

Winners of the 2011 Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government

Regional/rural non-senior staff representative – Ms Simone MacLaughlan, Mid-Western Regional Council

Ms MacLaughlan joined Mid-Western Regional Council in 2008 and is employed as Executive Secretary. She was nominated for an Award by the General Manager and Mayor because of the initiative she has shown, stepping well beyond her role to lead a team of women to develop a Women in Local Government program called Inspire, Encourage, Enlighten (IEE).

Ms MacLaughlan has been recognised for researching, developing, organising and implementing the IEE program which includes assertiveness training for all female staff members, four women's networking events each year and a mentoring program.

To support the IEE program, Ms MacLaughlan also developed and maintains a dedicated intranet page and produces a monthly newsletter, "MWRC Women in Local Government" which is distributed to all staff.

Ms MacLaughlan has been recognised for striving to improve internal communication and opportunities for all Council staff, recently conducting a pilot Workplace Wellness program which included lunchtime fitness activities and a supporting intranet site with exercise and nutrition tips. Ms MacLaughlan also developed, produces and distributes a monthly staff newsletter "Team Talk".

The selection panel chose Ms MacLaughlan from a strong field of candidates because of the initiative she has shown, the positive outcomes she has achieved for all Mid-Western Regional Council staff and the leadership she has shown above and beyond the duties of her position.

Metropolitan non-senior staff representative – Ms Helen Connell, Holroyd Council

Ms Connell was nominated for being an inspiring leader and the driving force behind a number of successful initiatives with both an internal and external focus. Besides her role as Manager, Human Resources at Holroyd Council, Ms Connell has also taken on the acting role of Manager, Media Relations, and is successfully managing two business units.

In her role as Manager, Human Resources, Ms Connell introduced the Holsafe Safety Program, which has won a national award and receives funding from WorkCover. In her dual role as Manager, Media Relations,

Ms Connell has managed a number of successful community events including PetFest, CityFest, Workplace Memorial Commemoration and an Asbestos Information Night.

Ms Connell has also been recognised for taking initiative in other areas of Council, including revamping the Social Club to boost membership, renegotiating vending machine options and adding extra activities such as barefoot bowls, social club lunches and healthy fruit days.

Ms Connell's commitment to women's development is well known, with Council's Women's Development Team winning two national awards under Ms Connell's leadership. Ms Connell has initiated a number of activities for women at Holroyd Council including networking lunches, training and development programs, support for female staff, flexible work practices, parental morning teas and staff surveys.

Ms Connell has inspired many people through her leadership and mentoring others, including a student from the Lighthouse Program and a HR practitioner through the LGMA Mentoring Program.

The selection panel chose Ms Connell from a very close field of high quality nominees because of her combination of leadership, sustained commitment to the development of women and award-winning efforts in a number of areas.

Regional/rural senior staff representative - not awarded in 2011

The selection panel were unable to assess any nominations in this category as meeting the selection criteria, so did not make an award this year.

Metropolitan senior staff representative - Ms Lisa Miscamble, Council of the City of Canada Bay

Ms Miscamble is Canada Bay's Director Community Development and was nominated partly because of her significant contribution to the development of Canada Bay's 20 year Community Strategic Plan "FuturesPlan20".

Under Ms Miscamble's guidance the planning and implementation process has engendered transformational leadership, innovation in engaging with the community and a realignment of organisational planning and processes in order to better facilitate responsive, dynamic and engaged services in Canada Bay. These efforts were recognised with a Public Relations Institute of Australia Golden Target Award for Excellence.

Ms Miscamble's vision, leadership and project management skills were considered by her nominators as being integral to the development of the Concord Library and Wellbank Children's Services facility, which is a model of best practice in sustainability and innovative design. In 2008 the building was highly commended for the Australian Property Institute Excellence in Property Local Government Award.

Ms Miscamble was also nominated for being instrumental in the establishment of two regionally significant playgrounds in the Canada Bay local government area, including an all-abilities regional playground which received the 2010 national award for best play space in Australia. The McIllwaine Park Regional Playground resulted from an extensive community consultation process led by Ms Miscamble which activated a low usage park into a popular facility with regional significance.

Ms Miscamble has been commended by her nominators for her leadership, communication and relationship strengthening skills; and as a mentor, role model and change agent which has resulted in a cultural shift within her division to one of best practice, continuous improvement and a learning environment.

Apart from adopting policies to support family-friendly and flexible work practices, implementing a nine-day fortnight and above-award conditions for Council's childcare workers, Ms Miscamble's commitment to staff and particularly the women working for Council has been demonstrated through her establishment of a panel of female staff and elected representatives to implement an annual program to promote opportunities for women at Council.

Ms Miscamble currently chairs the LGMA Women's Opportunities Network and is also a mentor for the LGMA's mentoring program.

The selection panel chose Ms Miscamble from a very strong field of Metropolitan Senior Staff nominees because of the breadth and depth of her commitment, abilities and achievements for her community, the Council and Council's staff.

Regional/rural elected representative – Clr Jan McWilliams, Mayor, Great Lakes Council

Clr McWilliams was nominated for her sustained commitment and tireless service to the Great Lakes community. Since her election to Great Lakes Council in 1995, Clr McWilliams served as Deputy Mayor from 2002 until 2008 and as Mayor since 2008.

Clr McWilliams was nominated because of her particular support for the sporting community and young people of the area. Clr McWilliams'

campaigning and fundraising support has resulted in the recently completed grandstand at Harry Elliott Oval. The Oval has hosted many State, Regional and State of Origin football matches since the official opening of the grandstand and Clr McWilliams is Patron of the local Hawks Football Club that also uses the grounds.

Clr McWilliams was also instrumental in the organising committee and fundraising with local young people which has resulted in the Tuncurry Skatepark, and provides a much needed recreational facility for the young people of Foster-Tuncurry.

At a strategic level, Clr McWilliams' nominators emphasise that her ongoing work with the local area command of the NSW Police has greatly assisted the minimisation of crime in the Great Lakes area and has built a cooperative relationship between the Police and Council.

Clr McWilliams' nominators highlight that her leadership skills have come to the fore since being appointed Mayor of Great Lakes Council in 2008, ensuring that Councillors have robust debate on issues brought before Council and through this process has encouraged responsible and thoughtful decision-making. Councillors have responded by respecting the decision-making process and because of her approach Clr McWilliams is a very popular and well-respected Mayor who has headed a united and cohesive Council, delivering positive outcomes for the community.

Clr McWilliams has also been very involved with many community organisations, including women's volunteer organisations, assisting with fundraising efforts and practical support to achieve positive outcomes for the local community. This includes working with the Red Cross Ladies to establish Forster's first Blood Bank in 2009 as well as assisting the War Widows Guild with fundraising. Clr McWilliams has also been a strong supporter of Vietnam Veterans, RSL Sub Branch and the National Servicemen's Association.

The selection panel chose Clr McWilliams because of the range of positive outcomes she has achieved for her local community, particularly comments about her consultative approach to leading a united and cohesive Council.

Metropolitan elected representative – Clr Karen McKeown, Penrith City Council

Clr McKeown has served on Penrith City Council since 2004, serving as Deputy Mayor in 2006 and 2007. Clr McKeown has also recently been elected to the Executive of the Local Government Association of NSW.

Clr McKeown was nominated because of her ongoing support of council and her community through her passion and commitment to environmental sustainability, particularly climate change. Clr McKeown has been Penrith City Council's Sustainability Champion since 2005 and represented Council at a United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali in 2007.

Clr McKeown is acknowledged as being a key driver in establishing programs in Council and the City to promote sustainability, including the Sustainable Penrith Action Plan, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives Water Campaign, the Energy and Water Savings Action Plans and integrated sustainability indicators to measure outcomes in both the City and the Council.

Clr McKeown was nominated for displaying inspirational leadership through her passion for delivering outcomes such as her commitment to the Mayors' Asia Pacific Environmental Summit held in Melbourne in 2006 which drives Council's initiatives on energy and green events.

Together with her focus on climate change, Clr McKeown was also nominated for being a strong advocate for social justice, playing an active role in the Blue Mountains/Nepean Interagency Taskforce on Homelessness and the Greater Western Sydney Regional Homelessness Committee. She actively pursues Council's policies on affordable housing and community development activities such as Penrith City's Neighbourhood Action Plans.

Clr McKeown's contribution to the participation of women in local government is well known - she is currently in her second term as President of ALGWA NSW, having served on the Executive since 2004. She is a strong advocate for women and passionate about increasing the level of representation by women in local government, in elected and senior staff roles. Clr McKeown is also a member of the NSW Joint Ministerial Advisory Council for Women in Local Government. Clr McKeown has also played an active role in encouraging and fostering staff from Penrith City Council to become more involved in ALGWA.

The selection panel chose Clr McKeown because of her leadership, depth of commitment and holistic approach to achieving positive outcomes in local government in a wide range of areas to build a better local community.

Winners of the 2010 Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government

The winners of the 2010 awards were presented by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Barbara Perry MP and the Minister for Women, the Hon Jodi McKay MP, at a function held at Parliament House on 8 March 2010.

Regional/rural non-senior staff representative – Ms Jenni Eakins, Coffs Harbour City Council

Ms Eakins has worked for local government for over 20 years and is currently Executive Manager of Cultural and Community Development at Coffs Harbour City Council.

Ms Eakins was nominated because of her contribution in the areas of community and cultural facility development, with an emphasis on consultation, inclusion and relationship building.

Ms Eakins has been involved in the development and construction of two branch libraries, two stages of the Regional Art Gallery, a suburban community centre, relocation of the central library, extension and refurbishment of the theatre and development and construction of a central community centre.

The development and construction of the \$2.4 million multipurpose central community centre is the project for which Ms Eakins was nominated, as it typified her approach to work in local government throughout her career. The project was the culmination of nine years of work, involving a significant needs analysis process and a number of project concepts which did not proceed. Ms Eakins took on the project after it had been rejected by a number of other project engineers. The end result is a high quality, energy-efficient building with a range of special artistic features which meets the needs of special interest groups, as well as the broader community.

The contributions Ms Eakins made to the project which were valued most highly by her nominators were her attitude and approach to the project. As a result, a number of ongoing warm and positive professional and community relationships have been developed and maintained in spite of the challenges faced.

Ms Eakins' nominators believe that she leads in a truly inclusive and consultative manner and she demonstrates on an ongoing basis that leadership is about engaging people first and then leading them forward to exceed all expectations.