

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK AWARDS 2023

WINNING PROJECT
CASE STUDIES

**ONE VOICE
FOR COUNCILS**



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RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards

Excellence in Communication

Category Winner

Division A

Council Name

Central Darling Shire Council

Project Name

Printed Resident Newsletters

Population

1,829



Central Darling Shire Council

We're going ahead - Advancing our Shire

Message from the ADMINISTRATOR - Bob Stewart

As 2023 draws to a close Council is required to finalise its Annual Audit and Annual Report and submit them to the Office of Local Government and make them available to the public. Staff have been busy working towards delivery to meet the deadlines by the end of November.

At the October Council Meeting the review of our ward boundaries was undertaken to ensure compliance with the Local Government Act in preparation for the September 2024 Local Government elections. Details are set out in this newsletter.

The General Manager and I have again met with the Minister for Local Government to ensure that adequate future funding is available to the incoming Council to deliver services to its community and, whilst the Minister understands Central Darling's needs, he must work through the machinery of government and treasury processes.

Good news we received is advice that Council has been allocated an additional \$6.1m on top of last year's allocation of \$4.3m under the Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund and works must be completed by 2227.

Opal Miners Way road sealing works

Approximately 10 kilometres of Opal Miners Way has been sealed. The sealing work began at around 45 kilometres away from Wilcannia towards White Cliffs.

This stunning mural project underway at White Cliffs is resulting in lots of positive comments. Located at the White Cliffs Hotel it is the creation of local artist Jerry Hayes. The project is funded with assistance from the NSW Government.

Town swimming pools opening

Unsupervised	Supervised
Lozbe Monday to Sunday Open to 7:00pm Wendee Monday to Sunday Open to 7:30pm	Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Public Holidays 3:00pm to 7:00pm Monday to Friday 3:30pm to 6:30pm Saturday, Sunday, Public Holidays 3:00pm to 7:00pm
White Cliffs Monday to Sunday Open to 7:00pm Wilcannia Monday to Sunday Open to 7:00pm	Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Public Holidays 3:00pm to 7:00pm Monday to Friday 3:30pm to 6:30pm Saturday, Sunday, Public Holidays 3:00pm to 7:00pm

Council staff have been working on the town pools in preparation for opening on November 1. However, there is still some maintenance work being undertaken and this may result in some delay with the opening times.

October 2023 Newsletter - Central Darling Shire Council - PO Box 165 Wilcannia NSW 2836. Phone: 08 8083 8900

Project Summary

To address residents' awareness concerns, The Central Darling Shire Council initiated a strategy, producing a monthly Resident Newsletter. With a local government area about the size of Tasmania the Shire is home to 1725 people. The major towns are separated by big distances. The Shire faces communications challenges for reasons including that not all residents have access to the internet.

The Council enhanced various channels, including email, media releases, public notices, interviews, website updates, electronic signs, and social media, along with support from local businesses. The first Shire-Wide Council Resident Newsletter, launched in October 2022, received positive feedback for effectively informing the community. Ongoing monitoring is crucial to refine the strategy and ensure continued success in keeping residents informed about local developments.

Key Learnings/Results

Since introducing the newsletter, anecdotally complaints about lack of information have reduced. The monthly Resident Newsletter is now an important way of communicating with our community and helps keep people informed about Shire Services activities, projects, and infrastructure improvements as well as important government information such as flood support and the Menindee Fish Deaths incident.

RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards

Excellence in Communication

Category Winner

Division B

Council Name

Wingecarribee Shire Council

Project Name

Seniors Festival 2023

Population

51,670



Project Summary

The Seniors Festival 2023 communication strategy aimed to increase awareness and participation among seniors in the Shire, particularly those not active on social media or email platforms. Key factors identified during the situational analysis included the need for alternative communication channels for seniors and key locations such as retirement villages for targeted outreach. Print media, radio, and face-to-face interactions were found to be effective in engaging seniors. The chosen methods, including hard copy distribution, poster placement, email, print and digital advertising, radio, and social media, were selected to ensure a comprehensive and successful outreach strategy.

Key Learnings/Results

The Seniors Festival communication campaign successfully achieved its objectives, attracting approximately 856 attendees over 12 days. Positive feedback was received for event organization and collaboration with the Council. While the budget was effectively utilised, feedback suggested a need to further enhance event promotion, signposting, and the distribution of hard copy programs, particularly in high-traffic areas like newsagents and post offices. The council views this feedback as an opportunity for growth, values community input, and is committed to continuous improvement for future event planning and communication strategies.



RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards

Excellence in Communication

Category Winner

Division C

Council Name

Penrith City Council

Project Name

2022 Trees for Mums

Population

51,670



Project Summary

Trees for Mum, Council's longest-running Bushcare event, marked its 15th year in Penrith in 2022. Council has consistently hosted the event since its inception in 2008. Initially focused on honouring mothers, the event expanded its definition of "Mum" to include grandmothers, aunts, and mother figures for inclusivity. Beyond celebration, the event promotes environmental sustainability by encouraging residents to plant native trees or shrubs, contributing to community greening and cooling.

In 2022, the event reached maximum capacity, with 256 registrations for 240 slots. The successful campaign primarily leveraged organic methods, with social media leading at 55% through Facebook and 11% via Instagram. A successful paid Instagram Story campaign was introduced for the first time, complemented by eDMs, a media release, and articles in the Western Weekender.

Key Learnings/Results

The event attracted 256 registrations for 240 spots, with 228 participants planting 225 trees. Notably, 87% were first-time attendees. The Eventbrite questionnaire revealed that 55% discovered the event on Facebook, 11% through Instagram and Council's website.

Community feedback praised the event's mission, emotional connection to Mother's Day, and organisation. Overall, the organic communication strategy outperformed the paid approach, showcasing campaign success.



RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards

Innovation in Special Events

Category Winner

Division A

Council Name

Gunnedah Shire Council

Project Name

Book Paper Folding for Fairy Tale February – Gunnedah Library

Population

12,690



Project Summary

Book Paper Folding, a highlight of Fairy Tale February, transforms cancelled books into art. Started in August 2021, it teaches paper folding as a craft, contributing to the annual event. People of all ages create diverse artworks, including 87 paper rats, fairy houses, and more.

Fairy Tale February also includes Seek and Find games, Book Buddies, Brain Training, and interactive activities. Despite Covid restrictions, the February 2022 event had 46 activities, 681 participants, and 4565 door counts. Book Paper Folding remains a popular and ongoing library program.

Key Learnings/Results

The success of the Book Paper Folding program at the library was measured by the enthusiastic community response and the attendance of people of all ages. Despite Covid restrictions, the program recorded a door count of 4565, organised 46 events, and engaged 681 participants, noteworthy for our rural Shire.

Ongoing outreach visits and teaching the craft continue to yield positive results. For example, during the 2022 Woodworkers Christmas party, 20 out of 30 attendees learned paper folding on the spot. The program also received recognition, winning the Innovations in Outreach Services award in 2022 from the NSW Public Libraries Association.



RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards

Innovation in Special Events

Category Winner

Division A

Council Name

Narrabri Shire Council

Project Name

The Exchange Business Activator (TEBA) Program

Population

13,049



Project Summary

TEBA, a collaboration between Narrabri Shire Council, The Exchange Narrabri, and The University of New England SMART Region Incubator, aimed to boost economic recovery post-drought and pandemic. Providing local businesses with floor space and expert support, TEBA targeted economic revival, community resilience, and job creation in line with local strategies.

Designed for regional businesses, TEBA offered capacity-building events, networking opportunities, and development programs. These included UNE SRI Hatch Programs, UNE SMART Region Incubator Leverage Program, Business Networking Events, Business Circle Discussions, Mentoring Sessions, Guest Speakers, and Learning Lunches.

Delivered both in-person and online, TEBA sessions were recorded for future access. The program employed a branding and communication strategy to effectively reach the Narrabri Shire community.

Key Learnings/Results

The TEBA Program gathered feedback through forms and surveys, receiving 58 responses. Additional evaluation is planned for the "End of TEBA Celebration event" on June 30, 2023. Notable outcomes include an overall rating of 4.63 out of 5 for TEBA event experiences, with 98.27% expressing willingness to recommend it. The program has supported the establishment of six businesses. Qualitative feedback underscores the positive impact, such as the endorsement of Leverage as a fantastic program and acknowledgment of TEBA events' value to the community. These insights will guide future refinements and enhancements to TEBA's offerings.



RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards

Innovation in Special Events

Category Winner

Division B

Council Name

Hawkesbury City Council

Project Name

Event Passports

Population

67,649



Project Summary

Hawkesbury City Council hosts four major annual events: Australia Day, Hawkesbury Fest, Savour the Flavour Hawkesbury, and Light Up Windsor. They also play a significant role in the Hawkesbury Show. These events aim to boost tourism, increase awareness of council services, and foster partnerships. Council collaborates with local stakeholders through sponsorship packages and inviting service providers.

Historically, Council faced challenges in visitor engagement, sponsor benefits, and event flow. With growing interest, the team sought a simple solution to encourage exploration of the entire event space and drive traffic to sponsors' businesses. The solution needed to be easily adaptable across all Council events.

Key Learnings/Results

In 2021, 96 'major prize' passports were collected at Light Up Windsor, along with 800 minor prize passports. This success led to the concept expanding at the 2022 Hawkesbury Show, with 1000 passports given away.

At Light Up Windsor 2022, 285 'major prize' passports and 1200 minor prize passports were submitted, marking a 196.88% increase and 50% increase in engagement, respectively. This success drove awareness and visitation to the Visitor Information Centre, with sponsors reporting increased stall visitation and high satisfaction with engagement.

For the Hawkesbury Show 2023, 2000 passports were distributed, indicating a 100% increase in engagement and driving awareness and visitation to emergency service partners.

RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards

Innovation in Special Events

Category Winner

Division C

Council Name

City of Canterbury Bankstown

Project Name

Ramadan Nights Lakemba

Population

380,406



Project Summary

“Ramadan Nights Lakemba” in the City of Canterbury Bankstown is a month-long street festival held during Ramadan in Lakemba, Sydney. Originating as a single street barbecue, the event has evolved into a cultural buffet with over 70 food vendors serving traditional foods from various cultures until the early hours of the morning. Attendees from across Sydney, NSW, Australia, and overseas come to experience diverse cuisines, making it a unique global food bazaar. In 2022, the event drew over 1.2 million people, and in 2023, it attracted 1.4 million attendees, establishing its recognition as a state-significant event. The festival runs from March 21 to April 20, 2023, from dusk until 3 am every night.

Key Learnings/Results

Participation in Ramadan Nights Lakemba surged from 1.2 million attendees in 2022 to 1.4 million in 2023, reflecting a 14% increase. The event’s peak night, on April 15, drew almost 80,000 attendees.

Real-time monitoring during the event facilitated crowd management, providing crucial statistics for police and security. This information was accessible in the event control room and remotely tracked by the communications team via an app, enabling live communications. Multiple CCTV cameras were used for queue and incident monitoring.

Council successfully secured funding for the event, with a \$1 million Multicultural NSW grant over two years covering nearly 50% of the operating costs, totaling over \$2 million. Despite a \$70,000 marketing budget, extensive unpaid media coverage and social media engagement reached an audience of over 12 million, equivalent to an advertising space rate of \$6.5 million.



RH Dougherty Events and Communications Awards

Reporting To Your Community

Category Winner

Division B

Council Name

Hawkesbury City Council

Project Name

Renewing Hawkesbury's Road

Population

67,649



Project Summary

The Renewing Hawkesbury's Roads project, stemming from the Council's flood emergency hub, serves as a centralised information source with weekly updates on Major Road Projects, Road Recovery Projects, and Daily Road Maintenance. Innovative solutions include an Interactive Roads Projects Map for visual clarity, a display at the 2023 Hawkesbury Show attracting over 11,000 visitors, and an SMS Phone Database for instant emergency updates to isolated communities. These approaches demonstrate the Council's commitment to efficient and diverse communication channels.

Key Learnings/Results

The Renewing Hawkesbury's Roads reporting program has been highly successful in delivering timely information on road repair projects post-floods. The multiplatform approach, spanning physical and digital media, has effectively addressed challenges in isolated communities. The diverse communication channels, including online hubs, social media, email, SMS, printed materials, and in-person interactions, have boosted community calmness and improved Council-resident engagement. The commitment to innovation and a continued multiplatform strategy for up to three years demonstrates a proactive and adaptable approach to information delivery during the flood recovery period.



LEO Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Awards

Project

Category Winner

Division A

Council Name

Singleton Council

Project Name

We Are Singleton: Portrait of a Town

Population

1,829



Project Summary

We Are Singleton: Portrait of a Town was a two-year social documentary project by photographer Edwina Richards, commissioned by Singleton Council to celebrate the town's people and mark the launch of the new Singleton Arts + Cultural Centre. The project included two exhibitions, with the first opening in March 2022. Richards, working closely with Christopher Saunders, used storytelling in her portraits to capture the everyday experiences of Singleton residents. The portraits were taken at meaningful locations chosen by the subjects, reflecting their connection to the town. The project, showcased in the newly built Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre, aimed to honour the town's adventurous spirit and highlight its unique identity in 2022.

Key Learnings/Results

The opening of the new Arts + Cultural Centre in March 2022 aligned with the local focus outlined in the 'Create Singleton 2032' plan. The inaugural program, "We Are Singleton: Portrait of a Town," aimed to fulfill the objectives of the Singleton Arts and Culture Strategy by promoting inclusion, celebrating diversity, and providing recreational services. The project successfully positioned the Centre as a creative hub, fostering community participation. Despite challenges like flooding and post-COVID disruptions, the exhibition drew over 400 community members in its first week, bringing the Singleton community together and contributing to a sense of pride and connection.



LEO Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Awards

Project

Category Winner

Division B

Council Name

Bathurst Regional Council

Project Name

Central Tablelands Collections Facility

Population

43,996



Project Summary

Opened in September 2022, the Central Tablelands Collections Facility (CTCF) is a cutting-edge 2,500 square metre repository and learning space. It offers state-of-the-art storage, including climate control and security, for regional collections, including those of the Bathurst Regional Council's Records Department. The \$4.6 million facility stores \$23 million worth of Regional Council collection inside. The facility caters to collections from various entities, such as neighbouring LGAs, volunteer-run museums, and educational institutions. It also provides flexible learning spaces, fostering industry partnerships with entities like the University of Melbourne's Grimwade Centre and the Australian Museum. As the first of its kind in regional NSW, the CTCF sets a standard for best practice collection storage for local government authorities.

Key Learnings/Results

The Central Tablelands Collection Facility, operational since September, has proven highly successful. Originally conceived for Bathurst Regional Council collections, it has evolved into a versatile regional hub, offering industry-standard storage and learning spaces. Early collaboration with larger organisations during the design phase ensured a well-thought-out and practical facility, meeting the needs of both the council and other collecting groups. The facility's success is reflected in the widespread interest, prompting Bathurst Regional Council to explore expansion options. The project underscores the council's leadership in the museum space, evident in the keen interest from other organisations looking to replicate the facility and utilise its learning spaces.



LEO Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Awards

Project

Category Winner

Division C

Council Name

Blacktown City Council

Project Name

Contemplate – Public Artwork

Population

382,831



Project Summary

CONTEMPLATE is a site-specific public art project at Blacktown's Memorial Grove, a tribute to domestic violence victims in NSW. Co-designed with affected families, artist Yu-Fang Chi created this memorial garden and artwork for reflection and healing in the city center. Selected through Blacktown City's Public Art commissioning process, it reflects a genuine co-design effort with the council, community members, local agencies, and the artist. This initiative fulfills the families' wish for a dedicated and private space to remember victims of domestic violence.

This project was initiated by our community and championed by Council's Women's Advisory Committee. Blacktown City consulted with the families of the victims through the entire process. This included:

- Choosing the site within Blacktown CBD
- Choosing the location where the Memorial Grove was to be built, and
- Selection of the artist.

Key Learnings/Results

The project aimed to create a space where the community could own and belong, commemorating victims of violence. It successfully fostered strong artist, cultural, and community participation, encouraging repeat visits and meaningful conversations among families. Aligned with Blacktown City's Community Strategic Plan, the initiative increased public art delivery, promoting cultural diversity experiences. It also achieved Cultural Development Outcomes by deepening a sense of shared cultural heritage and enhancing well-being. Through collaboration and feedback, the project created a contemplative and healing space at Blacktown Showground, amplifying community voices and providing crucial support for families.



LEO Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Awards

Strategy/Plan

Category Winner

Division C

Council Name

City of Parramatta Council

Project Name

First Nations Engagement Framework

Population

260,296



Project Summary

Parramatta Artists' Studios (PAS) developed an innovative First Nations Engagement Framework led by Dharug and First Nations artists. Finalised in December 2022, the framework reflects PAS profound commitment to First Nations people, artists, and communities on Dharug country, encompassing Parramatta and Greater Western Sydney.

Crafted over four years through extensive consultation, the framework prioritises: enhancing relationships; improving First Nations representation in PAS team and governance; fostering a culturally safe and inclusive space; investing in and supporting First Nations artists; implementing best practice protocols; and creating opportunities for co-design and co-development of programming.

Key Learnings/Results

Parramatta Artists' Studios (PAS) demonstrated leadership in developing its First Nations Engagement Framework by engaging in long-term consultations, workshops, and surveys from 2019 to 2022. The framework, led by First Nations perspectives, strategically aligns with the City of Parramatta Council's plans and signifies PAS' dedication to meaningful engagement and support for First Nations artists and communities.

PAS prioritised meaningful evaluation, incorporating annual reporting and reviews to ensure ongoing improvement. Key programming outcomes, as a result of developing the framework to-date, include an artwork commission by Dharug-artist Shay Tobin and Biripi-artist Jason Wing as well as Dharug-artist Billy Bain being awarded a PAS Rydalmere studio from June 2023 for two years.

LGNSW Planning Awards

Project

Category Winner

Division A

Council Name

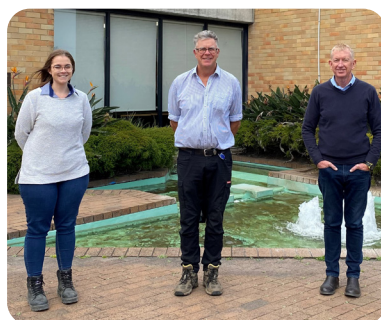
Singleton Council

Project Name

Singleton Council – Building Capacity Program

Population

23,380



Project Summary

In 2020, Singleton Council addressed a skills gap in building certification due to a limited workforce handling a high volume of applications. The Building and Development Certifiers Regulation 2020 presented challenges in attracting and retaining building surveyors in regional areas. To tackle this issue, Singleton Council introduced the Building Inspector Professional Development Program, aiming to assist an employee in gaining eligibility as an A4 Building Surveyor. The program involves formal mentoring, training, and strategies for process automation to enhance efficiency and reduce duplication in service delivery.

The team, drawing on industry experience, developed a mentoring and training program over two years to establish a sustainable career pathway for newly qualified building surveyors. Recruited in December 2020, by January 2023, the incumbent successfully obtained her Building Surveyor – restricted (class 1 and 10 buildings) registration.

Key Learnings/Results

The program was successfully completed during the COVID pandemic, meeting timelines and garnering satisfaction from all stakeholders. Its implementation resulted in significant benefits, including reduced processing times, enhanced confidence in council's building services, and improved staff engagement. The program exceeded expectations by creating non-traditional career pathways for young individuals entering the industry.

Metrics implemented since July 2022 showcase notable achievements:

- A 37% reduction in construction certificate processing time.
- A 72% increase in the number of Complying Development Certificates (CDCs).
- An 18% reduction in internal building referrals through improved allocation processes.
- An increase in staff engagement to 83%.
- Customer satisfaction at 91%.
- A 95% reduction in direct customer enquiries regarding delayed processing times.
- An 80% reduction in recruitment time.

LGNSW Planning Awards

Project

Category Winner

Division B

Council Name

Wingecarribee Shire Council

Project Name

Robertson

Population

51,760



Project Summary

The Community-Led Strategic Place Plan for Robertson marked a departure from Wingecarribee Shire Council's previous council-led approach to strategic planning. This shift aimed to enhance communication and engagement with the community, addressing perceived inadequacies in meeting community needs and aspirations. The initiative sought to increase community engagement, reflect diversity, and ensure all voices were heard and valued. Various engagement methods, including surveys, photo competitions, word cloud activities, and community consultations, were employed in the plan's development. Open communication, stakeholder partnerships, and educational initiatives fostered a positive environment for change and successfully addressed resistance. The initiative had a significant impact, prompting a transformation in the council's approach to planning and development services moving forward.

Key Learnings/Results

The revised Community-Led Strategic Place Plan for Robertson has left a lasting impact, shaping staff behaviour and enhancing council-community relationships. This change is now ingrained in the council's culture through a new community engagement framework. The success has spurred work on the next Place-Based Strategic Plan, showcasing a significant shift in the council's approach to planning services—a move from top-down to inclusive and participatory methods that engage stakeholders in the planning process. The new approach has influenced staff behaviour, emphasizing the importance of community engagement for fresh perspectives and ideas. This change has also positively impacted relationships within the planning system, fostering collaboration and trust between the council and the community.



LGNSW Planning Awards

Project

Category Winner

Division C

Council Name

Penrith City Council

Project Name

St Marys 2041: A planning pathway towards a thriving strategic centre

Population

216,282



Project Summary

The 2018 City Deal commitment by the Australian and NSW Government to connect St Marys to the Western Sydney International Airport is transforming the area into a strategic hub. Penrith City Council's St Marys 2041 plan, developed in response, aims to manage growth over 20 years. With projections of 12,500 more residents and 5,600 additional jobs by 2041, the plan focuses on addressing critical issues, maximising infrastructure benefits, and ensuring growth enhances liveability. The plan, comprising stages like the endorsed Town Centre Structure Plan, envisions a vibrant, sustainable, and welcoming St Marys through extensive community input and collaboration with government agencies.

Key Learnings/Results

The St Marys 2041 planning pathway exemplifies the benefits of place-based, long-term strategic planning, steering clear of ad-hoc decisions that may not align with the 'place.' The Structure Plan, serving as a guiding document, has already yielded results, securing a \$21 million WestInvest grant from the NSW Government for St Marys Central Park. The strategic approach of the comprehensive program provides clarity and transparency for the development industry, government agencies, investors, and the community.

By actively engaging the community and stakeholders early on and throughout the process, allowing them to shape the vision and outcomes, the St Marys Structure Plan has garnered significant support from various stakeholders, including the community, councillors, internal staff, state agencies, private organisations, and peak bodies. This interdisciplinary collaboration has built relationships, fostered trust, and instilled a shared responsibility for creating an excellent place for the community.

