

2025 SALLY ISAAC

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND* AWARD

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

AWARDS BOOKLET

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
LGPRO
PROFESSIONALS
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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 THE AWARD

The purpose of the LGPro 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

Please note that the nominee biographies in this booklet reflect the individuals' professional details at the time they were nominated for the award.



Sally Elizabeth Isaac

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WINNER



ANNIE LIU

Advocacy Advisor **Whitehorse City Council**

Annie Liu has become a highly valued member of Whitehorse City Council since joining in 2023. Initially providing translation skills for Mandarin-speaking residents, Annie quickly transitioned to the communications team, where she has contributed to strategic communications plans and written for various channels, including social media and council publications.

Annie's initiative led to the creation of a WeChat account for Whitehorse, making it the first Victorian council to engage Chinese-speaking residents through this platform.

Known for her adaptability and drive, Annie is trusted to deliver high-quality work and is regularly sought after by multiple teams within the organisation.

Her enthusiasm for learning and dedication to community service are evident in her successful grant applications and willingness to assist colleagues. Annie's writing skills and commitment to inclusive communication make her an asset to local government.

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HIGH COMMENDATION



AMY GREGOROVICH

Climate Action Coordinator **Yarra Ranges Council**

Amy Gregorovich is a courageous environmental leader whose career spans grassroots activism, community-led climate resilience, and strategic policy development. As Climate Action Coordinator at Yarra Ranges Council, Amy has delivered tangible outcomes for local communities, including the development of the Local Adaptation and Resilience Framework, which embeds climate adaptation into emergency preparedness and planning.

Amy's work on the \$13 million Resilient Energy Precinct and community battery projects has pioneered new models of energy resilience, earning recognition at national conferences and through industry partnerships. She recently initiated and authored the Community Guidelines for Solar Installs on

Council Facilities, enabling community groups to lead sustainability upgrades while ensuring safety and long-term asset management.

Her leadership qualities were evident early, running as a political candidate in a federal election at just 20 years old and advocating for climate and biodiversity on the national stage. Amy's volunteer work with Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater showcases her ability to mobilise young people, co-design citizen science programs, and secure funding for biodiversity initiatives. Known for her warmth, strategic thinking, and ability to build trust between stakeholders, Amy consistently applies a community-first lens to her work, translating complex environmental challenges into inclusive and actionable strategies.

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HIGH COMMENDATION



SELINA LANCASTER

Teacher and Nutritionist **Nagle College Bairnsdale**

Selina Lancaster is a dedicated high school teacher and nutritionist whose work is characterised by passion, resilience, and a commitment to uplifting those around her. Selina approaches every aspect of her life with love and determination, whether supporting her students, contributing to her community, or caring for her family and pets.

Her professional journey has been shaped by persistence and a focus on what truly matters, overcoming challenges while maintaining a positive outlook.

Selina embraces opportunities with enthusiasm, demonstrating independence and a willingness to step into unfamiliar territory. Her energetic and joyful approach brings lightness to even difficult moments, fostering a supportive environment for those she works with.

At her core, Selina is kind and strives to live and work in ways that would make her future self proud. She brings a dedication to personal growth and persistent effort to this work.



2025 AWARD NOMINEES

LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL
ORDER BY SURNAME

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MEGAN ASHTON

Asset Management System Administrator **East Gippsland Shire Council**

Megan Ashton is recognised for her exemplary leadership and commitment to process improvement within East Gippsland Shire Council. As Asset Management System Administrator, Megan demonstrates meticulous attention to detail and a conscientious approach to her work, consistently delivering high-quality outcomes. Her ability to foster collaboration across departments has positioned her as a future leader in local government.

Megan's professional achievements are complemented by her dedication to community wellbeing. She volunteers at the local animal shelter, providing temporary homes for cats in need.

This selfless contribution reflects her compassion and commitment to making a positive impact beyond the workplace.

A natural collaborator, Megan excels in building strong, interdependent relationships across diverse teams. Her adaptability enables her to thrive in dynamic environments, contributing to both operational and strategic initiatives. Megan's approach is characterised by passion, empathy, and a focus on continuous improvement.

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JESS BUCHANAN

Coordinator Engagement **Moonee Valley City Council**

Jess Buchanan brings over a decade of experience in community engagement to her role as Engagement Coordinator at Moonee Valley City Council. Driven by a commitment to social equity, Jess advocates for inclusive and accessible engagement, ensuring that diverse and underrepresented communities have a meaningful voice in council decision-making.

Jess is a gifted communicator and strategic thinker, adept at making complex information relatable. She has led the transition to an accessible online engagement platform, incorporating tools such as voice-recorded feedback, translated forms, and screen reader-friendly content.

Her leadership in developing the Community Engagement Policy and supporting gender impact assessments has strengthened council processes and outcomes.

Jess's facilitation of the Community Advisory Panel recruitment resulted in a diverse panel of 45 members, each supported to participate fully. Internally, Jess fosters a culture of trust and empowerment, mentoring her team to pursue projects aligned with their strengths. Her approach to engagement is collaborative and empathetic, building trust and co-creating stronger outcomes with the community.

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OLIVIA CIRILLO

MRCC Youth Council Deputy Mayor **Mildura Rural City Council**

Olivia Cirillo is dedicated to enhancing opportunities for young people in Mildura. As Deputy Mayor of the MRCC Youth Council, Olivia advocates for youth issues and works directly with local government to ensure young voices are represented in decision-making. Her leadership is evident in her active involvement across volunteering, sport, music, and academic pursuits.

Olivia offers a fresh perspective, informed by firsthand experience and a deep understanding of the needs of her generation.

She is committed to creating positive change, engaging with the community to address challenges and shape the future of Mildura.

Olivia's approach is proactive and inclusive, demonstrating maturity and a strong sense of responsibility. Her proactivity in gaining governance and community service experience reflect her passion for making a difference.

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VAN MY NGUYEN DANG

Diversity and Literacy Librarian

Greater Dandenong Libraries – Greater Dandenong City Council

Van My Nguyen Dang, known as My Van, has dedicated nearly 18 years to the public libraries sector, serving in various roles including Library Officer, Information Librarian, and Diversity and Literacy Librarian. She is committed to the public library sector and the community, believing that library Community Languages collections should reflect the diversity of their communities.

My Van proposed the use of “Showcase Collections,” employing a patron-driven model to ensure resources acquired meet actual community needs rather than what staff might assume is wanted. She has contributed to the development and delivery of numerous programs, including Library Tech on the Move, Peer2Peer Homework Club, Code Club, and Library Tech Assist.

Her creative mindset enables her to analyse community needs and implement innovative programs that respond.

Adaptable and forward-thinking, My Van embraces new technologies and evolving community needs with an open mind. She is passionate about lifelong learning and eagerly embraces challenges and opportunities for growth like secondments.

Her participation in statewide and national special interest groups demonstrates her commitment to the development of the public library sector.

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ABBY EAGER

Gender Equality Officer **Mitchell Shire Council**

Abby Eager is a dedicated Community Development Officer whose work has significantly advanced gender equality and primary prevention initiatives across her community. Abby is recognised for her deep commitment to inclusion and equity, underpinned by a strong understanding of intersectional approaches. She is a trusted voice both within her organisation and the broader community.

Abby's collaborative approach is evident in her ability to build and maintain strong partnerships, both internally and externally. She chairs the Gender Equality Action Group, supports gender impact assessments across the organisation, and co-develops resources to support gender equitable practices across council services.

Externally, Abby has fostered partnerships with family violence networks and grassroots women's groups, co-designing trauma-informed resources to raise awareness and advocate for change.

Her work amplifies the voices of women and girls, showcasing outstanding contributions and advocating for systemic change. Abby's energy and forward-thinking leadership are reflected in her inclusive approach and commitment to addressing the root causes of gender-based violence. She brings passion, integrity, and empathy to every aspect of her work.

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SHALYCE EASTWOOD

Acting Coordinator Infrastructure Planning **Mornington Peninsula Shire Council**

Shalyce Eastwood is a strategic and community-focused leader driving infrastructure planning at Mornington Peninsula Shire Council. She led the development of the Community Facilities Infrastructure Strategy 2024–2034, going on to oversee its implementation, reshaping the organisation’s approach to equitable, accessible, and financially sustainable facilities.

Shalyce established a cross-organisational “Community Infrastructure Planning Process,” integrating needs analysis, travel accessibility, utilisation, and fit-for-purpose audits.

She also led the development of the Shire’s first Community Infrastructure Management Models Framework, advocating for clear, consistent, and fair decisions about facility management based on local needs.

Shalyce’s leadership style is built on empathy and trust, creating space for colleagues and community members to share experiences and uncover real challenges and opportunities. She values collaboration, actively building partnerships to turn collective knowledge into practical solutions. Her commitment to inclusion, collaboration, and resilience is evident in her work, delivering outcomes that genuinely improve community life.

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GEORGIA HEAD

Primary Prevention Officer **Monash City Council**

Georgia Head is a passionate and collaborative professional known for her empathetic approach and commitment to achieving meaningful outcomes for the community. As Primary Prevention Officer at Monash City Council, Georgia has built a strong reputation for going above and beyond in all aspects of her work over the last five years.

Georgia's journey began at Active Monash before transitioning to the Community Strengthening team, where she supported over 300 registered volunteers across 23 programs. Her leadership in coordination, capacity building, and compliance has fostered strong community connections.

In her current role, Georgia focuses on community safety, designing tailored education sessions for priority groups and leading consultations to understand local safety risks.

Her strength in forging strategic partnerships, particularly with stakeholders such as Victoria Police, has expanded the reach and impact of her work. Georgia's efforts have led to the successful delivery of lifesaving training and impactful initiatives for Community Safety Month. She approaches challenges with a proactive, solutions-focused mindset and is deeply committed to continuous improvement and knowledge-sharing. Georgia's energy, innovation, and dedication make her an invaluable member of the Community Strengthening team.

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HANNAH HUNT

Visitor Information Centre Officer Indigo Shire Council

Hannah Hunt is recognised for her strong leadership, commitment, and community-focused skills across multiple roles within Indigo Shire Council and the broader community. As Visitor Information Centre Officer, Hannah demonstrates a deep knowledge of local issues and a strategic approach to community engagement and public safety.

Hannah's leadership extends to her roles as Community Engagement Coordinator and Health and Wellbeing Officer for the Beechworth Fire Brigade, as well as Adult Scout Leader for the Joey and Cub groups at 1st Beechworth Scouts.

Her ability to design and implement projects that respond to local needs is informed by her understanding of community concerns and resourcing.

Within the CFA, Hannah's role as an endorsed trainer and assessor has reinforced her commitment to empowering others and achieving measurable results. She values input from others, prioritises community-based solutions, and consistently follows through on commitments, even in the face of challenges. Hannah's approach is characterised by empathy, collaboration, and a focus on building competence and confidence in others.

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MYVANWY JENNINGS

Team Leader Early Years and Youth Services **Moorabool Shire Council**

Myvanwy Jennings, known as Miff, is an exceptional leader who embodies the values and purpose of Moorabool Shire Council. As Team Leader of Early Years and Youth Services, Miff demonstrates outstanding emotional intelligence, building meaningful relationships across all levels of the organisation and with key external stakeholders.

Miff is widely respected for her ability to inspire and motivate others, consistently creating an environment where team members feel valued and empowered. Her leadership is grounded in ethical practice and integrity, role modelling fairness, inclusivity, and professionalism.

A strategic thinker, Miff brings clarity and insight to complex challenges, leading to better outcomes for children, young people, and families.

Adaptability is one of Miff's greatest strengths, enabling her to navigate organisational change and respond to emerging community needs. Her contribution to the development of work instructions and the Young Communities Strategy 2024–2028 has been significant, ensuring comprehensive planning for children in their middle years. Miff's leadership style is insightful, intelligent, and values-driven, actively cultivating a positive and forward-thinking workplace culture.

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ELOISE LEOPOLD

Urban Designer **Melbourne City Council**

Eloise Leopold is an urban designer at Melbourne City Council and a design studio leader at RMIT University, championing well-designed public spaces and their role in forming inclusive and resilient communities. Eloise uses her position to solve urban problems and shape better design practices, welcoming diverse communities to live, stay, and play in the city.

Having experienced personal loss, Eloise is passionate about being a nurturing figure for young women in an industry traditionally represented by more men than women.

She actively advocates for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and is committed to understanding the social dynamics and patterns of behaviour that underpin urban environments.

Eloise's strategic design thinking addresses challenges such as population growth, housing affordability, climate and biodiversity emergencies, and social inequality. Her thoughtful and determined approach, combined with her commitment to further study, positions her to make a lasting contribution to advancing understanding of people, place, and the global community.

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ALEX MOORE

Senior Lead Emergency Response and Recovery Casey City Council

Alex Moore is an empowering and outcome-focused leader who has served at Casey since 2010. Alex's career is distinguished by innovative projects that have improved community outcomes in Aboriginal engagement, disability inclusion in emergency management, and the prevention of family violence following disasters.

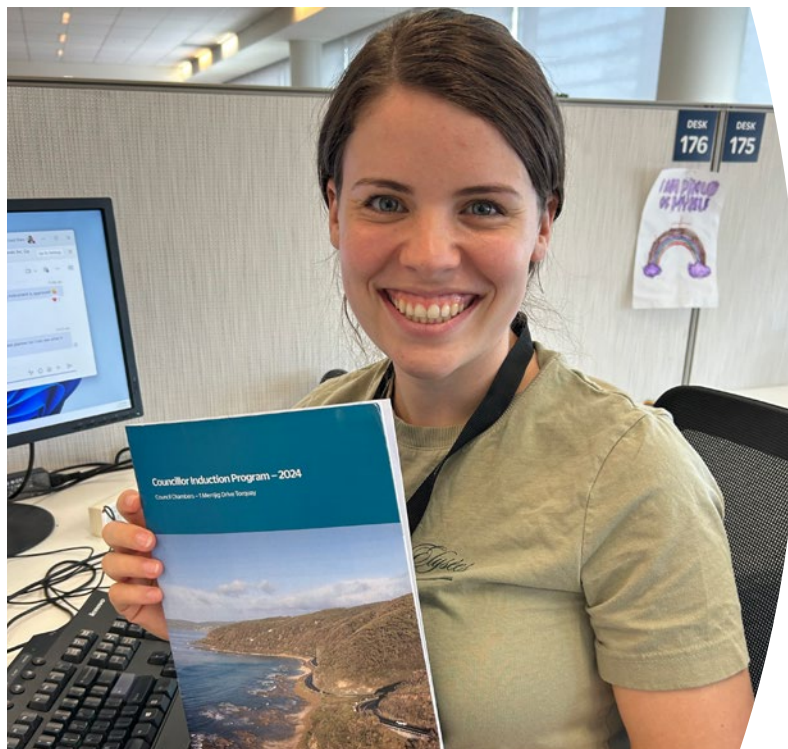
Her ability to connect with others fosters inclusive and supportive work environments, particularly in her leadership of staff and volunteers in emergency relief and recovery teams. Alex recently led an emergency exercise simulating the setup and operation of an Emergency Relief Centre, incorporating representatives from the Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Group in a first to facilitate learning from lived experience.

Alex's empathetic and composed leadership creates safe spaces for participants to navigate high-pressure scenarios, building confidence and capability to better support the community during emergencies. Her multidisciplinary background in community development, emergency management, and person-centred change management brings a well-rounded perspective to her work.

Alex prioritises her physical and mental wellbeing while managing a busy home life, demonstrating that it is possible to be a dedicated professional and a committed parent. Her emotional intelligence, ambition, and authenticity drive her success in building strong, collaborative relationships and making a meaningful impact in the community.

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LIBERTY NASH

Coordinator Governance and Council Business **Surf Coast Shire Council**

Liberty Nash is an inspiring, values-driven leader and a driving force for fairness, equity, and gender equality in local government. Liberty played a pivotal role in ensuring inclusive participation during recent Council election and induction programs, creating opportunities for working parents to fully engage in civic leadership.

Her commitment to transparency ensures Councillors have the right information to make sound decisions, presented in a way that the community can understand and trust.

Liberty is highly regarded for her ability to translate complex legislation into practical guidance, enabling smooth transitions and leading to progressive reforms such as the Councillors Media Policy and annual Councillor training.

Through her leadership, Liberty has become a catalyst for positive change, building confidence, trust, and collaboration across the Council. She is a role model for women in local government, demonstrating how integrity, courage, and inclusive leadership can shape the organisation for success. By making the Council's decisions more transparent and accessible, Liberty helps build trust between Councillors and the people they represent.

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KIARA NOONAN

Emergency Management Officer and Municipal Recovery Manager **Macedon Ranges Shire Council**

Kiara Noonan is a leader in emergency management and community resilience at Macedon Ranges Shire Council, demonstrating innovation, initiative, and dedication throughout nine years of service. Kiara's diverse experience spans community participation, prevention, preparedness, response, relief, and recovery across multiple council departments.

She led the Emergency Resilience and Recovery Marquee Project, enhancing community education and council response capabilities. As Municipal Recovery Manager, Kiara was instrumental in recovery efforts for the 2024 Bullengarook Fire and Riddells Creek Montessori kindergarten traffic incident, ensuring effective public communication, support for the community, and a smooth transition to recovery.

Kiara's strategic planning and compliance work as Executive Officer of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee has strengthened the emergency workforce.

Known for her calm, considered approach and inclusive nature, Kiara is always the first to volunteer to support others. Her ten years as a CFA volunteer further demonstrate her ability to lead in high-pressure environments and implement innovative solutions, making her a standout in emergency management.

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HARRIET NUNAN

Access and Equity Social Planner **Bass Coast Shire Council**

Harriet Nunan is a visionary leader whose work is defined by courage, authenticity, and a deep commitment to equity and inclusion. Harriet consistently challenges the status quo, addressing barriers that exclude people and reimagining systems to ensure fairness and accessibility for all.

Her leadership is grounded in codesign and lived experience, actively bringing people together and ensuring those most impacted are central in shaping solutions. Harriet's strength lies in her ability to combine systems thinking with practical innovation, navigating complexity and identifying new pathways where others see obstacles.

She is a connector, building trust across diverse stakeholders and fostering collaboration that delivers meaningful and sustainable change. Harriet leads authentically, uplifting others and strengthening their capacity to contribute.

Her passion for systemic social change is matched by her ability to translate big-picture thinking into local impact, making her a leader who drives transformative change for entire communities.

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GEORGETTE PATERNOSTER

Team Leader Animals and Amenity **Casey City Council**

Georgette Paternoster is a hardworking, resilient, and courageous leader who has made significant contributions to Casey City Council. After just four years' experience, Georgette entered a high-risk leadership role as Team Leader Animals and Amenity at one of Victoria's largest councils, supervising and leading local law officers in a traditionally male-dominated environment.

Georgette is known for her willingness to share insights and challenge different viewpoints to achieve positive outcomes for the community. She sets a high standard of work and leads complex investigations, particularly where offenders are known to be aggressive or violent.

Georgette has overseen numerous large-scale investigations under the Domestic Animals Act, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, and Casey Community Local Law – all carefully planned to ensure everyone gets home safely.

Her leadership resulted in the rescue and rehoming of 41 dogs from poor conditions in the past six months. Georgette fosters an inclusive and positive culture focused on people development, achieving positive community outcomes through her intelligence, care, and dedication.

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JAY-DEE PITCAITHLY

Youth Engagement and Participation Officer Port Phillip City Council

Jay-Dee Pitcaithly is a passionate youth worker and creative professional dedicated to ensuring young people are heard and meaningfully involved in shaping their futures. As Youth Engagement and Participation Officer at Port Phillip, Jay-Dee embeds advocacy, creativity, and inclusion into every aspect of their work, amplifying the voices of young people and creating genuine opportunities for youth leadership. Jay-Dee's development of Port Phillip's Youth Music Survey in 2024 involved direct engagement with over 200 local young people, whose ideas and insights informed the council's Live Music Plan. With a background in the arts, events, and community engagement, Jay-Dee excels at creating pathways that connect young people with real-world opportunities to develop skills, confidence, and networks.

Through the Youth Events Program, Jay-Dee has supported almost 200 young people with hands-on training and pathway opportunities, and facilitated paid work for over 70 young creatives and performers in the past year.

Jay-Dee is highly organised and experienced in managing complex projects from conception to delivery, fostering environments that are safe, accessible, inspiring, and culturally rich. Their commitment is reflected in regular collaborations with organisations such as Minus18, Artsbus, Linden New Arts, and St Kilda Eco Centre, delivering programs that engage young people through meaningful and culturally safe opportunities for connection.

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OLIVIA SALAMONE

Team Leader Construction Engineering **Knox City Council**

Olivia Salamone is a dedicated civil engineer and emerging leader, driven by a passion for creating positive change in both her industry and the community. As Team Leader Construction Engineering at Knox City Council, Olivia manages multiple renewal and capital works programs, consistently delivering projects on time, under budget, and to a high standard.

Olivia champions sustainable solutions, including an environmental concrete trial using 80 per cent recycled content, and launched the Food and Garden Bin program at Knox, which diverted significant waste from landfill and earned the 2023 Knox Star Award in the Think Big, Act Bold category.

Collaboration and community engagement are central to Olivia's approach, bringing diverse teams together and fostering shared decision-making across councils and the wider community.

Her leadership is exemplified by founding the Roads of the East collaborative group, uniting councils to share knowledge, align priorities, and advocate collectively for better outcomes. Olivia actively inspires the next generation of women in STEM, visiting high schools as an Industry Speaker and mentoring university students. Through her initiatives, mentorship, and professional leadership, Olivia demonstrates resilience, creativity, and a strong commitment to both the civil construction sector and the community she serves.

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LILY SETNIK

Bachelor of Agriculture Student
University of Melbourne

Lily Setnik is a dedicated second-year Bachelor of Agriculture student at the University of Melbourne, recognised for her outstanding leadership, collaboration skills, and commitment to community service. Lily's actions have created positive change both locally and internationally, including re-establishing Peninsula Rotaract and serving as President and Foundation Chair.

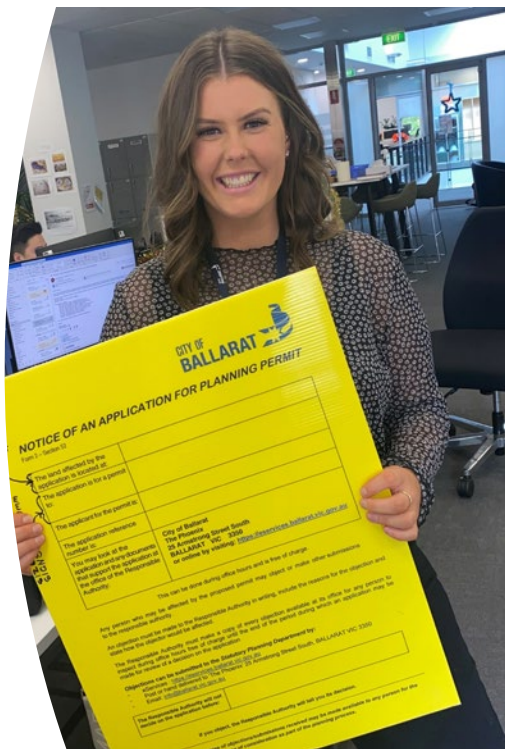
In her leadership roles, Lily has driven impactful social justice and environmental initiatives, like mentoring others in the successful Toothbrush+ project which provided thousands of dollars' worth of hygiene supplies to local community support centres. Her dedication to serving the community is further showcased through consistent volunteer work.

This has included volunteering with the Southern Peninsula Community Support Centre and organising Christmas toy drives for children.

Internationally, Lily's leadership was crucial in planning and delivering a service trip to Nepal, fundraising for health, food production, and education projects. She is committed to environmental conservation as Project Coordinator and Treasurer for the Citizen Science Crew at Daangean, organising collaborative events and leading habitat restoration days to educate new volunteers. Lily's passion for teaching and sharing knowledge reflects her commitment to building leadership skills and fostering positive change.

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EMMA SWIFT

Planning Support Officer Ballarat City Council

Emma Swift is a hardworking and motivated young professional with a passion for improving communities. As Planning Support Officer at Ballarat City Council, Emma has contributed to local government throughout her adult life, providing successful services and assistance to local businesses, community groups, and ratepayers.

Emma actively supports the community by volunteering at events and assisting with fundraisers such as Peaches Run, Fiona Elsey Walk, and Biggest Morning Tea for the Cancer Council.

These experiences have helped her develop a strong sense of empathy and teamwork, qualities she carries into her professional life.

Emma is committed to personal growth and brings an excitement to undertaking further study to become a Statutory Planner. Her dedication to continuous improvement make her a valuable asset to local government and the broader community.



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