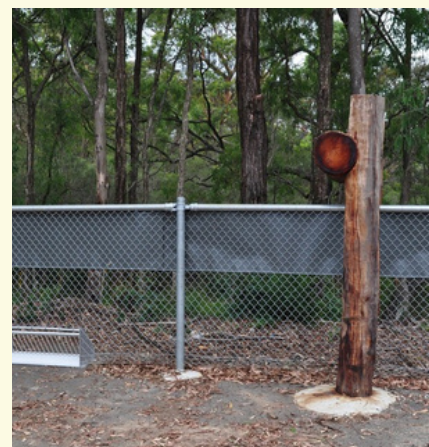
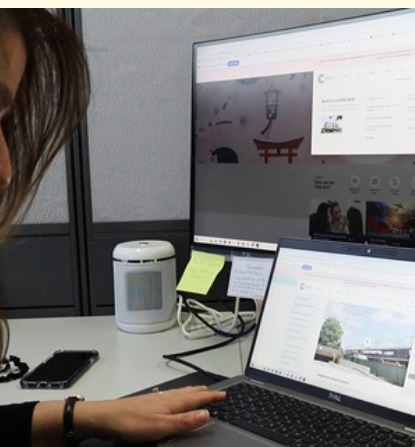


Planning  
Institute  
Australia

**2025**  
**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**AWARDS FOR  
PLANNING  
EXCELLENCE**



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# Message from the State President

I begin by thanking the awards jury and the convenor Sharon Smith RPIA (Fellow), who have devoted their time and expertise to this very important task. The jury always has the unenviable task of picking one winner for each category together with one or two commendations. Having reviewed the nominated projects, I am both inspired by these projects and immensely proud of the planning profession for the extraordinary work undertaken. The awards represent the diversity, breadth, and depth of our profession.

The awards have reinforced to me that planning is about place-based solutions which meet the needs of and aspirations of our communities. Successful planning is not a one size fits all approach. Technology and other innovations are also on display in the awards as a demonstration of how technology can be utilised to improve engagement with our communities and make us more agile and nimble.

We also see planners working with planning authorities to address our most pressing challenges for the future including housing, energy transition, and climate change.

The last 18 months has challenged all of us to consider how to increase housing supply while maintaining the quality of local environments. We see examples in the awards of planning authorities that have done this very successfully. These place-based solutions have addressed a variety of contexts across inner city, suburban, regional, or rural localities. These solutions also tackle critical issues which add complexity to the problem and demonstrate how planning can help communities manage complex problems.

Excellence does not mean perfection or without error. What we learn from excellence is how something can be even better as it provides lessons that we can apply for our projects.

Consider the award winners and do not just consider how can I apply that process to your work but consider how can you improve on that work. We highlight excellence in planning so that others can take the work begun and continue the journey to better and improved planning practices and outcomes. Well done to all the nominations and congratulations to the winners.

*Sue W.*



Sue Weatherley MPlA (Fellow)

# Message from the Jury Chair

Tonight we come together to share stories of innovation and dedication and to champion the importance of what we do in our planning profession. We celebrate and recognise the ingenious and meaningful work that is being undertaken by planners across rural, regional and metropolitan NSW. These Awards for Planning Excellence help us to communicate why planning matters, and assist to lift awareness of urban and regional planning as a career choice.

This year we have received many entries in all categories. Thank you to everyone who nominated. You have provided a spotlight on how you work within your communities to deliver quality strategic outcomes for our built and natural environments in an ever evolving and always challenging landscape. It is very apparent that planners across our state are proud and committed to our profession.

The judging panel is highly impressed with the quality of entries we have received in 2025. This is my second year as your NSW Awards Convenor, and it is such a privilege to dive into your nominations and read about your diverse and inspiring projects. The judging panel are likewise honoured to be invited to assess your submissions, and they have spent many hours in thoughtful deliberation over your many and varied nominations. It is a complex task when the standard of nominations is so high.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all members of the judging panel for their time and commitment. They each demonstrate an unwavering support for our profession and each brought a unique perspective in a collaborative manner when deliberating over the various categories.

Tonight, we acknowledge the excellence that flourishes within our profession. What a privilege it is to honour our peers who have excelled this year.



Sharon Smith RPIA (Fellow)

Congratulations to all nominees, and especially those who have received a Commendation or Award. Your work is helping to shape our world!

*Sharon S.*

# PIA New South Wales Awards Jury Members



**Amanda Antcliff RPIA**

Amanda is a Senior Principal Environmental Planner at Umwelt specialising in the delivery of integrated, multidisciplinary environmental assessments to support NSW and Commonwealth approvals. With a focus on complex State significant projects, she is committed to balancing environmental, social and cultural constraints.



**Michelle Bisson MPIA**

Michelle is the Executive Director of Planning and Environment at City of Newcastle. Michelle leads the Planning, Regulatory, Transport, Environment and Sustainability teams which includes overseeing the development approvals for the city and the implementation of key land use strategies.



**Donna Clarke RPIA**

Currently the Director of Landmark Planning Pty Ltd, Donna leads efforts to assist local governments and private consultancies in achieving exemplary planning outcomes. Eager to contribute a wealth of experience and a forward-thinking perspective, Donna remains committed to advancing excellence in urban planning.



**Stan Fitzroy-Mendis MPIA**

Stan is a planner from the City of Sydney with over 25 years NSW experience in Local and State Government and consultancy. Stan has a rare skill set having dual science and a first class honours planning degrees from UNSW and over 25 years as a planner in Sydney and greater NSW.



**Abbie Galvin LFRAIA**

Abbie is the 24th NSW Government Architect, a role which has been in effect for over 200 years. Using her skills and knowledge from 30 years of leadership in architectural practice, Abbie is responsible for championing design quality across the State, through advice, programs, policy and advocacy.



**Ben Hendriks MPIA**

With over 25 years in urban planning, Ben currently sets the strategic direction for Mecone as the Founder and Executive Chair, directly influencing land use and public policy. Ben contributes keen insights as a Local Planning Panel Member, ensuring decisions reflect community needs.

# PIA New South Wales Awards Jury Members



## **Simon Ip**

Simon is a Registered Planner at Gyde Consulting with over 20 years of planning experience; his expertise spans strategic and statutory planning, urban renewal, development assessment, design excellence and heritage conservation. He has extensive leadership experience in both the public and private sectors.



## **Roger Jasprizza AILA FRLA**

Roger is a Landscape Architect and associate director at Oculus, Urban Designer, and member of the NSW Government Architects State Design Review Panel with over 35 years' experience. He is focused on the creation of great places for the community, while balancing the needs of authorities and stakeholders.



## **Craig Kerslake**

Craig is a Wiradjuri design architect known for translating Indigenous knowledge and cultural narratives into built form in authentic, innovative and compelling ways. His work spans urban design, architecture, landscapes, and interiors, all grounded in a deep respect for Country and its living systems.



## **Nancy Marshall MPIA**

Associate Professor Nancy Marshall joined the University of Sydney in 2020. She is a City Planner and is now the Program Director for both the Master of Urbanism and Master of Urban and Regional Planning degrees. For the last three years, Nancy has been leading an interdisciplinary group of academics, working with government and industry to design, plan and research smart social spaces.



## **Greg New RPIA (Fellow)**

Greg is an expert in land use, infrastructure and development contributions planning. Director at GNL, his 30-year career stretches across both government and the private sector. Greg shares his development contributions knowledge in seminars and publishes articles in industry journals.



## **Sharon Smith RPIA (Fellow)**

Sharon (Gumbaynggirr) is a strategic and urban planner with 40 years of planning and urban design experience, in both local government and consultancy. Sharon is the immediate Past President of the NSW PIA Divisional Committee, and has served on the Committee for 8 years. She is currently PIA NSW Divisional Committee Vice President - Regions and member of PIA's Knowledge Circle.

# PIA New South Wales Awards Jury Members



**Melissa Thomas RPIA**

Melissa is an executive planner at Cessnock City Council. Melissa is a Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner, and has extensive experience extending over 20 years in local government and the private sector. Melissa's provides specialist statutory planning advice focusing on inner city projects, health, aged care and renewables.



**Karina Turvey PIA (Assoc.)**

Karina is a Planning Officer currently working on Statewide Strategic Planning and Systems Policy. Karina has a consultancy background focused on Statutory Planning. She was awarded the 2025 National Tertiary Student Project Award for her thesis undertaken at University of NSW, which explored the role that public infrastructure can play in shaping our night-time economies.

## Award Sponsors

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NSW Public Works

### Bronze Sponsor



### Spotlight Sponsor



### Category Sponsor





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# Award Winners and Commendations

# Climate Change & Resilience



## PROJECT

**A Climate Vulnerability Assessment for NSW Primary Industries Building climate resilience through evidence-based planning**

## AWARD

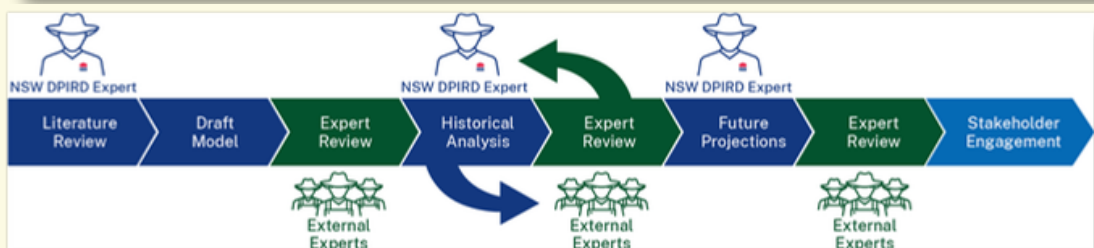
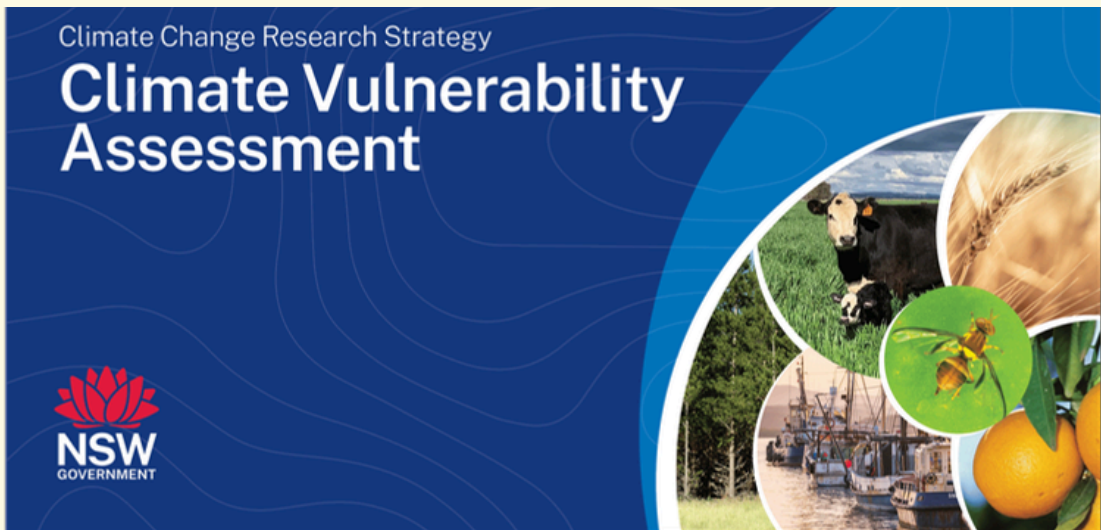
**Climate Vulnerability Assessment and the Agricultural Landuse Planning Teams, Climate and Natural Resources Division, the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.**

The judges praised this project for its depth, clarity, and direct applicability to real-world decision-making. The Climate Vulnerability Assessment provides a statewide framework for understanding and managing climate risks across key agricultural sectors – crops, livestock, fisheries, and biosecurity.

Through detailed modelling, expert engagement, and vulnerability scoring, it translates complex data into tools that can

guide both policy and farm-level adaptation. The judges noted the project's precision, transparency, and sector-specific insights as setting a new standard for evidence-based resilience planning in New South Wales.

Congratulations to the NSW Department of Primary Industries for a rigorous, data-driven contribution to agricultural resilience and climate adaptation.



## PROJECT

**Central Coast  
Community Resilience  
Plans**

## COMMENDATION

**Central Coast Council  
and CRED Consulting**

*Land of the Traditional  
Owners: Land of the  
Darkinjung People of the  
Darkinjung Nation*

The Central Coast of NSW is one of the most at-risk regions in Australia for bushfires and floods. Its communities are among the most socially vulnerable, which affects their ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. In recent years, Central Coast residents have endured the compounding impacts of bushfires, successive floods, and the COVID-19 pandemic. As recovery from one disaster began, another followed - placing ongoing strain on social connections, mental health, and the community's capacity to bounce back.

To address these challenges, Community Resilience Plans have been developed to strengthen disaster preparedness and build resilience and social connection in vulnerable communities affected by flood and/or fire. These plans provide a framework for Council to collaborate with communities in achieving their vision, aspirations, and ideas for improving social cohesion - ensuring they are better equipped to withstand, adapt to, and recover from future disasters.

The plans were developed by Council, with support from CRED Consulting, and co-designed with the community through an extensive and innovative consultation process and several actions identified in the plans have already been implemented, resulting in tangible benefits such as improved preparedness and stronger community networks.



# Community Wellbeing & Diversity



## PROJECT

**Ed.Square Residents Group**

## AWARD

**Frasers Property Australia and Fourfold Studio**

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Land of the Cabrogal Clan of the Dharug Nation*

The judges commended this project for its authenticity and impact in building genuine community connection. Developed by Frasers Property at Ed.Square in Sydney's South-West, the initiative embeds a dedicated Community Development Team, supported by consultants, to create and sustain a Residents Group.

The program funds and facilitates resident-led events, activations, and social initiatives that foster inclusion, diversity, and wellbeing in a new high-density masterplanned community.

Led by Georgia Bergin and Claire Palmer, it goes far beyond typical developer engagement, creating a framework where residents drive the culture of their neighbourhood.

The judges saw this as a standout example of social sustainability in practice—measurable, human, and lasting.

Congratulations to Georgia Bergin, Claire Palmer, and Frasers Property for setting a new benchmark in building community through development.



## PROJECT

### Open Streets Program 2024-2025

## COMMENDATION

### Transport for NSW

The Open Streets Program 2024–25 is awarded a commendation in the Community Wellbeing & Diversity category for its visionary and inclusive approach to reimagining public spaces and strengthening social connection.

This program transformed the way communities across New South Wales experience their local streets,

turning roads into vibrant, people-first places filled with creativity, celebration and connection.

Through this initiative, 73 councils reimagined road spaces into vibrant public spaces, delivering community events that brought together over 800,000 people. Streets became stages for festivals, performances and gatherings that strengthened local identity and community belonging.

The program demonstrated great collaboration between councils, businesses, cultural industry and the community and delivered

improved social, cultural and economic benefits, with many communities reporting stronger relationships and increased local business activity.

The Jury commends this high-quality program.



## PROJECT

### Waverley Council Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme

## COMMENDATION

### Waverley Council

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Bidiagal, Birrabirragal and Gadigal People.*

The jury commends Waverley Council for its leadership in addressing housing affordability through the Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme.

In a context of escalating housing pressures in Sydney's east, the scheme

demonstrates an innovative and practical planning mechanism that secures long-term affordable rental housing for key workers and vulnerable households.

By embedding contributions within the development approvals process, Waverley Council has created a sustainable model that balances growth with social responsibility.

The project stands out for its strong alignment with community wellbeing and diversity objectives, ensuring that people who contribute to the economy and vibrancy of the local



area can continue to live and work within it.

Importantly, the scheme is supported by strong financial feasibility and provides a replicable framework for other councils, showing how planning levers can be used to deliver inclusive,

resilient, and equitable communities.

This commendation recognises Waverley Council's commitment to advancing housing equity through thoughtful and effective social planning policy.

# Emerging Planner of the Year



## AWARD

### Amber Nehal PIA (Assoc.)

Amber was nominated by her employer Mecone for her capability, the quality of her work and the positive influence she has within the planning profession. Within her workplace, she has become a trusted expert on housing policy and State Significant Developments, known for her passion for housing equity.

Amber is also a significant member of the NSW Emerging Planners Committee, as the Socials Sub-Committee Lead for the last 2 years. She has spearheaded the 'Planning Buzzwords' social media series, breaking down complex planning terminology and significantly enhancing PIA's engagement with industry.

The judges were impressed by her initiative and the meaningful contribution she is already making at such an early stage in her career.

Amber's technical acumen, integrity, collaborative spirit and commitment to advocacy make her a highly deserving winner of the Emerging Planner of the Year Award.

Congratulations Amber. We celebrate your achievements! You are a standout emerging leader!



# President's Award

## PROJECT

**Mid-Western Region  
Housing Strategy**

## AWARD

**Mid western regional  
council, Gyde, the  
planning studio.**

*Land of the Traditional  
Owners: Traditional  
custodians of the  
Wiradjuri Nation*

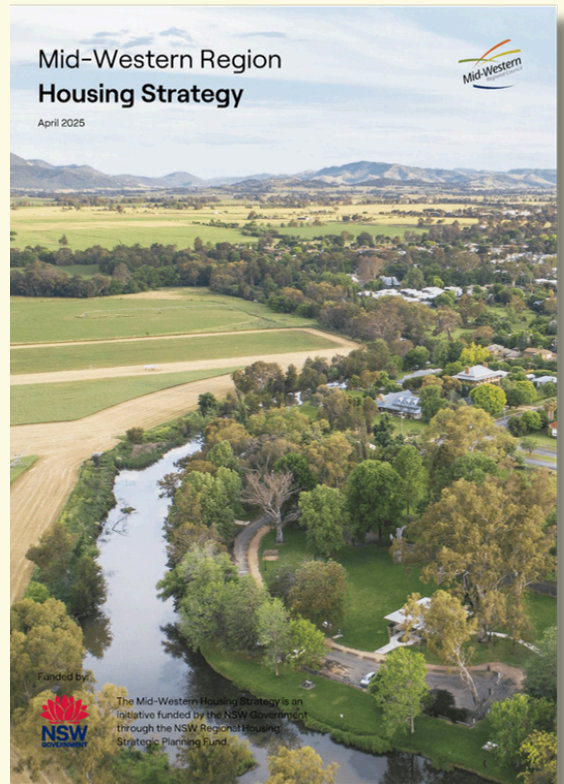
The future of planning demands that practitioners confront emerging challenges and embrace opportunities with a deep understanding of place and context. This context spans inner-city, urban, suburban, regional, and rural environments. Given the diversity of communities across these settings, planning responses must be equally diverse and locally attuned. In recognition of this, the President's Award this year celebrates planning work that meaningfully and innovatively addresses specific local challenges.

The President's Award is presented to The Mid-Western Region Housing Strategy by Mid-Western Regional, Council Gyde Consulting and The Planning Studio. This Strategy represents the first housing strategy

developed with explicit consideration of the impacts of the Renewable Energy Zones (REZ). It offers not only a forward-looking vision for housing within the Mid-Western Regional Local Government Area, but also a comprehensive assessment of the region's significant growth pressures.

The strategy includes an analysis of the wide-ranging effects of the Central West Orana REZ and outlines a strategic approach to mitigate community impacts while leveraging investment opportunities. Its preparation required extending beyond the parameters of the Local Housing Strategy Guideline to deliver a bespoke housing supply and demand assessment, tailored specifically to the needs of the Mid-Western community.

Congratulations to Mid-Western Regional, Council Gyde Consulting and The Planning Studio.



# Great Place



## PROJECT

**Penrith Beach Summer Activation**

## AWARD

**NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Land of the Dharug People*

Penrith Beach in Western Sydney exemplifies how visionary planning can transform equity, climate, and community outcomes for a community. Created through a partnership between the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and Western Sydney Lakes, this innovative activation transformed a waterway into a vibrant public beach for Sydney's west.

By bringing the coast to the city's west, Penrith Beach reinvigorated relationships with the precious waterways.

Over 340,000 visitors came to Penrith Beach across two seasons, providing safe, free access to swimming and recreation during the hottest months.

The initiative was supported by inclusive design thinking, sustainability measures, and robust community programming.

From Junior Lifesavers to skin cancer screenings, Penrith Beach reimagined what public open space can be: a place for health, connection, and a reimagined "day at the beach."

Penrith Beach has been celebrated locally and internationally, including by The New York Times and The Guardian. It stands as a bold and replicable model for equitable, nature-based urban transformation.



## PROJECT

Cobar Ward Oval  
Precinct

## COMMENDATION

**Cobar Shire Council in  
Collaboration with  
DunnHillam  
Architecture + Urban  
Design and SJB  
Planning (NSW)**

*Land of the Traditional  
Owners: Land of the  
Ngiyampaa  
Wangaaypuwan People*

The judges commend the Cobar Ward Oval Precinct as a shining example of how visionary planning can transform a place in rural NSW into the heart of its community.

The precinct's high-quality facilities, including a multi-purpose pavilion and Early Learning Centre, provide flexible, inclusive spaces for sport, culture and everyday gathering, fostering community connection, pride, and wellbeing.

Strategically aligned with local and state priorities, the project delivers lasting social and economic benefits, advancing the importance of planning in regional Australia. Its successful implementation, supported by robust collaboration between government, technical experts, and the community, demonstrates a transferable model for rural revitalisation.



# Performance & Innovation in Development



## PROJECT

DAISY AI

## AWARD

**Cumberland City Council**

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Land of the Dharug People*

Cumberland City Council has demonstrated leadership and innovation through the launch of the Development Application Intelligence System (DAISY), one of the first AI-powered planning tools trialed in local government in NSW.

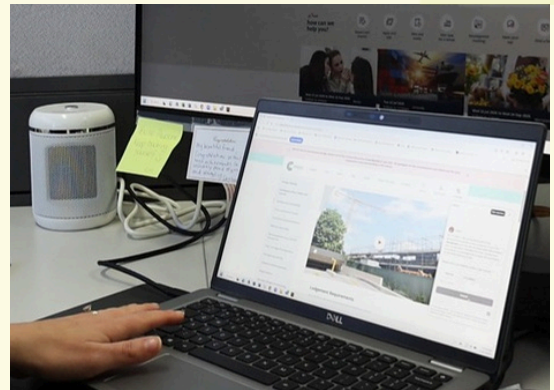
Delivered under Council's Smart Services pathway and supported by the NSW Early Adopter Grant Program, DAISY integrates Council's planning policies into a multilingual, 24/7 chatbot providing accessible, accurate and timely planning advice, helping applicants lodge development applications.

The project demonstrates measurable, efficiency improvements and a strong commitment to responsible AI use through a

“human in the loop” approach to ensure accuracy and compliance.

Cumberland City Council is commended for its use of emerging technology to enhance understanding, streamline planning processes, and strengthen community confidence, serving as a strong example of planning innovation.

Cumberland's work sets a benchmark for smart, inclusive and responsive planning, and is an adaptable model that can be adapted across the sector.



# Planning Research



## PROJECT

**Care in Transit:  
Designing for  
Passengers, Transport  
Operations, and  
Homelessness Support**

## AWARD

**Transport for NSW and  
La Trobe University,  
supported by Inclusive  
Design and The  
University of Sydney**

*Land of the Traditional  
Owners: On Gadigal Land  
in the Eora Nation as well  
as Burramattagal land in  
the Dharug nation.*

The judges consider “Care in Transit” as an excellent piece of planning research, which re-imagines public transport infrastructure as inclusive and compassionate environments for the socio-economically disadvantaged members of our community.

This research is pivotal in examining a real and pertinent issue of homelessness. The judges are impressed with how it reframes the role of transport hubs as spaces that support people living precariously, without diminishing customer experience and service delivery.

The research is based on a robust methodology involving international case studies, passenger analysis, service mapping, and stakeholder engagement.

It demonstrates a successful collaboration of experts and specialists in transport planning and operation, design, social services and the academia.

The findings are well grounded and provide important insights for implementation through the production of design principles, best practice guidelines and stakeholder framework.

The judges applaud this visionary research that extends beyond conventional focus on transit and mobility, to one that also embraces inclusiveness, social justice and empathy.



# Improving Planning Processes



## PROJECT

**The Impact of Process Improvement on Performance**

## AWARD

**Singleton Council**

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Land of the Wanaruah, Wonnarua People*

In a hotly contested category, judges decided to award Singleton Council as the winner for its strong outcomes, for improving DA turnaround times, and for demonstrating positive team culture. This is a planning process which can be replicated across NSW, even for small planning teams.

Singleton Council has tackled the issue of Development Assessment (DA) processing in a small regional council head on with bravery and acumen. From significant workload pressures resulting in high staff turnover and numerous customer complaints, they developed a three phase solution over 2 years to improve outcomes.

A proactive process improvement plan has delivered a dedicated Duty Planner Kiosk, a travelling Planning in the Park program and the highly praised Delivering Your Dreams guidance booklet. Utilising these innovative techniques, they developed metrics to measure their success and to be accountable for their results in terms of real time monitoring through an internally facing dashboard.



## PROJECT

**Rethinking Transport Oriented Development: Alternative approaches for Canterbury, Belmore, Lakemba, Wiley Park and Punchbowl**

## COMMENDATION

**Canterbury-Bankstown Council**

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Land of the Dharug People*

The City of Canterbury-Bankstown developed an innovative, place-based alternative to the State Government's Transport Oriented Development (TOD) and Low and Medium Rise Housing (LMRH) programs. Instead of applying generic rezoning, the council created tailored master plans for Canterbury, Belmore, Lakemba, Wiley Park, and Punchbowl.

This process, undertaken in a relatively short period, resulted in plans that exceeded the State housing targets while protecting local character, enhancing open space, and supporting community needs.

Key innovations that went beyond the alternative State policy included requiring land dedications for parks, introducing a higher 3% affordable housing contribution, promoting garden-style apartments, rooftop gardens, communal spaces, and through-site pedestrian links.

Extensive community engagement and design charrettes ensured transparency and inclusivity. The approach resulted in development potential of over 9,000

dwellings in the metro-rail walk catchments, and over 11,000 sqm of new open space.

Canterbury-Bankstown Council's approach also influenced policy-setting in other councils, demonstrating a model for sustainable, community-driven urban growth.



## PROJECT

**NSW Housing Pattern Book**

## COMMENDATION

**Government Architect NSW**

The judges commend the NSW Housing Pattern Book for setting a new benchmark for planning performance, delivering streamlined approvals and high-quality, buildable homes that directly address the urgent housing needs of NSW.

Developed through robust collaboration with architects, government, industry, and community and strategically aligning with state and national reforms, the Pattern Book's replicable model shows how planning reform can deliver high-quality, accessible, affordable housing at speed, enhancing development and community outcomes and ensuring that great design is available to all.

Congratulations to Government Architect NSW.



# Planning with Country



## PROJECT

**Connection with Country Framework**

## AWARD

**Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**

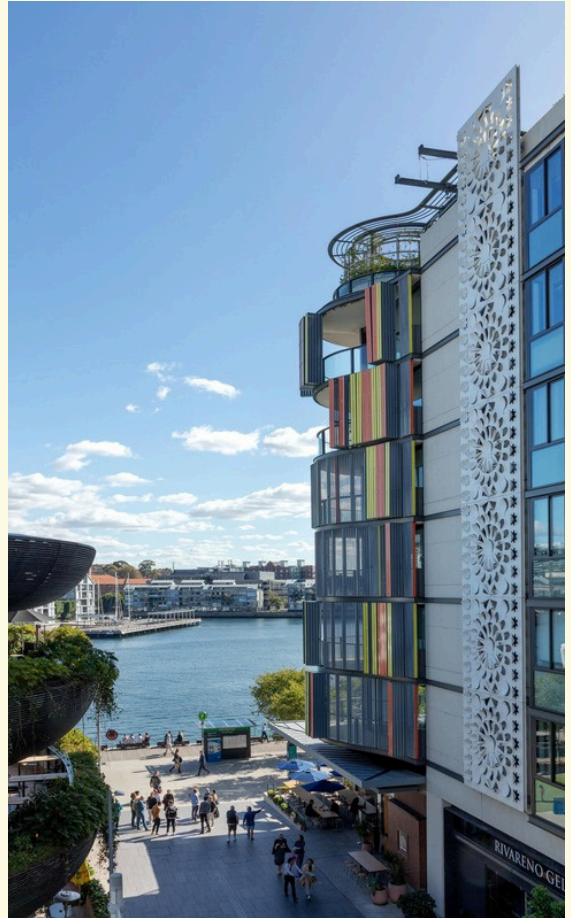
The Connecting with Country Framework is a NSW based initiative that integrates Aboriginal culture, knowledge, and values into the planning and design of the built environment. It has local and international ramifications including the potential to influence global design practices, promote sustainable development, and encourage the recognition of Indigenous rights and heritage on a wider scale. It fosters collaboration and seeks to embed a deeper connection to place, leading to more resilient and culturally rich outcomes that can serve as a model for other nations grappling with similar issues.

The Connecting with Country Framework, developed by the Government Architect NSW, championed by Dillon Kombumerri is the first of its kind in Australia, it responds to the urgent need for built

environment decisions to address climate change effects such as drought, fire and floods, and protect Country, communities, and sacred sites from the impacts of rapidly increasing development. Its reach has improved outcomes from infrastructure and precinct planning to schools and housing, health and landscape design in NSW in urban and rural environments.

Grounded in Aboriginal worldviews, led by Aboriginal people and shaped through close collaboration with Aboriginal communities and knowledge holders, the Framework shifts the paradigm from a human-centred approach to one that is Country-centred.

Congratulations Government Architect NSW and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure!





# Stakeholder Engagement



## PROJECT

**'No need to drive'...  
Resilient Willoughby  
Primary School Active  
Travel Program**

## AWARD

**Willoughby City Council**

*Land of the Traditional  
Owners: Land of the  
Cammeraygal Clan of the  
Eora Nation*

This project undertook unique stakeholder engagement to empower primary school students to 'think globally and act locally' by tackling the traffic congestion around their school. By developing year 5 geography lessons, students were highly engaged in a locally relevant learning program achieving curriculum.

Willoughby City Council in collaboration with Willoughby Public School, the NSW Department of Education's Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre and the Victorian-based cycling advocacy group Bicycle Network, developed the program which resulted in measurable improvements in student travel behaviour, including a 27% increase in active travel rates.

Council's approach ensured that students felt empowered, subsequently seeing Council implement and promote the 4 active paths leading to their school and improving pedestrian infrastructure along some sections. As a result of its success, Transport for NSW has adopted the methodology and is providing \$500,000 in funding from the NSW Get Kids Active Program for up to 10 councils and public schools to undertake the project in 2025/26.

Congratulations to Willoughby City Council and all involved for this fantastic initiative!



Artist Impression - Option B intersection improvement at Gorman Street, Wyalong Street and Edward Street - Image by SMM



**Edward St and Penshurst St South  
Streetscape Improvement Project**

15 September 2024

WSPA meeting – Naremburn Community Centre

## PROJECT

**Broadmeadow Place Strategy – Aboriginal Stakeholder Engagement**

## COMMENDATION

**City Of Newcastle**

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Land of the Awabakal and Worimi People*

The City of Newcastle's Broadmeadow Place Strategy Aboriginal Stakeholder Engagement is a standout example of meaningful collaboration with traditional landowners. Led by Council, the initiative placed Aboriginal voices at the centre, fostering

genuine relationships and co-authorship of the 30-year infill development strategy.

Using culturally respectful methods including yarning circles, walks on Country, and on-site meetings, the engagement by Council gained trust and respect with Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal people, which enriched the planning outcomes with deep cultural, social, and environmental knowledge.

Outcomes included Country-centred themes, a focus on caring for Country, and exploring options for affordable housing for Aboriginal

families and a proposed cultural wellbeing hub.

This genuine approach for engagement offers a transferable model for future projects at City of Newcastle and beyond, ensuring better outcomes for both traditional owners and new communities being planned.



## PROJECT

**Living Lab Northern Rivers**

## COMMENDATION

**Living Lab Northern Rivers**

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Lands of the Widjabal Wia-bal of the Bundjalung Nation*

The jury are inspired by the Living Lab Northern Rivers submission which is a community-led, research-informed, and design-enabled initiative established after the 2022 Northern Rivers floods.

Formed through partnership between the NSW Reconstruction

Authority, the University of Technology Sydney, and Southern Cross University, Living Lab Northern Rivers operates across seven flood-affected Local Government Areas on Bundjalung Country. It fills a structural gap — creating a trusted “third space” where community knowledge, government policy, and technical expertise meet on equal terms.

In the face of adversity, the jury felt that the “Third Space” was an inspiring in-between medium where more liberated collaborations can unfold. This quickly builds capacity and shared understanding of

the challenges communities face. The approach demonstrates how engagement can drive adaptation, recovery, agility to drive enduring regional transformation.



# Strategic Planning Project

## PROJECT

**Ku-ring-gai Council  
TOD Alternative  
Preferred Scenario**

## AWARD

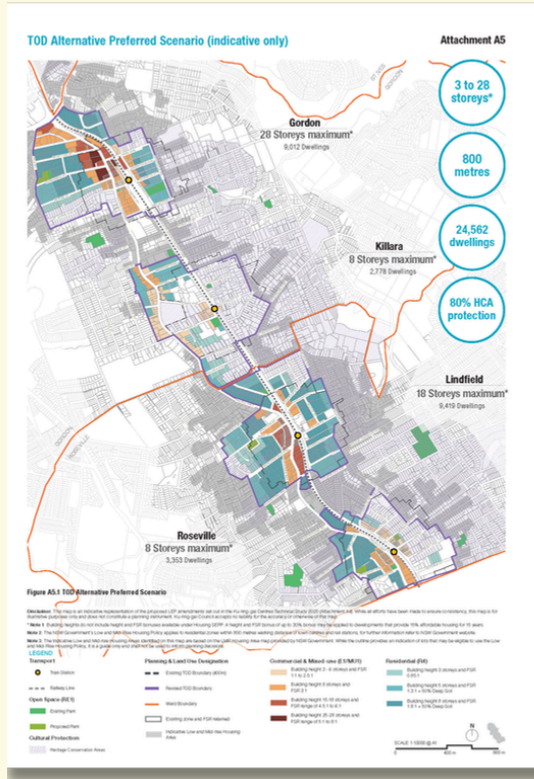
**Ku-ring-gai Council**

*Land of the Traditional  
Owners: Land of the  
Guringai People of the  
Eora Nation*

The judges have awarded Ku-ring-gai Council in the Strategic Planning Project category for their Transport Oriented Development Alternative Preferred Scenario. The Implementation Strategy applied seven planning principles and included deep community consultation to create a community-engaged response to TOD.

The project is evidence based, with clear methods, targets and green scenarios. Importantly, it demonstrates how well-planned, place-based approaches to density can help address the housing crisis while maintaining local character and amenity.

Through this project, Ku-ring-gai Council showed how, with careful planning, zoning changes can be both contextually appropriate and commercially viable.



AWARD



## PROJECT

### Broadmeadow Place Strategy

## COMMENDATION

### City of Newcastle

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Land of the Awabakal and Worimi People*

Broadmeadow is a Regionally Significant Growth Area with the potential to deliver homes to address a national housing crisis. The Broadmeadow Place Strategy was finalised in March 2025 and sets a blueprint for development of the 313-hectare precinct over the next thirty years.

The project is the most significant urban renewal project to be undertaken in Greater Newcastle.

Underpinned by collaboration, technical expertise and meaningful engagement, the place strategy overcomes significant environmental challenges such as flooding and contamination and presents opportunities for well-located homes, jobs and a vibrant sport, recreation and entertainment destination. Delivered under a unique partnership between local and State government, the only partnership of its kind outside of Sydney, the

strategic planning project is a model example of precinct planning. It demonstrates a collaborative and coordinated exercise in growth and infrastructure planning, while remaining deeply rooted in community values. It's a powerful example of how place-based planning can be transformative when driven by vision,



inclusivity, and collaboration. The Broadmeadow Place Strategy redefines how regional urban renewal can be done well.



## PROJECT

### Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2050

## COMMENDATION

### Sydney Olympic Park Authority in Collaboration SJB Architecture and SJB Planning

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Land of the Wann-gal People*

The Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2050 stands out as an exemplary strategic planning project, being one of the most significant and largest detailed master plans in NSW. It is a visionary and innovative framework for

transforming the precinct into Sydney's Beating Green Heart.

The judges were particularly impressed by how this project seeks to harmonise urban design with the parklands and strengthen the area's identity as both a premier events precinct and a desirable residential and commercial hub. The project seeks to balance the demand for urban development while protecting significant ecological and natural resources, while enhancing connectivity through active and sustainable transport and responding to the housing crisis with



diverse and affordable housing options. A key focus was to embed First Nations voices, language, and symbolism through the Connecting with Country framework.

Master Plan 2050 sets a new benchmark for urban transformation—where legacy, innovation, and Country come

together to shape an enduring future for Sydney Olympic Park.

Congratulations to the Sydney Olympic Park Authority and team on this exceptional achievement!

# Technology & Digital Innovation



## PROJECT

**MyFarmPlanner Digital Pre-Assessment Tool for Intensive Agricultural Development in NSW**

## AWARD

**NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development**

MyFarmPlanner is a transformative digital support to NSW farmers to navigate the complex planning system of intensive agriculture, especially after natural disasters. By converting a complex, time-consuming process into a 15-minute digital experience, the MyFarmPlanner platform empowers users with tailored questionnaires and location specific guidance for development applications.

Launched in 2021 for the poultry industry and expanded across agriculture and rigorously tested, it's 2025 re-launch helps farmers stay on their land by removing barriers of cost, time, and complexity. The platform improves application quality, provides clear pathways, boosts farmer confidence, and

streamlines disaster relief efforts. Its accessible design suits all tech skill levels and enhances planning efficiency across rural and regional NSW. The platform's structure is designed for efficient implementation, making it easily deliverable and transferable to more industries and communities.

Congratulations to NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development on this important technology project which supports our farmers.



## PROJECT

### Inner West Council Fairer Futures Mapping Tool

## COMMENDATION

### Inner West Council GIS Team and Strategic Planning Team

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Land of the Gadigal and Wangal People of the Eora nation*

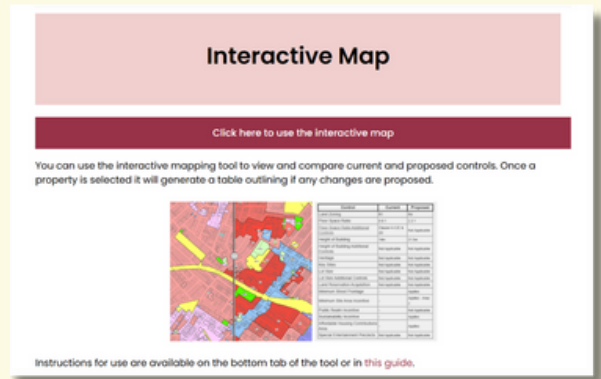
Inner West Council introduced an innovative GIS-based mapping tool to help explain the council's 'Our Fairer Future' housing policy alternative to the State Government's Transport Oriented Development and Low and Medium Rise Housing programs.

Unlike static PDF maps, the interactive tool provided dynamic layers, sliders to compare current and proposed zoning, and an adaptive legend, making complex planning proposals transparent and accessible on any device. Its originality lay in simplifying technical reforms for diverse audiences, including residents less confident with technology. The mapping informed quality engagement with the community. Over 3,000 residents engaged in the first consultation round, using the tool to make tailored submissions and informed feedback.

Community workshops, town hall sessions, and one-on-one "speak to a planner" meetings also resulted in meaningful engagement. The mapping tool and qualitative stakeholder engagement activities produced a practical, transparent, and replicable model for



consultation on draft planning policies generally.



## PROJECT

### MOSAIC Planning Platform

## COMMENDATION

### Mecone

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Eora Nation, Darkinjung Nation and Kulin Nation*

MOSAIC Planning Platform is recognised for its outstanding achievement in technology and digital innovation, delivering a leading planning intelligence platform that integrates complex and fragmented data into a single, accessible digital platform.

MOSAIC has continuously evolved, enabling real-time spatial analysis and informed decision-making across both government and industry. Its innovative features, including live mapping of planning proposals, curated development application datasets, and the Automated Intelligence Mapper, demonstrate exceptional technical capability and a deep understanding of planning practice.

The platform's rigorous dataset, user-centred design, and operational reliability have positioned it as a resource for over 20,000 professionals.

Mecone's collaborative approach and commitment to continuous improvement exemplify excellence in digital planning, setting a new benchmark for transparency, coordination, and efficiency across the

sector. The judges commend MOSAIC for demonstrating technical excellence, and leadership in delivering a platform which has made an enduring contribution to Australia's planning system.



# Tertiary Student Project



## PROJECT

**More than dead space:  
Exploring the  
recreational use of  
cemeteries in Sydney**

## AWARD

**Joanna Kontogiorgis**

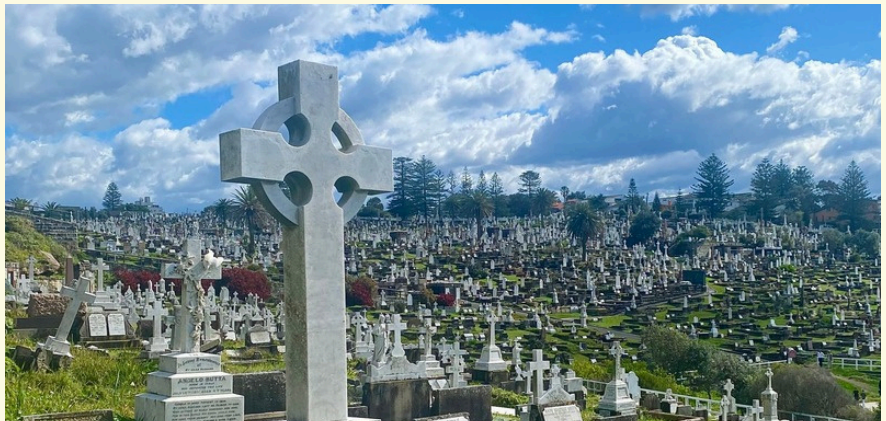
This thesis explores how future cemeteries can be planned and designed to integrate both recreational and interment functions, seemingly conflicting functions. This idea addresses both the shortage of burial spaces in Sydney and the pressure on public open spaces –both which are real and current issues in the Sydney planning context.

This thesis used a mixed methods research approach which drew on academic literature, plans and policies, and site observations of current burial lands. The are two real strengths of this thesis: firstly, this student conducted her own in-depth interviews to understand the Australian context.

Secondly, it presented recommendations for planners, cemetery operators and designers to, perhaps, unlock the potential of adding cemeteries to Sydney's open spaces network, for recreational purposes.

The research found that planners and cemetery operators are highly supportive of this pioneering idea.

This amount and quality of work is an exemplar of tertiary student work! Congratulations Joanna.



## PROJECT

**The Impetus and Implications of the 15-Year Timeframe for Affordable Housing Provision in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021**

## COMMENDATION

**Nishka Chauhan**

*Land of the Traditional Owners: Gadigal Land of the Eora Nation*

The jury commends Nishka Chauhan for her Honours thesis, *The Impetus and Implications of the 15-Year Timeframe for Affordable Housing Provision in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021*.

This timely and rigorous project critically examines one of NSW's most significant recent housing reforms, analysing the rationale, risks, and long-term impacts of time-limited affordable housing. Nishka's research demonstrates originality by interrogating what happens when affordability expires, offering a fresh temporal perspective rarely addressed in housing policy discourse.

Through a combination of policy review and stakeholder interviews, the thesis provides valuable insights into the experiences of developers, community housing providers, and tenants, highlighting both opportunities and vulnerabilities. Importantly, Nishka proposes practical recommendations - such as structured exit strategies and mechanisms to strengthen delivery - that bridge academic critique and professional application. Her work represents an impressive contribution to planning scholarship and practice, and a commendable achievement at undergraduate level.



# 2025 Award Nominees

**Amber Nehal PIA (Assoc.)**  
Nominated for Emerging Planner of the Year by Mecone

**Archipelago, The Planning Studio, Maitland City Council, Cessnock City Council and Singleton Shire Council**  
Anambah to Branxton RSGA Enquiry by Design (EbD) and Planning Principles

**Blacktown City Council**  
Risks of not planting trees along our streets

**Blacktown City Council**  
Mount Druitt Precinct Masterplan

**Business Murwillumbah, Tweed Shire Council and CRED Consulting**  
Murwillumbah  
Community Improvement District

**Canterbury-Bankstown Council**  
Rethinking Transport Oriented Development: Alternative approaches for Canterbury, Belmore, Lakemba, Wiley Park and Punchbowl

**Canterbury-Bankstown Council**  
Rethinking Transport Oriented Development: Alternative Approaches for Canterbury

**Canterbury-Bankstown Council**  
Raising the bar: CBCity's integrated 3D and digital tools

**Central Coast Council and CRED Consulting**  
Central Coast  
Community Resilience Plans

**City of Newcastle**  
Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme

**City of Newcastle**  
Broadmeadow Place Strategy - Aboriginal Stakeholder Engagement

**City of Newcastle & NSW Department Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**  
Broadmeadow Place Strategy

**City of Parramatta, Place Score, Place Intelligence**  
Parramatta Square Place Measurement Framework and Operations

**Climate Vulnerability Assessment and the Agricultural Landuse Planning Teams, Climate and Natural Resources Division, the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development**  
A Climate Vulnerability Assessment for NSW Primary Industries  
Building climate resilience through evidence-based planning

**Cobar Shire Council in Collaboration with DunnHillam Architecture + Urban Design and SJB Planning (NSW)**  
Cobar Ward Oval Precinct

**Cumberland City Council**  
DAISY AI

**Cumberland City Council**  
Guildford Laneway Dashboard: Data-Driven Placemaking

**Cumberland City Council**  
reVITALise Regents Park Library Precinct

**Cumberland City Council in Partnership with Western Sydney University and Tensile Design & Construct**  
Cumberland City Council - Climate Change and Resilience - Cool Carparks

**Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**  
Shelter, Strategy, and Storms: Building Resilience Through Risk-Based Planning

**Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**  
NSW Housing Pattern Book

**Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**  
Connecting with Country Framework

**Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**  
Penrith Beach Summer Activation

**Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**  
State-wide in-fill affordable housing policy

**Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**  
Guiding best practice for koala fencing in south-west Sydney growth areas

**Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**  
Transport Oriented Development (TOD) Accelerated Precincts Program

# 2025 Award Nominees

**Dr Johanna Brugman (University of Auckland), Prof Jua Cilliers (University of Technology Sydney), Dr Mukesh Ray (University of Technology Sydney)**  
Scaling-Up Urban Nature through Equitable Land Use Planning: Lessons from Australia on Community-Driven and Socially-Responsible Climate Action

**Frasers Property Australia and Fourfold Studio**  
Ed.Square Residents Group

**Hannah Collins**  
A thesis undertaken within a BCP "Intergenerational Integration" Exploring the opportunity to co-locate aged Care and childcare centres

**Hawkesbury City Council**  
Hawkesbury Slab Barns and Outbuildings Study

**Highlight Consulting**  
NSW Central Coast Property Newsletter

**Inner West Council**  
Our Fairer Future Plan - Inner West Council's alternate approach for new housing across the local government area

**Inner West Council GIS Team and Strategic Planning Team**  
Inner West Council Fairer Futures Mapping Tool

**Inner West Council with CRED Consulting**  
Inner West Council Deliberative Forum

**Joanna Kontogiorgis**  
More than dead space: Exploring the recreational use of cemeteries in Sydney

**Ku-ring-gai Council**  
Ku-ring-gai Council TOD Alternative Preferred Scenario

**Lake Macquarie City Council**  
Lake Macquarie Housing Forum

**Lake Macquarie City Council**  
Lake Macquarie Housing Diversity Planning Proposal

**Larissa Hooper**  
Towards Equitable Cities: Pioneering Gender Impact Assessment for State Significant Projects

**Lauren Daly PIA (Assoc.)**  
Nominated for Emerging Planner of the Year by GYDE Consulting

**Living Lab Northern Rivers**  
Living Lab Northern Rivers

**Maitland City Council Smith & Tzannes**  
Maitland Residential Density Guide

**Mecone**  
MOSAIC Planning Platform

**MidCoast Council**  
Draft MidCoast Local Environmental Plan

**Mid-Western Regional Council, Gyde Consulting and The Planning Studio**  
Mid-Western Region Housing Strategy

**Natalie Lawrie PIA (Assoc.)**  
Nominated for Emerging Planner of the Year

**Nishka Chauhan, Project Planner, Gyde Consulting, for a Bachelor of City Planning Honours Thesis undertaken at UNSW Sydney (2024)**  
The Impetus and Implications of the 15-Year Timeframe for Affordable Housing Provision in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021

**Northern Beaches Council, Spackman Mossop Michaels, and Western Sydney University**  
Brookvale Greening Strategy

**Penrith City Council**  
St Marys Town Centre Master Plan: Leading Transformational Urban Development

**Placemaking NSW**  
Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour, Sydney's Premier Outdoor Cultural Venue

**Placemaking NSW**  
Leading with Country

**Placemaking NSW**  
The Rocks | Tallawoladah Women's Safety Strategy

**Planna**  
Town Planning Software and Report Delivery

**Purdon, Delos Delta and Dubbo Regional Council**  
Draft North-West Urban Release Area Residential Development Control Plan

**Regional Assessments, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**  
Bradfield City Centre Master Plan

**Rishi Gujarathi PIA (Assoc.)**  
Nominated for Emerging Planner of the Year by Aurecon

**Shellharbour City Council**  
Streamlining Assessments, Accelerating Development

**Singleton Council**  
The Impact of Process Improvement on Performance

# 2025 Award Nominees

## **Sydney Metro**

Recreating the Cumberland Plains in the Western Parkland City

## **Sydney Metro**

Sydney Metro - Western Sydney Airport - Stakeholder Engagement with Bradfield Development Authority

## **Sydney Metro and Parklife Metro**

Place Urban Design Corridor Landscape Plan (PUDCLP): Empowering Stakeholders through Design on the Sydney Metro - Western Sydney Airport

## **Sydney Olympic Park Authority in Collaboration SJB Architecture and SJB Planning**

Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2050

## **The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development**

myFarmPlanner - Digital Pre-Assessment Tool for Intensive Agricultural Development in NSW

## **Tract & Penrith City Council**

Creating benefits for Nature and People in LGAs

## **Transport for NSW Open Streets Program 2024-25**

## **Transport for NSW The Community Improvement District Pilot Program**

## **Transport for NSW and Campbelltown City Council, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Artists Maddison Gibbs and Danielle Mate;**

**Community including Aunty Karen Beetson, Aunty Karen Austin, Aunty Annette Houston, Aunty Michelle Hailes, Aunty Doris Williams, Tina Taylor.**  
Ngalambay, Oxley Street Underpass, Campbelltown, Places to Love Program

## **Transport for NSW, La Trobe University, supported by Inclusive Design, University of Sydney**

Care in Transit Care in Transit: Designing for Passengers, Transport Operations, and Homelessness Support

## **Urbis Visual Team East End Newcastle s4.55 Modification Stage 3 and 4 - Visual Impact and View Sharing Assessment addressing relevant Planning Principles**

## **Urbis Visual Team Onslow Avenue Visual Impact and View Sharing Assessment**

## **Waverley Council Waverley Council Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme**

## **Willoughby City Council "No need to drive" ... Resilient Willoughby Primary School Active Travel Program**

## **Wollondilly Shire Council, CRED Consulting and South Western Sydney Local Health District Wilton and Greater Macarthur Health and Wellbeing Strategies**





PIA

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