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21 November 2019

Innovation and excellence on show at AAA National Airport Industry Awards

A development project that changes how we respond to emergencies, a community engagement program reaching tens of thousands of people and a technical solution that allowed a taxiway replacement to be completed in just five weeks were among the winning projects at the Australian Airports Association (AAA) 2019 National Airport Industry Awards last night.

AAA Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said this year once again showcased the industry's commitment to delighting passengers, inspiring technical excellence and innovation, and supporting the growth of our cities and communities.

"Every year the standard rises even higher as airports find new ways to work smarter, faster and always with the passenger in focus," Ms Wilkie said.

"We have seen airports once again improve how passengers access the airport, enjoy their time before their flight and move quickly through airport processes as a result of some innovative projects this year.

"There are also some fantastic examples of airports forging ever-stronger links with their local area as an important part of the fabric of their communities.

"It is great to see so many airports investing in a truly passenger-centric and sustainable future for our industry."

Brisbane Airport took out the capital city airport of the year after ramping up its community engagement program ahead of the opening of its new runway next year.

Avalon Airport won the major airport category after welcoming its first international services, while Dubbo City Regional Airport took out the large regional airport category.

Bendigo Airport was named small regional airport of the year after its first commercial flights in more than 30 years commenced in 2019, while West Sale Airport's upgrade earned it the title of small regional aerodrome of the year.

Several innovation and excellence awards were also confirmed, showcasing a range of projects from across the industry.

NT Airports Chief Executive Officer Ian Kew was also recognised for his outstanding contribution to the industry.

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The National Airport Industry Awards were held at the AAA National Conference on the Gold Coast.

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Note to Editors: A full list of winners is attached.

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2019 National Airport Industry Awards winners

Airport of the year winners

Category	Winner
Capital City Airport	Brisbane Airport
Major Airport	Avalon Airport
Large Regional Airport	Dubbo City Regional Airport
Small Regional Airport	Bendigo Airport
Small Regional Aerodrome	West Sale Airport

Innovation and excellence award winners

Category	Winner	Description
Commercial	Darwin International Airport	Emergency medical retrieval precinct development Darwin International Airport completed new facilities at its Emergency Medical Retrieval Precinct (EMRP) in April. The precinct is home to the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre's (NCCTRC) deployable field hospital, as well as CareFlight and the RFDS. The NCCTRC was originally established by the Federal Government following the October 2002 Bali bombings and ensures timely responses to major onshore and offshore incidents in Australia and SE Asia. The new, world-class precinct provides a vital link for medical services overseas and across rural and remote regions of Northern Australia that did not previously exist.
Community engagement (Major airport)	Brisbane Airport	Brisbane's new runway community engagement program Brisbane Airport has implemented a comprehensive community awareness and education program ahead of the opening of its new runway in 2020. Key features of the program have included the use of Benny, its Mobile Information Centre, in key community locations

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		and the development of a Flight Path Tool to provide information about new flight paths specific to residents' own home address. More than 11,050 people have visited the mobile information centre since November 2018, while 111,000 people have logged on to the flight path tool.
Community engagement (Regional airport)	Karratha Airport	Inter-regional flight network The City of Karratha and Shire of East Pilbara have launched a new initiative to connect Pilbara and Kimberley towns where direct RPT services weren't available. The councils, with industry partner Rio Tinto, are sponsoring an inter-regional flight network. The service started in August to expand access for many businesses within the region, providing opportunities for them to grow and develop their business offerings. Aviair is operating the service on 9-seat Beechcraft B200 Super King Airs.
Customer experience (major airport)	Sydney Airport	AIRA – An inclusive customer experience Sydney Airport was the first airport in Australia to partner with Aira to offer an innovative navigation service for people with vision impairment. The cutting edge mobility solution works via a smartphone app, connecting users with personalised, on-demand information to help them explore Sydney Airport's terminals.
Customer experience (regional airport)	Whitsunday Coast Airport	We are taking off campaign Whitsunday Coast Airport completed a terminal upgrade in 2019, with a significant focus on providing an unparalleled customer experience. The project created a stronger connection with the local tourism offering after confirming 97 per cent of the airport's passengers were holiday travellers. The new terminal features a range of initiatives to improve the travel experience. Its heart shaped aquarium and augmented reality experience have also extended the local tourism experience to the airport itself.

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Environmental management	Barrow Island Airport	<p>Commitment to protecting Barrow Island’s unique environment</p> <p>Barrow Island, located off the coast of the Pilbara region, is one of the most important conservation reserves in Australia and is home to several species that are now extinct or greatly reduced on mainland Australia. Airport staff have been specifically trained to conduct screening to prevent non-indigenous species of flora and fauna being introduced to the island, to protect its unique biodiversity.</p>
Infrastructure development (major airport)	Melbourne Airport	<p>Rapid quick set concrete</p> <p>Recent taxiway replacement works were completed at speed at Melbourne Airport, with the project using ‘rapid set’ cement to replace independent pavement slabs in just four hours. The innovative approach allowed the taxiway replacement to be completed in just five weeks, without the need to close airfield operations for work to take place.</p>
Infrastructure development (regional airport)	Geraldton Airport	<p>Runway renewal and extension project</p> <p>The airport’s runway renewal and extension project created 184 jobs for the local economy and 42 additional regional tourism jobs across the life of the project. The project makes new export opportunities direct from the region possible, for goods such as fresh produce, graphite, beef, aquaculture produce and seafood.</p>
Non-aeronautical development	Darwin International Airport	<p>Creating an innovative and unique national advertising partnership</p> <p>The airport has formed an innovative new advertising partnership with oOh! Media, which makes it easier for businesses to access the airport’s advertising assets, and provides stronger connections between the airport and local businesses.</p>
Operations	Melbourne Airport	Domestic CT scanning trial

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		Melbourne Airport completed the first domestic CT scanning trial in Australia, processing over 60,000 passengers in six weeks. The trial improved throughput, passenger experience and overall security outcomes.
Technology	Melbourne Airport	Enterprise data platform The use of data analytics is providing a real-time and predictive view of the traveler journey through Melbourne Airport. The system alerts airport staff to shifts in expected traveller presentations to ensure improved allocation of resources at key border processing points.

Corporate project of the year winners

Winner	Description
Corporate Project	Turner and Townsend (Lead), Jacobs and Antoun Civil Engineering (Melbourne Airport airfield pavement slab replacement using rapid quick set cement)
Regional Airport Corporate Project – Joint winners	Downer EDI Works (Connellan Airport upgrade) Avionics Airfield Lighting (Torres Strait Island airstrip construction project)

Outstanding contribution award winner: Ian Kew, NT Airports chief executive officer.