Frawley, accepted the award from the sponsor of this category, Bronwyn Blagoev from the Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience.

Congratulations to Logan City Council for winning the Award for Excellence in Collaboration.

Three additional finalists were also recognised in the category: Redland City Council's Disaster Management Plans; Logan City Council's Mayor's Reading in Schools Program and Cassowary Coast Regional Council's Reconstructing Cardwell Project.

When the destructive force of ex-cyclone Oswald hit the Redlands in January 2013, it empowered the creation of a state of the art cooperative process for dealing with potential emergencies. A collaboration between Redland City Council's Disaster Planning and Operations Unit, emergency and essential services and key community agencies was

born. This strong collaborative effort was recognised as a finalist; Judges noting that the success of the effort was tested during the Christmas fires on North Stradbroke Island in 2013 and was proven to be highly effective.

Logan City Council received its second recognition in this category, named as a finalist for the collaborative efforts which led to a literacy initiative in the community. The Logan area has 215 nationalities and ethnic groups represented in its community, with 26.1% of residents born overseas. Pockets of disadvantage in this young community are exacerbated by low literacy levels. The Mayor's Reading in Schools Program seeks to increase literacy through an innovative collaboration between council and the community. Accessing volunteers from the community, close to 200 children were read to by the volunteers over the past year. The majority were from families with English as a second language. Due to its success, this collaborative effort is ongoing.

Cassowary Coast Regional Council's nomination was born in the aftermath of tropical cyclone Yasi. In responding to the natural disaster, council and the Department of Transport and Main Roads joined forces to develop the Cardwell Vision.

The result of innovative community engagement, the Vision provided a blue-print for the Cardwell redevelopment and a reference point for day-to-day project decisions. The project successfully integrated community development and infrastructure reconstruction, assisting in social, environmental and economic recovery. A Governance Framework and Memorandum of Understanding formalised the collaboration between Transport and Main Roads and Cassowary Coast Regional Council, but it was the genuine willingness to work cooperatively at officer level which made the difference and ensured the effective delivery without overlap or underlap and with a high level of consistency.

## **Congratulations to the three finalists.**



Collaboration winners Cr Phil Pidgeon and Jane Frawley (Logan City Council) with Mark Crawley and Bronwyn Blagoev (DLGCRR)



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# EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

Recognising that Queensland councils are increasingly required to develop innovative approaches to the challenges facing communities, the Award for Excellence in Innovation has been an important category in the awards' programme. The category requires nominees to clearly demonstrate the creation of an innovative solution to a problem or issue, resulting in the improvement of organisational performance or productivity, customer service or the provision of services to the community.

With the Excellence in Innovation Award traditionally being the most highly contested of the categories, 2014 proved no different and the calibre of entries highlighted the true ingenuity that Queensland councils apply to resolving issues facing their organisations and communities.

In 2014, the winning nomination was Bundaberg Regional Council's Incremental Flood Gauge Mapping Initiative.

Two major flood events have brought significant suffering to the Bundaberg region in the past four years. In assessing the experience of the community during these events, Bundaberg Regional Council identified that, while the information provided by the Bureau of Meteorology relating to flood heights is valuable to emergency services and disaster response officers, it is difficult for residents to translate to their own circumstances. This causes anxiety and also increases the load on various emergency service providers, as residents constantly call seeking information that makes sense.

Bundaberg Regional Council sought to resolve this issue and provide the community with the information it needed to make decisions and to plan for evacuation. The innovative, Incremental Flood Gauge Mapping Initiative was developed, allowing residents to access the information they need to make informed decisions by going online to see where the water is predicted to rise to in their location. The maps are accessible from mobile devices and, most importantly, provide a clear link between the Bureau of Meteorology's predicted flood heights and the expected inundation in specific areas of the region.

A representative from Bundaberg Regional Council stated that "The innovative application took the form of a web based GIS application that was conceived, bench tested and successfully deployed within very demanding timescales. With state of the art technologies, the Bundaberg community has been provided with a solution which delivers key information relating to property based estimated flood inundation via the internet."

Bundaberg Regional Council CEO, Peter Byrne and Project Architect, Steve Bowden were on hand to accept the award from Innovation category sponsor, Stephen Bunting of Morrison Low.

Three other finalists were also recognised by the Judges in the Innovation category: Logan City Council's Outreach Immunisation Service, Noosa Shire Council's Corporate Systems Implementation and City of Gold Coast's Project COBI.

Logan City Council's Outreach Immunisation Service was a finalist in the Innovation category for its approach to increasing vaccination rates.

Newly established, Noosa Shire Council was recognised for its Queensland-first approach to the provision of IT infrastructure and services.

City of Gold Coast created a new digital interface for customers, allowing a range of functions to be undertaken online and for residents to view their rate account balances or set up a payment plan.

Congratulations to Bundaberg Regional Council, Logan City Council, Noosa Shire Council and the City of Gold Coast for embracing innovation.



Innovation winner Peter Byrne and Steve Bowden (Bundaberg Regional Council), Mark Crawley and Stephen Bunting (Morrison Low)



Mark Crawley with Innovation finalist, Brett de Chastel (Noosa Shire Council)



Innovation finalist, Cr Phil Pidgeon (Logan City Council)

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#### **Sydney**

Suite 401, Level 4  
54–58 Foveaux St  
Surry Hills 2010

+61 2 9211 2991

#### **Brisbane**

Level 5, Toowong Tower  
9 Sherwood Rd  
Toowong 4066

+61 7 3870 0069

#### **Perth**

PO Box 6393  
East Perth 6892

+61 8 9202 1359

#### **Auckland**

Level 1, 8 Lion Place  
Newmarket  
Auckland 1149

+64 9 523 0122

[mail@morrisonlow.com](mailto:mail@morrisonlow.com)  
[www.morrisonlow.com](http://www.morrisonlow.com)

  
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# ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARD

The Above and Beyond Award category is the only Award for Excellence which recognises an individual. The Award seeks to celebrate a council officer's commitment and effort beyond their stated duties in providing exemplary service to their council or community.

The universal appeal and inclusive nature of the selection criteria have given councils of varying size and location the opportunity to promote staff achievement through the Awards. Previous winners have included officers from Lockyer Valley, Central Highlands Regional Council and Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council.

In 2014, Banana Shire Council employee, Greg Curtis, received top honours in the Above and Beyond Award category.

In this busy world, it is easy to get stuck on tasks, completing one and moving on to the next without taking time to consider whether the tasks are the right ones or if there is a better way. Greg Curtis avoided that trap by taking a step away from the strict confines of his role to consider the overall fleet service and management approach of council.

He quickly recognised that the practice of buying new cars and turning them over after a number of years was expensive and unsustainable. In seeking an alternative, he devised a new approach which council adopted. As a result, the fleet is managed differently, with late model vehicles purchased at

auction and turned over more frequently to maximise return on investment. Added to this, he introduced a system to better manage servicing and modifications and provide a comprehensive analysis of vehicle performance.

Still not satisfied, Greg went further, taking council down a new path through the purchase of a workshop complex with state-of-the-art equipment. This is leased to Queensland Transport and has allowed council and trucking companies to have their vehicles inspected by QT locally, rather than having to travel out of the region. Through Greg's efforts, Banana Shire Council has also developed a local auction centre so that vehicles can be auctioned out of Biloela. These auctions draw in large numbers of people and businesses from surrounding areas and have assisted the local economy – especially food and fuel outlets, accommodation suppliers and rental businesses.

Greg's efforts above and beyond the strict requirements of his role have had a significant and sustainable positive financial impact on council and for the community.

Greg received his award from category sponsor, Conrad Martens of Active Assurance.

Congratulations Greg.



Mark Crawley with Above and Beyond winner Greg Curtis (Banana Shire Council) with Conrad Martens (Active Assurance)

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# EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK

The newest of the award categories, Excellence in Teamwork celebrates a team whose efforts have ensured that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Nominees must demonstrate this through the team's effective use of resources, strong collaboration, mutual understanding and good communication.

This year, Redland City Council's Communication, Engagement and Tourism Group was identified by the Judges as the team that best represented the values of this Award.

Led by Tracey Walker, the group swiftly implemented a response to the North Stradbroke Island bushfire over the 2013 Christmas period. This response was built on a strong team focus which had been developed over many months prior. It was reliant on, not only the close teamwork of its individual officers, but their relationship with council's partners in emergency services and essential services. The coordinated response to the fires involved the QFS, Redland City Council fire crews, Queensland Parks and Wildlife crews, two fixed-wing aircraft, three water bombing helicopters and a reconnaissance helicopter, the disaster coordination centre, the incident control centre and the local community.

The team was able to disseminate messages quickly and effectively using social media streams, amongst other methods, and, in so doing, empowered the community to take a role in further dissemination of information. Importantly, their process empowered the community to provide information back to those involved in fighting the fires. The tweets and status updates from residents were monitored by officers

around the clock and became the eyes and ears of the emergency workers, allowing them to better focus their efforts. The result of these efforts...no loss of life or homes.

The solid team approach used in facing this dangerous event showed the value of establishing and maintaining cross-organisational teams that can be recruited in managing unpredicted events.

Representatives from the group were in attendance to receive their award from the category sponsor, Technology One's Customer Development Manager, Noel Briggs.

Tablelands Regional Council was also a finalist in this category.

Having been through the process of amalgamation, in 2013, Tablelands Regional Council was faced with the requirement to de-amalgamate. With high levels of public scrutiny, the task was challenging from start to finish. But, with a "get in and do attitude", a transfer committee was established, which included Tablelands Regional Council CEO, Ian Church, Mareeba Transfer Manager, Rod Ferguson, Project Manager, Brett de Chastel and staff from council. This committee developed a series of guiding principles which outlined the objectives of the process – most importantly, how they would work as a team and ensure the best results for staff and community alike. Through the strong teamwork, the team were able to meet the 1 January deadline for creating two separate councils.

**Congratulations Redland City Council and Tablelands Regional Council.**



Teamwork winners Matt Murray, Nick Clarke and Tracey Walker (Redland City Council) with Mark Crawley and Noel Briggs (Technology One)

# 2014 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 series of diverse 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) and links areas across council by expanding understanding and creates teams.

The 2014 Queensland LGMA Management Challenge was held at Mount Cotton Training Centre in Brisbane and featured challenges which included:

- A pre-Challenge video exploring productive communities as relevant to their own local area and council;
- A strategic speed dating challenge where teams had a limited time to explore specified issues with the other competitors;
- A debate around the issue of local government reform;
- A facilitated discussion on policy-driven objectives as relates to the national local government agenda.

Each team was guided by a mentor who provided advice and support in the preparation and debriefing phases of the challenge. On the day, a number of appointed observers monitored the progress of teams, looking at how they approached tasks, how they allocated work, how they worked as a team to harness strengths and to capture the input of all members and how they coped with the stress of short timeframes. Task outputs, such as reports, posters, presentations and videos, were assessed by single assessor and a moderation activity was undertaken to ensure consistency. All teams also received feedback on their performance which is critical to the professional development the Challenge offers.

The winner of the Queensland leg of the Challenge will now go on to compete against interstate and New Zealand counterparts in the Australasian finals in Melbourne in June 2014.

This year's Queensland Challenge winner was Cairns Regional Council with their team Bob's Builders. Excited members of the team collected their award from Management Challenge Facilitator, Peter Crockett.

Runners up were Toowoomba Regional Council's, Synergy Effect, in second place and Mackay Regional Council's, Village People Mackay, who took third place.

Congratulations to all of the teams who competed this year and we look forward to seeing you all again next year.

**We wish Bob's Builders every success for the Australasian finals.**



Mark Crawley with Challenge winner Cairns Regional Council's 'Bob's Builders' and Challenge Facilitator, Peter Crockett



Mark Crawley with Toowoomba Regional Council's 'Synergy Effect' and Challenge Facilitator, Peter Crockett



Mark Crawley with Mackay Regional Council's 'Village People Mackay' and Challenge Facilitator, Peter Crockett



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Level 7 Quay Central | 95 North Quay, Brisbane Qld 4000 Australia  
T 07 3174 5006 | F 07 3012 7862 | E [admin@lgmaqld.org.au](mailto:admin@lgmaqld.org.au) | W [www.lgmaqld.org.au](http://www.lgmaqld.org.au) | ABN 97 968 931 841