

PLA Awards of Excellence 2013

Learning from Australia's Parks and Leisure Programmes

Text by Mark Band
Images as credited

Parks and Leisure Australia (PLA) held its annual Awards of Excellence Gala Dinner on Wednesday, October 16, 2013, at the Pullman Albert Park, Melbourne. The awards recognise the outstanding initiatives and innovative efforts of "the people behind the places" that promote opportunities for the good use of leisure time for social, environmental, and economic benefits. Hosted by media personality and former Australian Football League player Sam Kekovich, the event was attended by over 400 professionals from the parks and leisure sector.

There were a total of eight Awards of Excellence and two Awards of Commendation given out. Alongside the local government winners, the former PLA president and current Hume City Council Manager of Leisure and Youth Services, Bruce Fordham, also won the prestigious 2013 Frank Stewart Award,

the highest individual honour awarded by PLA. The Frank Stewart Award recognises individuals who have made a significant contribution to the development, promotion, and advocacy of the parks and leisure industry through their personal and professional endeavours.

PLA is an Australian professional body representing the parks, gardens, recreation, and leisure industry. Its flagship awards serves as a prestigious and prominent benchmark of industry standards. PLA and Centre for Greenery and Urban Ecology (CUGE) continue to strengthen their collaboration, following the Memorandum of Collaboration signed between them in mid-2013.

More information: www.parksleisure.com.au/about/awards-of-excellence

1, 2. Organised by Pittwater Council, Food & Wine Fair offers wine tastings and wine sales, a variety of hot food, picnic wares, jams, olive oils, breads, and confectionery (Photo: Pittwater Council).

3, 4. A host of non-competitive, fun, free, accessible, and locally staged events in Banyule encourages people to be active outdoors (Photo: Banyule City Council).

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Award for Events

name Pittwater's Fabulous Community Markets
award recipient Pittwater Council (NSW/ACT)
location Sydney, New South Wales
completion date Ongoing since 2006

Comprising Palm Beach Market, Pittwater Fine Food & Wine Fair, and the Beaches Market, the markets were designed to offer various attractions throughout the year across a range of different settings and fulfilled the social and cultural aspirations for the local community and visitors to the area.

This award recognises the combined effort required to successfully plan, organise, and manage effective events or festivals that promote opportunities for leisure as well as a number of social, environmental, and economic benefits.



Award for Leisure Facilities

name Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre
award recipient Glen Eira City Council (VIC/TAS)
location Melbourne, Victoria
completion date 2012

The new sports and aquatic centre was constructed on the existing site of East Bentleigh Pool in Melbourne and designed around the needs of the Glen Eira population. Its key objectives were to be a safe facility; provide year-round opportunities for leisure, recreation, and well-being; incorporate innovation; and be self-sustaining.

This award recognises leisure centres, aquatic centres, sporting facilities, sports precincts, community centres, and other venues for activities that demonstrate innovative features of design, development, and operation.



Award for Inclusive and Connected Communities

name Banyule Free Leisure Program
award recipient Banyule City Council (VIC/TAS)
location Melbourne, Victoria
completion date 2011

Banyule Free Leisure Program began in 2011 and focuses on non-competitive, fun, free, accessible, and locally staged events. It is coordinated in partnership with local community groups and organisations and includes a calendar of bi-yearly events, such as movies in parks, family bike rides, and music in the park.

This award recognises innovative programmes, projects, practices, or events that deliver greater opportunities in leisure through the creation and strengthening of inclusive and connected communities.



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Award for Open Space Development

name Angelsea Riverbank Development
award recipient Surf Coast Shire Council (VIC/TAS)
location Melbourne, Victoria
completion date 2013

The development included: a versatile performance shelter for community events and gatherings; sealed pathways along the riverbank for enhanced connectivity; and a natural play space that enhanced and highlighted the natural landscape. The play space also provided picnic facilities, seating, and planting to encourage greater use of the riverbank and upgrade and protect degraded areas.

The award recognises outstanding examples of design and management among open spaces that are vibrant, successful, and well designed and managed.

Award for Parks

name North Adelaide Dog Park
award recipient Adelaide City Council (SA/NT)
location Adelaide, South Australia
completion date 2012

The North Adelaide Dog Park has created significant social benefits by allowing people to meet and interact and strengthening the sense of local community. The park encourages dogs to socialise in a safe environment, reducing aggressive behaviours and the frequency of dog attacks. Its large open space means that dogs and their owners gain physical health benefits through regular exercise.

The award recognises outstanding examples of design and management among parks that are vibrant, successful, and well designed and managed.

Award for Planning

name Armstrong Creek Sports Development Plan
award recipient City of Greater Geelong (VIC/TAS)
location Geelong, Victoria
completion date Published in 2012, Development ongoing

A comprehensive network of sport and recreation facilities was planned for Armstrong Creek Sports Development. The plan includes: an aquatic and entertainment centre; 4 multi-purpose indoor stadiums; an athletics track; 22 netball courts; 36 tennis courts; 15 football or cricket ovals; 3 bowls or croquet facilities; 12 soccer or hockey pitches; 21 sports pavilions; a playground within a 400-metre-walk to residences; and a major playground for persons of all abilities.

The award recognises outstanding examples of strategic planning that have enriched and revitalised a community.



Award for Playspace

name Woodbridge Riverside Park
award recipient City of Swan (WA)
location Perth, Western Australia
completion date 2012

The project's aim was to create a major environmental, educational, and cultural showpiece to connect the community to the unique nature and culture of Swan River and to deliver sustainable social, environmental, and economic outcomes. The play areas are specially designed to inspire creative, engaging, and physical play and will be themed around the people, plants, animals, culture, history, and ecology of the river.

This award recognises a project that demonstrates a unique journey that involves a range of stakeholders, contributes to a sense of "place" for its local community, and exhibits design innovation that will inspire others.

Award for Sustainable Initiatives

name Cronulla-Woolooware Wastewater Reuse Scheme
award recipient Sutherland Shire Council (NSW/ACT)
location Sydney, New South Wales
completion date 2012

The scheme demonstrates innovation by providing recycled wastewater for irrigation to both private and public users, including local golf courses, ovals, and recreation areas in the eastern part of Sutherland Shire. The council had identified sustainable markets for recycled water and the need to provide a cost-effective water supply that would create a drought-proof solution for the local sporting fields.

This award recognises improved and innovative programmes, practices, projects, or events that demonstrate significant sustainable initiatives and outcomes to provide greater opportunities in leisure.

5, 6. Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre is a one-stop sports destination for the Glen Eira population (Photo: Robert Churchus Photography).

7, 8. Play spaces and a multipurpose performance shelter at Angelsea Riverside Development (Photo: Surf Coast Shire Council).

9. Woodbridge Riverside Park's play areas are themed around the people, culture, history, and ecology of Swan River (Photo: City of Swan).

10. A golf course being irrigated by recycled water from the innovative Cronulla-Woolooware Wastewater Reuse Scheme (Photo: Sutherland Shire Council).

11. North Adelaide Dog Park has encouraged a thriving community of local dog owners and their dogs with its safe and vibrant environment (Photo: Adelaide City Council).

12. Site where construction of the Armstrong Creek Sports Development Plan is ongoing (Photo: City of Geelong).

AWARDS OF COMMENDATION

Award for Parks

name Dom Serra Grove
award recipient City of Subiaco (WA)
location Perth, Western Australia
completion date 2013

The city aimed to maximise the community's use of this public open space, by providing more amenities to support socialisation and by beautifying the area so that community members would want to visit and spend time there. The design of the grove was also guided by design workshops with local residents.

Award for Leisure Facilities

name Smoky Bay Jetty Restoration
award recipient District Council of Ceduna (SA/NT)
location Flinders, South Australia
completion date 2012

The Smoky Bay Progress Association understood the need to renovate the broken-down jetty that represented the focus of the town. A renovated jetty was regarded importantly to promote community pride, as a contrast to the "broken-down" image delivered by the state of the existing jetty. The aim was to provide a venue offering recreational and social interest for families and appeal to all ages that had access free of charge. 

CITYGREEN

Produced bi-annually by the Centre for Urban Greenery & Ecology, CITYGREEN captures issues relating to greening and ecology of the urban environment. It communicates multi-disciplinary knowledge essential to the realisation of a green city. The articles in each specially curated issue are written by well-known experts and professionals from greenery-related disciplines like arboriculture, architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning and urban ecology.

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