

2024 SALLY ISAAC

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND* AWARD

Recognising
the significant
community
contribution of
young women
35 years and under

AWARDS BOOKLET

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
LGPRO
PROFESSIONALS
THE LEADING VOICE



*The Sally Isaac Memorial Scholarship Fund is a sub-fund of Australian Communities Foundation

BACKGROUND

Sally Elizabeth Isaac was an extraordinary woman and young leader in the Local Government sector who passed away in early 2009.

In 2006, at the age of 33, Sally was appointed Director of Community Programs at Yarra City Council where she was directly responsible for 342 professional staff working in aged care, childcare, community planning, advocacy, the arts, and library services.

She had an amazing capacity for developing people and engaging in policy debate, and her absolute commitment to social justice in the community is sorely missed. People from all walks of life, from government to business, remark on the respect and admiration they had for Sally.

Sally was exuberant and brave, bright and insightful, brilliant and engaging. She was focused and intelligent with an enduring commitment to making things better. She was also humble, loving, and full of fun, with wisdom beyond her years.

There was something truly special about Sally Isaac. For all who knew her, she will remain an inspiration and close to their hearts. Soon after her death her family, friends and colleagues met to discuss ways to recognise the incredible impact that she had on people's lives.

In 2009, they established the Sally Isaac Memorial Scholarship Fund, as a sub-fund of Australian Communities Foundation. Its aim is to raise funds and awareness to build a significant capital endowment which is distributed in perpetuity by way of an educational scholarship to help foster young women leaders who make a significant contribution to their community.

The award recipient receives a \$10,000 educational scholarship for research or study in Australia or overseas.

PURPOSE OF THIS AWARD

The purpose of the Sally Isaac Memorial Scholarship Fund Award is to:

- Recognise the enormous contribution that Sally Isaac made to public life, especially to those in the community who were more socially excluded and disadvantaged.
- Raise the profile and support fundraising efforts for the Sally Isaac Memorial Scholarship Fund.
- Foster and encourage future female leaders in the community who commit to making a significant improvement to the community.

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WINNER



REBECCA BOTHERAS

Sport and Recreation Coordinator, Yarriambiack Shire Council

Dedicated Leader and Rural Community Champion

Rebecca Botheras is a highly driven, friendly, passionate, and motivated young professional. Known for her strong attention to detail and collaborative nature, Rebecca brings an empathetic understanding of rural community challenges to her work.

Since joining the Yarriambiack team four and a half years ago, she has consistently demonstrated her capacity to drive positive outcomes for the community. A leader of change, she is both innovative and adaptive. As a leader, Rebecca is rational, informed, and considered in her decisions. She is recognised by her peers as a teacher, collaborator, and problem solver with vision.

Rebecca excels at engaging with community members and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, helping them navigate complex problems and find solutions.

Recently, she took on a project coordination role, epitomising sound project management. Her love for sport and recreation shines through in her projects, where her negotiation and communication skills ensure successful outcomes.

Her professionalism is infectious, making her team proud to be part of her initiatives. A self-starter, Rebecca championed the organisation's Fair Access Policy and Sport and Recreation Strategy, which will both be crucial strategic documents that guide the planning and delivery of sport and recreation initiatives and infrastructure projects for the next decade. She has also driven digital transformation, championing procurement processes and compliance obligations, and providing training to staff across the organisation.

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HIGH COMMENDATION



MADDI COOPER

**Jets Team Leader - Banyule Youth Services,
Banyule City Council**

Social Advocate and Innovator

Maddi Cooper exemplifies values-led leadership in the community sector, with a deep commitment to social justice, strategic innovation, and lifelong learning. Starting as a volunteer at 18, Maddi engaged in fundraising, international infrastructure projects, and local food relief efforts, laying the groundwork for a career dedicated to community wellbeing.

With a bachelor's degree in social work, Maddi began her professional journey in youth homelessness services at 23, earning a nomination for State Practitioner of the Year by the council to Homeless Persons (CHP). This recognition highlights her ability to drive impactful change while remaining deeply rooted in her core values.

Transitioning to early intervention and systemic advocacy, Maddi joined Banyule City Council's Senior Youth Engagement Team and quickly rose to Team Leader. She specialised in family violence perpetrator services, integrating preventive strategies into her work. Her innovative program training youth outreach workers as accredited L2P mentor drivers and securing housing for long-term rough sleepers illustrate her values-driven approach.

Maddi's passion for sharing knowledge and lifelong learning is evident in her development of thirteen evidence-based free school workshops, engaging over 3,000 young people in a year. Her commitment to fostering a vibrant, informed community and youth sector is unwavering.

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HIGH COMMENDATION



NADIA DOUGLAS

**Community Strengthening Facilitator - Aboriginal Engagement,
Cardinia Shire Council**

Authentic Enabler of Positive Change

Nadia Douglas is a dedicated professional committed to creating positive change and supporting First Nations communities. Raised on Bundjalung and Yuin Country, Nadia has maintained a strong connection to her community and is a passionate advocate for First Nations communities.

Nadia's professional journey includes a pivotal role at Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association, where she led programs and events to uplift the local Indigenous community. Joining Cardinia Shire in April 2024, she quickly played a key role in delivering Reconciliation events and cultural awareness sessions for NAIDOC Week.

Collaborating with local Koori Support Officers, Nadia ensures First Nations students have a strong voice and culturally safe environment. She will lead the creation of Cardinia Shire's next Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, engaging leaders across the organisation to support this work.

Since 2016, Nadia has volunteered with the Australian Indigenous Alpine Sports Foundation, delivering programs that significantly impact Aboriginal young people. Her authenticity and positivity shine through in all her endeavours, making her a valued leader in her community.



2024
AWARD
NOMINEES

**LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL
ORDER BY SURNAME**

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JENNA ALLAN

**Director Corporate and Organisational Performance,
Buloke Shire Council**

Dedicated to Community and Strategic Leadership

Jenna Allan is deeply committed to her community through her role at Buloke Shire Council. Appointed as Manager of Community Services in October 2022, she has been proactive in preparing the community for impending funding changes, ensuring that vulnerable services were not disrupted. Jenna's empathetic approach and thorough understanding of the needs of carers, elderly clients, and those with disabilities highlight her commitment to inclusive service delivery.

Jenna's ability to undertake thorough community and industry consultations has been crucial in mediating the needs of various stakeholders. Her high standard of care and empathy, combined with a strategic mindset, has enabled her to navigate complex issues while maintaining the council's financial awareness.

Jenna's dedication to learning and development is evident in her inclusive and thoughtful approach to both work and community engagement.

Her team-oriented approach is genuine and thoughtful, fostering a collaborative environment. Jenna is diligent in her work ethic, always striving to understand the topic at hand and support problem-solving in a collaborative way. Her commitment to making a positive impact on those around her is reflected in her proactive and inclusive leadership style.

Jenna's ongoing dedication to her community and her proactive approach to challenges position her as a key leader within Buloke Shire Council. Her ability to balance empathy with strategic thinking ensures that she will continue to drive positive outcomes for the community.

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SARAH BOND

**Executive Officer Climate and Nature,
Yarra Ranges Council**

Expert in Sustainability and Climate Adaptation

Sarah Bond brings extensive knowledge in sustainability education, biodiversity, and environmentally sustainable design to her role at Yarra Ranges Council. Her lifelong dedication to fostering climate adaptation and regenerative design practices underscores her commitment to creating a sustainable future for the community. Sarah's expertise is widely recognised, evidenced by her conference presentations and active participation in inter-governmental relationships.

Sarah's ability to communicate effectively and build coalitions is a crucial leadership skill. She has successfully activated foundational coalitions to garner cross-organisational support, using international best practices to inspire and lead through positivity and hope. Her recent Climate Adaptation workshop exemplifies her strategic approach, helping leaders identify solutions to local climate challenges.

Sarah approaches challenges proactively, tackling them at the root cause. Her review and reform of a policy for using fire as a land management tool is a testament to her innovative thinking and ability to gain traction at every level. This policy reform led to the council's first Cultural Burn, celebrated as a healing activity for Country and Traditional Owners.

Sarah's dedication to enhancing community resilience positions her as a valuable asset in the fight against climate change. Her proactive and strategic approach ensures that she will continue to make significant contributions to sustainability and climate adaptation, with her work already leading to workstreams addressing future risks of drought, flash flooding, and urban heat.

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KATIE CAMILLERI

**Coordinator Youth and Community Development,
Nillumbik Shire Council**

Innovative Leader in Community Development

Katie Camilleri began her career in local government at the age of 24, transitioning from the not-for-profit sector into community development. Since joining Nillumbik Shire Council in 2018 as a Positive Ageing Officer, Katie has demonstrated strong leadership abilities, developing initiatives that support older people to live and age well. Her leadership qualities were quickly recognised, leading to her promotion to Team Leader Youth Development in 2019, where she reshaped Youth Services for Nillumbik.

Katie's strategic focus and partnerships have led to significant outcomes for young people, including the establishment of Nillumbik's first Youth Council in 2020 and a Youth Strategy in 2022. Promoted to Coordinator Youth and Community Development in 2021, Katie now leads a multi-disciplinary team, enhancing the delivery of youth and community development services.

Katie has been instrumental in evaluating, building, and strengthening the delivery of quality, effective, responsive, and efficient youth and community development services. Her passion for asset-based community development is evident in her leadership style, which values building on the strengths and resources of her teams.

Katie's commitment to creating a strong, inclusive, and sustainable culture is reflected in her work, making her a key leader in community development. Her innovative approach and dedication to continuous improvement ensure that she will continue to drive positive outcomes for the community.

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ELLIE COPE

Senior Advisor - Corporate Communications, Darebin City Council

Champion of Transparent and Inclusive Communication

Ellie Cope is an empathetic communications professional who champions diverse representation and transparency in local government. She actively elevates diverse voices through deliberate and tactical engagement with stakeholders, including staff and community members from diverse backgrounds.

Projects like the Wear it Purple Day campaigns and a January 26 advocacy video campaign featuring Aboriginal Elder Uncle Alan Brown highlight her commitment to inclusive communication. Colleagues frequently seek her guidance on messaging for complex and sensitive topics, where her ability to foster unity and dispel misinformation is invaluable.

Ellie excels at transforming complex data into clear, accessible narratives, ensuring that Council performance is transparent and understandable for the community. Her standout work at Darebin City Council has included creating its award-winning 2022/2023 Annual Report, which received a gold medal at the Australasian Reporting Awards for excellence in annual reporting.

Ellie's dedication to transparent and inclusive communication makes her a key asset to Darebin City Council. Her proactive approach and commitment to community engagement ensure that she will continue to make significant contributions to local government.

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JAIIMEE CORCORAN

**Senior Community Laws Officer,
Knox City Council**

Exemplary Investigator and Mentor

Jaimee Corcoran has demonstrated exceptional investigative skills, particularly in leading a complex illegal waste-dumping investigation. During this ongoing investigation, she has meticulously gathered evidence, interviewed the accused and witnesses, and collaborated with external agencies such as EPA Victoria, Victoria Police, and other local governments. Her thorough approach ensures there is sufficient evidence to prosecute this high-profile matter.

Jaimee is known for her unwavering integrity and strong work ethic, consistently upholding ethical standards in all her professional dealings. Her dedication to her work is evident in her willingness to go above and beyond to ensure that all tasks are completed to the highest standard. Jaimee is highly valued for her positive contributions and proactive approach, regularly taking the initiative to guide and mentor her colleagues, fostering a collaborative and supportive work environment.

Recognising the challenges faced by a new team member, Jaimee implemented a mentorship program, providing one-on-one guidance and support to help new starters acclimate to their roles and improve their performance. This mentorship not only supported new employees but also fostered a culture of support and collaboration within the team. Additionally, Jaimee recently led process improvements for the council's Fire Hazard Inspections, contributing to efficient and positive outcomes.

Jaimee brings thorough investigative skills, a high level of integrity, a willingness to take on challenges for both personal and professional growth, and positive team contributions to her work. Her commitment to excellence and mentorship are highlights of her significant contributions to local government.

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MARDI CUTHBERT

Manager Infrastructure and Open Space, Casey City Council

Proactive and Effective Leader in Infrastructure

Mardi Cuthbert is an energetic, proactive, and effective leader who continuously drives performance in all aspects of her role. As Manager of Infrastructure and Open Space, Mardi oversees 120 staff members and over 130 contracts, managing an annual operating budget of over \$60 million and a capital budget of \$20 million. Her duties involve maintaining all of the council's infrastructure and open space assets, which serve a population of 411,000.

Mardi's pragmatic and authentic leadership style has allowed her to thrive in the male-dominated depot environment and engineering discipline. Her ability to build strong rapport with staff, respond to feedback, and embed resilience and shared leadership into her team has been instrumental in her success.

Drawing on her self-awareness and leveraging her strengths, Mardi continues to identify areas for growth for both herself and her team.

Her achievements include winning the 2019 Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA) Emerging Leader Award and representing Australia in international triathlon competitions. Mardi maintains both her physical and mental wellbeing, enabling her to excel in her professional and personal pursuits. Her leadership has shifted her team's culture into highly engaged and outcome-focused leaders.

Mardi's commitment to improving cultural venues, enhancing technical operations, and serving the community with excellence positions her as a leader and innovator in local government. Her work continues to make a positive impact across the sector.

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PENNY DODSWORTH

**Statutory Planner,
Central Goldfields Shire Council**

Passionate and Driven Community Supporter

Penelope Dodsworth – or Penny – is a talented and driven young woman dedicated to supporting her community through her career in planning. Although she has not completed her Bachelor of Urban, Rural, and Environmental Planning due to difficult circumstances, Penny has contributed significantly to professional, educational, and community volunteer projects. Her deep passion for community support is evident in her commitment to positive collective progress.

Penny lives by the phrases “be the change you want to see in the world” and “it takes a village to raise a child,” reflecting her compassion towards every individual she meets. She has travelled extensively across Europe, Scandinavia, the UK, and Asia, sharing her learned perspectives on thought and the built environment with her peers and in her work.

Penny speaks intermediate French, plays folk music, and enjoys various artistic pursuits in her spare time.

In her professional role, Penny has demonstrated her ability to navigate complex planning schemes and contribute positively to her community. She is known for her thoughtful and empathetic approach, building strong relationships with colleagues and community members alike.

Penny’s future aspirations include starting a podcast to help practitioners and interested individuals understand planning schemes better. She is dedicated to community support and positive change, as well as to continuous learning and professional development, evident in her proactive approach to challenges.

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NIKKI-LEE HERN

Operations and Contracts Coordinator – South Melbourne Market, Port Phillip City Council

Environmental Advocate and Problem Solver

Nikki brings a dynamic vibrancy to the workplace at South Melbourne Market (SMM), with her colleagues describing her as tenacious, enthusiastic, and always willing to help others. She possesses exceptional communication skills with the ability to conscientiously tailor messaging for a variety of audiences. With a strong sense of empathy, she has an innate ability to understand and connect with others, fostering positive relationships with colleagues, Market traders, contract partners, and members of the Port Phillip community.

She excels at problem-solving and uses a proactive, forward-thinking approach to anticipate and address challenges. She is strategic and adapts well to changing situations, evident in her operations role where every day is different and full of surprises. In her role, she responds to emergency and first aid situations with empathy and confidence, advocating for a safe and welcoming environment for all.

She takes initiative, showing assertiveness and a positive attitude in the pursuit of goals.

Environmental sustainability is something which she cares deeply about. She always advocates for sustainable practices at work by using reusable containers, walking to and from work, encouraging proper waste separation, and including sustainability options within her contracts and operations work. It is not uncommon for her to stop and chat to a customer by a bin station to provide guidance on waste separation and share the journey of what becomes of their recycled waste.

Whether it be helping a colleague who is unfamiliar with a technical task or offering suggestions on diversity and inclusion, Nikki shares her knowledge to empower others. In addition to her work with Port Phillip, she volunteers with a youth-led charity which delivers leftover food to charities to reduce food waste from going to landfill and to alleviate hunger.

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ELIZABETH JOHNSTON

**Social Planning Lead,
Melton City Council**

Strategic Leader in Health and Social Planning

Elizabeth Johnston provides critical health and social planning, research, and policy expertise that drives strategies for improving health and wellbeing outcomes. She has led complex social research and policy development initiatives, including the Alcohol Harm Minimisation Policy and the Safe City Proud Communities implementation plan, both pivotal in addressing key community safety and wellbeing concerns.

Elizabeth's dedication to continuous learning and her proactive approach to challenges are key attributes that define her leadership. Her academic achievements, such as a Master of Public Policy and a Graduate Certificate in Crime Prevention, along with her participation in various leadership development programs, underscore her commitment to professional growth.

Elizabeth uses the knowledge gained from these qualifications to develop innovative, evidence-based strategies that have tangible positive effects on community wellbeing.

Beyond her professional duties, Elizabeth's volunteer work, including mentoring young drivers through the L2P Program and serving on the board of Neighbourhood Watch Victoria, highlights her dedication to community enhancement. These experiences have honed her skills in leadership, communication, and community engagement, making her a well-rounded and impactful leader.

Elizabeth demonstrates an unwavering commitment to social justice, a continuous pursuit of knowledge, and a proven ability to lead and inspire. Her strategic insight and compassionate leadership ensure she will continue to drive positive outcomes for the community.

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DISA LINDEN-PERLIS

**Social Policy Officer,
Brimbank City Council**

Analytical and Problem-Solving Policy Officer

Disa Linden-Perliss exhibits strong analytical skills, enabling her to understand complex policy issues and assess the impact of proposed policies on her organisation, external stakeholders, and the community. She recently worked with various stakeholders to gather and analyse data which she synthesised into a submission prepared for the Victorian Government on food insecurity.

Disa's capacity to work independently and collaboratively to identify issues, develop practical solutions, and address challenges in policy and process implementation is commendable. She has adopted a service coordination approach to homelessness, engaging with both internal and external stakeholders to enable integrated and coordinated responses across different sectors and disciplines.

Her excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, allow her to effectively convey policy details, interact with stakeholders, and present evidence-based reports to diverse audiences. Disa's understanding of local government operations, structures, processes, and regulations is exceptional. While she has a strong social justice value set, she also appreciates the political environment in which decisions are made by elected representatives.

Disa's project management skills are evident in her ability to plan, execute, monitor, and evaluate projects. She has been instrumental in using the organisation's newly created project management framework, transferring this skill to others through coaching and support. This is further demonstration of her dedication to professional growth and her ability to navigate complex policy landscapes.

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LINH LY

User Experience Designer, Stonnington City Council

Passionate Advocate for Inclusive Design

Linh Ly is known for her curiosity, compassion, and passion for equality. Her approach to work is driven by compassionate curiosity, striving to understand the community and find ways to improve their lives. Linh aims to see things from the perspective of those she serves, especially individuals with accessibility challenges, low technology proficiency, or language barriers.

Coming from an immigrant family, Linh has firsthand experience with the difficulties of navigating council services with limited language proficiency. This personal background fuels her commitment to making these services more accessible for everyone, not just the majority. She understands the isolation that comes with struggling to access essential services and continuously advocates for inclusive design in her role.

Linh's dedication to accessibility and equality is evident in her work. She is motivated by the potential of design to contribute to a better world. Her efforts focus on ensuring that council services are user-friendly and accessible to all community members, regardless of their background or abilities.

Linh's passion for inclusive design and her determination to make a positive impact on the community make her a valuable asset to the City of Stonnington, as does her commitment to improving accessibility and her innovative approach to user experience design.

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ALEX MOORE

Municipal Recovery Manager, Casey City Council

Dynamic Leader in Community Recovery and Engagement

Alex Moore is a dynamic, focused, and effective leader who has worked with the City of Casey since 2010. During this time, she has led innovative projects to improve community outcomes in Aboriginal engagement, the prevention of family violence following disasters, and building capability for emergency management. Alex’s remarkable ability to understand and connect with others allows her to quickly build rapport and create supportive, inclusive work environments.

Her leadership of staff and volunteers in the City of Casey’s emergency relief and recovery support teams is particularly noteworthy. Recently, Alex ran an emergency management exercise that provided staff from across the organisation with the opportunity to practice working in an Emergency Relief Centre. Her empathetic leadership guided the team through these challenging circumstances, better preparing them to support the community in times of disaster.

Alex’s deep self-awareness enables her to make informed decisions, leverage her strengths, and work on areas for improvement. Her humility and resilience in response to feedback drive her to seek opportunities for growth and step outside her comfort zone. Her constant pursuit of self-development has seen her build a multidisciplinary background in community development, emergency management, and person-centred change management.

Leading by example, Alex maintains both her physical and mental wellbeing, managing a busy home life with twin 18-month-olds and a 4-year-old. She demonstrates to other young leaders that it is possible to be a successful and committed professional while also dedicating herself to her young family. Alex’s emotional intelligence, ambition, learning agility, and authenticity highlight her dedication to making a positive impact in the community.

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CLAIRE PEPIN

**Acting Coordinator Statutory Planning,
Ballarat City Council**

Collaborative Leader and Innovative Problem Solver

Claire Pepin is a collaborative leader who believes in building consensus through active listening, empathy, and creative problem-solving. Her ability to listen actively, ask insightful questions, and communicate effectively has allowed her to build strong relationships, facilitate community engagement, and foster inclusive environments. Throughout her academic and professional experience, Claire has led diverse and successful teams, working collaboratively to achieve shared goals.

Claire's leadership style is characterised by a strong commitment to supporting and empowering team members, fostering a culture of innovation, creativity, and continuous learning. As a dedicated and passionate urban planner, she possesses strong critical thinking, analytical skills, and creative problem-solving abilities. These skills enable her to approach complex applications and problems with a fresh perspective and develop innovative solutions.

Her ability to break down intricate problems into manageable components, identify key issues, and consider multiple perspectives allows her to think outside the box and find effective and efficient solutions. These skills have been demonstrated through various experiences in her roles in local government and higher education. Claire's dedication to professional growth and her proactive approach to challenges make her a valuable asset to Ballarat City Council.

Claire's commitment to building consensus, fostering innovation, and supporting her team makes her an asset to her organisation. Her ability to navigate complex applications and maintain a focus on finding creative and practical solutions highlights her significant contributions to the broader sector and best practice.

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KYLIE PETERSON

Manager Customer Experience, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

Innovative and Community-Focused Leader

Kylie Peterson's career embodies the values of social justice, equity, innovation, and community empowerment central to Sally Isaac's legacy. As a Health and Wellness Director, Kylie's leadership significantly increased community participation and successfully engaged youth and diverse cultural groups through mental health programs and partnerships with organisations like Beyond Blue. Her innovative approach includes pioneering Australia's first mobile 360 gym, bringing fitness directly to underserved communities.

During her tenure at Brimbank, Kylie led the Response and Recovery portfolio during the pandemic, providing essential services to countless residents. She was also responsible for developing and consolidating two of the council's most strategic documents – the Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Kylie's strategies have consistently expanded access to services for disadvantaged residents, ensuring inclusivity and promoting overall community wellbeing.

Kylie has shown a deep commitment to mentoring future leaders in every role, creating an empowering work culture that boosts engagement and performance. Many of her mentees have advanced to award-winning roles. Now, in her role at Mornington Peninsula Shire, Kylie is leading a transformation in community relations, improving customer experience across all council services and breaking down siloes along the way.

Driven by her passion for better community outcomes, Kylie takes a strategic approach to community empowerment. Her innovative thinking and commitment to social justice ensure lasting positive change for the communities she serves.

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TARA RIDLEY

**Team Leader Technical Services,
Wyndham City Council**

Leader in Enhancing Operational Efficiency

Tara Ridley has a proven track record of significant achievements within the local government sector, particularly in enhancing the operational efficiency and technical capabilities of cultural venues. She has planned and delivered critical upgrades to the audiovisual systems at both the Encore Events Centre and the Civic Centre, elevating the technical standards of these venues and enabling them to cater to a wide range of bookings with enhanced technical quality.

Tara's leadership potential has been recognised through an acting role as coordinator, where she demonstrated the ability to manage teams, coordinate day-to-day operations, and maintain high standards of service delivery. This experience has further solidified her reputation as a capable and forward-thinking leader within the organisation. Recently, Tara was elected to the committee for the Technical Managers Network with the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres, reflecting her growing influence in the sector.

Prior to her work at Wyndham, Tara accumulated extensive experience in local government, serving communities at the City of Port Phillip, Brimbank City Council, and Parramatta City Council. This background has provided her with a broad perspective on community engagement, a variety of community events and cultural infrastructures, and the diverse needs of different populations, which she effectively applies to her current role.

Tara's achievements demonstrate a consistent commitment to improving cultural venues, enhancing technical operations, and serving the community with excellence. Her work continues to make a positive impact across the sector, positioning her as a leader and innovator in local government.

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LUCIANA SANSONE

**Youth Resilience Coordinator,
Indigo Shire Council**

Compassionate and Dedicated Youth Leader

Luciana Sansone commenced a role as Youth Officer with Indigo Shire Council in March 2022, having previously worked at Alpine Shire Council in a similar position. In this role, Luciana was responsible for delivering the council's Youth Strategy across a vast rural area in Victoria's northeast, often entailing long drives, late nights, and weekend work to equitably service the local government area.

Luciana's work ethic, compassion, and kindness quickly endeared her to young people and stakeholders across the community, making an immediate impact in her role. Recognising her growing skillset and leadership potential, Luciana was promoted to Youth Resilience Coordinator in late 2022. In this role, she oversees the Youth portfolio, supervising a team of three youth workers and mentoring a Peer Youth Worker.

Luciana, coming to Australia from Uruguay and with a Master's Degree in Executive Coaching and Leadership from the University of Barcelona, thrives when presented with a challenge, and her growth and development as a coordinator have been remarkable. She possesses exceptional organisational and financial management skills, but her ability to nurture and support her team is most impressive.

Luciana's dedication to her work and her team is evident in her proactive approach and commitment to continuous improvement. Luciana's dedication to youth resilience and her compassionate leadership make her an asset to her organisation and community.

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DANA SHINE

**Coordinator of Statutory Planning,
Baw Baw Shire Council**

Dedicated and Authentic Planning Leader

Dana Shine is dedicated to her role as a statutory planner and to her team. She understands the significant responsibility that comes with making the community a better place for residents, protecting the heritage fabric of existing places, and balancing growth with environmental considerations. Dana is passionate about making sound, clear, and timely decisions, taking into account heritage, environmental, urban design, community, and economic factors.

Dana is also committed to leading and mentoring others to become great planners who understand this responsibility. She co-led the creation of the department's first community consultation process for statutory applications and worked with a career coach specialising in local government to improve her skills as a leader and mentor.

Dana ran the RMIT student mentorship program at Casey City Council for four years and led her team to achieve the highest number of decisions in a month that the Baw Baw Shire Council Statutory Department has ever achieved.

In her leadership role, Dana believes in being authentic and vulnerable, which has enabled her to create strong bonds with her team and build a high level of trust. She has reviewed processes to ensure they provide the best, most accurate, and timely advice to the community and applicants. Dana's dedication to professional growth and her proactive approach to challenges make her a valuable asset to Baw Baw Shire Council.

Dana is committed to her job, her team, and the community, and brings with her a passion for mentoring and professional development. Her leadership and dedication to excellence highlight her significant contributions to local government.

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GEMMA SIMPSON

**Youth Worker/Children and Young People First Project Officer,
Central Goldfields Shire Council**

Advocate for Equity and Community Capacity-Building

Gemma Simpson demonstrates ongoing dedication to her work and the communities she serves. She is a strong advocate for equity, social justice, and community capacity-building. Having grown up in Central Victoria, Gemma is particularly passionate about working in rural and regional areas, supporting them to grow as vibrant and healthy communities.

At Central Goldfields Shire Council, Gemma has been willing to tackle big-picture challenges to address areas of community need. She has driven and contributed to projects aimed at improving access to public transport, healthy and nutritious food, and further education. A strong strategic thinker, Gemma identifies key opportunities and patterns in complex systems and brings partnerships together to address challenges collaboratively.

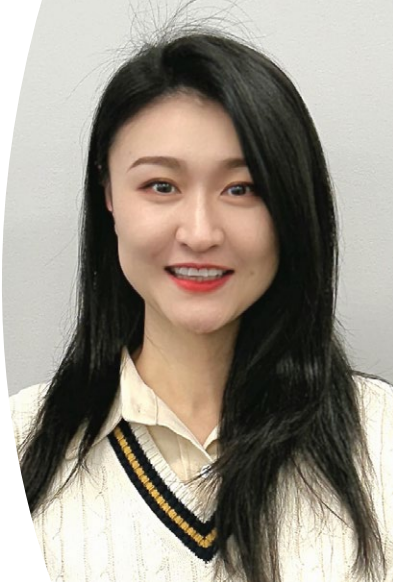
Gemma is confident and knowledgeable in her work, making her a capable project manager and presenter. She is thoughtful, approachable, and respectful to others in her work, both within her team and with the community. Her patience and empathy help her build meaningful and respectful dialogues with young people through the Shire's programs, offering guidance and acting as a positive mentor to support their growth as community leaders.

Always willing to help others, Gemma often goes out of her way to lend a hand, whether by staying back at events to help pack up, showing colleagues how to navigate a system, or providing input and feedback on others' projects. Her passion for community voice and participation in decision-making processes often leads her to work extended hours across evenings, weekends, and public holidays to host community consultations.

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MICKEY SONG

**Business Support Officer,
Glen Eira City Council**

Proactive and Resilient Team Player

Since joining Glen Eira City Council, Mickey Song has quickly tackled a substantial backlog of tasks and emails, ensuring that all pending assignments were completed efficiently. By managing this workload effectively, she has facilitated a smooth transition within the team, maintaining a steady workflow even under pressure. This proactive approach addressed immediate challenges and set a benchmark for high productivity during times of increased demand.

Understanding the importance of a well-prepared team, Mickey initiated comprehensive training for new staff members on building administration tasks. She aimed to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their roles confidently and efficiently. The training was practical and thorough, enabling new team members to integrate quickly and contribute effectively. As a result, the team's overall effectiveness and morale improved, leading to smoother workflows and enhanced service delivery.

During a period of significant staff shortages due to unforeseen illnesses and resource constraints, Mickey took on extra responsibilities to ensure continuity of operations. Recognising the critical nature of their work, she collaborated closely with management and the planning support team to develop strategies that mitigated the impact of reduced staffing levels. This involved reallocating resources, adjusting timelines, and optimising communication channels to keep projects on track despite the challenges.

Mickey's ability to adjust to changing conditions and take on extra responsibilities demonstrated her commitment to the team's success and Glen Eira's broader objectives. Her efforts focused on maintaining smooth operations and addressing immediate needs caused by staff shortages. By promoting a culture of readiness and continuous learning, she aimed to strengthen the team's resilience and adaptability, ensuring they continue to deliver dependable service to the Glen Eira community.

2024 SALLY ISAAC MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND* AWARD



REBECCA WALTON

**Senior Social Policy and Advocacy Officer,
Monash City Council**

Innovative and Strategic Social Justice Leader

Rebecca Walton – or Bex – is an innovative, strategic thinker and social justice leader at Monash City Council. She lives and breathes strong values of equity, diversity, and inclusion to ensure the best evidence-based outcomes for the Monash community. Bex’s strong research, stakeholder engagement, and project management skills have seen her deliver significant projects such as the inaugural LGBTIQ+ Action Plan, Rainbow Tick Plan, advocacy for social housing, and an intersectional approach to the Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Bex has also led the Charter for Homelessness and Social Housing for 13 councils in the southeast. This complex social housing advocacy project demonstrates her strong communication and engagement skills, coupled with a collaborative and inclusive practice. Using her project management skills, Bex continually ensures that the work between the 13 councils is owned, responsive, and meeting the needs of all stakeholders.

Bex excels at building community rapport with often the most marginalised cohorts of the community. Her strengths-based approach places them at the centre of community consultation, ensuring they feel heard, validated, and valued as their feedback is embedded into council policies and programs. Recently, Bex has taken on the role of leading the Health and Wellbeing team, empowering them to go above and beyond, which has led to a high-performing team with direct health and wellbeing outcomes for the community.

Bex generously shares her expertise whenever asked, including with members of the council’s executive leadership team, the wider community strengthening team, and the organisation. She contributes to the Monash values through her involvement in the LGBTIQ+ working group and the Reconciliation Action Plan working group. Bex brings with her innovative thinking, strategic leadership, and a commitment to social justice.

2024 SALLY ISAAC

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND* AWARD



KIRA WHITTAKER

Sustainability Programs Officer, Darebin City Council

Inspiring and Empowering Climate Action Leader

Kira Whittaker is passionate about inspiring and empowering those around her to take meaningful climate action. Both at work and in her personal life, she has delivered programs that help people mitigate climate change by using their voice and building knowledge and skills. Kira is community-minded and was first energised to get involved in community action when surrounded by hundreds of like-minded peers at a youth climate summit.

Kira loves her work in Darebin’s Climate Emergency and Sustainable Transport teams because it gives her the opportunity to work directly with community members to help make Darebin a better place to live. She is a creative thinker known around the office for making things happen. One of her first projects at Darebin was developing the Keep Cool in Darebin Map, a practical support tool delivered directly to those impacted by heat stress. She followed this by writing and producing Darebin’s first online Staff Climate Emergency Training, now integral to the regular induction program.

Kira is extremely organised and has a talent for staging welcoming, friendly community events. In 2022, she managed the successful launch of the Free Monthly Bike Checks at Reservoir program, now in its third year. Meanwhile, she has used her excellent interpersonal skills to support hundreds of staff at Darebin to get started with active and sustainable travel through the Love Your Commute staff program.

Kira dedicates time outside of work to continuing her climate action. She started the first community climate action group in Broadmeadows, Hume Climate Action Now, providing locals with a voice to demand action on climate change. She also volunteered with Climate for Change, where she initiated inspiring conversations with hundreds of people and equipped them with practical skills to make a real difference.

2024 SALLY ISAAC

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND* AWARD



MATTIE YOUNG

**Community Cultural Development Officer,
Maroondah City Council**

Passionate Advocate for Arts and Culture

Mattie Young is a passionate and dedicated arts and culture specialist whose commitment to supporting her local creative community is evident in her tireless work for Maroondah City Council. As Community Cultural Development Officer, Mattie is responsible for many programs and initiatives that support the growth and development of local artists and their practices, build the sustainability of creative industries and small businesses, and deliver Maroondah's Arts and Cultural Strategy.

Mattie is values-driven and committed to nurturing arts projects that come to life within the community. Her work is all about supporting artists to thrive and helping the community feel actively engaged in local creative opportunities. Among other initiatives, she manages the council's Arts and Cultural Grants Program, advising and guiding applicants and supporting the delivery of resulting projects. She also leads a networking and professional development program for artists, bringing people together, enhancing wellbeing, and facilitating meaningful conversations and learnings.

Mattie's boundless energy and positive attitude have endeared her to the Maroondah community, leading to strong, meaningful relationships with local artists, creative businesses, and other stakeholders. She is a champion of artists and a vocal advocate for the power of art and creativity to change lives and empower communities. Mattie is proud to be the silent supporter behind the artist, working hard to enable artists to succeed and deliver the best work they can.

This dedication is evident by the frequent praise the council receives for her work from artists and arts and cultural groups who have been touched by Mattie's efforts. Mattie is also a valuable member of the Arts and Culture team, her passion, integrity, and support for her teammates contributing to the success of the team and the wider directorate on a daily basis.



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