



Local Government  
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AUSTRALIA SA

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALS AUSTRALIA, SA

23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL  
LEADERSHIP  
EXCELLENCE  
AWARDS

EXCELLENCE IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT /  
DISASTER RECOVERY FINALISTS

# 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARDS

## Award Finalists

### EXCELLENCE IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT / DISASTER RECOVERY

#### THANKS TO



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#### **Adelaide Hills Council Community Resilience Team - Towards Community Led Emergency Resilience**

The Towards Community Led Emergency Resilience (TCLER) project has been developed through an active process of listening to and addressing community needs following the Cuddlee Creek and Cherry Gardens bushfires of 2019-20, which significantly impacted the Adelaide Hills Council (AHC) area. Learnings from the earlier Sampson Flat fire of 2015 were also incorporated into the development of the project, which recently won the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience National Local Government Award.

TCLER brings together multiple resilience building initiatives encompassing disaster preparedness, response and recovery. This includes the delivery of community disaster resilience workshops in partnership with Red Cross; wellbeing and psychological preparedness sessions for targeted community members including families and those with lived experience of a disability; improved support and information for residents around landscape and property preparation; and the development of a grants program to assist in setting up community halls as recovery hubs following a natural disaster.

Adelaide Hills Council's own internal processes are also being reviewed and improved through this program, most notably through the development of the AHC Recovery Operations Manual which has significantly contributed to Council's swift response to recent incidents including the Stirling Village Mall fire.

The program is leading the way in community-led disaster resilience in SA, sharing learnings and insights with other councils through multiple professional networks. This is key in ensuring wider community needs are met into the future.

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#### Mid Murray Council - 2022/2023 Flood Mitigation Response and Recovery

Described as 'economically the worst natural disaster in South Australian history', the 2022/2023 Flood Event caused extensive damage to townships on the River Murray, destroyed or damaged hundreds of properties, and left Mid Murray Council with significant costs because of preparing for, mobilising during, and recovering from, the Flood Event.

The Flood Event was an inter-agency operation, with a focus on the protection of people and property. Given the slow-moving nature of the event, Council was presented with a unique set of circumstances, dedicating a significant number of resources alongside Government agencies during the preparedness phase, to mitigate the impact of the event. The uniqueness of the event provided Council with an opportunity to establish operational frameworks and internal decision-making structures to ensure the Council was prepared to deal with the flood event.

During the preparedness phase the following key works, amongst others, were undertaken:

- Construction of three temporary levee banks
- Closure of approximately 150kms of roads and open space
- Decommissioning of 27 Community Wastewater Management Systems and the Bowhill Water and TV systems
- The closure 80 marine facilities
- Removal of community infrastructure such as street furniture and other equipment
- Establishment of displaced resident's camping locations

Whilst the flood preparation works were being undertaken, the Critical Incident Management Team also gave due regard to Council's core service delivery, ensuring that staff not involved with flood preparedness maintained "business as usual" activities as much as possible over the duration of the Flood.

Council dedicated substantial resources to not only respond to the Flood, but maintain business continuity beyond the Event, and fast track recovery efforts to return normalcy to the community.

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#### Mount Barker District Council - Fire to Flourish

Fire to Flourish (F2F) is a comprehensive project implemented by Mount Barker District Council (MBDC) to enhance the preparedness and resilience of both council and its communities in the event of natural disasters. Notable achievements have been realised across a number of areas which reflect progress in the pursuit of both community led resilience and traditional ruwe (land) management using kiri (fire).

Under the heading of Community Resilience, Australian Red Cross 'Redi Communities' workshops have been delivered in nine locations, with five additional locations planned for the remainder of 2024. The workshops empower communities to actively form working groups and action plans, consistently prioritising crucial needs such as strengthened social connections, the development of 72-hour community response plans, and the establishment of local Community Support Hubs. Additionally, natural disaster education and awareness levels are being increased, and localised disaster resilience plans are being implemented.

F2F is also actively enabling the reviving of traditional ruwe (land) management using kiri (fire) in support of the Peramangk and Kurna Nations cultural practices. This endeavour not only aims to heal the land but also seeks to nurture the well-being of Traditional Owners, concurrently reducing the risk of bushfires. The practice of traditional ruwe management using kiri dates back over 60,000 years and is skilfully employed for various purposes, including weed control, plant regeneration, bushfire mitigation, increased food supply, and improved access to cultural areas.

Other successful F2F outcomes includes the development of a Roadside Vegetation Management plan and employment of two Fire Mitigation Officers tasked with reducing fuel loads in reserves, road verges and open spaces.

This project is made possible through funding from the Australian Government. With support from various specialist groups, Fire to Flourish is set to make a lasting impact over its 2.5-year timeline, concluding in March 2025.

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