

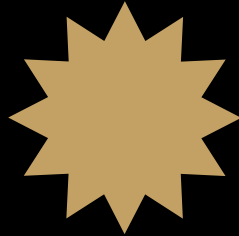


MAVlab

Innovation Awards

We See You Shine

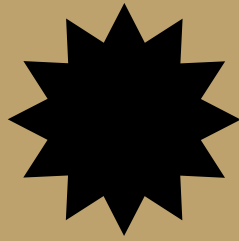
**Thursday 17th September 2026
Fitzroy Town Hall
201 Napier Street, Fitzroy
6:00pm - 10:00pm**



Acknowledgement of Country

The Municipal Association of Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters, and culture. We pay our respect to Elders past and present who carry the stories, traditions, cultures, and aspirations of First Peoples, and who forge the path ahead for emerging leaders.

We support local government's commitment to strengthen relationships with Victoria's First Peoples communities and for it to encourage greater unity, knowledge, cultural awareness and respect for the first occupants of our land — through its strong community links and local representation.



2026 MAVlab Innovation Awards Celebration

Innovation in local government takes courage. It takes vision.
And it takes persistence.

The MAVlab Innovation Awards have returned in 2026 to recognise those who rise to the challenge, spotlighting the bold ideas, imaginative minds, and everyday breakthroughs shaping the future of local government in Victoria.

“These awards, now in their second year, are a wonderful way for the MAV, as the peak body for local government in Victoria, to shine a light on the fantastic work of the sector,” said MAV President Cr Jennifer Anderson.

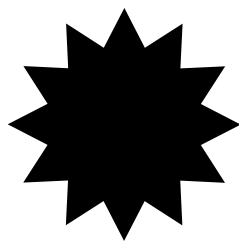
Through sweeping transformation or quiet reinvention, councils across Victoria are responding to complex challenges like climate change, economic pressure and community wellbeing with creativity and care. We’re seeing innovation in action: smarter systems, more inclusive services, transformed public spaces, and forward thinking policy.

Each year, finalists contribute their stories to the growing [MAVlab Innovation Case Study Library](#), creating a valuable resource for our local government sector. By sharing leading case studies through photos, videos and project data, we help councils learn from one another, adapt successful approaches, and build the capability and confidence needed to scale innovation across Victoria.

Whether you’re gathering research, fostering collaboration and curiosity, redesigning systems, leading transformation, or driving change in another way, your contribution deserves to be celebrated.

We see you shine.

Thank you.



Agenda

5:30pm - 6:00pm

Finalist and awards partner arrival

A time for our award finalists and partners to meet and commemorate the occasion with a photograph, as well as for a special briefing.

6:00pm - 6:30pm

Arrival and entertainment

City of Whittlesea's The Next Verse Songwriting program featuring Ian Marks, Lucy McKinnon, Tiffany Doan and Pavel Wojtech performing their original songs.

6:30PM - 7:30pm

Awards ceremony - first half

Welcome to Country, Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Andrew Gardiner
Opening address by Cr Ruth Gstrein, Corangamite Shire, Non-Metro
Deputy President MAV Board, Director - Great South Coast Barwon Region
Premier Partner address by Kate Chase, Davidson
Awards presentations with MCs Bonnie, Gemma, Nalika, Justin (7 awards)

7:30PM - 8:00PM

Interval

8:00PM - 8:40PM

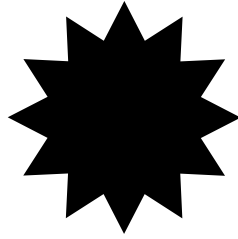
Awards ceremony - second half

Premier Partner address by Cameron Whitehead, JLT Public Sector
Awards presentations with MCs Bonnie, Amanda and Tavis (6 awards)

8:40PM - 10:00PM

Celebration and networking

Food and beverages will be served throughout the evening via a grazing station and roaming canapés; each guest receives one complimentary drink on arrival, with additional beverages available for purchase (card payments only).



ENTERTAINMENT

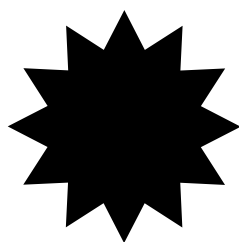
The Next Verse Musicians City of Whittlesea

Tonight's entertainment features four talented musicians - Ian D. Marks, Lucy McKinnon, Tiffany Doan and Pavel Wojtech - who recently participated in The Next Verse, a six-week songwriting development program developed by the City of Whittlesea.

The program featured a series of practical workshops facilitated by acclaimed singer-songwriter Charles Jenkins, supporting 17 emerging local songwriters to explore lyric writing, chord progressions, song structure, collaboration, performance skills and the fundamentals of live sound engineering.

Participants in the program developed two original songs inspired by their connection to Melbourne's northern suburbs and the places they call home, while also collaborating to create a group composition. The program culminated in a showcase performance at the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre, where participants presented their original work in a professional performance setting.

We are delighted to showcase the work of Ian, Lucy, Tiffany and Pavel as part of tonight's program and thank the City of Whittlesea for its ongoing commitment to supporting the development of local songwriting talent.



Award Categories

Awards will be presented in the following order.

Award

The Stronger Together Award for Council Collaboration

The Skilled to Serve Award for Capability Uplift

The Smooth Operator Award for Service and Systems Transformation

The Connector Award for Inclusion and Community Cohesion

The Wellbeing Award for Community Health Impacts

The Storytelling Award for Inclusive and Engaging Council Communications

The Community Voice Award for Inclusive Democratic Engagement

Supported By

Davidson

Datascape

Atturra

Ylab

Choosewell

RMIT Regenerative Futures Lab

ARDN

INTERVAL

The Dollars and Sense Award for Impactful and Innovative Business Operations

The Horizon Award for Future Climate Leadership and Action

The Resilient Infrastructure Award for Emergency-ready Community Systems

The Thriving Places Award for Design and Planning Excellence

2026 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico Award: Emerging Leader

2026 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico Award: Established Leader (CEO)

SenSen Networks

Infrastructure Sustainability Council

Matter

JLT Public Sector

JLT Public Sector

Davidson

PREMIER PARTNER



Proud supporter of the 2026 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico: Established Leader Award and The Stronger Together Award

For 35 years, Davidson has worked alongside organisations and leaders to help them perform, adapt and move forward with confidence. Today, we bring together expertise across people, strategy and technology, helping organisations turn ideas into practical progress and build capability that lasts.

We are proud to support the MAVlab Innovation Awards and recognise the people behind ideas that make a difference. These awards celebrate innovation, collaboration and practical outcomes that strengthen local government and the communities it serves.

CASE STUDY

An executive leadership team that looks like Greater Dandenong

Davidson partnered with Greater Dandenong City Council to support the recruitment of a new Executive Leadership Team following an organisational restructure led by CEO Jacqui Weatherill in 2024.

Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse municipality in Victoria and one of the most diverse in Australia, with residents representing more than 150 birthplaces and nearly two-thirds of the population born overseas. The mandate was to build a high-performing executive team that not only demonstrated exceptional leadership capability but also authentically reflected the diversity of the local community.

The search focused on ensuring strong cultural representation throughout every stage of the recruitment process, from longlists and shortlists through to final appointments. A key objective was to identify and attract both diverse and non-traditional talent, including candidates from outside the local government sector, to bring fresh perspectives, innovation, and new approaches to executive leadership.

Davidson implemented a targeted and inclusive search strategy, ensuring diverse representation across all shortlists and embedding equity considerations at every stage of the process.

The final executive team includes culturally diverse leaders, including two executives from diverse backgrounds, one of whom is of Iranian heritage, bringing perspectives that closely align with the community demographic. An out-of-sector appointment was successfully secured, introducing new thinking and innovation into the executive leadership team.

The overall composition of the executive team reflects a strong alignment with the multicultural profile of Greater Dandenong, supporting more inclusive decision-making and community engagement



PREMIER PARTNER



Proud supporter of the 2026 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico: Emerging Leader Award and The Thriving Places Award

As a long-term partner of the peak body for Local Government in Victoria, we recognise the importance of delivering innovative and sustainable services to local governments and community-based organisations. Local Government plays a crucial role in providing essential services to communities, and at JLT Public Sector, we are committed to helping our clients identify and manage their risk to protect their communities.

CASE STUDY

Closing the insurance protection gap for local government

Councils and their communities are facing rising disaster risks and escalating insurance costs, leaving many underinsured and exposed to significant financial shocks. JLT Public Sector are collaborating with a group of regional councils to design the Community Protection Mutual. A pooled funding model that shares catastrophe risk across members.

Through a feasibility partnership with the Southwest Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils and other stakeholders, JLT are developing a mutual structure that enables councils to collectively pool high-risk exposures such as flooding. By spreading risk across participating members, the model improves access to affordable coverage while reducing reliance on increasingly volatile commercial insurance markets.

The approach strengthens financial resilience, supports faster recovery following disasters, and provides a scalable framework that can be adapted by other regions facing similar risk and affordability challenges.

jltpublicsector.com



Award Partner



Proud supporter of The Community Voice Award

The Australian Resilient Democracy Network (ARDN) is designed to encourage interdisciplinary, collaborative, and applied research seeking policy-relevant insights that measure, diagnose and assess pathways strengthening Australia's democratic resilience. The network is dedicated to sharing the analysis publicly and to encourage the use of these ideas to prompt future research collaborations and actionable policy. The ARDN is co-chaired by the Australian National University (ANU) and the Office of Social Cohesion (OSC) in the Department of Home Affairs.

australiandemocraticresilience.substack



Award Partner



Proud supporter of The Smooth Operator Award

Atturra is an ASX-listed technology and advisory company that helps local governments modernise systems, improve service delivery and achieve better outcomes for their communities. Combining deep industry expertise with leading technologies from partners including Microsoft, SAP and Infor, we support councils through every stage of their digital transformation journey. Our end-to-end delivery capability helps organisations reduce complexity, improve efficiency and prepare for the future with confidence.

atturra.com

Award Partner



Proud supporter of The Wellbeing Award

Choosewell Health Link is an award-winning health insurance broker dedicated to delivering expert advice and meaningful savings to Australian employees. Their specialized LGE Program — partnered with MAV and GMHBA — empowers local government staff with affordable private cover and exclusive hospital excess reimbursements, simplifying health decisions while enhancing financial protection.

choosewellhealthlink.com.au/corporate-lge



Datascape:
local government
software built for
Australian councils.



Award Partner



Proud supporter of The Skilled to Serve Award

Datascape is Datacom's purpose-built platform for local government, helping council teams work smarter across the services their communities rely on most. Built with deep local government experience and shaped by councils, Datascape lifts staff capability and takes the friction out of everyday work, from community engagement and regulatory services to revenue, finance and asset management, helping redefine the everyday for councils and communities.

datacom.com/datascape

Award Partner



Proud supporter of The Horizon Award

The Infrastructure Sustainability Council is the peak body for infrastructure sustainability in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand - delivering the leading systems to enable sustainability in all types of infrastructure across planning, design, construction, and operations. We represent more than 200 members and \$429 billion in capital under registration.

iscouncil.org



Award Partner

matter.

Proud supporter of The Resilient Infrastructure Award

Matter helps councils and operators transform their waste and water management by providing world-first AI solutions to build smarter, more resilient communities. Councils working with Matter replace guesswork with data by combining advanced sensor networks with powerful data analytics, saving time and money while reducing risk. Trusted by councils across Australia, we turn real-time data into actionable insights that build a more sustainable future.

Talk to us about your council's future with Matter.

matter.city

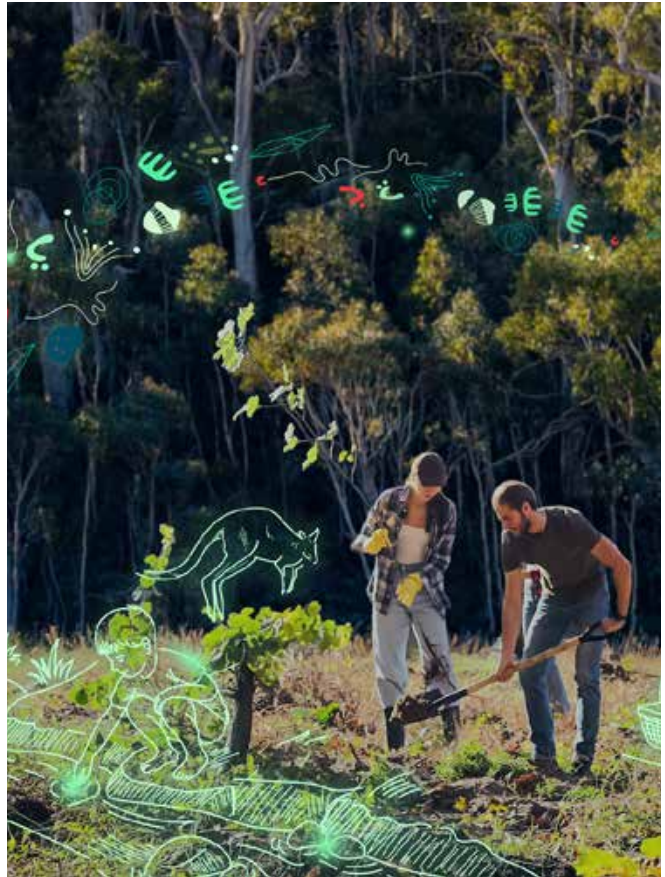
Award Partner



Proud supporter of The Storytelling Award

RMIT Regenerative Futures Institute works to rebuild social, environmental and economic systems to create a more just and sustainable world. A new interdisciplinary initiative, we advance regenerative practice through education, research and collaboration. We bring together expertise across design, science, technology, systems thinking and social innovation, alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, to explore how universities, industry, and communities can respond to complex environmental and societal challenges.

rmit.edu.au/about/regenerative-futures



Award Partner



Proud supporter of The Dollars and Sense Award

SenSen Networks (ASX: SNS) is a leading Physical AI company. Its flagship platform, SenDISA®, the Physical AI Operating System for Government, transforms data from multiple sensing technologies into actionable intelligence, court-grade evidence and automated workflows. As a sensor-agnostic platform, SenDISA integrates computer vision, ANPR, GPS, RFID, LiDAR and other data sources to help governments monitor and manage complex physical environments. Today, SenSen's solutions support parking and kerbside management, heavy vehicle compliance, road safety, environmental regulation and smart mobility for more than 70 government agencies worldwide.

sensen.ai

ylab.global



Innovation Partners



Association of Local Government Information Management (ALGIM) are a not-for-profit association that brings people and technology together for a digitally transformed local government sector. We cover multiple disciplines, including Information Technology, AI, Web & Digital, Customer Experience, Process Improvement and Data & Insights. Our purpose is to deliver on shared policies, resources, and projects. algim.org.nz



Australian Smart Communities Association (ASCA) is the leading member-based organisation advancing smart, sustainable and inclusive communities across Australia. ASCA connects local government, industry, academia and communities to share knowledge, build capability and accelerate innovation. Through events, advocacy, research and partnerships, ASCA helps leaders harness technology, data and collaboration to deliver better outcomes for people and places. australiansmartcommunities.org.au



Australian Red Cross exists to support people in their most difficult moments. With 111 years' experience and a nationwide community of 16,000+ members and volunteers, we act locally and connect globally to deliver what's needed, when it's needed most. redcross.org.au



The Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) is a collaboration of Victorian councils creating resilient, liveable and future-ready communities. Through shared leadership, evidence-based tools and collaborative planning, CASBE strengthens local government capacity to respond to climate, social and economic challenges. CASBE champions resilient design and supports councils to deliver neighbourhoods where people and nature thrive. casbe.org.au



Deidentified is an AI Privacy Gateway purpose-built for Australian local government. It enables councils to adopt generative AI tools while automatically protecting citizen privacy through real-time de-identification and re-identification of sensitive data. With human-in-the-loop governance at its core, Deidentified gives councils the confidence to move forward with AI, knowing that privacy, security and public accountability requirements are met by design. deidentified.com.au



FinPro's vision is to be the leading network supporting local government finance professionals in Victoria, to enable the delivery of community focused services to achieve positive outcomes. An Incorporated Association, FinPro has over 1,000 members representing all Victorian Local Government Councils, 5 regional library corporations and over twenty other organisations. finpro.org.au



As the foremost leadership organisation in Victoria, Leadership Victoria has been delivering unique programs for 35 years, creating a diverse network of over 8000+ Alumni. LV supports leaders to take the next step in their leadership journey and mobilise them to create meaningful impact in their organisations, communities and beyond. LV partners with business, government and community organisations to support leaders at all levels, driving organisational and systemic transformation. leadershipvictoria.org



Neighbourhood Houses are places of connection, belonging, participation and inclusion. With over 400 locations across Victoria, these community-led & place-based centres have a significant and meaningful impact on their communities. A strong partnership with local council can ensure the community has united support and empowerment, and encourages community-led development. nhvic.org.au



Spero-ai is a Melbourne-based company led by a former Victorian Government planning director, with 16 AI-native prototypes across the end-to-end planning permit process. The focus is accurate, explainable, planning-grade AI that fits council systems and delivers measurable efficiency gains. spero-ai.tech





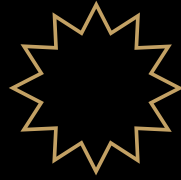
The Stronger Together Award

for Council Collaboration

In recognition of demonstrated council-led collaboration -
across councils, teams, or with industry partners - that drives
community resilience and local outcomes.

Award Partner





Finalists



Worms at Work

City of Melbourne

Worms at Work tested whether public furniture could help divert food waste, grow compost and support local stewardship in Fishermans Bend. Delivered through the Digital Innovation Challenge, the pilot brought Council teams, residents, businesses, designers, composting experts, researchers and technology specialists together to trial visible, community-supported composting infrastructure in everyday urban space.

Community Disaster Resilience Plan

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

Through community-led networks, a new Emergency Dashboard, targeted water safety partnerships and the Resilience, Relief and Recovery Network, this project brings Council, emergency services, local groups and residents together to reduce disaster risk and support shared responsibility.

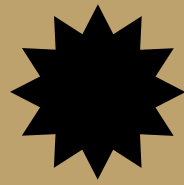


Yering Billabongs Project

Yarra Ranges Shire Council

The Yering Billabongs Project restores 60 hectares of Birrarung floodplain through a multi-agency partnership led by Yarra Ranges Council, embedding Wurundjeri leadership. Using nature-based water diversion, cultural land management and adaptive governance, it reconnects Olinda Creek, improves water quality and habitat, strengthens cultural stewardship, and delivers a scalable model for integrated environmental, cultural and community outcomes across Victoria for communities.

Bright Spark Special Commendations: Beyond the Flood, Campaspe Shire Council, Building a Victorian Local Government AI Community, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council and CDS Bin Baskets Rollout, Yarra Ranges Shire Council.



The Skilled to Serve Award

for Capability Uplift

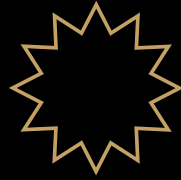
In recognition of initiatives that strengthen council workforce capability, foster leadership, learning and development, and prepare teams to deliver innovative, adaptive services to the community.

Award Partner



Datascap

Powered by Datacom



Finalists



Stronger Together: A shared Cyber Security model for Local Government

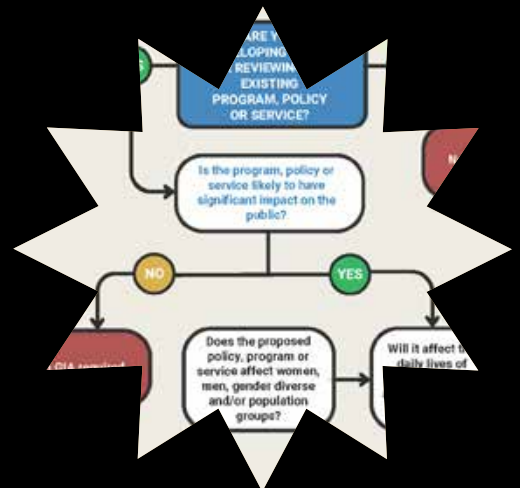
City of Greater Bendigo

An innovative shared cyber security model redefining how councils access critical capability. Leveraging a flexible, fit-for-purpose managed SOC/SIEM solution, this initiative enables affordable, scalable protection for diverse environments. Led by the City of Greater Bendigo, it pioneers a new approach to shared services, delivering practical and affordable innovation that can be replicated across the local government sector.

From Compliance to Insight: AI-Powered Gender Impact Assessments

Gannawarra Shire Council

Gannawarra Shire Council developed an AI-enabled approach to gender impact assessments (GIAs), transforming a resource-intensive compliance task into a fast, scalable and insight-driven process. This innovation enables staff to produce high-quality GIAs in seconds, improving consistency, reducing workload and embedding gender equality into decision-making across policies, programs and services.

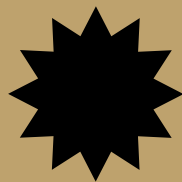


Family and Domestic Violence Workplace Support Program

City of Port Phillip

Family and Domestic Violence workplace awareness and capability uplift plan including updated Policy, guidelines and workplace safety plan, all staff keynote speaker with lived experience, intranet update promoting clear information and resources, FDV prevention and awareness training for all people leaders and key roles, updated Workplace Contact Officer framework to support FDV, and regular communication to staff incl CEO messaging.

Bright Spark Special Commendations: Casey Innovation Program, City of Casey and Building and Scaling an Organisation-wide Change Champions Network, Greater Geelong City Council.



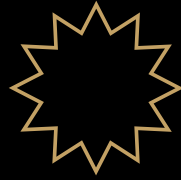
The Smooth Operator Award

for Service and Systems Optimisation and Transformation

In recognition of innovation in council service systems,
demonstrating impact through new approaches to drive better
experiences for the community and staff.

Award Partner

atturra



Finalists



Stronger Together: A shared Cyber Security model for Local Government

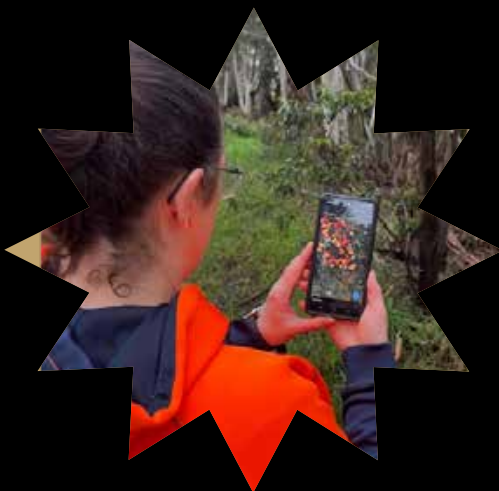
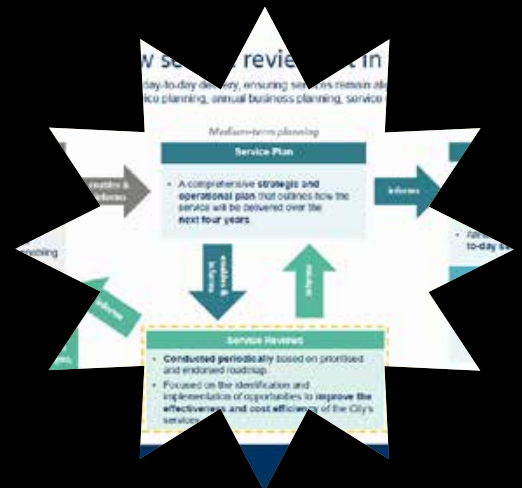
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Service Review Program

City of Greater Geelong

The City of Greater Geelong designed and implemented a whole-of-organisation Service Review Program to fundamentally change how council understands, plans, evaluates and improves its services. The initiative introduced a common service language, service catalogue, review playbook, design principles and governance framework, enabling evidence-based decision making and sustainable service innovation across 31 council services and more than 120 sub-services.



M-Snap

Mitchell Shire Council

Mitchell Shire Council is proud to present “M-SNAP” (Mitchell Spatial Nature Asset Platform) a suite of user-friendly environmental mapping apps to improve how field data is captured, shared and used. Co-designed with Environment and GIS team and environmental works contractors. The apps provide structured and accurate spatial data. The outcome is improved environmental management, efficiency, risk management and evidence-based decision-making.

Bright Spark Special Commendations: KerbsideIQ, Mitchell Shire Council and AI Agents built with C.A.R.E., City of Port Phillip.





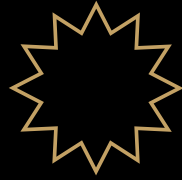
The Connector Award

for Inclusion and Community Cohesion

In recognition of an innovative council-led program that brings communities together in creative ways, strengthening connection, social cohesion, and equitable spaces for people of all backgrounds, genders, ages, and abilities.

Award Partner





Finalists



Test and Learn: Co Designing Inclusive Playgrounds

City of Boroondara

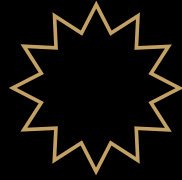
Boroondara's "Test and Learn" playground program engaged people with lived experience to co-design inclusive community spaces. It reimagined playgrounds beyond infrastructure, strengthening inclusion, connection, and belonging. Partnering with Belmore Special School students and Ability Works, it used a "design for one, extend to many" approach, testing, refining, and delivering small, high-impact improvements for people of all abilities across local playgrounds.

Disability at Dusk

City of Casey, City of Greater Dandenong
and Cardinia Shire Council

Disability at Dusk was a regional community celebration designed for people with disability, families, carers and allies. Delivered by the Southern Region Disability Alliance (SRDA), this partnership between three councils created a mainstream-quality event experience people with disability are often excluded from, bringing together entertainment, performers with disability, a services expo, sensory and quiet spaces, access volunteers and accessible wayfinding.





Finalists



Youth Without Limits

City of Greater Dandenong

Greater Dandenong Youth and Family Services, in partnership with Dandenong High School and local youth disability service Burke & Beyond, implemented Youth Without Limits – a project designed to build young people's awareness and inclusive support of people with a disability. Young people also developed event planning skills and co-delivered the Youth Without Limits event for over 80 local young people.

Fair Access: Sport Inclusion Program

City of Whittlesea

Council's Fair Access Policy was an opportunity to change the way sport is managed in the City of Whittlesea. Through consultation, consideration and embedding Gender Equity, the Fair Access Policy and its implementation is helping build stronger club and thriving communities by wholistically breaking down barriers to sport.



Bright Spark Special Commendations: YOur Special Place, City of Casey and Artplay New Ideas Lab, City of Melbourne.

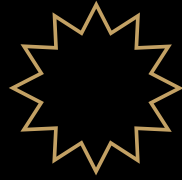


The Wellbeing Award for Community Health Impacts

In recognition of an innovative council-led program that
delivers measurable improvements in community health,
wellbeing and quality of life.

Award Partner





Finalists



Homelessness in Bass Coast: Scaling Collective Impact

Bass Coast Shire Council

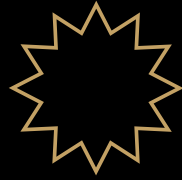
Through brave leadership and catalytic partnership-development, Bass Coast Shire Council has demonstrated and scaled a holistic approach to inter-agency coordination, community-led advocacy and funding attraction that is now driving sub-regional implementation of international best practice to end homelessness in the region.

Immunisation Equity in Action

Greater Dandenong City Council

An innovative, council-led immunisation model improving equitable access for culturally diverse and newly arrived communities. Through bilingual support, community, outreach and school-based delivery, tailored catch-up immunisation, and system partnerships, the program removes barriers to vaccination—ensuring every family, regardless of background or eligibility, can access timely, culturally safe immunisation resulting in our community being protected from vaccine preventable disease.





Finalists



Mallee Wellbeing Week

Mildura Rural City Council

A regional, multi-day initiative delivering inclusive wellbeing events across Mildura, Ouyen and Murrayville. The program brought together community members, services and keynote speakers to build resiliency, reduce stigma and improve access to wellbeing supports through education, lived experience discussions and social connection.

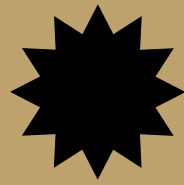
Engaging Fathers, Strengthening Families: MCH & Dads Group Collaboration

City of Stonnington

A collaborative initiative between Stonnington Maternal and Child Health Services (MCH) and Dads Group to actively engage fathers in early parenting. The program integrates father-inclusive practice into MCH services, delivers targeted events, and strengthens referral pathways—improving connection, parenting confidence, and mental wellbeing for fathers and their families.



Bright Spark Special Commendations: Home Library Service with Better Health Network, Kingston City Council, Aging Well: Immunisation Education and Pop-up Vaccination Clinics, City of Melbourne, MMR Rapid Response, Measles Prevention Initiative, Melton City Council and Upper Yarra Partnership: Listen to Learn, Yarra Ranges Shire Council.



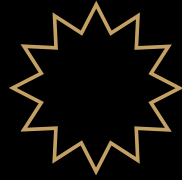
The Storytelling Award

for Inclusive and Engaging Council Communications

In recognition of an innovative council-led program that
uses creative storytelling to drive community engagement,
understanding, and trust.

Award Partner





Finalists



THIS! Is Kingston

City of Kingston

THIS! is Kingston is a bold destination storytelling campaign that reimagined how local government communicates place, culture and community. Through inclusive storytelling, creative branding and collaboration with approximately 150 local businesses, the campaign elevated Kingston's visitor economy, strengthened community pride and helped residents and visitors discover the unexpected.

Poetic Portraits

City of Monash

Poetic Portraits is a powerful storytelling project that gave voice to 20 Monash residents through poetry, portraiture, and audio. Delivered with RMIT University, it transformed lived experiences into public stories. The project created deep emotional connection, challenged perceptions of ageing, and celebrated identity, culture, and belonging across generations.



ngurrak barring

Yarra Ranges Shire Council

ngurrak barring ('mountain paths' in Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung) invites an immersive exploration into the cultural and creative heartbeat of goranwarrabil (the Dandenong Ranges), along 39 km of interconnected walking trails. At its core, ngurrak barring is about innovative storytelling through art, design and interpretation, including permanent sculptures, First Peoples design, digital platforms and interpretive signage, connecting a rich creative heritage to a thriving contemporary culture.

Bright Spark Special Commendations: Keeping Hume Clean, Hume City Council.



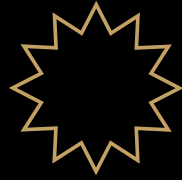
The Community Voice Award

for Inclusive Democratic Engagement

In recognition of innovative and impactful community engagement programs that strengthen democratic outcomes, build trust, address disinformation, and amplify diverse and often unheard voices.

Award Partner





Finalists



Stand Together: Countering Misinformation

Indigo Shire Council

Stand Together: Countering Misinformation equipped 75 participants across four Indigo Shire library branches with evidence-based tools to identify, fact-check, and respectfully challenge misinformation. Led by award-winning journalist Lauren Martin and grounded in the UNSW Kaldor Centre's research framework, the program positioned libraries as trusted civic spaces where communities build the media literacy skills essential to healthy democratic participation.

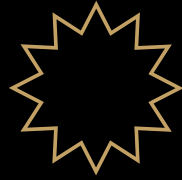
Talking Kingston

City of Kingston

Talking Kingston is Kingston City Council's year-round engagement platform, giving residents and businesses ongoing opportunities to influence Council priorities and investment decisions. By moving beyond traditional annual consultation,

Talking Kingston creates a two-way conversation between Council and community, ensuring feedback is heard, acted upon and reflected in projects and services that shape Kingston's future.





Finalists



By Kids for Kids Collective

City of Melbourne

By Kids For Kids (BKFK) shifts children from passive consumers of public life into active co-designers of city programming. Operating as a democratic, child-led collective, the cohort pitches, debates, and executes interactive public arts experiences. By embedding genuine decision-making and resource allocation, BKFK builds early civic literacy, amplifies unheard voices, and redefines inclusive municipal engagement from the ground up.

Council Plan 2025-2029

Greater Shepparton City Council

Greater Shepparton's Council Plan 2025–2029 was co-created through innovative deliberative engagement, scenario planning, and inclusive outreach. By amplifying under represented voices and integrating robust evidence with community aspirations, the process built genuine trust and delivered a resilient, community owned roadmap that is already guiding integrated strategy implementation across council.



Bright Spark Special Commendations: Our Place, Our Plan, Glen Eira City Council, Hume Young Mayors, Hume City Council, Shaping Balaclava, City of Port Phillip.





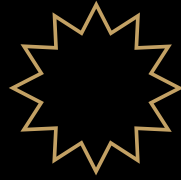
The Dollars and Sense Award

for Impactful and Innovative Business Operations

In recognition of innovation in council procurement, finance and business systems that deliver greater value for money, revenue generation, strengthen community and local industry outcomes, and improve financial sustainability.

Award Partner





Finalists



Stronger Together: A shared Cyber Security model for Local Government

City of Greater Bendigo

An innovative shared cyber security model redefining how councils access critical capability. Leveraging a flexible, fit-for-purpose managed SOC/SIEM solution, this initiative enables affordable, scalable protection for diverse environments. Led by the City of Greater Bendigo, it pioneers a new approach to shared services, delivering practical and affordable innovation that can be replicated across the local government sector.

Customer Experience Governance Model

City of Whittlesea

The City of Whittlesea's customer success business partner model transformed the way their teams think of the customer experience and act on it. The robust customer experience governance model sits across all their services and has seen self-service increase more than 400% without sacrificing customer satisfaction.



Upper Yarra Local Economic Development Strategy

Yarra Ranges Shire Council

The Upper Yarra Local Development Strategy innovates traditional council economic development by functioning as a community-led investment framework. Facilitated by Council, it directs State Government funding into Innovation Working Groups. This model has established 11 seed-funded projects to drive long-term regional prosperity, create local jobs, and strengthen local industry outcomes.

Bright Spark Special Commendations: Old Cheese Factory Analytics Upgrade, City of Casey.



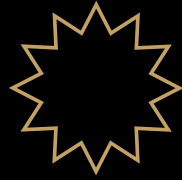
The Horizon Award

for Future Climate Leadership and Action

In recognition of an innovative council-led program or project that advances climate adaptation, climate resilience, or emissions reduction through sustainable, circular and regenerative approaches, including energy systems, design or retrofit, and community partnerships.

Award Partner





Finalists



Climate Action Living Lab

City of Casey

The Climate Action Living Lab is a City of Casey initiative that delivered six real-world climate trials through co-design, experimentation, and cross-sector collaboration. The program generated measurable environmental, social, economic, and innovation outcomes while building local capability, partnerships, and evidence to scale practical, community-driven climate solutions across the municipality and beyond.

Zero Emissions Initiative with Kingston's Local Business

City of Kingston

Kingston's Zero Emissions Business initiative helps industry transition from gas to efficient, electrified technologies powered by renewable energy. Through tailored assessments, business cases and strategic partnerships, the program supports businesses to reduce costs and emissions while strengthening resilience. Since 2022, it has engaged 113 businesses across 150 sites and identified more than 21,600 tCO₂-e in future emissions reductions.



Monbulk Community Microgrid

Yarra Ranges Shire Council

The Monbulk Microgrid is a council-led community energy project delivering resilience in a disaster-prone region. Linking key community facilities through 100 kW solar and 200 kWh battery storage, it reduces emissions by about 120 tCO₂e annually while enabling emergency hub operations for 3,000 households. Co-designed with community and partners, it provides scalable, cost-effective, climate-ready precinct infrastructure with long term benefits.

Bright Spark Special Commendations: bunjil nganga (Quarry Hills) ReLeaf Project, Whittlesea City Council, Supercharging Mildura Rural City, Mildura Rural Shire Council, Worms at Work, City of Melbourne and Polytank Recycling Program, Strathbogie Shire Council.

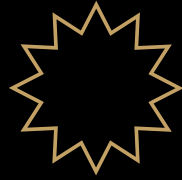


The Resilient Infrastructure Award for Emergency-Ready Community Systems

In recognition of innovation in the planning, delivery and management of resilient infrastructure - including risk mitigation and insurance-informed approaches - that supports communities before, during and after emergencies.

Award Partner

matter.



Finalists



Energy Resilient Community Hubs

Bass Coast Shire Council

Bass Coast Shire has partnered with local communities, industry, response agencies and government to deliver catalytic uplift in energy resilience across Bass Coast. Council has delivered 10 Energy Resilient Community Hubs at key sites with co-located community services, creating an eco-system of all-hazards resilience, supported by strong investment in social capital with local networks.

Modern Asset Management meets Biodiversity Protection and Public Safety

City of Stonnington

Stonnington Council embarked a multi-year project of upgrading Kooyongkoot shared path along the Gardiner Creek. This first stage served as designing a blueprint for building an inter-generational resilient infrastructure that will provide a shared path with modern public lighting management, biodiversity protection, reduction of adverse emissions whilst maintaining public safety. Building the inaugural IoT observation Station further futureproofed the project.



Council Resilient Buildings Program

Yarra Ranges Shire Council

Yarra Ranges Council's Resilient Buildings Program is redefining community resilience by transforming 33 existing facilities into a network of emergency-ready, low-carbon hubs. Through innovative retrofits including solar, batteries and backup power, the program strengthens disaster preparedness, cuts emissions and reduces costs. Delivering lasting social, environmental and operational benefits, it provides a scalable model for resilient communities everywhere.

Bright Spark Special Commendations: Casey Cellular Infrastructure Mapping, City of Casey.



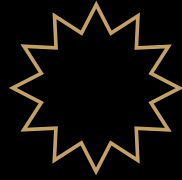
The Thriving Places Award

for Design and Planning Excellence

In recognition of council-led innovation in urban, housing and transport planning and design that creates vibrant, connected and resilient communities.

Award Partner





Finalists



Doing Planning Differently

Murrindindi Shire Council

Murrindindi Shire turned a rural housing and workforce crisis into a delivery pipeline. In a post-disaster, hazard-exposed Shire, we have connected design, housing and township planning to shift from strategy to action, unlocking key worker housing, directing growth to safer serviced locations and giving small rural communities a practical model for resilience-led place-making.

Neighbourhood Activity Centre Framework

City of Stonnington

Stonnington has prepared a Neighbourhood Activity Centres Framework to guide growth and development across 17 of our local centres, anticipated to accommodate a significant share of growth over the next 15+ years. It introduces clear built form controls (including FARs) to manage height and scale, while also including objectives, strategies and actions to support improved sustainability, walkability and public spaces.



Shifting your thinking from the constraints of a defined project to seeing and understanding the broad context of Country through the eyes of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

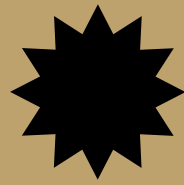
ngurrak-ba wurrung balit Country Voice Strong: Indigenous Design and Engagement Protocols

Yarra Ranges Shire Council

The Indigenous Design and Engagement Protocols set out a respectful, collaborative framework for working with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners. They embed cultural protocols, Indigenous knowledge and early partnership into planning and design, ensuring projects honour Country, support self-determination, and deliver meaningful, culturally grounded outcomes for community, place, and future generations.

Bright Spark Special Commendations: Growing Places Strategy, Golden Plains Shire Council, Mansell Reserve Masterplan, Mildura Rural City Council and Smart Shared Path Infrastructure, Stonnington City Council.



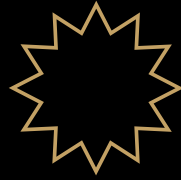


2025 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico Award: Emerging Leader

In recognition of an emerging Victorian local council leader
demonstrating excellence in innovation for the public good.

Award Partner





Finalists



Ann Ly

Secretariat, Community Advocacy Officer
City of Greater Dandenong

Ann Ly serves as secretariat and advocacy lead for the Back Your Neighbour campaign, delivered by the Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum. Since 2023, she has driven the campaign's strategic direction, led advocacy and coordinated national engagement with policymakers, councils and communities to advance fair reforms for people seeking protection in Australia.

Jay Smith

Energy and Water Innovation Officer,
Mildura Rural City Council

Over 15 years in local government, Jay has led Mildura's transition to a low-carbon future through renewable energy, electric transport and emissions reduction. Combining data, community insight and bold leadership, he has secured millions in funding, driven region-wide collaboration, and embedded sustainability into council operations — delivering lasting impact locally while influencing innovative practice across Australia.



Manohar Esarapu

Chief Information and Innovation Officer
City of Port Phillip

Manohar Esarapu was the Chief Information and Innovation Officer for the City of Port Phillip and innovator of the C.A.R.E framework: a balanced, accessible framework for AI adoption that brings together governance, use-case alignment, workforce enablement and technological foundations.



Bright Spark Special Commendations: Nick Grant-Collins, Coordinator, Community Safety and Resilience, Bass Coast Shire Council, Dr Marjan Hajjari, Executive Director Strategy and Corporate Services, City of Greater Dandenong and Lucy Proctor, Business Investment and Support Coordinator, Yarra Ranges Shire Council.

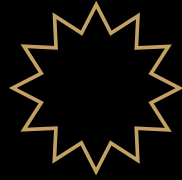


2025 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico Award: Established Leader (CEO)

In recognition of an established Victorian local council CEO demonstrating excellence in innovation for the public good.

Award Partner





Finalists



Jacqui Weatherill

Chief Executive Officer
City of Greater Dandenong

Jacqui Weatherill is a respected executive leader known for building inclusive, high-performing organisations. As CEO of the City of Greater Dandenong, she leads one of Australia's most diverse municipalities, combining strategic vision, strong culture and community focus. Her career spans local government, sport and the not-for-profit sector, with a consistent commitment to developing people and strengthening institutions.

Mary Agostino

Chief Executive Officer
Mitchell Shire Council

Mary Agostino is a highly respected local government leader whose partnership-led approach has delivered lasting outcomes for communities across Melbourne's north. Through strategic advocacy, regional collaboration and courageous leadership during times of crisis and growth, she has secured transformational investment, strengthened community resilience and created enduring value. She exemplifies how purpose-driven leadership can shape stronger communities and regions.



Tammi Rose

Chief Executive Officer
Yarra Ranges Shire Council

Over 25 years, Tammi has built a distinguished career in local government as a CEO, senior executive and board director. She delivers lasting community outcomes and advocates for the local government sector across jurisdictions. A generous and influential leader, Tammi actively contributes to sector networks and is passionate about developing future leaders, investing time mentoring and coaching the next generation.







2026 Sun Trophy

The purpose of the MAVlab Innovation Awards is to seek out and shine a light on creative innovation of all shapes, sizes and types - and it is only

To that end, we wanted to ensure that we mark this prestigious recognition with a unique and special artifact. Something that reflects the innovative thinking, deep skill, dedicated practice and rich storytelling that is at the heart of all of the nominated projects and people in this program.

As in 2025, we sought out a local Victorian artist and commissioned the creation of the 2026 "Sun Trophy" - one of which will be presented to each MAVlab Innovation Award winner.

2026 Sun Trophy Artist: Alterfact

Alterfact was founded in 2014 by Ben Landau and Lucile Sciallano with the goal of merging new technology and tradition through 3D printed ceramics.

Working with open source 3D clay printers that they have built and modified themselves, Alterfact creates and experiments with the possibilities of this contemporary technique. Their work explores the space between handmade and mass manufactured form and the influence of digital technology on craft practice.

Spanning art, craft and design, Alterfact's transdisciplinary practice pushes the boundaries of plastic-based 3D printing and plays with the capacities of clay to form intricate design and effects, borrowing inspiration from textiles, fibre arts, tapestry and basketry.

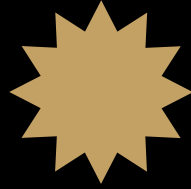
We hope the MAVlab Innovation Award Winners will treasure these artworks both for the recognition that they represent, and for their beauty and great care and skill that went into their creation.



MAVlab

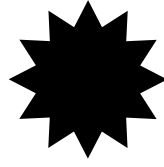


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With thanks to our judges

Justin Daly, Mornington Peninsula Shire
Jacquetta Griggs, Wyndham City Council
Marjan Hajjari, City of Greater Dandenong
Kate Harris, City of Greater Dandenong
Rakhi Khanna, Brimbank City Council
Fiona Le Gassick, Greater Shepparton City Council
Simon McMillan, Whitehorse City Council
Clare Murrell, City of Melbourne
Shawn Neilson, City of Banyule
Nalika Peiris, Merri-bek City Council
Santiago Perrotto, City of Darebin
Laura Pfiester, City of Melbourne
Justine Resta, Maribyrnong City Council
Thomas Rodger, Manningham City Council
Ann Selby, City of Casey
Tavis Vallance, City of Boroondara
Simon Woodland, Bass Coast Shire Council
Rob Adams AM, Adams Urban
Roya Azardi, Ylab
Sally Capp AO, Former Lord Mayor of Melbourne
Mark Chou, Australian National University
Katherine Ellis, Leadership Victoria
Ashlee Gardiner, Australian Smart Communities Association
Ben Hart, Fireside
Dan Hill, University of Melbourne
Olga Hogan, Breakthrough Victoria
Vanessa Huxley, Davidson
Georgiana Johnson, Datascape
Eilish Maguire, Australian Red Cross
Rebecca McKenzie, Dare Consulting
Uncle Charles Pakana, Victorian Aboriginal News
Jeanette Pope, Freelance
Alexander SG, SenSen Networks
Chris Speed, RMIT University
Claire Taylor, VicHealth
David Watson, Atturra
Molly Whelan, Foundation for Young Australians
Cameron Whitehead, JLT Public Sector
Adam Wood, Matter





MAVlab

Innovation Awards

We See You Shine