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Airports awards recognise exceptional leaders and projects

The best of the Australian airports was on show overnight as the sector recognised their achievements and success at the Australian Airports Association (AAA) National Industry Awards 2023.

AAA Chief Executive James Goodwin said there was 65 airports and organisations nominated for this year's awards.

"The awards acknowledge the amazing work being at Australian airports and the innovation and leadership of the dedicated people who work in the sector," Mr Goodwin said.

"Australian airports are at the forefront of creating unique customer experiences, forging ahead with infrastructure projects, new sustainability measures and focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion," he said.

"Congratulations to all the winners and nominees. The awards recognise how the airport sector is making a difference across the travel, sustainability and infrastructure landscapes," Mr Goodwin said.

Brisbane Airport took home four awards including Airport Excellence Infrastructure Award, Airport Excellence Commercial Award, Capital City of the Year and joint winners along with Melbourne Airport for the Airport Excellence Diversity Equity and Inclusion Leadership Award for facilitating Australia's first flight handled end-to-end entirely by women on International Women's Day.

Cairns cemented their status as a leader in the sustainability, winning Major Airport of the Year for their Growing Sustainably for Our Community Program and Airport Excellence Sustainability Award for their ground-breaking agreement to support threatened species in their region.

Sydney Airport won Airport Excellence Innovation Award for their COVID-19 idea of Tripsim by SYD, an innovative digital product and Airport Excellence Operations Award Security Operations Real-Time Dashboard, for the Operations Team to be able to make instant data-driven decisions.

Port Hedland International Airport took out the Large Regional Airport of the Year Award along with Emerging Airport Leader Award for Hayley Vale as Head of Airport after four years in the sector.

AAA National Chair, Kym Meys said these projects and individuals are a testament to Australia’s airport sector, moving forward with new innovations, especially focused on sustainability and customer experience.

“It is great to see firsthand the strides the sector has made in recent years and how all airports are thinking outside the box in terms of creating a better future for not only the airports but for all that travel through airports,” Ms Meys said.

“Congratulations to all who organisations, projects and individual nominees and winners at last nights award ceremony.”

A full list of winners can be view below.

Category	Winner	Description
Airport Excellence Award: DEI Leadership Award	Melbourne Airport and Brisbane Airport: Flying high on International Women's Day	Some challenges are so big they require innovative cross industry collaboration to achieve a result. Melbourne and Brisbane Airports put aside competition to take the lead in raising the profile of women in aviation and increase diversity by encouraging more females to join the industry. The airports joined forces with Virgin Australia and Airservices to facilitate Australia’s first flight handled end-to-end entirely by women. Months of planning to co-ordinate rosters culminated on International Women’s Day with VA313 operating from Melbourne to Brisbane. The event received significant national media coverage and highlighted the numerous roles available to women around the country.
Airport Excellence Award: Operations Award	Sydney Airport: Security Operations Real-Time Dashboard	The implementation of the Security Operations Real-Time Dashboard has been instrumental in transforming operations during tumultuous period in 2022 and continues to be utilised by the operations team. The new dashboard was developed to support Security, the Terminal teams and Transport in better manage queues, through the integration and presentation of real-time data. It includes information on passenger and vehicle counts, performance metrics, and wait times. For the operations team to be able to make instant data-driven decisions meant staff and resources could be deployed effectively, improving operational efficiency and most importantly transforming the customer experience for

		our passengers.
Airport Excellence Award: Infrastructure Award	Brisbane Airport: International Apron Rectification Project	Covid-19 was devastating for aviation but was an opportunity to complete works which normally would impact operations. Using an accelerated project delivery model, Brisbane Airport Corporation rehabilitated a section of failed apron taxilane, at a time of historic low numbers of international flights. To minimise the program and risks, an innovative subgrade treatment using mass soil mixing of the sand subgrade adjacent to existing pavement was chosen. This mitigated export of existing material, managing ground water, and risk associated with traditional heavy vibratory compaction of damaging adjacent existing pavement. Works were completed before international traffic roared back to life.
Airport Excellence Award: Sustainability Award	Cairns Airport: Cairns Airport SLL - A ground-breaking Agreement to Support Threatened Species	In 2022, Cairns Airport became the first business in Australia to integrate biodiversity as an operational target in its financial structure. Cairns Airport, under operator North Queensland Airports (NQA), signed a ground-breaking Sustainability Linked Loan (SLL) with a highly unique feature that commits us to regenerating habitat to protect a number of threatened species, within a specified timeframe. Only one other agreement is known globally, a paper producer in Brazil. Another flagship target of the SLL is the reduction of emissions to Net Zero by 2025, a goal which would make Cairns Airport one of the first airports in Australasia to reach net zero emissions by 2025.
Airport Excellence Award: Commercial Award	Brisbane Airport: Brisbane's Best Bites	Airport food has long been given a bad rap, lumped in with in-flight service and assumed to be bland, uninspiring, expensive or all three! Brisbane Airport and its Domestic Terminal retailers have been working to change this perception by introducing premium restaurants, cafes and bars with delicious, quicky, well-presented food that offers value. But how to get that message out? The Brisbane Airport Best Bites campaign changed public perception as it highlighted the Domestic Terminal's most appealing menu items, surprising audiences with the abundant high-quality food options available. The campaign positioned the terminal's dining offer amongst Brisbane's best, rivaling off dining.
Airport Excellence Award: Innovation	Sydney Airport: Tripsim by SYD, an innovative	The idea for tripsim came during the depths of COVID, when Sydney Airport was looking for

Award	digital product launched by Sydney Airport	innovative opportunities to solve customer problems while creating new revenue opportunities. Despite the increased importance of mobile phone coverage while overseas, the eSIM technology is rarely used by Australian travellers. With cost-of-living pressures impacting all areas of travel, most passengers were overpaying for network coverage. Off the back of strong customer research, the airport launched tripsim, an eSIM product that offers travellers data bundles for over 150 countries without the need to swap out a physical SIM card or change phone numbers.
Small Regional Airport/Aerodrome	Fulton Hogan and Jacobs: Cessnock Airport Upgrade Project	Cessnock Airport sits in the lower Hunter Valley in NSW and is home to flying schools, aircraft maintenance organisations and tourist operators. The airport is owned and operated by Cessnock City Council (Council). In 2021, Council set out to upgrade Cessnock Airport. The scope of work included runway widening, new taxiways and apron extension, and reconstruction of the runway, taxiway sections and eastern apron area. Other airfield pavements were resealed. Additionally, a new LED AGL system was installed, including single sided PAPI for both runway ends. Ancillary works include temporary works, linemarking, and flank regrading.
Large Regional Airport	ASI Solutions (UK): Sustainably extending the life of Mackay Airport RWY14/32	Mackay Airport was able to sustainably extend the life of RWY 14/32 following receipt of the 2016 Pavement Condition Report, which recommended a planned resurfacing during FY20/21. The Mackay Airport RWY 14/32 is the first commercial runway in Australia to be treated twice with a Penetrative Asphalt Preservative (PAP) resulting in a 50 per cent increase to the life of the runway, delaying the significant capital cost and the environmental impact of runway resurfacing projects.
Major, Metro and Capital City Airport	To70 Aviation: Western Sydney International Airport - Interactive Flight Path and Aircraft Noise Impact Tool	To70 was engaged by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts to develop an online interactive tool showcasing the preliminary flight path design to be introduced with Western Sydney International Airport. Noise modelling was also integrated, with the ability for users to receive individualised summaries of the impact from flight path and aircraft noise changes personalised for their location. The online tool is the primary digital community engagement platform and supports the

		Environmental Impact Statement by converting technical airspace information into a highly accessible and easy to understand format.
Emerging Airport Leader Award	Hayley Vale – Port Hedland International Airport	Hayley Vale has been in the airport industry since 2019. She has a background in corporate services including at Bundaberg Regional Council, the Pilbara Ports Authority, and earlier in her career, at Warner Village Theme Parks. After six months in the airport industry, Hayley moved to the position of Corporate Services Manager with Port Hedland International Airport (PHIA). Excelling in her responsibility for a major landside development, Hayley then undertook a terminal redevelopment project from April 2022 to August 2023 and during this time, in just four years in the industry, was appointed as PHIA Head of Airport.
Appreciation Award	Greg Fordham – Managing Director, Airbiz	For leadership and commitment to the airport sector and the AAA for more than four decades.
Small Regional (non-RPT) Aerodrome of the Year	Orbost Airport: Vegetation Management, Airport Safety & Security	Orbost Airport is a critical piece of Infrastructure owned by Council during the 2019/20 summer bushfires which ravaged most parts of East Gippsland. Due to the airport's remote locality within a native reserve on Crown Land, the airport is surrounded by native protected and endangered flora and fauna which has made it difficult to remove vegetation encroaching on the airports OLS and control wildlife presenting risks to aviation safety.
Small Regional (RPT) Airport of the Year	Gove Airport: Terminal Revitalisation 2022/23	The successful completion in March 2023 of Stage 1 of the Terminal Revitalisation Project marks a significant milestone in the \$1.8 million main terminal refurbishment. Stage 1 effectively tackled critical external surface and roof structure concerns, demanding extensive remediation and repairs to ensure the terminals integrity and functionality.
Large Regional Airport of the Year	Port Hedland International Airport: Port Hedland International Airport	Innovative leadership and planning, a \$32 million Terminal Expansion Project and the creation of strategic partnerships have contributed to record-breaking passenger numbers at PHIA. Through the early establishment of an aviation development taskforce and a new repositioning statement, coupled with cutting-edge and thoughtful terminal design, PHIA serves community and business needs while also positioning itself to support Port Hedland's expected population doubling during the next two

		decades. By focusing on maintaining strong community links, PHIA has consolidated its position as a vital and integral part of the Pilbara region while being Australia's fastest recovering airport post-COVID.
Major Airport of the Year	Cairns Airport: Growing Sustainably for Our Community	The region that Cairns Airport serves is highly unique, providing it with continual opportunity for innovation. Cairns Airport is surrounded by world-class natural assets and cultural experiences, which are highly attractive to visitors. They view it as their duty to nurture these drawcards for our community and Traditional Owners, while also supporting our region's economy. Cairns Airport has implemented a series of ambitious initiatives, some which have never been done before in Australia. We are committed to growing employment, supporting our environment and fostering key partnerships as we continue to build our aviation network and serve our region's best interests.
Metro Airport of the Year	Bankstown Airport: Bankstown Airport	Bankstown Airport has led the Australian aviation industry in excellence and sustainable growth, including substantial investments in new and upgraded facilities and infrastructure. Such investments include enhancements to airside pavements and key airport roadways, the opening of a premium new airport hangar, refurbishment of the passenger terminal, launch of community facilities and the rollout of solar power to support the transition to net zero. In line with a major brand relaunch in late 2022, Bankstown Airport precinct has been revitalised and reimagined as a thriving gateway destination connecting aviation, business and the community - setting the benchmark for others to follow.
Capital City of the Year	Brisbane Airport: Sustainability Leadership	Brisbane Airport is providing industry-wide leadership through innovation and sector wide collaboration to make airports and aviation more sustainable with impact beyond Brisbane. Just in the past year, Brisbane has become: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first Australian airport to host and support a hydrogen electric aircraft trial • The first airport to represent all Australian airports on the inaugural Jet Zero Council • The first airport to investigate blue carbon • The first Australian airport to achieve ACI Level4 • The first Australian airport to use AI to reduce

		waste and power use <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Net Zero (Scope 1 & 2) by 2025
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Footage of the awards ceremony can be downloaded [here](#) or contact Natasha Lorenz via nlorenz@airports.asn.au or on 0400 518 985.

Ends.

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