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Audio Visual Presentation
David Salt and Tania Quick, Meinhardt

Awards Program Design
Kathryn Cuddihy, David Lock Associates

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DAVID LOCK ASSOCIATES

Bachelor of Urban, Rural and Environmental Planning
at BENDIGO CAMPUS
Congratulations to the 2012 Award and Commendation recipients.

In the best environments, there are no obvious markers to the creative expression of researchers’, planners’ and designers’ work. They just become fabulous places. These Awards acknowledge the rich and diverse palette of components that form good planning.

Planning, like all professions in the broader development industry, has been subject to the vagaries of the market. This year’s Award nominations reflect the impact of economic constraint, but also brilliant creativity, adapting to circumstances, and building resilience in a changing climate.

These Awards recognise the work of key projects by individuals and teams of people. And yet, each project is underpinned by a colony of planners across various disciplines. Whether collaborating, funding, researching or analysing environments and communities, the core work of planners is to justify place-based interventions, whether they be social or environmental strategies, new town designs, or structure plans.

Many thanks to our judging panel of experts for their valuable and voluntary contribution to assessing entries in their respective categories. Once again this year, our judging panels have involved eminent and well-respected people, drawn together from across the profession especially for this process. To them we are entirely grateful.

To others that assist – the Awards Sub-Committee members, the PIA Victoria Committee and office staff – we thank you for your time, commitment and indulgence to ensure the Awards do truly reflect excellence, and that the process, culminating in the Awards night, is a resounding success. We also welcome Liz Johnstone as the new PIA Victoria Executive Officer and we look forward to her assistance in coming years.

To Ecology & Heritage Partners, a Major Partner of the Awards, and to our other dedicated sponsors, thank you for your investment in recognising great planning in Victoria. Without your support, we could not have put this together. Special thanks to Kathryn Cuddihy from David Lock Associates for the Awards Program, David Salt and Tania Quick from Meinhardt for the visual presentation and voice over, Darryl Coote and Deborah Jackson for the entertainment, and to Associate Professor Michael Buxton of RMIT University for his generous provision of Storey Hall.

Carmel Boyce MPIA CPP
PIA Victoria Awards Co Convenor

Clive Jackson MPIA CPP
PIA Victoria Awards Co Convenor

Message from the PIA Victoria Awards Co Convenors
The 2012 Awards for Planning Excellence once again provides an opportunity for us to recognise excellence in planning and the many benefits enjoyed by the community from the projects and achievements of the many planning professionals across Victoria.

Recognition of the work of the planning profession and the work of outstanding individuals within it is crucial to raising awareness of the value of good land use planning and design, and the practical projects that enhance the lives of people living in our towns, cities and regions. Planning is a collaborative and integrated practice involving a range of professions and skills, including urban design, transport, community engagement, environmental sciences and regulation. Our Awards focus on outcomes, large and small, that benefit the community through this integrated approach.

The Awards categories include recognition of the achievements of students and young planners who are so important to the future of the country and our profession.

As Australia continues to grow and develop in the context of south-east Asia and international economies, it is essential that our professional practice and knowledge base grows with it. Young planners will play an important role in this changing environment and the future of our nation.

On behalf of the PIA Victoria Committee, I wish to thank our sponsors and the many judges who have given their time and expertise to make the Awards a success this year. Finally, I would like to thank the PIA Victoria office team, and Carmel Boyce and Clive Jackson as the 2012 Awards Co Convenors for their tireless efforts in organising the Awards for Planning Excellence.

Congratulations to this year’s Award and Commendation recipients and to all those who have been nominated for excellence in their work this year.

Steve Dunn MPIA CPP
PIA Victoria President
The Victorian Coalition Government is delighted to once again support this year’s Planning Institute of Australia Awards for Planning Excellence.

Planning is an important economic driver, and excellence in planning ensures our cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable and well placed to meet future challenges and growth.

Our planning system is responsible for delivering desirable outcomes while supporting the economic prosperity of our State, preservation of our built form and protection of the environment.

The Coalition Government is focussed on implementing reforms to increase efficiency and productivity, and the planning portfolio is playing a pivotal role.

Strategic planning for Melbourne and our regions is well underway to deliver a new vision for Victoria which is not just about land use, but a framework for our State’s ongoing liveability, as well as productivity, investment and jobs for the next 30 to 40 years.

Excellence in planning and urban design will be critical in ensuring Melbourne continues to grow as one of the most diverse, distinctive and liveable cities in the world and is able to strengthen its relationships with regional Victoria, other Australian capital cities and those internationally.

The Coalition Government recognises the enormous contributions of the planning community to Victoria. It is the shared responsibility of planners to plan new suburbs and communities, shape the future of existing cities and towns, and protect our valued urban and regional environments.

The PIA Awards for Planning Excellence give us all the chance to celebrate planning excellence and recognise the vital role planning plays in our day-to-day lives.

My sincere congratulations to all the nominees and winners, and I look forward to working with you as we realise Victoria’s exciting planning future together.

The Hon Matthew Guy MLC
Minister for Planning

Message from the Planning Minister
Melbourne is now a truly international city and once again we were voted one of the most liveable cities in the world. This is, of course, a great tribute to those planners who have created the built framework in which we live and play. The legacy we have inherited is our vibrant streetscapes and laneways and our unique suburbs which form the backdrop in which we live our lives.

But, internationally the competition is getting smarter. Melbourne cannot take its high ranking for granted. Right around the world in places like Canada, Denmark and the US, cities are realising the social and economic advantages of creating liveable, accessible, sustainable and pedestrian-friendly environments. In the next 20 years, the cities that will thrive are those that generate economic growth by attracting the best and the brightest people from around the world. Clusters of innovative people who generate and market ideas are the factories of tomorrow.

And government has an important role to play. Government policies must enhance the character of our built heritage by promoting design that improves the liveability of each neighbourhood. Now is not the time for ad hoc and uncoordinated development. Now is the time to tackle liveability, social isolation and the health implications associated with inactive lifestyles.

The PIA’s Planning Excellence Awards once again shows that in Victoria, innovation, excellence, flair and inspiration are alive and well.

I would like to acknowledge the support that the Planning Institute gives young planners and students is particular, recognising the importance of training and encouraging tomorrow’s planners and innovators.

Congratulations to all of this year’s winners and nominees; your contributions to planning determine the shape and lifestyles of our regions and cities.

Brian Tee MLC
Shadow Minister for Planning
Judging Panel

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Awards Co Convenors
Carmel Boyce
Carmel Boyce & Associates
Clive Jackson
Department of Human Services
Award to:
Caroline Dickson,
Casey City Council

Caroline is a Senior Strategic Planner at Casey City Council and was nominated by the Council for this Award. She is a highly skilled planner with excellent written, oral and visual communication skills, a passion and drive for achieving optimal planning outcomes, and excellent project and stakeholder management skills.

Caroline has undertaken a number of difficult and complicated projects, managing them very effectively. For example, she prepared a high quality Council submission on Social Housing in Victoria in response to a State Government Discussion Paper, a draft Rooming House Strategy for the City of Casey which aims to provide policy guidance for permit applications for rooming houses and operational guidance in registering, managing and enforcing matters relating to rooming houses and contributed to Council’s submissions and presentations to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Liveability in Outer Suburban Melbourne and the Parliamentary Inquiry into Environmental Design and Public Health in Victoria.

Caroline is a talented planning professional, consistently demonstrating exceptional dedication, skill and temperament, and is a worthy recipient of the 2012 Outstanding Achievement by a Young Planner Award.
AWARD

Award to:
Planisphere
In partnership with Greater Bendigo City Council, Jones & Whitehead, Urban Enterprise, RPD Group, AECOM

Project:
Bendigo CBD Strategy

The Bendigo CBD Plan is an exemplary example of a strategic planning vision that has been realised over time with outstanding results.

Council has committed to it, business has endorsed it, the community has embraced it and the whole of Bendigo (and visitors to Bendigo) are living it. The Plan has made a difference where that difference can be seen.

The Plan is holistic and pragmatic, it pushes the boundaries and it has the imprimatur of all involved. It is not just a retail or economic strategy, but rather a whole of Bendigo CBD strategy that provides significant opportunities for new development.

The CBD Plan has built on the strengths of Bendigo, its form and function and has used its own assets and resources to recreate places and areas in the city to realise a revitalised place. Council and its consultants researched and sought international best practice to contribute to place making. The results can be seen on the ground and the benefits of having such a strategy are evident.

The Bendigo CBD Plan is a living example of how an excellent strategy can positively contribute to revitalisation and change on an ongoing basis. The City of Greater Bendigo should be commended on the high quality of design and construction of the urban interventions already completed.
The Hard Won Victory

AWARD

Award to:
Brimbank City Council
In partnership with Meinhardt,
EPA Victoria, MGS

Project:
The Brooklyn Evolution Project

This project represents a triumph of persistence, the realisation of a long held vision and a strong desire to consult and engage with a community that had become jaded and disillusioned with years of promises, plans and collaborative processes across a range of organisations with varying roles and responsibilities.

The City of Brimbank took leadership of the issues, in collaboration with the EPA, turning around community attitudes to the Braybrook industrial area and gaining critical public support for a long term plan that minimizes industrial impacts.

Working with a sceptical and hostile community that had lost faith in the capacity of any level of government to address a series of seemingly intractable problems associated with the conduct and operation of a whole of series of industrial uses, the award winner has demonstrated that planning using sound processes of engagement can provide actions that will deliver real gains - an exemplary ‘hard won victory’.
Outstanding Tertiary Student Project - Borrie Prize

Award to:
Tessa Bond, Noah McDonald, Lindsey Coutts, Sophie Jordan, Michael Anson, Bonnie Grant, RMIT University

In partnership with TelimiboSoNo Planning & Design

Project:
Precinct Structure Plan

This project, prepared for the Growth Areas Authority for land within the City of Wyndham, is impressive, well-presented and comprises of a comprehensive and thorough analysis, review and design. The project was undertaken in two phases, with background and technical information, a review and analysis of the site’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and preliminary urban structure presented in the first report. The design for the site forms the second report, informed by the first document and also addressing the environmental, social and economic features of the site.

The proposed urban structure for the site focuses on medium-density mixed land use served by high-quality public transport, which is a key element and pre-condition of the development. Walkability is prioritised in the design, resulting in a comprehensive and integrated network of trails. The area will be well served by public transport and development will be around transport hubs. All housing will be within 800 metres of public transport.

This project addresses sustainability and health issues, and proposes a walkable, accessible and inclusive design, challenging traditional designs of outer urban estates that rely on vehicles as the primary form of transport. The team acknowledges the risks associated with their proposals but rises to the challenge to provide a new style of outer urban development.
Commendation to:
Caroline Cody, Gabby Hogan, Brendan McRae, Ben Saggers, RMIT University

Project:
Invisible Touch: How privately owned ‘public’ space can result in space not so public

This case study into the use of civic spaces compared the use of a traditional town centre with one under a more privatised model, concentrating on the Werribee and Point Cook town centres. The project related an analysis of public documents and a useful literature review to observations of the centres to derive conclusions about the ways the centres were used. It pointed to differences in observed behaviour, between perceptions and actual activity, and to similarities in design.

The project showed originality, was well structured and presented, and derived useful conclusions.

Commendation to:
Sophie Jordan, Tessa Bond, Lindsey Coutts, Noah McDonald, Mia Zar, RMIT University

Project:
Planning for Employment in Melbourne’s Growth Area – A case study from Wyndham

This project investigates how local government planning can contribute to the provision of greater employment accessibility in the City of Wyndham, one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia. The project provides useful spatial, demographic and other information, and identifies the ways local government could increase employment accessibility in growth areas. The project reviewed literature and used both qualitative and quantitative methods. It drew a series of strong conclusions from its analysis which could benefit other councils in their planning.
Award to:
Hansen Partnership
In partnership with Six Degrees Architects, Simon Taylor Landart, Environmental Earth Sciences, Moreland City Council, McCorkell Constructions

Project:
1 Heller Street Brunswick

The Heller Street project represents a remarkable and successful collaboration between council, community and a highly creative team of consultancies. This team, who won the tender to develop an empty council-owned industrial site in inner suburban Brunswick, have produced a brilliant and innovative model for new inner urban development and communal living.

The City of Moreland set the initial parameters for this difficult-to-develop “orphan” site in need of expensive remediation.

Instead of rolling out the same, well-worn carpet of suburban subdivision, they reserved two-thirds of the site for new public parkland, developed the remaining third as densely packed terrace housing, and ensured the housing stock is amply sized to accommodate families, who will enjoy their front-yard “public common” to its full capacity.

Hansen Partnership led successful consultations with the local community and steered the proposal through the planning process. Simon Taylor Landart created the marvellous terra-formed public common. Six Degrees Architects designed the housing, with a completely fresh re-think of the private/communal front porch interface. McCorkell Constructions built the whole thing to budget.

The project has retained its sense of idealism and originality from its initial conception all the way through to final delivery. It has proven its viability on all counts. It will stand as a model of inspired decision-making, and of visionary support for the realisation of an extraordinary and beautiful design for communal living.
Best Planning Ideas
Small Project

COMMENDATION

Commendation to:
Planisphere
In partnership with Colac Otway Shire Council, Aspect Studios, NMBW Architects, Urban Trans

Project:
Colac CBD and Entrances Project

‘Botanic Garden City’ is the inspired vision produced by Planisphere in partnership with Aspect Studios, NMBW Architecture Studio and Urban Trans for the Colac Otway Shire.

This project is an excellent example of how a small idea can, through intelligent guidance and community engagement, be formulated into an achievable vision.

The strategy not only embodies the spirit and pride of the place but provides the framework and tools for its implementation. It is both inspirational and pragmatic in its expectations and provides a good model for other towns and communities wishing to improve their urban environments.

This is a finely crafted project that is worthy of recognition and support for its future implementation by Colac Otway Shire.
Award to:
Moreland City Council

Project:
Moreland Higher Density Design Code

Urban consolidation and the promotion of higher density housing in strategic locations such as activity centres are pillars of Victorian planning policy. General guidelines are part of policy but many responsible authorities, designers and proponents consider there is a void with respect to detailed design standards for higher density housing above three storeys that can be applied as a statutory tool.

The Moreland Design Code for Higher Density Housing has been developed in-house by Council’s strategic planning, architecture, urban design and ESD professionals to fill the gap. It aligns with the other residential codes within the Victoria Planning Provisions in terms of its approach, language and format.

The result is a clear, polished and practical document that builds on the suite of residential design standards. The Code addresses the typically fraught and debated issues associated with higher density housing including natural ventilation, building spacing, use of borrowed light to habitable rooms, visual and acoustic privacy, and private and communal open space. The Code articulates standards with the aim of better quality, more sustainable, higher density residential development, including mixed use buildings. It is assisted by sample design responses.

Moreland City Council’s initiative is an excellent advance in planning practice in Victoria and is a practical tool that will give greater clarity and certainty to the community, decision-makers and the development industry.
Commendation to:
Planisphere
In partnership with Greater Dandenong City Council, Aspect Studios

Project:
City of Greater Dandenong Gateways Strategy

This innovative project tackles the often ill-defined and inconsistently interpreted concept of “gateways”. Greater Dandenong recognised that in its own (and other) planning schemes there were multiple (and varied) references to gateways, yet minimal guidance for practitioners (applicants, council officers and VCAT) about what a “gateway treatment” should entail.

Gateways are often marked as a simple asterisk on a plan, and implemented simplistically with a row of flag poles, signage or tall building. The role and importance of any gateway, the strategic vision for its future, and guidelines for its development are typically not explicit or clearly articulated in planning documents.

This strategy establishes a conceptual framework for defining a gateway - as a place of entry or a point of transition from one situation to another. The strategy uses corridors and nodes as the basis of gateway typologies applied to the City of Greater Dandenong which can be adapted to other locations. The strategy makes the link between gateways as a landscape and urban design treatment with the planning system and planning permit process. The strategy includes easy to understand guidelines for signage, concept plans for selected gateways, and proposes an implementation framework that includes public works and a planning scheme amendment.

As the basis for Council's preferred directions for gateways into, out of, and within the municipality, the typology and strategy will be an important tool in public works and the assessment of permit applications. The approach is commended and recommended to other planning authorities as a model to follow.

This work significantly contributes to strategic thinking about the notion of gateways. It has the potential to save significant time and resources for developers, Council and VCAT while achieving a better standard of gateway treatments in the future.
Commendation to:
Alpine Shire Council
In partnership with Book & Black

Project:
Bushfire Prevention iPad Application

As a rural Council with just two planning staff, Alpine Shire has made innovative use of new technology to improve bushfire prevention measures.

Developed in-house from the ground up, the Shire has created an iPad application that simplifies and improves reliability in the onerous task of monitoring and enforcing compliance with permit conditions flowing from the Bushfire Management Overlay (and previous Wildfire Management Overlay).

Responding to the devastating 2009 fires and subsequent Royal Commission recommendations, the Shire and its planners gave priority to fire prevention measures. Permit conditions require the creation and maintenance of minimum defensible space for the lifetime of approved developments in BMO areas. This is now complemented by a commitment to ongoing monitoring of compliance, which has been combined with the annual cycle of inspection of every property in the Shire by Council’s Municipal Fire Prevention Officer.

The daunting task of locating all subject properties and relevant permit conditions has been greatly simplified by the iPad-based application. Mapping of relevant properties is complemented by a link to permit conditions through Council’s planning database.

This innovative initiative is a great example of the effective use of new technology to achieve an identified priority while substantially reducing the scale of human resources required to achieve this.
Award to:
Plan B La Trobe University
Student Planners Association

Project:
Dynamic Regional Young Planners -
Leading, innovating, engaging

Plan B is an organisation of undergraduate,
postgraduate and alumni students associated with
La Trobe University (Bendigo campus) programs in
Planning and Community Development. Since 2010,
it has developed a strong ‘outward facing’ voice for
young planners in promoting sustainable, healthy
and equitable development in central Victoria.
It has worked to improve sustainable and active
transport outcomes at the Bendigo campus through
using in-kind graphic design and printing funds to
create a user-friendly map of walking, cycling and
public transport information.

This has led to a ‘MapMyTown’ toolkit that has
assisted communities such as Castlemaine to
advocate for sustainable transport. More recently,
they have engaged in community-based activism
on food security. In organising and supporting
students to be actively engaged in community
planning issues, Plan B has supported a new
generation of activist planners.
Commendation to:
Nillumbik Shire Council

Project:
What would you add to the mix?
Essential Ingredients for the Nillumbik Planning Scheme

Nillumbik Shire Council demonstrated a real commitment to the public participation process as part of its Planning Scheme review. It extended the consultation beyond the ‘statutory period’, used creative ways to engage communities in the topic and provided a range of opportunities for the community to get involved. The way that the planning review was made into a proactive, attractive and user friendly campaign, as well as the range of tools used to engage communities were key strengths of this approach. The organisation’s willingness to go ‘above and beyond’ to inform the community of the planning process and listen to their feedback serves as a good example of how to work with communities to discuss planning matters, and provides a strong basis for future community based planning.

Commendation to:
Stockland

In partnership with Whittlesea City Council, Now for Future

Project:
The Mernda Community Conversations

Stockland and Whittlesea Council have recognised that building houses and social infrastructure is not the same thing as building communities. The Mernda Community Conversations represents an effort by Stockland to go beyond the usual development processes. The Conversation methodology empowered the residents to set their own priorities. They were resourced and supported in the implementation of their ideas by both organisations. This has facilitated the growth of an active and engaged community association. The community has since held two successful events, Christmas Carols and the Mernda Community Fair, and these have encouraged even more social interaction.

Plans for a full calendar of events demonstrates the sustainability of this approach to community development in new suburbs. Stockland are now planning to replicate this approach in other areas around Victoria. They are commended for making the effort to build the social capital of communities as well as the bricks and mortar.
As an Australian first, PIA, Places Victoria and 3AW, as joint partners, are very pleased to host the 2012 Victorian GREAT PLACE AWARD on the highly rated radio program Streetwise, with Urban Planner Bill Kusznirczuk encouraging members of the public to nominate great places during his weekly segment. A great place may include a public space, a street or a neighbourhood.

The objective of the Award is to increase community discussion about what represents a great place and to promote good planning.

By taking a public approach through radio and web based media, project partners are creating increased opportunities for debate about the diversity of places across Melbourne, what makes them valued and how they are perceived and enjoyed.

It is anticipated that conducting the Award in this public forum will foster a heightened awareness of great places, as well as the role of planning and the organisations contributing to creating these places.
Award to:
Community Planning and Development Program, La Trobe University Bendigo Campus

Project:
Making the World our Campus

La Trobe University’s PIA-Accredited Planning Program at the Bendigo campus has developed the most extensive Australian and international fieldwork and study tour program of any university in Australia. Over the last three years, the Planning program has conducted six international planning study tours with 85 participating students in 12 different countries, in addition to nine Australian field-based domestic study projects of three days or more with over 320 students participating.

These experiences are priceless for students of planning and community development, a people-and-place profession which at its most empowering is the complete antithesis of desk-bound activity. They are challenging project-based initiatives engaging students in critical thinking before, during and after the actual field trip and, furthermore, grounded in a wider appreciation of urban and regional planning theories and policies.

The field trip experience makes a novel, enriching and transformative contribution to student learning, both individually and through working in groups, in dealing with real communities, and in the challenge of working in unfamiliar environments. Feedback from students is overwhelmingly positive. It is no surprise that it delivers opportunities for trans-cultural learning experiences, partnerships with international universities, involvement with multiple stakeholders in vastly different communities, and spin-offs into scholarship of teaching publications.

The university and the staff involved, particularly Trevor Budge and Andrew Butt, are congratulated for their innovative leadership in planning education.
President’s Award

A W A R D

Award to:
Moreland City Council

Project:
Moreland Higher Density Design Code

For the first time in Melbourne’s history the number of apartments constructed has exceeded the number of detached dwellings. The siting and design of higher density mixed use development is important for the quality of life for future residents, for off-site impacts and ensuring the development makes a positive contribution to the area within which it is located.

Higher density housing in strategic locations such as activity centres and around transport nodes remains a core element of urban planning policy, and yet there is a general lack of guidance for such buildings over three storeys.

To improve the quality of development outcomes, Moreland City Council have built on the guidance and objectives provided in ResCode, the 2004 DSE Guidelines for Higher Density Residential Development and existing local policy to provide detailed design standards for higher density housing above three storeys that can be applied as a statutory tool.

Using building typologies common to Moreland, with input from in-house strategic planning, architecture, urban design and ESD professionals the Moreland High Density Design Code aligns with other residential codes within the Victoria Planning Provisions in terms of its approach, language and format. The Code addresses important issues associated with higher density housing including natural ventilation, building spacing, use of borrowed light to habitable rooms, visual and acoustic privacy, and private and communal open space.

The Code was informed by an extensive review of permit applications lodged with the Council over five years, and consultation with the Coburg Urban Design Review Panel and Victorian State Architect.

This is a practical approach that will give greater clarity and certainty to the community, decision-makers and the development industry and will assist to improve planning practice in Moreland as well as elsewhere.
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