

2023 Winners

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Anthea Kerr Award

Alexandra Rumore

Senior Outreach Solicitor, Disaster Response Legal Service, Legal Aid NSW

Alex is a warm and generous leader, with social justice and public sector values at the heart of everything she does.

When widespread flooding devastated communities across NSW in 2022, Alex was there on the ground. In this emergency, Legal Aid NSW provided over 5,700 legal services. As a senior outreach lawyer with the Disaster Response Legal Service, Alex rolled up her sleeves to ensure overwhelmed communities had their legal needs met. For months, Alex worked long days and weekends, travelling thousands of kilometres, delivering trauma-informed legal help where it was needed most.

Honourable mention: Sheena Pham

Associate Director, Strategy and Delivery Unit, NSW Treasury



Sheena provides a calm measured approach and leadership in the most challenging and high-pressure circumstances. This was demonstrated exceptionally during the delivery of 10 key state-wide programs to support the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sheena is a kind and empathetic leader who is quiet but powerful in her ability to build and inspire teams.

Sheena is a passionate advocate for culturally and linguistically diverse colleagues and is deeply committed to creating opportunities for them to thrive in the public sector. She brings this passion to her work every day by advocating for services that are accessible, equitable, and designed with thorough community engagement and consideration.



NSW Public Servant of the Year

Brad Fisher

Senior Project Manager, Electrical, NSW Public Works



As the NSW Public Works Technical Electrical Advisor on the Cooler Classrooms Program, Brad was responsible for delivering air-conditioning systems, solar PV cells and electrical upgrades to approximately 1,200 schools. His determination, ability under pressure, willingness to go above and beyond and ability to think differently enabled the program to extend to approximately 100 additional schools than originally forecast.

Brad won the 'Think Differently (Individual) Award' at the NSW Public Works Staff Awards 2022 and the 'Regional NSW Individual Award' 2023 for this work.

Building a resilient economy

Innovation project – podular construction



Aboriginal Housing Office, Department of Planning and Environment

The Innovation Project was developed to position the Aboriginal Housing Office with the most robust and efficient end-to-end process for delivering new residential buildings to Aboriginal clients in regional communities.

The team partnered with Corrective Services Industries and the University of Technology Sydney to design and deliver the 'Podular' construction system, enabling a reduction in building time and costs, increased tenant satisfaction, and more Aboriginal employment opportunities. Outcomes have informed the creation of procurement and design guidelines for the Aboriginal Housing Office.

Honourable mention: WestConnex – Sustainability and Environment



Infrastructure & Place, Transport for NSW

WestConnex Stage 3a links the M4 and M8 motorways to create an underground western bypass of the Sydney CBD.

The project set aggressive sustainability benchmarks through the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA) process. The project included a range of sustainable achievements as well as working with local artists to connect the project to Country, greatly exceeding the sustainability target with the highest benchmark for a road tunnel at the time.

Connecting communities

Assertive outreach program – Tweed Heads

Housing Services, Department of Communities and Justice

The Assertive Outreach program reduced the number of rough sleepers within the Tweed Shire by creating a multi-agency response and strengthening partnerships between services to better support those experiencing homelessness.



The program supports rough sleepers into accommodation and assists in tenancy retention. The result has been that 140 rough sleepers have been housed with a 95% tenancy success rate.

Partners: NSW Health, Social Futures, Momentum Collective

Honourable mention: Team Screen



Department of Primary Industries

Team Screen is a group of passionate, dedicated and determined staff from NSW Department of Primary Industries Fisheries, working across research and management.

The team have developed and implemented innovative fish-protection screens to prevent native fish becoming trapped in irrigation systems. This supports improved quality of life, real employment opportunities, better recreational fishing and other social benefits such as connection to country and mental health.

The outcomes delivered by Team Screen directly enhance local economies, support well-connected communities with quality local environments, and strengthen the recovery and resilience capacity of regional NSW.

Driving public sector diversity

Quiet Hour



Service NSW, Department of Customer Service NSW

One in 5 Australians live with disability, with 80% not obvious to others. Almost a third of those with disability aged over 15 avoid situations that are uncomfortable. Service NSW Centres were found to have barriers that make it difficult for these customers.

To assist customers living with a range of hidden disabilities, including Autism and hearing or vision sensitivities, Service NSW launched Quiet Hour. It works by reducing noise, lighting and other distractions, where possible, allowing customers to complete transactions in a less heightened sensory environment.

Honourable mention: Googong Public School



Schools Infrastructure NSW, Department of Education

Building the new Googong public school, the team sought to establish meaningful connections with the traditional custodians and incorporate their knowledge and practices into the school's design.

In establishing this connection within the school site, the life and culture of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people can be acknowledged and celebrated. By respecting Aboriginal perspectives and incorporating Aboriginal knowledge in the school design, the new environment supports a diverse and inclusive workforce and shapes students to be culturally competent future leaders.

Partners: Aunty Dr Matilda House-Williams, Savills, Pedavoli Architects, North Projects, Hansen Yuncken

Excellence in service delivery

Digitising of vehicle inspections (R-Safety App)

Safety, Environment & Regulation, Transport for NSW

Every year in NSW, approximately 5 million vehicle owners are required to take their vehicle for a routine inspection through an authorised examiner to ensure that the vehicle meets set standards for safety and roadworthiness. This typically requires an average around 90 minutes of travel time for the vehicle owner.

The digitising of mobile vehicle inspections facilitates authorised examiners to conduct vehicle inspections at a location nominated by the vehicle owner via an app. This is particularly beneficial for people with vehicles such as trailers and caravans, which are challenging to transport for an inspection.

It has been estimated that a 15% take up of mobile inspections will realise \$43 million in economic value per year in travel time savings alone for people in NSW.

Honourable mention: Expansion of Staying Home Leaving Violence



Strategy, Policy and Commissioning, Department of Communities and Justice

Staying Home Leaving Violence supports women and their children to remain safe in their home after leaving a violent relationship. An intensive case management service, it includes safety and risk assessments, security upgrades, financial assistance, legal help and employment support.

The Department of Communities and Justice successfully led the largest expansion of the program, growing the service from 33 to 84 locations across NSW. Now supporting more than 6,400 women and children each year to stay safe, Staying Home Leaving Violence operates across NSW, with 70% of providers located regionally.

Highest quality healthcare

The Murrumbidgee Model



Murrumbidgee Local Health District

The Murrumbidgee Rural Generalist Training Pathway is an innovative workforce strategy developed to address the chronic shortage of General Practitioners (GPs) in regional NSW.

The pathway has been successful in attracting, training and retaining junior doctors providing regional communities with access to highly trained GPs who understand their unique needs. The trainees are enabled to work across general practice and local hospitals while learning advanced skills such as emergency medicine.

Partners: University of New South Wales

Testing donors for emerging infectious diseases

NSW Health Pathology

The ability to screen donor organs for infectious diseases and compatibility in just a few hours means the difference between life and death for patients awaiting transplant.

With a shortage of organs, the NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service and the TGA-licensed NSW Health Pathology Nucleic Acid Testing Laboratory at Prince of Wales Hospital Sydney are a team of dedicated clinical pathologists, laboratory scientists and donation specialists working a 24/7 roster to respond whenever a donor organ becomes available.



World class education and training

Assessment for complex learners project



Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, Department of Education

For thousands of young people in NSW, particularly those with the most complex learning needs, conventional teaching support and assessment are inaccessible.

The Assessment for Complex Learners developed a suite of tools to help special educators know where their students are in their learning journey, aligned with national literacy progressions.

Every single student in the NSW public school system can now be seen on a single literacy and numeracy continuum. This is a first in NSW, Australia and globally.

Going the extra mile for civil construction training



TAFE NSW

TAFE NSW's civil construction team created a mobile delivery model that brings high quality education and training to students in remote NSW.

The team partners with local businesses and delivers tailored programs for First Nations' communities, people with disability, people with low literacy levels and other disadvantaged groups.

The initiative is helping to develop the next generation of industry experts by supporting more than 90 apprentices state-wide. Overall, it has helped more than 1,900 students access vocational training and support.

