2022 Winners

Anthea Kerr Award

Winner: Courtney James

Registered Midwife, Aboriginal Midwifery Caseload Model, Western Sydney Local Health District

Courtney is a proud Wiradjuri woman and a talented and caring midwife in the new Aboriginal Caseload Model at Westmead Hospital, known as Dragonfly Midwifery Caseload. This model of care was introduced to provide culturally sensitive care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. Courtney has been instrumental in the ongoing development of the Dragonfly model by driving the design of the Antenatal outpatient clinics. Her understanding of Indigenous communities is evident in how she conducts herself in all interactions with the women and families. Courtney 'walks the talk' and educates other midwives about cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.

NSW Public Servant of the Year

Winner: Amanda Causley

Welfare Services Functional Area Coordinator for Northern NSW and Community Services Caseworker, Department of Communities and Justice

Since the northern NSW floods began earlier in 2022, Amanda has spent countless hours coordinating 54 evacuation centres. Working around the clock, she prioritised the care and safety of disaster impacted communities, evacuation centres and staff to ensure they were supported. Amanda did all of this with a smile and remained calm despite the massive challenge she faced. She is very respected within the DCJ Disaster Welfare space, and Resilience NSW have also noted that she never faltered in her leadership and remained responsive and calm whilst under a significant amount of pressure.

A Strong Economy

Winner: Construction industry shutdown response

Infrastructure NSW

In July 2021, there was a construction pause across Greater Sydney to reduce COVID-19 transmission. To mitigate the economic impacts, Infrastructure NSW immediately established a Construction Reopening Team to develop a pathway to safely reopen construction. This resulted in construction resuming quickly and the industry becoming an early leader in COVID-safe work practices and vaccination.

Honourable Mention: Supporting home ownership for Aboriginal people

Aboriginal Housing Office

To address the disparity in home ownership in NSW between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families, the Aboriginal Housing Office developed the Aboriginal Home Buyer Saver Grants Project. The project enables Aboriginal people to overcome barriers to achieve home ownership and all its associated economic and social benefits including intergenerational change. The scheme consists of three grants that eligible Aboriginal people can apply for to access a one-off financial boost. The project addresses the Premier's Priority to increase home ownership and contributes to Closing the Gap target 9, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need.

Excellence in Digital Innovation

Winner: Virtual Rural Generalist Service

Western NSW Local Health District

Across NSW and Australia there are longstanding challenges in recruiting doctors to rural communities. The Virtual Rural Generalist Service is a support service for western NSW hospitals that enables rural generalist doctors to provide virtual and face-to-face medical coverage to vulnerable rural communities. Since implementation, there has been improved access to medical support close to home and on country, high

service uptake, high patient satisfaction, and improved support for retaining rural GPs. This is a sustainable solution that supports recruitment and retention of medical staff to rural hospitals and multipurpose services into the future.


Honourable Mention: M4 Smart Motorway – NSW's First Smart Motorway

Infrastructure and Place, Transport for NSW

Traffic growth on the M4 Motorway requires intervention to ease congestion and improve safety amidst western Sydney's growing population. NSW's first "Smart Motorway" technology will ease congestion and better manage traffic flows. Major improvements have been linked to a Managed Motorway System that controls traffic movements and helps manage incidents on the motorway to reduce impacts to traffic flow. In the first year of operation, the M4 Smart Motorway saw a 6-minute improvement in travel time from Penrith to Parramatta, and more importantly, an up to 40 percent reduction in serious traffic accidents.

Highest Quality Education
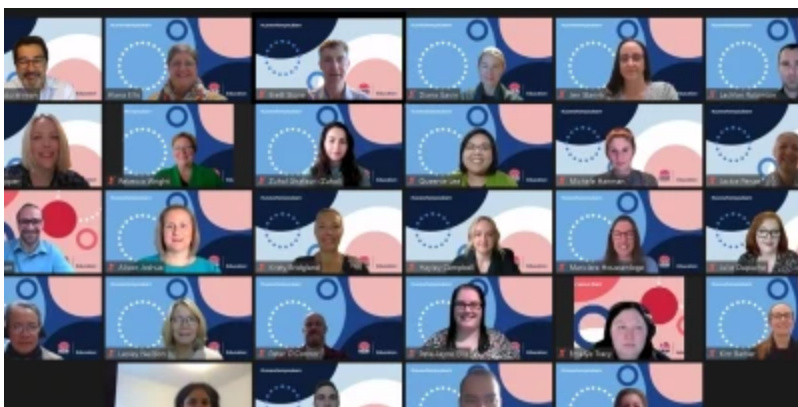
Winner: Check-in Assessments to enable student learning

Student Assessment Online Reporting Team, Department of Education

In response to concerns that student learning would be impaired from lockdowns, the Department of Education developed rapid

assessments to monitor student progression and enable schools to tailor support. Check-in Assessments are an Australian-first tool created to identify potential literacy and numeracy gaps quickly and easily. The tool was first created in April 2020 and completed by almost 63,000 students within 4 months. The first results were returned to schools within 48 hours, providing rapid insights backed with specific resources. Given their outstanding value, Check-in Assessments now occur twice-yearly for 400,000 students in Years 3 to 9.

Partners: Student Assessment and Online Reporting team, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

Honourable Mention: Rural Access Gap program

Information and Technology Directorate, Department of Education

Key metrics indicated a growing gap between metropolitan and regional schools and inequities in access to digital tools. To address this divide, the Rural Access Gap program set out to build digital capacity, efficacy, and capabilities by supporting over 1,000 rural schools in enabling digital classrooms. So far, the program has led to an improved 1:4 device-to-student ratio, provided nearly 13,000 teachers with access to a personal device and ensured higher internet connectivity speed across nearly 1,000 schools. This comprehensive approach provides the foundations for lifelong learning and ensures all students get quality education no matter where they live.

Partners: Department of Customer Service

Putting Citizens at the Centre

Winner: First Nations Support Program

Revenue NSW

First Nations people are over-represented in the fines system, which disproportionately impacts their social and economic participation and results in a cycle of escalating disadvantage. Revenue NSW transformed their services to increase engagement with First Nations people by developing place-based, data-driven community action plans to tackle local issues and transforming their internal culture. This includes a First Nations Team providing culturally safe services, an awareness toolkit to reduce voting fines, a 'Tell us Once' program to reduce the impact of licence sanctions in remote communities and repealing legislation that caused citizens to fear they would be locked up because of fines.

Recovery and Resilience

Winner: COVID-19 and Discharge Shuttle Service

Patient Transport Service, HealthShare NSW

To safely transport COVID-19 patients during the Delta outbreak, the Patient Transport Service team worked with National Patient Transport and the Clinical Excellence Commission to implement a new model to safely transport discharged COVID-19 patients from hospital to home via a shuttle service. Within 1 week, timeliness of COVID-19 transfers rose from 65 percent to 88 percent, despite an increase in demand of more than 1,000 percent across the system. The result was an improvement in patient flow during the peak of the outbreak, with patients spending less time in hospital. The shuttles were hugely successful, safely completing more than 16,000 COVID-19 transfers in 2021.

Partners: National Patient Transport (NPT), Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC), NSW Ministry of Health – System Flow Centre, State Health Emergency Operations Centre (SHEOC), NSW Ambulance & state-wide Local Health Districts

Honourable Mention: Learning from Home: A Crisis Solution

Learning from Home Team, Department of Education

As the pandemic escalated in 2020, the Learning from Home Team was required to move deftly to design and implement a central, high quality and accessible digital curriculum for thousands of schools. The first phase was produced in 16 days and supported curriculum from early childhood to Higher School Certificate, and over the next 18 months, the team developed over 2,500 teaching and learning instructional videos, resources and digital packages. Ongoing consultation across the school community informed improvements as the pandemic progressed. This became Australia's leading remote school learning program which empowered teachers, schools and parents to support the continuity of learning for one million NSW students.

Securing Justice and Opportunity for Vulnerable People

Winner: Pathways to Employment

Corrective Services NSW

Research suggests ex-offenders who gain stable employment after release from prison are 50 percent less likely to return to custody. The team established a pilot program to implement a structured process to enhance employment opportunities for women. This included a new service delivery model to address identified support gaps, engagement with employers and pre- and post-release tailored employment programs. The pilot resulted in a 60 percent employment rate and led to funding for additional resources to increase the scope to encompass all women exiting custody and also males. The project continues to evolve under the title 'Pathways to Employment'.

Partners: Various organisations and companies in NSW seeking labour across industries including food services, warehousing and construction; training organisations offering vocational and pre-employment programs to support people exiting custody

Honourable Mention: Justice Advocacy Service

Strategy, Policy and Commissioning, Department of Communities and Justice

The Justice Advocacy Service (JAS) fills a critical service gap in supporting people with a cognitive impairment in contact with the criminal justice system (CJS). The service responds to research that suggests people with a cognitive impairment are over-represented in the CJS, overlooked as a disability cohort, and highly vulnerable to becoming entrenched without appropriate support. Since 2019, JAS has provided state-wide support to over 4,000 victims, witnesses, suspects and defendants with a cognitive impairment during interactions with police and legal representatives, at court, and in custody.

Partners: Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS)

Well Connected Communities with Quality Local Environments

Winner: Working with local communities to support social and economic outcomes at Brewarrina

Property & Development NSW

Property & Development NSW was asked to find an alternative use for Brewarrina Correctional Facility focused on realising optimal community benefit. Community feedback highlighted the need for a women's drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. PDNSW worked collaboratively with Brewarrina Local Aboriginal Land Council resulting in the transfer of part of the land to the traditional owners for cultural preservation and primary and agricultural enterprises. Remaining land was transferred to the Brewarrina Shire Council and leased to Orana Haven Aboriginal Corporation to provide drug and alcohol rehabilitation services. Both outcomes will deliver social and economic benefits to a disadvantaged and marginalised community.

Honourable Mention: Benefits of Investment in Social Housing Capital Maintenance

Portfolio Management and Policy & Innovation Divisions, NSW Land and Housing Corporation

These teams collaborated to develop an evidence-based business case which produced a Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.72 – an Australian first in costing the benefits of investment in a social housing capital maintenance program. Land

and Housing is pioneering new ways to manage its social housing portfolio of 125,000 homes to provide safe, appropriately maintained properties. Since Land and Housing is self-funded, they require capital maintenance funding to cover the cost of required upgrades without selling other social homes.

Partners: PwC