

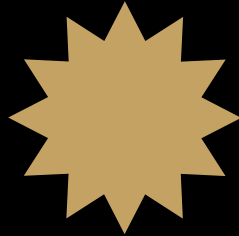


MAVlab

Innovation Awards

We See You Shine

Wednesday 8th October 2025
Higher Ground
650 Little Bourke St, Melbourne
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 memories, 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.



Welcome to the 2025 MAVlab Innovation Awards Celebration

The MAVlab Innovation Awards are here to spotlight the bold ideas, imaginative minds, and everyday breakthroughs shaping the future of local government in Victoria.

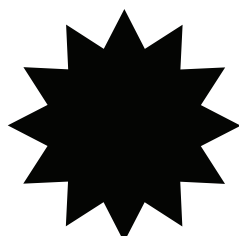
This new awards program celebrates the ingenuity, determination, and impact of local council teams and individuals who are driving real change through sweeping transformation or quiet reinvention.

Across Victoria, councils 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. The MAVlab Innovation Awards honour this work and the people bringing it to life.

We see you shine.

Innovation in local government takes courage. It takes vision. And it takes persistence. These awards are about recognising those who rise to the challenge. They are about celebrating the everyday innovations to the big bold transformations, where councils staff are finding opportunities at all scales to be creative, to deliver value to the communities who they passionately serve.

Whether you're rethinking how services are delivered, designing for climate resilience, or finding new ways to engage your community — your contribution should be celebrated.



Agenda

6:00pm - 6:30pm

Arrival and entertainment

Harambee Choir, a community vocal group based in Melbourne, Australia formed by a diverse group of young adults who all share a love of singing! The name “Harambee” (pronounced ha-rum-bay) means “in the spirit of togetherness” in Swahili.

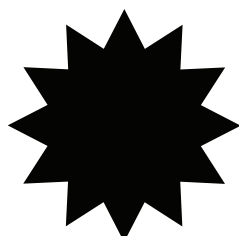
6:30PM - 9:00pm

Awards ceremony

Acknowledgement of Country
Opening address by MAV President, Jennifer Anderson
Awards presentations with MCs Bonnie, Gemma, Cam, Fides

9:00PM - 9:30PM

Celebration and networking



Award Categories

Award

The Thrive Award for Leadership in Change Management
The Insights Award for Leadership in Data-driven Decision-making
The Engage Award for Impactful and Inclusive Storytelling
The Sandbox Award for Experimentation Practice
The Stronger Together Award for Council Collaboration
The Connector Award for Community Inclusion and Cohesion
The Wellbeing Award for Community Health Impacts
The Refuge Award for Innovation in Housing and Safe Spaces for Community
The Now and Forever Award for Impact and Legacy
The Energiser Award for Climate Resilience and Adaptation
The Future is Maintenance Award for Asset Management
The Smooth Sailing Award for Service Optimisation and CX
The Fin-novation Award for Financial Ingenuity
The Systems and Cycles Awards for Regenerative Design
2025 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico Award: Emerging Leader
2025 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico Award: Leader

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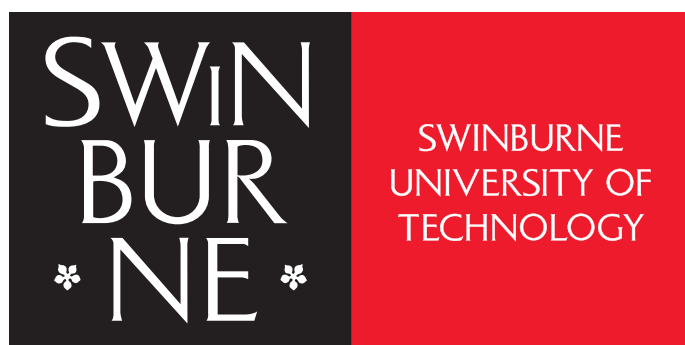


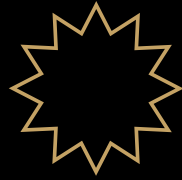
The Thrive Award

for Leadership in Change Management

In recognition of an exceptional local government leader or team who has contributed to an evolving, innovative culture in local government, enabling internal change and improvement.

Award Partner





Finalists



Continuous Improvement Team

Banyule City Council

Banyule's Continuous Improvement Team drives innovation, collaboration, and problem-solving across the organisation. By leading cross-organisational projects and creating efficiencies, the team helps foster staff engagement and a sense of shared ownership. Their approach has contributed to a culture of continuous improvement and delivered measurable outcomes.

Tavis Vallance

Coordinator Partnerships & Innovation
Boroondara City Council

Tavis brings a thoughtful blend of strategic thinking, creativity, and hands-on delivery to innovation in local government, shaped by a decade of experience in state government and the sport sector. From executive-led missions to grassroots initiatives, he approaches innovation as a practical discipline — focused on meaningful outcomes, steady progress, and community impact.



Lisa Ippolito

AI Enablement Lead
Whitehorse City Council

Lisa Ippolito is a continuous improvement specialist turned AI capability leader who has led a council-wide shift to explore and adopt generative AI at Whitehorse City Council. With no official brief or budget, Lisa has built guidelines, programs, networks, training, and real-time pilots, all while lifting sector capability and confidence.





The Insights Award

for Leadership in Data-driven Decision-making

An award recognising an exceptional local government individual or team leading in the use of technology and data to support council decision-making.

Award Partner





The five participants nominated for this award lead the diversity, inclusion and equity projects for Manningham Council, as part of the Organisational Development team. This team is empowered to create initiatives and approaches to highlight inclusive practices for the whole organisation.

The Knowledge Bank Technical Working Group develops and maintains the City of Melbourne's sector-leading community feedback analytics platform. Using custom-built NLP and machine learning, the Knowledge Bank makes it easy for staff to understand community insights across topics, themes, and past engagement projects.



The Learning and Organisational Development team drives meaningful growth at the City of Melbourne by connecting staff with the right development at the right time. Grounded in business needs and strong partnerships, the team translates goals into impactful, inclusive learning aligned with strategic and community outcomes.





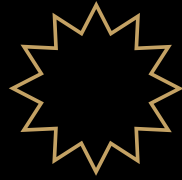
The Engage Award

for Impactful and Inclusive Storytelling

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

Award Partner

FIRESIDE AGENCY®



Finalists



Beach Safety: Innovation and Collaboration in Bass Coast

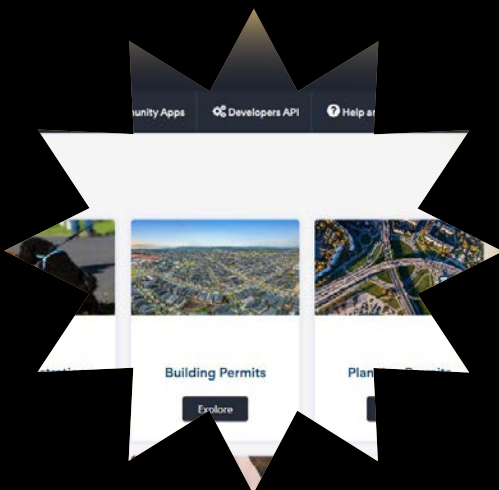
Bass Coast Shire Council

In response to tragic 2024 drownings, Bass Coast Shire led a cross-sector beach safety initiative with partners including Life Saving Victoria and VicPol. Using inclusive storytelling and co-designed messaging across digital, print, and signage, the project reached 145,000+ people. Measured by behaviour change and zero drownings in 2024–25, it's now recognised statewide model as a leading model for water safety communication.

Baybot

Bayside City Council

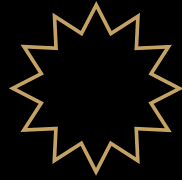
BayBot is an innovative generative AI chatbot launched by Bayside City Council to improve online navigation for council customers. It draws solely from council website content to ensure accuracy and cites sources. Designed with safeguards aligned to business rules, BayBot supports customer self-service, helping enhance user experience and contribute to organisational efficiency.



The City of Casey Open Data Exchange Insights Pages

Casey City Council

The Open Data Exchange shares council data with the Casey community. Since 2023, the Insights Page has been enhanced with more user-friendly visualisations and storytelling, focusing on accessibility for residents with limited data literacy. Featuring topics like emissions and council transparency, it's mobile-friendly and inclusive. Value is measured by analytics, feedback, and engagement, with traffic up 82% and increased internal collaboration.



Finalists



Mallee Women: Sharing Stories, Shaping Equality

Mildura Rural City Council

Mallee Women is a short film launched June 2025 to support long-term cultural change within the Mildura Regional City Council and community. It features diverse local women, sharing personal reflections on gender inequality and equality, power, privilege and action. It introduces concepts and terms related to gender equality to deepen understanding and community dialogue.

Peninsula Tales

Mornington Peninsula Shire

Peninsula Tales is a digital-first strategy highlighting local heroes, grassroots projects, and heartwarming moments that define the Peninsula. Through short videos and articles shared via social media, the Peninsula Buzz newsletter, and Peninsula Wide magazine, these stories engage the community, fostering pride in environmental achievements and everyday human connections. The editorial team carefully selects content to inspire and unite residents.



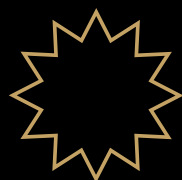


The Sandbox Award for Experimentation Practice

In recognition of a leading practice of testing and trialling to scale change across a council organisation and lead to tangible benefits for local community and/or council staff.

Award Partner





Finalists



Banyule's 1000 Jobs Project: A Tested Model for Inclusive Employment and Economic Growth

Banyule City Council

Launched in 2020, Banyule's Inclusive Local Jobs and Social Enterprise Strategies aim to reduce employment barriers for First Nations people, culturally diverse communities, people with disability, and young people. Through inclusive hiring, social procurement, and partnerships with businesses and social enterprises, the initiative reached its goal of 1,000 job outcomes by June 2024 — a year ahead of schedule.

Living Labs

Casey City Council

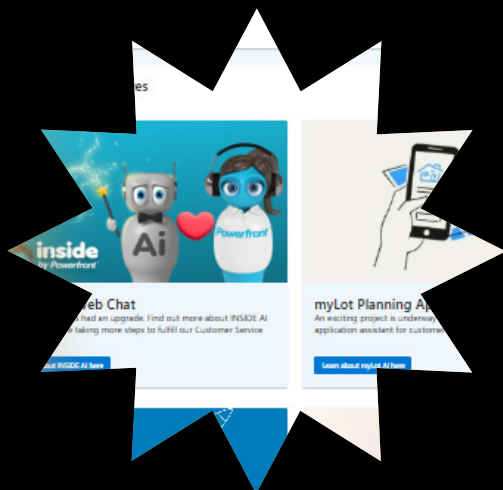
A Living Lab brings together diverse stakeholders — government, academia, businesses, and the community — to trial innovative solutions that address complex problems. The Circular Economy Living Lab was delivered in 2023, Future Mobility Living Lab in 2024, and Climate Action Living Lab in 2025. The Playbook was published in 2024 to support the adoption of this approach by other councils and organisations.



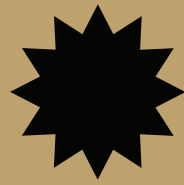
Mornington Peninsula Shire AI Experimentation Journey

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

Mornington Peninsula Shire's AI Experimentation Journey is a comprehensive capability-building initiative launched in 2024, designed to support the responsible adoption of AI through structured, staff-led experimentation. The program is spearheaded by a 65+ person AI Pioneer Network and, as a permanent innovation mechanism, positions the council as a national leader in responsible AI adoption.



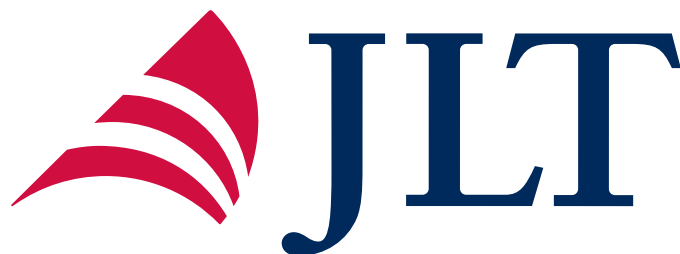


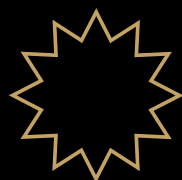


The Stronger Together Award for Council Collaboration

In recognition of demonstrated council-led collaboration
driving community resilience and/or other local outcomes.

Award Partner





Finalists



Bass Coast Homelessness Think Tank

Bass Coast Shire Council

Implemented in late 2023, the Homelessness Think Tank is a community-led initiative convened by Bass Coast Shire Council in partnership with Rotary Club Wonthaggi. The Think Tank has become a catalytic driver of community-led projects, and operates as a continuous cycle of implementation, community-led evaluation, and adaptation.

Welcome Baby to Wurundjeri Country Ceremony

Brimbank City Council and Maribyrnong City Council

The Welcome Baby to Wurundjeri Country ceremony for First Nations children aged 0-5 and their families, fostered connections to culture, community, and Country as well as improving access to Early Years services. The event was run by Maribyrnong and Brimbank councils on 25.02.2025. 43 children were welcomed by Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Dianne Kerr, joined by 200 family and community members.



Timber Transition: Upper Yarra Local Development Strategy

Yarra Ranges Shire Council

Launched in mid-2023, the Upper Yarra Local Development Strategy is a three-year initiative empowering communities impacted by the timber industry's closure. Through Smart Specialisation and Quadruple Helix collaboration, the project supports locally led Innovation Working Groups to create job-generating projects that build long-term township viability.





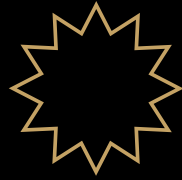
The Connector Award

for Community Inclusion and Cohesion

In recognition of an innovative council-led program or project that brings community together in creative ways to strengthen connection and social cohesion, especially with young people.

Award Partner





Finalists



Shaping the Future of Noojee

Baw Baw Shire Council

Shaping the Future of Noojee is a four-year project (August 2022 – December 2026) supporting economic diversification and resilience following the cessation of native timber harvesting. Led by a dedicated team, it focuses on local job creation, business and product collaborations, increased tourism, and stronger community connection — helping Noojee transition from its timber-town identity to a more sustainable economic future.

#Proud2Be

Greater Dandenong City Council

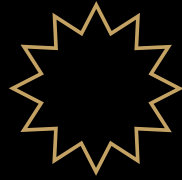
#Proud2Be is a co-designed campaign supporting LGBTQIA+ youth in Greater Dandenong — Australia's most multicultural community — where cultural and religious barriers can limit acceptance. From August 2023 to February 2024, the project engaged schools, ran 12 capacity-building sessions, and empowered young people to create advocacy materials to deliver a campaign that reached over 75,000 people and boosted visibility, confidence, and community awareness.



Merri-bek Democracy Lab

Merri-bek City Council

Launched in 2019, the Merri-bek Democracy Lab — a partnership between Merri-bek City Council and The Public Value Studio — empowers diverse community members to engage in civic life. Through an 8-week skill-building program, participants gain confidence, build connections, and lead community projects. Outcomes include 88% reporting increased civic awareness and 92% stronger social ties.



Finalists



The Mount Alexander Shire Community Infrastructure for Flood Recovery and Resilience

Mount Alexander Shire Council

Following the October 2022 floods, Mount Alexander Shire Council launched a Flood Recovery and Resilience Program. Funded by Emergency Recovery Victoria and shaped through workshops with over 100 community members and partners, the program is delivering a series of projects that are strengthening local connection and building long-term resilience and recovery infrastructure.

Our Country, Our Way – Embedding Indigenous Perspectives in Land and Emergency Management

Yarra Ranges Shire Council

“Our Country, Our Way”, launched by Yarra Ranges Council in 2023, embeds Indigenous perspectives in land and emergency management. Through co-designed frameworks, integration of Indigenous knowledge, and a national symposium, the initiative empowers First Nations leadership, fosters cultural resilience, and promotes sustainable, culturally safe practices — strengthening inter-council collaboration and continuing strong stewardship of Country and heritage.



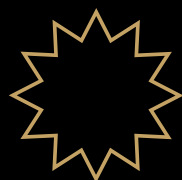


The Wellbeing Award for Community Health Impacts

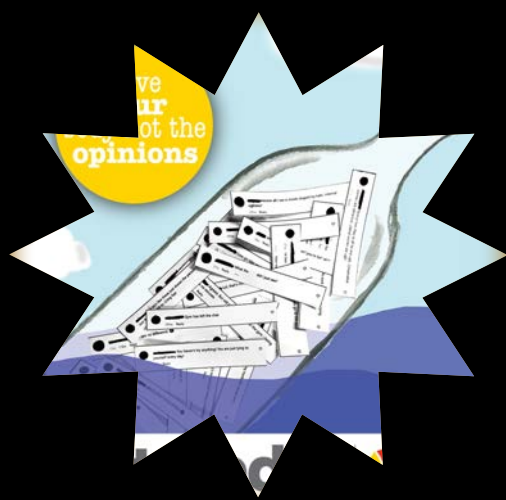
In recognition of an innovative council-led program or project
with valuable community health and well-being outcomes.

Award Partner





Finalists



#Filtered: The Body Image Project

Greater Dandenong City Council

#Filtered: The Body Image Project is a youth-led social media campaign by Greater Dandenong City Council, co-designed with Killester College students and supported by the Butterfly Foundation and Chisholm Institute. Running from Nov 2023 to Dec 2024, it educates young people — especially young women — on social media's impact on body image, reaching 15,000+ and boosting awareness of support resources for 94% of participants surveyed.

Gendering in a New Era in Sport Project

Mildura Regional City Council

Gendering in a New Era in Sport is a state-funded initiative empowering sporting-clubs to create safe and inclusive environments for women and gender-diverse individuals. The program combines education, training and auditing tools to identify gaps and implement actionable strategies. Since 2022, 26 clubs have participated, fostering systemic cultural change and improved governance.



Mallee Women: Sharing Stories, Shaping Equality

Mildura Regional City Council

Mallee Women is a short film launched June 2025 to support long-term cultural change within the Mildura Regional City Council and community. It features diverse local women, sharing personal reflections on gender inequality and equality, power, privilege and action. It introduces concepts and terms related to gender equality to deepen understanding and community dialogue.





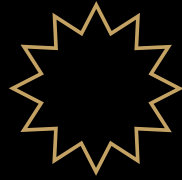
The Refuge Award

for Innovation in Housing and Safe Spaces for Community

In recognition of an innovative council-led place, project or
program creating safe refuge, amenity or shelter.

Award Partner





Finalists



The Harbour – Social Housing Pilot

Darebin City Council

This project is piloting the long-term lease (50 years) of underutilised council-owned land to deliver social housing. Following community engagement and an expression of interest process, the site was leased to a Community Housing Provider. Completed in August 2023, the development meets top sustainability standards and retains public parking and trees — supporting long-term housing for the community.

Make Room

Melbourne City Council

This transformation of a heritage-listed, council-owned building on Little Bourke Street into 50 studio apartments for people experience chronic homelessness is based on Housing First principles. This highly collaborative project provides residents with integrated support and pathways into sustainable long-term housing.



Safe Haven: A Community Driven Housing Solution for Women and Children at Risk

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

This community-driven housing solution for women and children at risk explores the transformative potential of inclusive, community-led solutions to homelessness and housing insecurity. With over 80% community support this project will create a safe haven for women and children and older women at risk in Rosebud on the Peninsula.





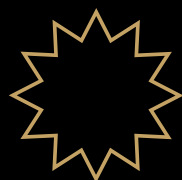
The Now and Forever Award

for Impact and Legacy

In recognition of an innovative council-led project that delivers
value for future generations.

Award Partner





Finalists



Growing Our Own Early Years Workforce

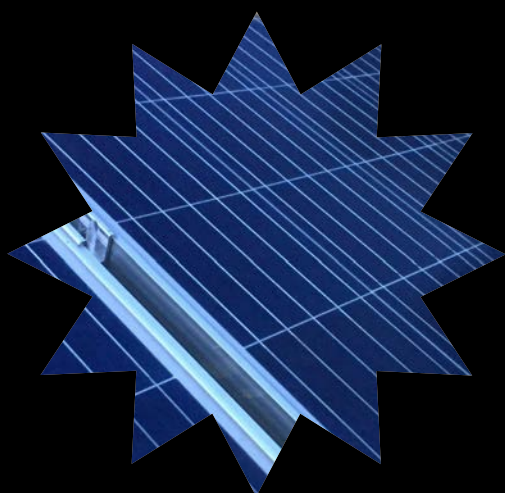
Corangamite Shire Council

Since 2020, this initiative has built a skilled, collaborative early years workforce through tailored recruitment, professional development, and leadership pathways. Strong partnerships with educators, schools, and community have reduced professional isolation and improved retention. With 40% of staff upskilling, the organisation is now an employer of choice, offering career progression and fostering structured, collaborative work practices.

The Harbour – Social Housing Pilot

Darebin City Council

This project is piloting the long-term lease (50 years) of underutilised council-owned land to deliver social housing. Following community engagement and an expression of interest process, the site was leased to a Community Housing Provider. Completed in August 2023, the development meets top sustainability standards and retains public parking and trees — supporting long-term housing for the community.



Solar Saver

Darebin City Council

Solar Saver (2014–2025) is a council-led program offering solar and efficient systems with no upfront cost and 10-year interest-free loans. Supporting over 2,000 households — 60% low-income or vulnerable — it has installed 8,800 kW of solar, cut 122,000 tonnes of CO₂, and generated \$16M in local economic activity, advancing climate resilience, equity, and community-wide electrification.

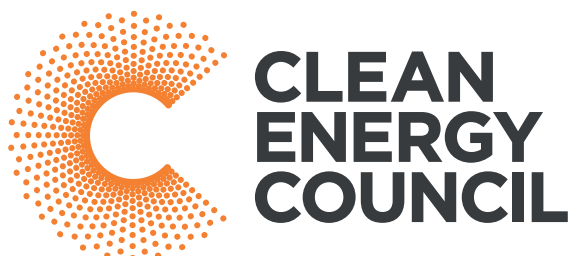


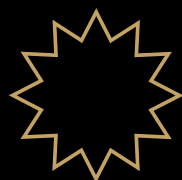
The Energiser Award

for Climate Resilience and Adaptation

In recognition of an innovative council-led project or program
focused on climate adaptation, climate resilience and or
emissions reduction.

Award Partner





Finalists



Climate Action Living Lab (CALL)

Casey City Council

Casey Active Local Lab (CALL) is a Casey City Council initiative supporting external partners to test innovative climate solutions that build environmental and community resilience. Six organisations, selected via a grants process in August 2024, are trialling projects from February to December 2025. Impact is measured using shared metrics and data to evaluate outcomes across all trials.

Solar Saver

Darebin City Council

Solar Saver (2014–2025) is a council-led program offering solar and efficient systems with no upfront cost and 10-year interest-free loans. Supporting over 2,000 households — 60% low-income or vulnerable — it has installed 8,800 kW of solar, cut 122,000 tonnes of CO₂, and generated \$16M in local economic activity, advancing climate resilience, equity, and community-wide electrification.



Private Electric Vehicle Kerbside Charging Project

Port Phillip City Council

In 2022, Port Phillip City Council piloted kerbside EV charging for residents without off-street parking, partnering with a provider to install home-powered units on council land. Starting with 10 units and expanding to 100, the project established safe, equitable permitting for private use of public space. Impact is measured through uptake, resident feedback, and progress toward climate resilience goals.



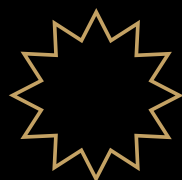


The Future is Maintenance Award for Asset Management

In recognition of a council-led project or program
demonstrating innovation in ongoing place or asset
maintenance.

Award Partner

matter.



Finalists



Public Art Conservation Program

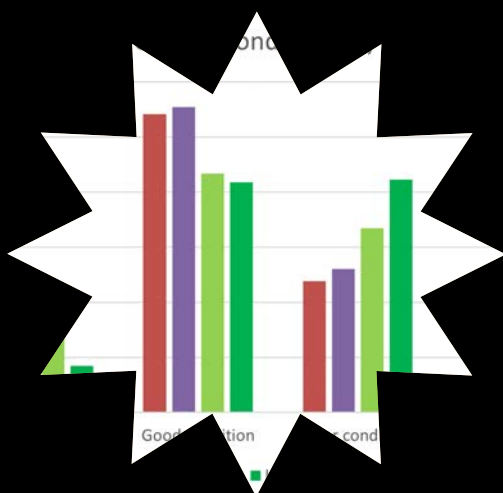
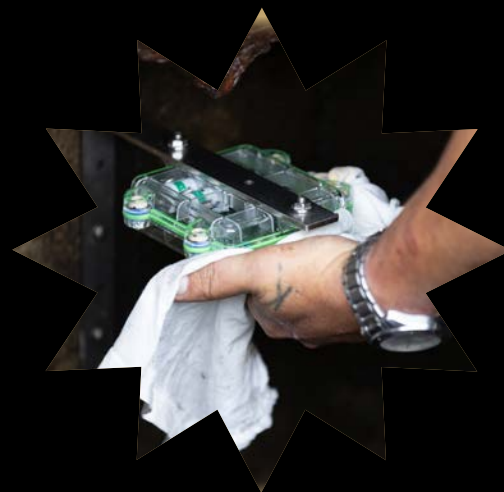
Ballarat City Council

Launched in 2023, the City of Ballarat's Public Art Conservation Management Program supports its \$20M public art collection — one of Australia's most significant regional collections. Led by the Public Art Officer, the program includes a digital database, condition assessments, and annual conservation planning. Success is measured by completed restorations, improved condition ratings, and growing community engagement, including philanthropic support.

Melbourne's Stormwater Sensing Pilot

Melbourne City Council

Running from early 2024 to June 2025, the Stormwater Sensing Pilot trialled smart sensors in 30 drains to monitor water levels, blockages, and debris in real time. Led by the Smart City Incubator, it enabled proactive maintenance, featured co-designed signage, and public education. Now operationalised, it improves asset management, with value shown through early interventions and reduced unplanned maintenance.



Renewals for Nature

Melbourne City Council

From November 2023 to June 2024, the City of Melbourne and Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria developed a comprehensive methodology to audit all municipal garden beds. Combining asset mapping, condition assessments, and ecological theory, the project supports horticulture, asset management, and biodiversity planning. Outcomes include improved plant survival, reduced renewal costs, and enhanced capacity to meet biodiversity targets.

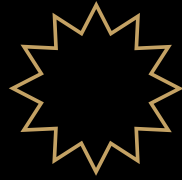


The Smooth Sailing Award for Service Optimisation and CX

For an innovative council-led program or project demonstrating
excellence in the use of data and/or technologies in service
optimisation and improved customer experience.

Award Partner

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Finalists



Baybot

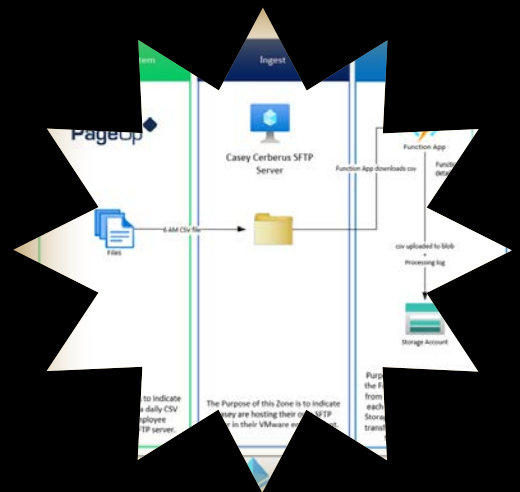
Bayside City Council

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Smart Start: Automating Payroll Onboarding for Faster Service and Compliance

Casey City Council

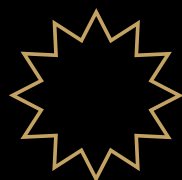
Launched in April 2025, this project automated onboarding data transfer from PageUp to iChris, replacing manual HR and payroll entry. Handling up to 500 records annually, it reduces errors, improves compliance, and speeds up processing. Designed as a low-cost MVP, it enhances employee experience and engagement by enabling timely, seamless onboarding for new starters and their managers.



'My Mitchell' mobile app

Mitchell Shire Council

Launched in August 2024, the My Mitchell App improves resident access to council services through features like bin reminders, waste guides, issue reporting, and local news. Designed for mobile convenience, it supports ongoing community engagement. Success is measured by adoption and feedback, with early results showing strong uptake and positive community response.



Finalists



Mitchell Shire Council Gender Impact Assessment App

Mitchell Shire Council

Launched in November 2023, Mitchell Shire's Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) App supports compliance with the Gender Equality Act 2020. Built on PowerApps for mobile and desktop, it streamlines assessments and approvals. Now embedded in Council decision-making, it is improving gender equity outcomes and is shared widely across Victorian local governments and major organisations, promoting broader adoption statewide.

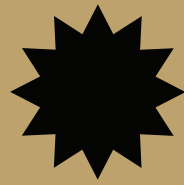
MyLot

Yarra Ranges Shire Council

Launched in March 2025, Yarra Ranges' MyLot is an AI-powered digital planning portal that streamlines pre-application advice for residents, developers, and consultants. Featuring a Permit Checker and Submission Checklist, it improves application quality and reduces enquiry times. MyLot enhances planner productivity and empowers the community to make informed decisions, fostering a faster, more inclusive planning process.





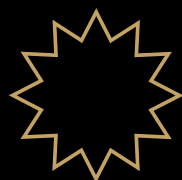


The Systems and Cycles Awards for Regenerative Design

In recognition of an innovative council-led project or program
demonstrating innovation excellence in sustainable and
regenerative design and or retrofit.

Award Partner





Finalists



Soft Plastics Circular Contract

Brimbank City Council

Launching in August 2025, Brimbank's Circular Plastics Project will be Melbourne Metro's first permanent council-led soft plastics recycling program with a closed-loop guarantee. In partnership with Close the Loop, collected plastics will be turned into asphalt additive for local roads. The program targets landfill diversion, illegal dumping, and community participation, with success measured by diversion, uptake, and engagement.

Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre

Darebin City Council

Completed in 2023, the all-electric Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre is a 6 Star Green Star facility powered by renewables, featuring water reuse systems, green infrastructure, and a 450kW solar array. Replacing a gas-powered centre, it advances climate action and community wellbeing. A RecycleSmart partnership supports waste recovery, with impact measured through emissions, waste diversion, and user satisfaction.



Queen Victoria Market Circular Economy Precinct

Melbourne City Council

Running from 10 July to 30 September, the Queen Victoria Market Circular Economy Precinct engages local and international visitors in sustainable practices. It features a reusable packaging pilot, circular food processing with the Moving Feast Kitchen to address food-insecurity for local university students, and public events for community education — demonstrating regenerative design and measuring impact through waste reduction, savings, and social outcomes.



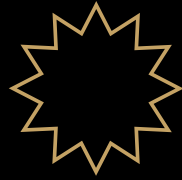
The Fin-novation Award

for Financial Ingenuity

In recognition for an innovative council-led program or project that has demonstrated innovation in financial strategy and management to achieve high impact results, cost savings, and/or new revenue for council.

Award Partner





Finalists



Shaping the Future of Noojee

Baw Baw Shire Council

Shaping the Future of Noojee is a four-year project (August 2022 – December 2026) supporting economic diversification and resilience following the cessation of native timber harvesting. Led by a dedicated team, it focuses on local job creation, business and product collaborations, increased tourism, and stronger community connection — helping Noojee transition from its timber-town identity to a more sustainable economic future.

Smart Asset Monitoring at Casey Fields

Casey City Council

Launched in 2024, this initiative uses smart sensors and AI vision across the 80-hectare Casey Fields to monitor usage, traffic, and maintenance needs. Supporting both community and elite sport, the project enhances asset management through real-time data. Value is demonstrated through improved planning, budget alignment, stakeholder engagement, and more informed, data-driven decision-making — continuing into 2025.



Caring Across Communities

Glen Eira City Council and Bayside City Council

Glen Eira and Bayside Councils partnered to deliver a seamless, sustainable transition of in-home and social support services. From 11 November 2024, Bayside began servicing Glen Eira residents, ensuring continuity of care, expanded offerings, and secure staff employment. All deliverables were met on time, with over 1,600 residents supported — 65 of whom now receive increased services to better meet needs.

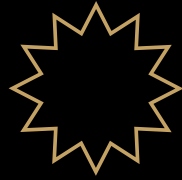


2025 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico Award: Emerging Leader

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

Award Partner

LEADERSHIP VICTORIA



Finalists



Tavis Vallance

Coordinator Partnerships & Innovation
Boroondara City Council

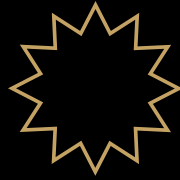
Tavis brings a thoughtful blend of strategic thinking, creativity, and hands-on delivery to innovation in local government, shaped by a decade of experience in state government and the sport sector. From executive-led missions to grassroots initiatives, he approaches innovation as a practical discipline — focused on meaningful outcomes, steady progress, and community impact.

Scot Walker

Emergency Management Coordinator
Greater Dandenong City Council

With nearly seven years in local government, Scot has successfully navigated significant legislative changes and increasing service demands. He leads a small, dedicated team that consistently goes above and beyond to support the community. Inspired by his team's commitment and passion, Scot embraces every challenge with a focus on the community's wellbeing and best interests.





Finalists



Margie McKay

**Manager Urban Design and Place
Greater Geelong City Council**

Margie brings over 20 years' experience in architecture, urban design, and strategic planning, focusing on public interest and policy innovation. She supports multidisciplinary teams and works collaboratively within government to deliver community-focused solutions. Skilled in stakeholder engagement and urban strategy, Margie is committed to evidence-based, inclusive outcomes that contribute to resilient and thoughtful city-making.

Jay Smith

**Energy & Water Innovation Officer
Mildura Rural City Council**

Jay has over 15 years in local government, nearly 10 with Mildura Rural City Council. His work supports renewable energy, electric transport, and emissions reduction, influencing councils nationally.

Grounded in data and community, Jay has secured funding, led collaborations, and fostered a culture of sustainability. A mentor, advocate, and educator, Jay strives to make a meaningful impact in climate action.

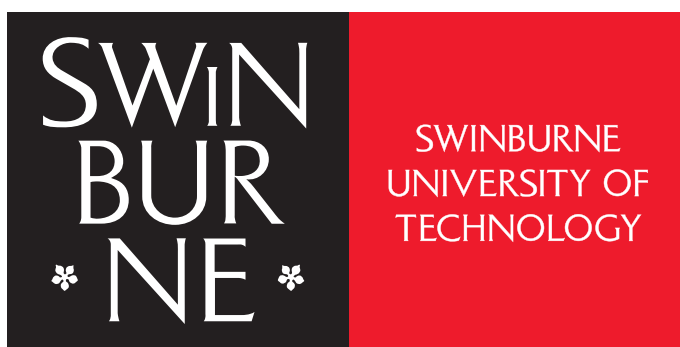


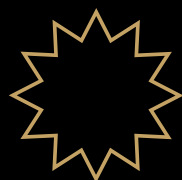


2025 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico Award: Leader

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

Award Partner





Finalists



Christian Stefani

Director Strategy and Partnerships
South Gippsland Shire Council

Christian Stefani, Director of Strategy and Partnerships at South Gippsland Shire Council, brings over 20 years of leadership experience across diverse local government portfolios. He is a skilled strategist and advocate, known for navigating complex challenges and driving successful outcomes. Passionate about empowering others, Christian is committed to fostering growth, collaboration, and strong community and organisational impact.

Simon McMillan

Chief Executive Officer
Whitehorse City Council

Since joining Whitehorse City Council as CEO in 2019, Simon McMillan has led the organisation through COVID-19 recovery and major transformation. Navigating rapid growth and state-led infrastructure projects, he champions integrity, collaboration, and strong partnerships. Simon fosters a culture of staff engagement, ensuring employees feel valued and empowered as the organisation evolves to meet future challenges.



Amanda Kern

Manager Strategic Planning, Environment and Transport
Yarra Ranges and Nillumbik Shire Councils

Amanda Kern is a nationally-recognised planning leader whose career spans 20 years in Victorian local government. Known for her values-based leadership and pioneering innovation, Amanda led the creation of MyLot; an award-winning AI-powered planning tool that has transformed public access to planning information.







Principal Partner



If you partner with Swinburne University of Technology, you are guaranteed real industry experience, cutting-edge skills, and career-building connections.

Real skills. Our learning environments are far from textbook – we’re constantly investing in state-of-the-art spaces, enabling endless discoveries.

Real experience. We connect students seamlessly with industry and local Councils, through deep partnerships, placements, projects and professional degrees.

Real connections. We know our differences are what make us stronger. Like smaller classes with mentorship from industry-connected educators, and our creative, inclusive community.

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www.swinburne.edu.au

Awards Partners



The Now and Forever Award: 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. www.redcross.org.au



The Sandbox Award: Breakthrough Victoria is transforming the Victorian economy by investing in and supporting successful IP and research commercialisation. We deliver this vision by investing in innovation and technology commercialisation and catalysing private investment to deliver economic growth, job creation and environmental and social impact for Victoria. www.breakthroughvictoria.com



The Energiser Award: The Clean Energy Council is the peak body for the clean energy industry in Australia. We work to accelerate Australia's transition to a clean energy future, laying the foundations for Australia to become a clean energy superpower. www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au



The Fin-novation Award: 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. www.finpro.org.au



The Engage Award: Fireside is the communications agency for people suspicious of communications agencies. We're sought out by organisations doing important work who are struggling to tell their story - then kept close because we deliver without the usual agency nonsense. We're particularly passionate about helping councils across Australia connect with their communities through powerful storytelling. Why? Because we believe good local government is made even better with great communication. www.firesideagency.com.au



The Stronger Together 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. www.jltpublicsector.com



The Smooth Sailing Award: SERV is the operator of the historic Victorian Register of land and, through LANDATA®, Victoria's land title and property information service, provides vital property information to all Victorians. As a progressive data partner, SERV and LANDATA® are building digital solutions that uplift service delivery, reduce friction, and better serve communities – connecting Victorians to the trusted property information they need. www.servvictoria.com.au/landata

Partners Continued



2025 Innovatio Pro Bono Publico - Emerging Leader: Leadership Victoria (LV) has been developing, connecting and inspiring leaders for more than 35 years, building a diverse community of over 7,000 Alumni. Our graduates strengthen communities and tackle society's complex and systemic challenges in their organisations, communities and beyond. www.leadershipvictoria.org



The Future is Maintenance Award: Matter provides world-first AI solutions to build smarter, more resilient communities. We replace guesswork with data by combining advanced sensor networks with powerful data analytics, helping councils and operators transform their waste and water management. Trusted by councils across Australia, we turn real-time data into actionable insights that build a more sustainable future. Welcome to the future with Matter. www.wastematters.co www.watermatters.ai



The Refuge Award: Neighbourhood Houses are places of connection, belonging, participation and inclusion. With over 400 locations across Victoria, these community-led & place-based 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. www.nhvic.org.au



The Connector Award: nbn Local is a dedicated engagement team within nbn's Regional Development & Engagement branch. Our purpose is to build digital capability in regional communities, improve customer experience, and create meaningful social and economic benefits for rural and regional Australians. Operating across 22 regions nationwide, we work alongside local communities to connect people and businesses with opportunities that digital connectivity enables. www.nbnco.com.au



The Systems and Cycles Award: RMIT is a global university of technology, design and enterprise. One of Australia's original tertiary institutions, RMIT University enjoys an international reputation for excellence in professional and vocational education, applied research, and engagement with the needs of industry and the community. RMIT is a world leader in Art and Design; and Architecture and the Built Environment - including the leading expertise and in the Centre for Urban Research and Australian Urban Observatory. www.rmit.edu.au



The Insights Award: SenSen Networks is a global leader in AI-driven enforcement and mobility solutions for cities, enterprises, and universities. Our flagship products, SenFORCE and SenPIC, enable cities to automate parking, traffic, and curbside compliance, reducing congestion and improving safety. With deployments across 60+ cities in Australia, North America, and Asia, SenSen is helping cities streamline enforcement to tackle complex urban challenges, boost efficiency, and manage parking demand. www.sensen.ai



The Wellbeing Award: VicHealth (the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation) is proud to support Local Governments in creating healthier, more equitable communities. As the world's first health promotion foundation, we focus on preventing chronic disease and promoting health where people live, learn, work, play and age. We partner with Councils to elevate community health and wellbeing priorities, recognising the crucial role they play in driving local action. www.vichealth.vic.gov.au





2025 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 right that we reflect this purpose in our own practice.

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.

We sought out a local Victorian artist and commissioned the creation of the inaugural “Sun Trophy” - one of which will be presented to each MAVlab Innovation Award winner.

2025 Sun Trophy Artist Cassie Leatham

Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung) artist Cassie Leatham of Wild Blak Arts has handcrafted the 2025 Sun Trophy. The woven suns were created after Cassie harvested and dried native Indigenous grasses, weaving over many weeks in a variety of styles.

Cassie Leatham is a multi-disciplinary Indigenous artist working in weaving, fashion and jewellery design, painting, ceramics, bushtukka and cultural education. All of Cassie's works have a deep connection to Country, biodiversity and traditional sustainable living of the past, to carry on in the present, for future generations to witness and learn.

Cassie is generous with sharing her knowledge, "it's about

sharing important messages, and the meaningfulness of caring for Country and being sustainable in everything we do."

All trophies include a blackwood timber base crafted by Chapman & Bailey and engraved at Melbourne City Engraving.

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.

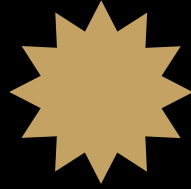
We see you shine.



MAVlab



MAV
MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA



With thanks to our judges

Amy Gregorovich, Yarra Ranges Shire Council
Bianca Benjamin, Melbourne City Council
Cam Perkins, Darebin City Council
Kate Harris, Greater Dandenong City Council
Yuri Guzman, Greater Dandenong City Council
Julian Donlen, Port Phillip City Council
Max Ree-Goodings, Murrindindi Shire Council
Lee Bethune, Greater Geelong City Council
Sam Bagnato, Banyule City Council
Mandy O'Toole, Melbourne City Council
Jason Eades, Melbourne City Council
Justine Resta, Maribyrnong City Council and ALGIM Australia
Alicia Hooper, Surf Coast Shire Council
Rakhi Khana, Brimbank City Council
Graeme Mawson, Boroondara City Council
Joan Andrews, Bayside City Council
Ashlee Gardner, City of Parramatta (NSW)
Allison Kealy, Swinburne University of Technology
Jemma Soklev, Swinburne University of Technology
Claire Taylor, VicHealth
Justin Gillingham, JLT Public Sector
Nathan Hart, Clean Energy Council
Ben Hart, Fireside Agency
Ralph Horne, RMIT University
Tom Bentley, RMIT University
Keir Paterson, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
James Sankar, Australian Smart Communities Association (ASCA)
Katherine Ellis, Leadership Victoria
Lauren Morrey, Breakthrough Victoria
Eilish Maguire, Australian Red Cross
Emile Theodorou, Australian Red Cross
Uncle Charles Pakana, Victorian Aboriginal News
Tamara Pararajasingham, Uniting
Clare Flintoff, OzHarvest
Jeremy Walker, Craig Walker
Portia Odell, Climate Works
Rob Adams, Adam Urban
Sam Hannah-Ranken
Tyrone Toole, NTRO



MAVlab

Innovation Awards

We See You Shine