

Innovation and excellence on display as Australia's best airports are revealed

The commitment to delivering world class safety standards and passenger experiences was recognised on Wednesday night at the Australian Airports Association (AAA) National Airport Industry Awards 2024.

This year's event in Brisbane drew 81 nominations in 16 categories, acknowledging efforts across infrastructure, operations, leadership, innovation, sustainability and diversity.

"We were thrilled to receive so many entries this year and it highlights the wide range of projects and improvements being carried out at Australian airports," AAA CEO Simon Westaway said.

"Our members work diligently to implement the best technology, create a seamless travel experience and keep Australians moving.

"Congratulations to all the winners and nominees, they were certainly difficult decisions for the judges in such competitive fields."

Six airports were honoured for their excellence and innovation in the distinguished Airport of the Year categories, with West Australian airports taking all three regional awards:

- Small Regional Aerodrome of the Year - **Djarindjin Airport, WA**
- Small Regional Airport of the Year - **Newman Airport, WA**
- Large Regional Airport of the Year - **Broome International Airport, WA**
- Major Airport of the Year - **Cairns Airport, QLD**
- Metro Airport of the Year - **Archerfield Airport, QLD**
- Capital City Airport of the Year - **Adelaide Airport, SA**

Sunshine Coast Airport claimed the **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership Award** for its Australian-first use of accessible technologies. The collaboration with BindiMaps and Céрге helps remove barriers for those with a disability, making all passengers feel welcome, included and confident when travelling.

Cairns Airport was recognised for its team's steadfast determination and resilience when major flooding forced operations to cease in the middle of a peak travel period in December 2023.

Andrea Dobson from **East Kimberley Regional Airport** took home the **Emerging Airport Leader Award** for her dedication to skills improvement and thinking outside the box.

Airbiz was successful in the **Corporate Project of the Year Awards** for its Melbourne Airport Electrification Strategy, a key part of the airport's carbon reduction efforts.

AAA Chair Kym Meys said the awards showed the variety of projects undertaken at airports, providing new connections and better efficiency for passengers.

“The best in the business were on show last night and there were a lot of infrastructure accomplishments that deserved celebration,” Ms Keys said.

“Whether it’s an airfield in a tiny community in the Kimberley, a major airport in Queensland preparing for disasters, or an international gateway carrying out developments, airports around the country are continually working to deliver a better product.”

The Gala Dinner was hosted by Australian comedy legend Peter Helliar with more than 600 people in attendance.

The AAA is the national voice for airports, representing the interests of more than 340 airports and aerodromes across Australia. It also represents more than 150 corporate members supplying products and services to airports.

Photos of award winners will be made available [here](#)

A full list of winners can be found below:

Airport Excellence Awards

| Category | Winner | Description |
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| Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership | Sunshine Coast Airport - Innovation for Accessibility | In an Australian first, Sunshine Coast Airport has partnered with accessible technologies BindiMaps and Céрге. These innovative new technologies are helping Sunshine Coast Airport break down barriers facing people with disability when travelling, both now, and into the future. While there is still work to be done, these new technologies along with staff training and education will help Sunshine Coast Airport to build a culture that promotes accessibility and inclusivity for people of all abilities. |
| Operations | Canberra Airport - The replacement of AVDGS with the cutting-edge Safedock FleX at Canberra Airport | In November 2023, Canberra Airport, in collaboration with ADB Safegate, commenced the replacement of its ageing Advanced Visual Docking Guidance System (AVDGS) with the cutting-edge Safedock FleX. This ambitious two-year project, designed to enhance safety and operational efficiency, involves the integration of advanced 3D laser scanning and real-time gate management technology. Phase One of the project, which upgraded bays 6, 7, 8, 11, and 13, has drawn upon the expertise of Canberra Airport’s aviation managers, airside operations and safety team leaders, technical services personnel, and its IT experts, reflecting a truly collaborative approach to modernising critical airport infrastructure. |
| Infrastructure | Darwin International Airport - | In a multi-faceted approach to implement key Territory infrastructure projects, Darwin International Airport has transformed major infrastructure assets both outside |

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| | Airport Development Group - Terminal, Precinct and Hotel Development | and inside the terminal while supporting and growing Northern Australia's Covid-19 recovery. Major roadworks included the removal of two problematic seagull intersections on approach to Darwin International Airport terminal, the integration of three hotels into one with a common reception area, and the removal of the major road separating the hotels. Inside, the new terminal configuration required major infrastructure works for the relocated and updated check-in and security systems, a new domestic departure lounge, food and beverage restructures, first-floor access and waiting areas. |
| Sustainability | Sydney Airport - BES Standards placing sustainability at the forefront of design | Sydney Airport launched its precinct-wide Built Environment Sustainability (BES) Standards this year. These standards place sustainability at the forefront of every built asset, ensuring that all SYD-owned and operated building and infrastructure assets are developed with sustainability as a core consideration. The BES Standards ensure that all projects, no matter how big or small, are designed and completed in alignment with SYD's sustainability policy, strategies, and commitments. By integrating international airport precedents and industry best practices, the BES Standards provide project teams with clarity, information and the right tools to achieve the best possible sustainability outcomes. |
| Commercial | Perth Airport - Dunreath Village Development | Dunreath Village is a purpose-built neighbourhood shopping centre which opened in September 2023 and features Woolworths, Priceline, Sushi Hub, Butterman Café and a pop-up kiosk in its foyer. It is conveniently located within walking distance of Redcliffe Train Station, in the Airport West precinct, and provides all the conveniences of a local shopping centre for passengers, airport workers and the local community. With a construction time of just over 12 months, the new centre forms part of Perth's premium destination retail hub thanks to its proximity to the precinct's other outlets, including the DFO and Costco. |
| Innovation | Townsville Airport - Queensland Airports Limited - Electronic Community Aviation Consultative Group (eCACG) | Townsville Airport introduced an Electronic Community Aviation Consultative Group (eCACG) in April 2024. By transitioning from traditional in-person community hall style meetings to an online platform, the airport enhanced exposure, inclusivity and accessibility, particularly for the broader Townsville North Queensland region. The eCACG removed geographical and physical barriers, enabling diverse participation from the community and the airport's broader stakeholders. Since launching, the eCACG has generated 20-times the level of community engagement than the previous traditional in-person CACG. The |

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| | | eCACG initiative underscores Townsville Airport's commitment to modernising community consultation, setting a new standard for digital engagement in the aviation industry. |
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Corporate Project of the Year Awards

| Category | Winner | Description |
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| Small Regional Airport/Aerodrome | BildGroup - Deniliquin Airport – 06/24 Runway Upgrade | <p>BildGroup were engaged by Edward River Council to undertake the runway and lighting upgrade of Deniliquin Airport, with replacement of the existing 1,219m sealed runway (Runway 06/24).</p> <p>Scope of works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excavation of existing runway and lighting infrastructure • Stabilisation of two layers of pavement make up • Import of 11,500 cubic metres of Class 2 Fine Crushed Rock • Soil testing to determine stabilising agent • Installation of new runway edge lighting infrastructure including backup generator • Placement of prime coat and a two-coat bituminous seal • Line marking • Associated civil works <p>Works were staged to allow the airport to remain open and operational during construction.</p> |
| Large Regional Airport | Fulton Hogan - Hamilton Island - Great Barrier Reef Airport Upgrade Project | <p>The airport is the main air hub for the Whitsunday Islands and Great Barrier Reef serviced by direct flights from Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney together with private flights, charters, locally operated helicopters, light planes, and seaplanes. The runway is 1,766m long and 45m wide catering for over 500,000 passengers and 4,200 aircraft movements per year. The pavement on the nodes had started to show some distress due to its age, affected occasionally by tidal conditions. The RPT apron and Western apron also had an aged surface and, due to increase aircraft movement, had begun to show signs of distress. Those involved in the upgrade project said it was a “picturesque” location to carry out the works.</p> |
| Major, Metro and Capital City Airport | Airbiz - Melbourne Airport Airside Electrification Strategy | <p>Airbiz developed an airside electrification strategy for Melbourne Airport, with support from Beca. This involved a detailed evaluation of electric GSE charging infrastructure across airside apron areas. They determined ideal positioning and configuration of charging units and associated parking bays,</p> |

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| | | carefully considering the electrical load, risk and safety aspects as well as operational requirements across each pier. The study included the demand requirements associated with future aerobridge, ground power and preconditioned air requirements. A cornerstone of this work was the integration of strategic sustainability priorities, aligned with Melbourne Airport's ambitious carbon and environmental sustainability objectives. |
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Emerging Airport Leader Award

| Category | Winner | Description |
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| Emerging Airport Leader Award | Andrea Dobson – East Kimberley Regional Airport | From the very start as a freshly trained airport screening officer at East Kimberley Regional Airport, Andrea strived to better herself. Having quickly exhausted opportunities for development within the screening team, she started to look outside the box and determined she would have to broaden her operational knowledge with aspirations to, one day, managing the aerodrome itself. She confidently won a position as Aerodrome Reporting Officer and has continued to advance her understanding and education regarding airside operations and management skills. She is currently working on completing her Diploma in Aviation (Management), all within a very short time. |

Airport of the Year Awards

| Category | Winner | Description |
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| Small Regional (non-RPT) Aerodrome of the Year | Djarindjin Airport Pty Ltd - Helicopter Turnaround Mobile Application Innovation | Djarindjin Airport Pty Ltd (DAPL), has introduced an innovative world-first Helicopter Turnaround Specific TrackerAIRSIDE Lite mobile app designed to raise intelligence, efficiency, safety and compliance for helicopter operations. With 20 best practice functions and procedures, TrackerAIRSIDE Lite mobile app uses real time intelligence to support the numerous duties required of highly-skilled Indigenous workers performing high-risk, intensive, technical and one-of-a-kind helicopter hot refuelling aircraft turnarounds for the oil and gas industry. Benchmark time-tracking is involved to support intricate hot refuelling process and collaborative decision making across all stakeholders. |
| Small Regional (RPT) Airport of the Year | Newman Airport – Shire of East Pilbara - Redevelopment Design 2025 | In 2021, The Shire of East Pilbara completed an Airport Master Plan in response to planning for the replacement of an ageing aviation asset. Revitalising the existing Newman Airport is crucial to adequately addressing cultural reconciliation and to sustain the |

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| | | <p>economic resilience of the Pilbara Region. In 2023, the Pilbara contributed \$40.1 billion to the Australian economy. Aviation is a core means to welcome aviation passengers to traditional owner country. Aviation is crucial transport to the mining industry, however Newman Airport is quickly reaching capacity (420,000 PAX current in 2023). The Newman Airport Redevelopment Design 2025 Project is about identity and healing and working toward the Terminal Project 2030.</p> |
| Large Regional Airport of the Year | Broome International Airport - Singapore Connection | <p>Broome International Airport's nomination for Large Regional Airport of the Year is based on various initiatives that they have successfully implemented this year, with the most notable being the introduction of international services to Singapore. Securing a carrier to operate a new international service is a remarkable achievement given the population base of Broome is 15,000 people. In support of this service, BIA has completed a major terminal upgrade investing over \$20 million in significant expansion of the terminal capacity, along with embedding swing gate capability to allow the terminal to switch to international mode as required.</p> |
| Major Airport of the Year (not based in a capital city) | Cairns Airport - Flood Mitigation, Recovery and Growth | <p>Close to 80,000 passengers are processed through Cairns Airport in the week before Christmas. During this period in 2023, the team at Cairns Airport faced one of its biggest challenges to date. On Sunday 17 December, for the first time, flood waters came over the levy at Cairns Airport. This unprecedented event has been recorded as the region's worst flood since 1910. Operations needed to cease in the midst of the peak travel period. The Cairns Airport team displayed mammoth determination and resilience during this extraordinary situation. Their steadfast commitment produced an exceptional outcome for the community, stakeholders and industry.</p> |
| Metro Airport of the Year (located in the greater metropolitan area of a capital city) | Archerfield Airport Corporation (AAC) - From Aviation Pioneer to Economic Powerhouse | <p>A year of growth and development has delivered vital new infrastructure projects and diversified Archerfield's economic mix. AAC designed and constructed Archerfield's largest ever hangar complex, the \$26 million LifeFlight Clive Berghofer Maintenance Centre; extended facilities for fixed base operators; and developed and integrated the adjacent Transition Estate, including the completion of a 16,900m2 logistics warehouse, the largest building ever constructed on Archerfield Airport.</p> |
| Capital City Airport of the Year | Adelaide Airport Limited - Proudly Connecting South Australia, | <p>Adelaide Airport is at the forefront of innovation across many areas, from sustainability to customer experience. The airport takes an agile approach to change and seize opportunities when they appear, or</p> |

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| | Everyone's Favourite Airport | creates its own when the need is recognised. The airport is running world-first trials which will contribute to building the knowledge base for our industry. If successful, these initiatives will change the nature of air travel making it more accessible to everybody, more sustainable and a better experience across the board. |
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AAA Media: 0429 650 552