



2026
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

AWARDS FOR
PLANNING
EXCELLENCE

SA

NOMINATION GUIDELINES 2026

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AWARD CATEGORIES

There are two types of Award categories:

GENERAL CATEGORIES

Offered at a State/Territory level, with award winners (excluding commendation winners) being elevated to the National Awards for Planning Excellence.

- Great Place
- Strategic Planning Project
- Improving Planning Processes
- Emerging Planner of the Year
- Climate Change & Resilience
- Community Wellbeing & Diversity
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Technology & Digital Innovation
- Planning with Country
- Planning Research
- Tertiary Student Project

STATE ONLY CATEGORIES

Offered only at State/Territory level, with the winners NOT being elevated to the National Awards for Planning Excellence.

- Planning Champion
- Performance and Innovation in Development Award
- Secondary Student Project
- President's Award
- Minister's Award



TERMS & CONDITIONS

In consideration of the Planning Institute of Australia allowing the Nominator to nominate in and participate in the event, the Nominator agrees to the following:

- All nomination materials must be submitted electronically. No hard copy submissions will be accepted.
- The Judging Panel does not need to confer an Award in all categories.
- **Only one Award Winner** will be granted in each general category and then elevated to the PIA National Awards
- The Judging Panel may select more than one entry across eligible categories to receive Commendation Awards.
- The Judging Panel has the right to consider an award nomination in an alternate or additional category.
- Contact with members of the Judging Panel to discuss an award nomination is strictly prohibited.
- Any material and information provided as part of the nomination (Nomination Materials) may be used by the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) for the following **Purposes**:
 - entry of the Nomination into the Awards;
 - promotional purposes, including for this and future Awards events, both electronically and in material form;
 - judging purposes, including copying and disclosing the information to the judges;
 - reproduction in printed and electronic material – including the Commemorative Publication associated with this and future Awards events;
 - display during this and future Awards events – including electronically to the audience and in printed posters and signs in the venue;
 - publication on the PIA website, and other websites, for the purpose of showcasing Awards winners and nominations;
 - all other reasonable uses associated with the above activities, or that would reasonably be assumed to be connected with the operation of the Awards event.
- The Nominator grants PIA a perpetual, irrevocable, royalty free, worldwide, non-exclusive, license to use, modify, communicate, reproduce, publish and adapt the Nomination Materials for the Purposes both electronically and in material form.
- The Nominator warrants it holds sufficient rights in the Nomination Materials to provide the license granted above and that PIA's use of the Nomination Materials for the Purposes will not infringe any third party's intellectual property rights or moral rights.
- The Nominator warrants that nothing in the Nomination Materials is defamatory or gives rise to civil or criminal liability or otherwise violates any applicable law.
- The Nominator agrees to indemnify PIA against and in respect of all losses, damages and costs (including legal costs and disbursements on a solicitor-nominee or indemnity basis, whichever is higher), expenses, actions or claims (including third party claims) directly or indirectly incurred or suffered by PIA as a result of a breach or repudiation of these Conditions of Entry including a breach of a warranty, Nominator's act, omission or negligence, or the infringement of any third party's intellectual property rights.
- Nominators who have been misleading in their submissions or whose activities are not compliant with current relevant legislation may be withdrawn from the judging process or have Awards revoked.
- All nominations must be received by the published deadline. Nominations received after this date will not be considered.
- By submitting your nomination you agree that you have read, understood and accept these conditions.

PIA reserves the right to retain all entries. No part of the entries will be returned to Nominators unless requested upon nominating.

Entries will be excluded:

- a. If incomplete, such that they do not contain all the required information and images in the form.
- b. If received after the closing date.
- c. If they do not fulfil the binding clauses laid down in these conditions of entry.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I have to be a member of PIA to enter a project in the Awards?

Unless the eligibility criteria for a specific category requires you to be a member, non-PIA members may enter the Awards.

Can I enter the same project in more than one category?

Yes, where appropriate projects may be entered in more than one Award category provided:

- each nomination addresses the specific selection criteria for each category for each project, and
- you pay the relevant entry fee for each category for applicable states/territories only.

How should I present my submission?

The written component of your entry must address the selection criteria and be presented in A4 format. Addressing the selection criteria in a clear and comprehensive manner is essential for the entry to be competitive as the judges use the information to help with assessment. We encourage the close involvement of the project team in preparing the submission as the judges are closely looking at the quality and robustness of the written content rather than the presentation materials.

Whilst some entrants spend money on graphic design for the entry this has no impact on the judging process.

Is the maximum word count and supporting evidence word/page limit strict?

Yes. Any words that are over the word count/page limit will not be viewed by the judging panel.

Will my submission materials be returned?

No. Entries receiving Awards become the property of PIA and will not be returned.

Is there a fee to nominate a project?

Nomination fees are an important part of the financial structure that enables PIA to continue to provide a high-quality Awards program.

Entry Fees are \$240+ GST per nomination. The fee is payable for nominations for all categories except:

- Tertiary Student Project
- Emerging Planner of the Year
- Great Place Award
- Planning Champion Award

PIA has determined that nomination fees will be waived for projects where government agencies or non-for-profit organisations are the sole nominee. This decision has been made in recognition of the difficulties these organisations can have either meeting the expense due to budgetary constraints or because of restrictions on expenditure for governance and/or probity reasons.

My project is not geographic/location specific and/or involved input from people around Australia. Which State or Territory Awards should I enter?

You are able to choose any State or Territory to enter a project that is not geographic or location specific and/or involved collaboration with people from a number of different locations but you can only submit one entry in one State or Territory. Multiple entries are invalid.

Types of projects that might fall within this scenario include books or academic papers.

Can I submit an International Project?

International projects can only be accepted on the condition they have been undertaken by an Australian project team/or individual based in Australia.

You are able to choose any State or Territory to enter an international project but you can only submit one entry in one State or Territory. Multiple entries are invalid.

International projects completed by project teams/or individuals who do not reside in Australia are ineligible to nominate.



Will my entry be reassigned to a different category?

Nominators must do their best to select the most suitable category when submitting their nomination, and ordinarily, judges will consider the nomination against the category in which it was lodged. However, in exceptional circumstances, the judges reserve the right to move the entry to another category as they see fit.

Will there be an award and/or commendation in every category?

Not necessarily. Judges analyse all the entries in a category, looking for projects that demonstrate excellence against the category objective and selection criteria. If none of the entries are judged as having reached the threshold of excellence to receive an award or commendation, then the category will pass unawarded.

Can I re-enter a project in subsequent years?

The following rules apply to re-entering projects in subsequent years:

You cannot re-enter the project into the same category in which it has previously received an award or commendation unless there has been significant change to the project, and PIA has accepted it. PIA is not obliged to notify the judges if a project has received an award or commendation in any category in previous years. Receiving an award or commendation in a previous year does not predetermine the result of the new entry.

Projects that have never received an award or commendation can be re-entered into any appropriate category, including the original category.

You may only re-enter a project that has already received an award or commendation in a previous year if it is entered into a different category. Where applicable, you must pay the nomination fee for all re-entries.

KEY DATES

Nominations Open	Monday 22 June
Nominations Close	Monday 31 August
Awards Dinner	Friday 20 November

OTHER QUESTIONS?

Contact us on 08 8337 8816 or email sa@planning.org.au

COMPULSORY MATERIALS FOR PROJECT CATEGORIES

WRITTEN

All entries are to be in electronic format only and must include:

Nomination Statement - maximum of 5 x A4 pages (which is approximately 2500 words) in a suitable sized font. There is no minimum number of words, however, the nomination statement must address the selection criteria and outline the key issues and ideas addressed in the project and the key contribution the project makes to best/leading practice and learning for the planning profession.

Project Summary – which includes an abstract of no more than 250 words using the Project Summary Sheet for use in award promotions and media. If you haven't done so yet, download the [Project Summary Template](#).

Additional supplementary material may be submitted electronically where it is the subject of the nomination. Examples include: a book, PhD thesis, strategic plan, framework document. However, the judges will refer primarily to the Nomination Statement.

IMAGES

A minimum of five (5) high quality images of the project are required for promotional purposes. Images embedded in the Nomination Statement must also be provided as standalone image files. Image file names should succinctly describe the subject matter. For example 'louise street piazza open day.jpg', not 'IMG00023.jpg'

The basic minimum requirements for electronic images are:

- File format: *.jpeg or *.png
- Resolution: 300ppi;
- Dimensions: ideally 1920px x 1080px
- Size: 5MB max.

No special characters/symbols in file names (e.g. +!@)

CONSENT AND LICENSES

Proof of Consent to enter the Nomination into the Awards is required from the client/initiating body and all other entities involved in the project.

Download a [Proof of Consent Form](#). Nominations in the Planning with Country category must also include an endorsement (signature/s) from the authorised representative of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and/or community, and/or community organisations involved in the project - space is provided for this on the Proof of Consent form.

Licenses from copyright/intellectual property/moral rights holders are required so PIA can reproduce, exhibit, publish or communicate the specific words, images, plans, illustrations, and all other material you submit with the Nomination. You may already have the license to grant PIA use of the material (it may have been covered in your contracts with the client/initiator and other entities), in which case no license forms are needed. Otherwise, rights holders should complete a license form to accompany the Nomination. If you do not provide any license forms, you are warranting that you already have license to grant PIA use of all the materials you provide.

Download a [Materials License, Attribution and Schedule Form](#).

KEY LINKS

Download **Project Summary** template

Download **Proof of Consent** form

Download **Materials License, Attribution & Schedule** form

[Click here to start online nomination](#)

COMPULSORY MATERIALS FOR EMERGING PLANNER OF THE YEAR

WRITTEN

All entries are to be in electronic format and must include, from the employer, colleague, or peer (“nominator”):

- **Nomination Statement** which is a single page submission addressing why the nominee should be considered for the award.

PIA will then contact nominees who need to provide:

- Their current **CV**
- **Written response to questions** which will be provided by PIA.

Additional supplementary material may be submitted electronically where it is the subject of the nomination. Examples include: a book, PhD thesis, strategic plan, framework document. However, the judges will refer primarily to the Nomination Statement.

IMAGES

At minimum, a high-quality headshot photo of the nominee is required for promotional purposes. If possible, providing four (4) more high quality images of the nominee is preferable, such as more headshots, photos of the nominee on site, or of the nominee with an example of their work or engaged in consultation, etc.

Image file names should succinctly describe the subject matter. For example ‘louise street piazza open day.jpg’, not ‘IMG00023.jpg’

The basic minimum requirements for electronic images are:

- File format: *.jpeg or *.png
- Resolution: 300ppi;
- Dimensions: ideally 1920px x 1080px
- Size: 5MB max.
- No special characters/symbols in file names (e.g. +!@)

[Click here to start online nomination](#)

COMPULSORY MATERIALS FOR PLANNING CHAMPION

WRITTEN

All entries are to be in electronic format only and must include:

- **Nomination Statement** - maximum of 5 x A4 pages (which is approximately 2500 words) in a suitable sized font. There is no minimum number of words, however, the nomination statement must address the selection criteria.
- **Abstract** - An abstract of no more than 250 words using the Project Summary Sheet for use in award promotions and media. If you haven't done so yet, download the [Project Summary Template](#).
- **2x Testimonials** - outlining the way that the nominee has championed planning.

Additional supplementary material may be submitted electronically where it is the subject of the nomination. Examples include: a book, PhD thesis, strategic plan, framework document. However, the judges will refer primarily to the Nomination Statement.

IMAGES

At minimum, a high-quality headshot photo of the nominee is required for promotional purposes. If possible, providing four (4) more high quality images of the nominee is preferable, such as more headshots, photos of the nominee on site, or of the nominee with an example of their work or engaged with the work that supports the nomination, etc.

Image file names should succinctly describe the subject matter. For example ‘louise street piazza open day.jpg’, not ‘IMG00023.jpg’

The basic minimum requirements for electronic images are:

- File format: *.jpeg or *.png
- Resolution: 300ppi;
- Dimensions: ideally 1920px x 1080px
- Size: 5MB max.
- No special characters/symbols in file names (e.g. +!@)

[Click here to start online nomination](#)

NATIONAL AWARD CATEGORIES

GREAT PLACE

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises a great place, street or neighbourhood. Great places have a true sense of place, cultural and historical interest, community involvement and a vision for tomorrow. A great place is one that attracts, inspires and motivates people. It has a great atmosphere. It's a place that people are proud of. It sparks an individual sense of pride and contributes to the overall community wellbeing. It brings people together whether to eat, drink, sleep, play or work.

A great place might be a single building, a precinct or a neighbourhood.

It is awarded for a place that demonstrates a significant achievement for an area, either a single community or a geographic region, in accomplishing positive changes as a result of planning. It should demonstrate the implementation from plan to place that makes an outstanding contribution to advancing planning practice.

This award recognises achievement on the ground. It sees a plan come to life and result in a quality planning outcome. The place should be a physical place enjoyed by people and communities. Projects in rural, peri-urban and regional areas, in addition to urban areas, are encouraged to nominate.

Nominations should address the relevance of the project to one or more planning interest such as urban and regional planning, social planning, environmental planning, transport planning, urban design, economic development planning and/or planning law.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

Nominated places should be operational / functioning for at least 12 months prior to nominating for this Award.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises an outstanding strategic planning project, which includes regional plans, structure plans, master plans, infrastructure plans, planning schemes and similar.

This award is presented to projects that demonstrate vision and innovation, and should have relevance for the profession at large. Projects can range in size and scale and should advance the practice of strategic planning with broad application.

Strategic planning projects may also be recognised for overcoming significant challenges or hurdles to realise outstanding strategic planning outcomes.

Nominated projects should foster efficient and effective outcomes, be genuinely strategic, provide leadership, be responsive to need, improve spatial outcomes and be deliverable.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

IMPROVING PLANNING PROCESSES

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises a significant improvement in planning process or major planning reform which leads to good planning outcomes undertaken by a planner, planning authorities (local or state/territory) and development entities.

This award seeks to recognise an initiative that converts a planning policy and strategy into practice and in doing so achieves a great planning outcome. It is awarded for organisational arrangements or planning initiatives that have achieved improved planning performance or processes and advanced the public interest.

This award seeks to recognise the value adding that occurs from a new planning framework or improvements in practice that lead to enhanced development or community outcomes. The award-winning projects will be ones that contribute to a positive planning culture.

Whilst the genesis of the outcome may be a report, document, scheme or strategy, it is the implementation, action and delivery on the ground which this award seeks to recognise.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

EMERGING PLANNER OF THE YEAR

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises an Emerging Planner who has made an outstanding contribution or achieved something significant. The award recognises an Emerging Planner who represents balanced qualities in advocating for emerging planning professionals as well as high-quality planning outcomes in the workplace. This award recognises passion, integrity, involvement in the profession, achievements and ability to act as a role model rather than participating in “glossy” projects.

The individual shows strong promise and emerging capabilities in leadership, good emerging understanding of planning practice, innovation, enterprise and/or strategic thinking.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominees may be nominated by an employer, colleague or peer (“nominator”) by way of a single page submission addressing why the nominee should be considered for the award.

To be eligible for Emerging Planner of the Year, the nominee must be:

- a current Associate or Full Member of the Planning Institute of Australia who is within their fifth year after graduation from the first education qualifications that entitled them to become eligible to be a Member; and
- have been a member for a minimum of 6 months at the time of being nominated.

Nominees will be advised by PIA following the close of nominations and will be invited to provide their CV, a written response to questions (based on the selection criteria and provided by PIA), and images within seven days. Candidates who decline the nomination will be withdrawn from consideration.

Nominees should generally not nominate themselves and previous winners are ineligible for this award.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations for Emerging Planner of the Year will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Demonstrated planning skills and excellence in the professional workplace, i.e. innovation, strategic thinking, high quality of work, excellent emerging communication skills and a high capacity for problem solving.
- An activity or project that furthers the practice of planning or improves planning processes and makes a valuable contribution to teamwork.
- The individual's commitment to continuing professional development and involvement with professional institutes, networks, events, outreach work or relevant voluntary activity.
- The extent to which the individual serves as an advocate and role model for other emerging professionals in the industry or in the workplace; and
- Contribution to the planning industry and demonstrated emerging leadership qualities.

CLIMATE CHANGE & RESILIENCE

OBJECTIVE

PIA believes that planning is critical to responding to a changing climate and that planners must take up the challenge of mitigation and adaptation in their work. Innovative approaches to planning can strengthen resilience, reduce greenhouse emissions and empower communities.

The objective of this award is to highlight the important and varied role planning can play in responding to climate change, and also to strengthen professional knowledge and highlight planning system improvements required to manage this challenge.

This award recognises projects and initiatives that provide outstanding leadership and/or innovation that makes a positive impact on addressing climate change and can be held up as case study of best practice for the planning profession.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved, or will achieve, a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING & DIVERSITY

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises initiatives that achieve outstanding social sustainability outcomes. The award will focus on planning for communities - in other words, planning for people. It will recognise initiatives that support the health, wellbeing and diversity of the community and enhance planning projects and social outcomes. This award recognises the role of planning in improving access to social infrastructure for residents in cities, regions and towns. The award will celebrate great social planning that assists and supports community cohesion, safety, and supports the culture of diversity.

It is awarded for work by a planner, planning organisation, government organisation or a member of the community for a policy, scheme, project, process or event that demonstrates how a thorough understanding of the needs, cultural inclusiveness and aspirations of a community is integral to sound planning and desired social outcomes.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved, or will achieve, a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises initiatives and outcomes in implementing best practice public engagement that achieves genuine collaborative outcomes that leads to improved built form, planning processes or social outcomes. This award is not about the extent of engagement undertaken but the influence, improvement and capacity building that was achieved through the engagement. This award is about genuine and meaningful engagement with stakeholders and the community.

It is awarded for engagement work undertaken by or with a planner, planning organisation, government organisation, consultants or a member of the community for a policy, scheme, project, process or event.

The award illustrates how a neighbourhood, community group, key stakeholder or other local non-governmental entity influenced or utilised the stakeholder engagement process to address a specific need or issue within the community.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved, or will achieve, a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

PLANNING WITH COUNTRY

INTRODUCTION

This award seeks to recognise and bring light to changing the established ways of working with Country, so that more planning projects embrace and integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, culture, and tradition in all aspects of a project's life.

To shift from a business-as-usual practice and adopt a Country-centred approach, we need to change our way of working, guided by and involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Reframing our approach to project planning, design and delivery from human centred to Country-centred, guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and/or communities, is central to this award.

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander planning projects at all scales where there has been a meaningful partnership and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and/or community.

This award aims to shine a light on, and award, projects that are informed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge, culture and tradition and the application of this knowledge, culture, and tradition to improve all planning practice and land management.

Projects need to demonstrate how the project embraces and integrates Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge, culture, and tradition, including in the project design, delivery and ongoing care and maintenance of the project, and how the project demonstrates improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The award recognises projects which advance or address the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in the project.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander planning may take many forms, but at its core, it involves recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' connections to and responsibilities for managing and Caring for their Country.

This award recognises planning and design developed in partnership with, and informed by, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including traditional owners, local elders, land councils, artists, and community organisations. The award will also recognise the involvement of the relevant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or community in the project or policy to ensure its cultural integrity and authenticity.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations must be endorsed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and/or community, and/or community organisations. Nominations may be made by a member of the public or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

Planning with Country selection criteria continues on following page.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination's methodology has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.



TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL INNOVATION

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises the importance of technology and digital innovation in 21st century planning.

Digital opportunities and adapting technology to assist planning in our changing environment is critical. This award recognises the value that digital innovation and technology processes provide for planners, planning authorities and development entities. It will also highlight the importance of adapting information to improve processes and practices for communities in the virtual world and the real world. It also acknowledges that planning solutions can be considered and tested in the virtual world before being applied in the real world.

This award shows the power that digital information provides to city and town formation, city and town evolution and city and town shaping infrastructure.

This award recognises leadership and innovation in aspects of planning related to smart cities, digital transformation and managing disruption, providing open data to benefit all planners and the community to inform better decisions, and improved technology that provides more efficient planning systems.

The award is presented to the recipient(s) who demonstrate a more detailed understanding of the world which we inhabit and provide for better planning solutions and decisions which are data rich and which embrace other professions to ensure better more timely decisions are reached.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved, or will achieve, a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

PLANNING RESEARCH

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises an outstanding achievement in planning research.

It is awarded for a substantial piece of planning research which makes an outstanding contribution to the understanding of contemporary issues relating to planning in Australia. The award seeks to recognise work that extends planning debate and knowledge with emphasis on sound evidence as opposed to opinion. The research should have broad applicability to the planning profession. Commissioned research which presents an impartial view of the research topic can be considered in this category.

The award will be given to research that is impartial and evidence-based. This may be part of commissioned research, academic research, or as part of a doctoral study (PhD).

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved, or will achieve, a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

TERTIARY STUDENT PROJECT

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises outstanding planning work by an individual or group of tertiary students. It is awarded for a substantial project, report, book, thesis, article or piece of research which makes a significant contribution to planning and development outcomes.

Nominations can address any, or a combination, of the planning interests such as urban and regional planning, social planning, environmental planning, transport planning, urban design, economic development planning and planning law.

The award will be given to a project completed by the student during studies and assessed as part of a PIA accredited university program.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by an individual or group of tertiary students engaged in a planning related project. They may be self-nominated or nominated by a university, employer or PIA member.

Projects done as part of doctoral (PhD) studies are ineligible for this category and should be submitted in the Planning Research category instead.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved, or will achieve, a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advances the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's elements and methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

STATE AWARD CATEGORIES

PLANNING CHAMPION

For Division Awards only

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises non-planners (a person, group or business organisation) for their advocacy or for making a significant contribution and lasting presence to the urban and regional environment over the last 1-2 years.

It is awarded to a non-planner/s who promote and advocate for good planning and planning outcomes, and the value of planning and/or the planning profession to the public (i.e. through the promotion or reporting of planning issues that raise the positive profile of planning).

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations for the Planning Champion will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Demonstrate how they have advocated or enabled a good planning outcome to be achieved.
- Demonstrate how they have increased awareness in the community about the value of planners and planning.
- Demonstrate how their influence has had a positive impact on the community or planning project.
- Demonstrate how the outcome has been realistic and can be replicated.
- Demonstrate the contribution they have made to planning practice and/or learning for the planning profession.

The nomination should describe how the nominee has built support for planning and increased understanding of planning issues and values.

Nominations should be supported by two or more written testimonials outlining the way that the nominee has championed planning.

PERFORMANCE AND INNOVATION IN DEVELOPMENT AWARD

For Division Awards only

OBJECTIVE

This award recognises an outstanding development approval outcome.

This award is presented to small, medium or large scale projects that demonstrate vision, innovation, improvement, communication, collaboration and community benefit. Projects should advance the practice of development assessment to achieve positive land use planning outcomes. The size of a project is not necessarily a determining factor.

Developments may also be recognised for overcoming significant challenges or hurdles to realise outstanding planning outcomes in an urban, regional or rural setting.

Nominated projects and processes have obtained a development approval or been constructed.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public, developer or an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice. Approvals that have been obtained through the Environment, Resources and Development Court are ineligible (unless evidence shows otherwise).

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Vision and innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents an original, innovative or performance-based approach to achieve a positive outcome. Nominations are to clearly identify why this approach achieved a superior outcome.
- **Improvement** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with planning scheme or organisational objectives and advances a beneficial outcome for the assessment process, site, place, community. The improvements should be measurable and transferable to other projects or processes.
- **Communication and Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the proposal went over and beyond a usual development or assessment process to deliver highly collaborative and authentic development outcome. The project must recognise the important role of relevant stakeholders to achieve an innovative, balanced and beneficial outcome. *Note: Nominations are to provide evidence that the local authority has been notified of the nomination. Demonstration of highly collaborative and authentic community engagement is desirable and will be considered favourably, but is not essential.*
- **Community benefit** - Demonstrate how the nomination has or will successfully implement a significant community benefit, including the existing or potential benefits.

HEALTHY ACTIVE BY DESIGN AWARD

For Division Awards only

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Healthy
Active
by Design™

OBJECTIVE

The planning and design of our neighbourhoods, towns and cities shape how people move, eat, connect and spend time outdoors - key drivers of health and wellbeing.

The objective of this award is to highlight the critical role planning can play in supporting long-term population health. It celebrates projects that show how planning can enable active transport and recreation, access to nature and healthy food, social connection and welcoming local environments.

This award recognises outstanding projects and initiatives that integrate land use, transport, public open space, public realm and/or community infrastructure to enable healthier communities.

Nominations should demonstrate how the project or initiative aligns with relevant Healthy Active by Design goals to advance the role of planning in health. These are:

Public open space – Provide a range of public open spaces that meet the recreational, physical and social needs of all members of the community, while also strengthening everyday connection to nature.

Community facilities – Deliver welcoming facilities and spaces that meet diverse activity and service needs and are well integrated in the spatial and transport networks of existing or growing communities.

Buildings – Design, deliver and continually adapt buildings that enhance and activate the public realm, foster physical activity and social connection throughout daily use, and provide healthy indoor environments.

Destinations – Plan neighbourhood destinations as local hubs by clustering essential services, healthy food outlets, employment, education and recreation within walkable and cyclable catchments, supporting healthy behaviours and stronger community life.

Movement networks – Facilitate safe and convenient and pleasant active travel through accessible, integrated and connected for walking, wheeling, bike riding and public transport routes. Housing diversity – Provide housing choice through a mix of various types, tenures and sizes to meet the dwelling needs of a diverse community contributing to active and vibrant places.

Sense of place – Celebrate local character and identity through design, shaping places that feel distinctive, welcoming and grounded in their community, while supporting everyday life, walking, connection and wellbeing.

Healthy food – Create accessible, affordable and sustainable food environments that support healthy eating patterns and connect communities through integrated planning and design.

Nominees are also invited to submit their entry as a case study on the Healthy Active by Design website [here](#).

See [Healthy Active by Design for SA \(2026\)](#) for SA-specific guidance.

Healthy Active By Design eligibility and selection criteria continues on following page.

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations may be made by a member of the public or by an individual or organisation engaged in planning practice.

Eligible nominations may include completed projects, adopted strategies, planning policies, design frameworks, precinct plans, master plans, engagement processes, partnerships or other initiatives that demonstrate *Healthy Active by Design* in practice. Projects may be located in metropolitan, regional, rural or growth area settings.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Originality & Innovation** - Demonstrate how the nomination presents a visionary approach or innovative concept to address a specific need or issue.
- **Quality** - Demonstrate how the nomination achieved a very high quality outcome.
- **Strategic Alignment** - Demonstrate how the nomination aligns with a planning matter of local, regional, state/territory or national significance. Outline how the nomination advance's the importance of planning.
- **Implementation & Transferability** - Demonstrate how the nomination will be/or has been successfully implemented including a summary of the benefits. Outline how the nomination's methodology has potential application for others and how the use of the nomination's methodology can further the cause of good planning.
- **Collaboration** - Demonstrate how the engagement techniques and methods for the nominated project were appropriate, meaningful and applicable. Outline how the techniques contributed to a positive outcome.

SECONDARY STUDENT PROJECT

For Division Awards only

OBJECTIVE

This Award recognises outstanding planning work by a secondary student.

It is awarded for a substantial project, report, article, or research that significantly contributes to planning and development outcomes.

Nominations can address any of the planning interests, such as urban and regional planning, social planning, environmental planning, transport planning, urban design, economic development planning and planning law.

ELIGIBILITY

- An individual or group of secondary or high school students engaged in a planning-related project.
- May be self-nominated or nominated by a secondary school or employer or PIA member.
- Must be a piece of work completed during studies.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations should address how the objective of the award responds to the following selection criteria:

- **Innovation** - Discuss the originality of the concept or significant refinement of existing techniques or procedures. Nominations should illustrate the depth and scope of research.
- **Transferability** - Discuss how the project or work has potential application to other locations, projects, or areas of planning interest.
- **Discuss the project methodology** – convey how the work is based on sound and plausible research, analysis and evidence basis.
- **Referencing** – Demonstrate the breadth of research.
- **Quality** - Excellence of thought, analysis, writing, graphics, and character of presentation.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

For Division Awards only

This Award recognises the most outstanding contribution to issues relating to urban and/or regional planning in SA.

Nominations are not sought for this category. The President's Award is judged by the PIA SA President. The Judging Panel may be consulted in the determination of this Award.

MINISTER'S AWARD

For Division Awards only

This Award recognises the most outstanding contribution to issues relating to urban and/or regional planning in SA.

Nominations are not sought for this category. The Minister's Award is judged by the SA Minister for Planning. The Judging Panel may be consulted in the determination of this Award.



2026
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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