



Media Release

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2017 Local Government Awards for Excellence Winners Announced

Dorset Council and Devonport City Council have been declared the winners of the 2017 Local Government Awards for Excellence.

Dorset Council's innovative approach to securing and enhancing aged care services in its region won the *Delivering Excellence - Smaller Councils (population under 15,000) Award*. Dorset's Blue Derby mountain bike trail was also a finalist, together with West Coast Council for its Footpath Improvement Program.

A project by Devonport Council entitled *Read Devonport*, aimed at improving literacy as a means of gaining greater social and economic prosperity in the region, took out the *Delivering Excellence - Larger Councils (population over 15,000) Award*. Other finalists were Kingborough Council for its Kingborough Local Links program and website and Launceston City Council for its communications' during the 2016 Flood Crisis.

This year saw a strong field of entries vying for the honours, with projects ranging from mountain bike trails, responses to flood crises, and facilities to encourage healthier lifestyles.

In May 2015, the Dorset community was told one of Scottsdale's two aged care facilities would close and the other, a government-run facility was losing more than \$1 million a year, placing the future of aged care in the North East in doubt. Dorset Council led the revival with an innovative plan that saw a new operator take over the two facilities, with assistance from the State Government. This has led to aged care in the North East not only being secured but will allow for future expansion on the site.

Securing and expanding the aged care facilities will add to the local economy, creating jobs and wealth, as well as making it a region of choice to live and work, and retire. The project has national implications – an innovative model taking aged care in rural and regional areas from decline into growth, and providing a framework for communities to partner through Local Government with aged care providers and Government to deliver a better future for local communities.

Devonport Council's *Read Devonport* is a collaboration between Local and State Government, community service organisations, service clubs and the Devonport community, aimed at improving literacy. The program's objective is recognition that by improving literacy, it will lead to greater social and economic prosperity in the

region, with many of the program elements designed to support parents with low literacy levels.

A total of 56 partner organisations have come together to develop, invest in and deliver a program featuring 45 unique and interconnected projects. This has included delivering more than 525 free or low-cost literacy activities, workshops and events, connecting around 3,000 participants, and involving 150 staff and volunteers from partner organisations. \$150,000 was leveraged from an initial \$30,000 investment. The result is improved literacy, family connections, community participation and social inclusion.

Sponsored by MAV Insurance, the Local Government Awards for Excellence aim to promote outstanding achievement and to inspire leading management practice and continuous improvement among Tasmanian councils.

The awards were presented on 28 July at the annual Local Government Conference, held at Wrest Point, Hobart.

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