



MEDIA RELEASE

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Huon Valley Council wins LG Professionals Partnership and Collaboration Award

Huon Valley Council was among the Tasmanian Regional Winners recognised in the 2019 Local Government (LG) Professionals National Awards at a special ceremony held in Devonport on the evening of 17 October 2019.

The annual awards program celebrates the achievements of individuals and councils working hard to achieve great things in their communities. It provides an opportunity to showcase the high standards of service and innovation shown by local councils in their efforts to achieve better outcomes for communities, and as a result inspire similar initiatives across the country.

Huon Valley Council General Manager Emilio Reale travelled to Devonport to represent Council at the awards night, accepting the LG Professionals Tasmanian Partnerships and Collaboration Award in recognition of the Huon Valley Emergency Management Plan which guided the operation of Council's Emergency Evacuation Centres during the early 2019 bushfires.

"It's wonderful to see our staff recognised for their outstanding achievements in what was a very difficult time for our community," said Mr Reale. "The successful operation of our Evacuation Centres was due to the strong planning skills and innovation of staff, and their collaborative efforts with key agencies, community groups, community members, and neighbouring councils."

The Huon Valley Council Emergency Management Plan is designed to be scalable, with the ability to adapt to fluctuating numbers. During the 2019 fires more than 700 people and around 100 animals were cared for at the Huon Valley PCYC Evacuation Centre, while the Animal Refuge in Ranelagh was well equipped to accommodate more than 400 animals and 59 people.

"It was important to keep the evacuees and the community updated at this time and staff made excellent use of social media for this purpose," said Mr Reale. "This was something that had not been done to the same level before during bushfire disaster. It showed a high level of creative and practical thinking among staff."

Since the success of the Evacuation Centres Huon Valley Council has provided presentations and case examples to other Councils and agencies to share the invaluable knowledge and lessons learned. A working group has been formed with the Local Government Association

Communications & Media Officer

Huon Valley Council

communications@huonvalley.tas.gov.au



of Tasmania (LGAT) and other councils to develop standardised procedures to be used during future disaster events.

“Sharing experiences and knowledge is important for local councils to continually improve our services and procedures, and we are pleased to hear that other councils are finding the story of our experience this year useful for their own disaster management planning,” said Mr Reale.

A copy of the Huon Valley Emergency Management Plan can be found on the Community Safety page of the Council’s website at www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au/services/my-community/community-safety, with a reviewed version soon to be made available once approved by the State Controller.

As the Regional Winner, the Huon Valley Council was also a finalist in the National Federation Awards which were awarded at the LG Professionals National Congress and Business Expo held in Darwin. For the full list of this year’s National Federation Awards winners, visit the LG Professionals website: www.lgprofessionalsaustralia.org.au

For more information: Mayor Bec Enders (03) 6264 0300

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Huon Valley Council

communications@huonvalley.tas.gov.au